

HARDSHIP UTILITY GRANT SCHEME — ADMINISTRATION

1160. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Community Services:

I refer to the government's plans for the future administration of the hardship utility grant scheme.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that from July 2019 concession card holders will no longer be able to approach Synergy directly to apply for fee relief from HUGS?
- (2) If yes to (1), how will concession card holders access HUGS and who will manage this new process?
- (3) If yes to (1), will this new process require additional funding?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The state government will be expanding the third party assessment for the hardship utility grant scheme to include concession card holders from 1 July 2019. All HUGS applicants will be required to approach their utility provider, such as Synergy, in order to meet eligibility criteria before a referral for a third party assessment can be made.
- (2) HUGS is currently administered through the Department of Communities. Further details regarding the new process are currently being developed and will be implemented in time to transition to the new arrangements on 1 July 2019.
- (3) Yes. The funding allocated for the expansion of the third-party assessment is outlined in tabular form, so I seek leave to have that table incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

BUDGET ITEM	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Third Party Assessment (TPA) Non-Concession	\$1.5m	\$1.5m	\$1.5m	\$1.5m
Third Party Assessment (TPA) Concession	0	\$1.92m	2.013m	\$2.10m
TOTAL TPA	\$1.5m	\$3.42m	\$3.51m	\$3.60m
