

COST-OF-LIVING RELIEF

842. Mr P.C. TINLEY to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to support Western Australians facing cost-of-living pressures.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house how this government's electricity credits are supporting Western Australian households and small businesses?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how power prices under this government compare with those under the previous Liberal–National government?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(2) That is an excellent question. I thank the member for a good question and I know on behalf of his constituents how determined he is to see everything done to restrain the cost of living here in Western Australia. I am very pleased to tell members that under the Cook government every household in Western Australia is receiving at least \$400 as a household electricity credit this year. The first \$200 instalment of that was delivered in July and the second will be delivered in December.

I note that is in great contrast to the time that the former government put up electricity prices by 97 per cent. It did not cut the price of electricity like we are doing it. It put it up by almost double. We have also directed additional support to those who are most in need. Of course, in partnership with the Albanese Labor government we have delivered a \$250 credit to the households receiving the energy assistance payment. These households will receive a further \$250 on 1 December. Households that buy energy from our state-owned energy companies, which would have been privatised by my friends opposite, will receive their next instalment automatically, beginning on 1 December. That means that here in Western Australia, in 2023, more than one million WA households have received an electricity credit from Synergy or Horizon Power. But that is not end of it. That, of course, builds on the previous household credits we have given in other years as well. Unlike the opposition, which put up electricity prices by 97 per cent, we are putting electricity prices down.

We have gone further than that. In partnership with the Albanese government we are also providing support with Western Australian small businesses and charities. Businesses and charities that consume less than 50-megawatt hours of electricity each year are eligible for a \$650 credit, funded jointly by the state and federal Labor governments. That is 80 000 small businesses and charities that have already received their first payment and their second payment of \$325 is on its way. We know that not all small businesses and charities buy their energy from Synergy or Horizon. Those customers can also receive a \$650 credit by the end of this month. They have to apply for it because, obviously, we do not have a direct relationship with them through Synergy or Horizon Power.

That includes small businesses in shopping centres, businesses operating from airports and industrial parks, and small businesses that have a sub meter linked to a meter controlled by the landlord. Applications are open until Thursday, 30 November, and can be made online via the Small Business Development Corporation's website. We want to ensure that every Western Australian small business that is eligible for this benefit receives its credit. Many already have, over 80 000, because they are direct customers of either Synergy or Horizon, but we urge all those other businesses on embedded networks, with sub meters or in other locations where they are not directly buying their power from Synergy or Horizon, to apply through the Small Business Development Corporation for their \$650 right now.