

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

ANSWERS TO 2021-22 BUDGET ESTIMATES - QUESTIONS PRIOR TO HEARING

Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation (Synergy)

Hon Brad Pettitt MLC asked:

1) I refer to item 7 under Workforce Transition on page 794 of Western Australia State Budget 2021-22 Paper 2, Volume 2, stating that Synergy is on track for the planned closure of the Muja C Unit by October 2022 and Unit 6 by 2024 as a result of Synergy reshaping its generation portfolio to more effectively match current and future electricity demand requirements I ask:

- a) has any funding been allocated for the development of new large-scale renewable energy sources and large-scale storage beyond the already announced Kwinana big battery?

Answer: Synergy is working with the State Government to reshape its large-scale electricity generation and storage portfolio. It is embracing recent advances in downstream energy technology which have changed the way Western Australian's use and store energy in their homes.

Synergy is actively exploring opportunities to build, own and operate large-scale renewable energy projects. Previously, Synergy has worked with other companies to develop the Warradarge Windfarm near Eneabba, the Greenough River Solar Farm and several other smaller renewable assets.

Synergy will continue to invest in evolving its generation portfolio towards lower carbon emissions and distributed energy resource solutions, including the use of batteries, rooftop solar and virtual power plants. The 2021-22 state budget identifies funding for several projects including Project Symphony, Virtual Power Plants for Schools and Smart Energy for Social Housing.

Project Symphony

Project Symphony is a collaborative pilot project between the State Government, Synergy, Western Power, Energy Policy WA and the Australian Energy Market Operator. It is anticipated to involve around 500 homes and businesses in Southern River where almost 50 per cent of households have rooftop solar. Project Symphony will see Synergy aggregating the area's solar and other assets, including batteries, into a Virtual Power Plant (**VPP**) to explore how this technology can benefit customers, the network and the energy market.

Virtual Power Plants for Schools

Establishing a VPP involves aggregating a network of distributed energy resources such as solar and battery power, then drawing from these resources to dispatch electricity based on demand. The VPP for Schools project will see ten Western Australian schools transformed into smart, green and flexible VPPs. The 2021-22 State Budget expands this project by providing \$4.8 million towards investments in an additional six public schools, located in Kalgoorlie and Geraldton.

Smart Energy for Social Housing

The \$6 million Smart Energy for Social Housing initiative was announced by the State Government in July 2020. The 2021-22 State Budget provides further funding towards this initiative and will involve the installation of solar panels and hot water pumps on social housing properties, enabling a new group of Synergy customers to share the benefits of solar power.

Minister's initials

