

SYNERGY — CUSTOMER DEBT

291. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:

The last Economic Regulation Authority report on customer debt to Synergy showed that it had increased from an average of \$396 under the last Barnett coalition government in 2017 to \$766 in 2021–22, a 93 per cent increase, or almost double. Furthermore, in part 2 of the Auditor General’s 2021–22 state government financial audit, the Auditor General reported that the number of customers having difficulty paying their bills on time increased by 104 000, a 25 per cent increase. In addition, the latest published Synergy quarterly report shows a further deterioration in the doubtful debt position of our main energy retailer.

- (1) Are these substantial increases in customer debt and delays in payment not an indication that the minister’s energy price increases are simply harming already struggling Western Australian families?
- (2) Is the continued substantial increase in customer debt not proof that his poorly targeted electricity rebates are not helping those most in need?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(2) No.