

Government of Western Australia

Media Statements

Financial relief for bushfire-affected Western Australians

Friday, 18 February 2022

- Electricity and water customer assistance programs announced for those impacted by bushfires
- Water Corporation and Western Power crews working to reconnect all properties following fires
- McGowan Government committed to supporting affected families and businesses

The McGowan Government today announced further support for those affected by the impacts of recent bushfires in the State's Great Southern, South-West and Wheatbelt regions in the form of ongoing relief from Synergy, Water Corporation and Western Power.

Water Corporation

The relief package for those Water Corporation customers who lost their property includes:

- a water use allowance of up to 50,000 litres;
- interest-free payment arrangements and payment extension on existing bills;
- new and existing charges waived and no recovery action for 12 months;
- no-cost replacement or repair of damaged meters; and
- service charges waived for 12 months and waiving of building application fees and connection/disconnection fees.

Water Corporation customers with property fire damage or those who housed evacuees will also be offered support including:

- a free water use allowance of up to 50,000 litres; and
- interest-free payment arrangements and payment extension on existing bills.

For Water Corporation customers in the South-West community of Hester, the 50,000-litre water allowance will be automatically applied without having to register and they will not be charged for additional water used fighting bushfires or during clean-up operations.

Despite considerable impacts to its assets, Water Corporation crews have maintained water supply to all bushfire-affected areas of the South-West, Wheatbelt and Lower Great Southern, and most areas of the Upper Great Southern.

Water carting is continuing in some areas while crews work to repair severely fire-damaged assets. Residents in affected communities are asked to please continue limiting water use to essential purposes only.

For details on how to apply for assistance, Water Corporation customers should call 13 13 85 or visit <https://www.watercorporation.com.au/bushfireassistance>

Synergy and Western Power

The recent bushfires affected substantial parts of Western Power's network in bushfire locations with several hundred power poles, feeders and other electrical infrastructure damaged.

More than 13,500 customers whose power supply was affected by the Denmark, Bridgetown, Narrogin and Shackleton bushfires have had their power restored and Western Power is working to get the remaining 50 customers back on as safely and quickly as possible.

The Synergy Case Management team is available to tailor individual solutions for any customers experiencing hardship as a result of the bushfires. To speak to the team, customers can contact Synergy and request case management support due to bushfire-related hardship.

In addition, Synergy customers who have lost or have property damage to their homes or business will receive the following assistance:

- an immediate suspension will be placed on their account for collection activities for outstanding accounts;
- damaged meters on the property will be replaced at no cost; and
- all fees waived by Western Power for connections, reconnections and network charges (including cost of establishing a temporary builders supply).

Synergy can be contacted by calling 13 13 53 for residential accounts, 13 13 54 for business accounts or by visiting <https://www.synergy.net.au>

Comments attributed to Emergency Services Minister Stephen Dawson:

"Given the catastrophic fire conditions across the State and unprecedented number of incidents recently, I could not be more proud of all those involved in the response.

"I thank those who were fighting the fires and defending homes and properties, along with those supporting affected communities and displaced families and to those behind the scenes.

"The Water Corporation and Western Power relief packages will provide assistance to affected residents and communities."

Comments attributed to Energy Minister Bill Johnston:

"It has been a challenging summer for many customers across the network and I encourage those who have been impacted by these devastating fires to contact Synergy to discuss their circumstances.

"I am incredibly impressed by the dedication and resilience of emergency services personnel, repair crews on the ground and the local communities who support one another in these tough times.

"A special thanks from me to all the Western Power crews and network operations staff who worked during very tough conditions to get people's power back online as quickly as possible."

Comments attributed to Water Minister Dave Kelly:

"The relief package for Water Corporation customers will provide additional financial assistance to communities across the State who have been impacted by the recent bushfires.

"Water Corporation have been prioritising the maintenance of essential drinking water and wastewater services in the aftermath of the bushfires.

"On behalf of the State Government, I'd like to thank all Water Corporation staff for all their dedication and hard work during the recovery operations."

Emergency Services Minister's office - 6552 5800

Energy Minister's office - 6552 6700

Water Minister's office - 6552 6100