

ESSENTIAL SERVICES, CONSUMER HARDSHIP

Petition

HON SALLY TALBOT (South West) [3.01 pm]: I present a petition containing 180 signatures couched in the following terms -

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned residents of Western Australia are concerned about the incidence of utility consumer hardship. There are significant economic and social impacts caused in cases where consumers struggle to pay for access to essential services.

We therefore respectfully request that the Legislative Council examine and address utility consumer hardship by:

1. Assessing the extent, nature, underlying causes and cost of utility hardship in Western Australia, including examining situations where consumers are disconnected or restricted on account of being genuinely unable to afford their utility bills.
2. Reviewing recent studies and relevant policies and practices both in Australia and overseas dealing with utility debt.
3. Assessing the impact on consumer hardship of the policies and practices of Western Australian Utilities, Government departments and agencies.
4. Recommending changes to the policies, programs, regulations and practices of Utilities, the Economic Regulation Authority, the Energy Ombudsman, and Government departments and agencies, to mitigate consumer utility hardship

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 1001.]