

## Understanding the cost of electricity

In the 2011 State Budget, it was announced that the Home Plan (A1) tariff would increase by 5% from 20.83 cents per unit to 21.87 cents per unit. This will cost the average household an additional 19 cents per day. These changes are effective from 1 July, 2011. As reflected in the following diagram, the cost of producing and supplying electricity for the Home Plan (A1 tariff) is expected to rise by 11%. This is due to increases in the cost of generation, green schemes, network and retail costs.

Managing your energy use is more important than ever, and Synergy has a range of energy management solutions available to help you reduce the impact of this price increase.

We have a range of online solutions such as My Account, Bill Manager and our Energy Calculator which have been designed to help you identify where your money is being spent and tips to help you reduce your energy usage.

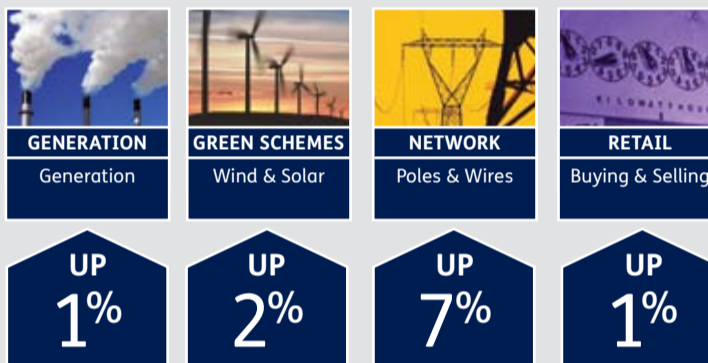
For more information on these solutions please visit [www.synergy.net.au/save](http://www.synergy.net.au/save)

Please note that rebates will increase to assist with the tariff increase. To see if you are eligible for rebate assistance please visit [www.synergy.net.au/rebates](http://www.synergy.net.au/rebates)

Additional assistance has also been provided through the Hardship Utility Grant Scheme.

The residential Home Plan (A1) tariff is increasing by 5%, even though the cost of inputs required to produce and transport electricity are expected to rise by 11%.

The government subsidy will increase from 3.5 cents per unit to 5.1 cents per unit to cover the difference.



Source: Synergy's 2011/12 forecast budget model.

### What this means to you.

(For an average Residential Home Plan (A1) customer using 17.15 units per day)

**You will be paying an extra \$0.19 per day**

**The Government Subsidy will increase by \$0.27 per day**



### Meet our new CEO

There has been a lot of focus in recent months on the cost of living, and, in particular, the cost of utility services.

We are very much aware of the impact this is having on household and business bills and are keen to assist our customers in managing their energy use.

Tariff increases are happening right around the country. The increases, while unfortunate, cannot be avoided. They are caused by increasing costs of generation, improving and upgrading network infrastructure, as well as the cost of renewable energy.

The best way to ease the impact of the increasing cost of electricity is to reduce the amount of electricity you use.

That's why we're asking our customers to share their unique ideas, at [www.lets-save-energy.com.au](http://www.lets-save-energy.com.au) Over 3,700 tips have been shared, providing many valuable and interesting suggestions which you may be able to use.

We also understand that sometimes it's difficult to pay bills on time, for a variety of reasons. If you think you may need more time to pay your bill, please call us as soon as possible and discuss a payment arrangement.

We're here to help. I hope you find the information in this newsletter helpful and interesting.

**Trevor James**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Let's Switch the Future

For more information and tips on managing your energy use go to [www.switchthefuture.com.au](http://www.switchthefuture.com.au)

Synergy, in collaboration with the electricity network operator Western Power, recently launched Switch the Future – an energy efficiency campaign as part of the Future Energy Alliance.

The aim is to build community awareness of energy conservation and behavioural change for improved energy efficiency.

### Synergy's top tips for saving energy and saving money:

- Turning off your second fridge can make a big difference and save you up to \$195 a year.
- Reducing your showers from 8 minutes to 4 minutes could save you up to \$140 a year on your electric water heating.
- Switching appliances off stand-by could save you up to \$175 each year.

\*Savings based on the residential Home Plan (A1) price 21.87 cents per unit (incl GST) and are correct as at 1 July, 2011. Actual savings may vary.

# Estimated bill?



Normally our customer bills are based on actual meter reading data provided to us by the electricity network operator, Western Power (who own and read the meters). However, sometimes Synergy needs to provide you with an estimated bill. If this happens we will tell you on your bill.

## Why did I receive an estimated bill and is it valid?

You may have received an estimated bill because Western Power was not able to access the electricity meter. For example, there may be a dog at the premises or the meter is behind a locked gate.

If Synergy cannot reasonably base your bill on an actual meter reading, Synergy is required by law to give you an estimated bill. If we do we will say so on your bill. If you ask, we will tell you the basis and reason for the estimation.

The estimate is calculated by Western Power as required by law and provided to Synergy so we can bill you. An estimated bill is valid and payable the same as a normal bill. An adjustment will occur in the next bill following actual meter reading.

For more information visit [www.synergy.net.au/meter](http://www.synergy.net.au/meter)

## How are bill adjustments made?

If your bill has been estimated and we subsequently receive an actual meter reading from Western Power we are required by law to adjust your next bill based on that actual meter reading.

### What can you do?

If you receive an estimated bill and it is higher than anticipated, you can read your meter and compare it to the estimated reading. To learn how, visit [www.synergy.net.au/meter](http://www.synergy.net.au/meter)

If you receive an estimated bill, you can ask for a meter data verification and a special meter reading. A fee (currently \$19.60 incl GST) for a special meter reading may apply.

It is important Western Power has easy access to the meter at your premise. To reduce the likelihood of receiving an estimated bill, you are required to allow access and keep the area surrounding the meter safe and clear.

If you're a self read customer it is important to take the time to correctly complete and return your self read card to Western Power within the required time.

# Gardening for energy efficiency

Did you know how your garden could be used to reduce your energy usage?

According to the Great Gardens' team, it's not just what you do inside your home to reduce your energy bills – there are simple things you can do in your garden too.

The free Great Gardens' workshops help show gardeners how they can make their garden into a natural air conditioner.

To see the team in action, check out a video clip at [www.synergy.net.au/sponsorships](http://www.synergy.net.au/sponsorships)

The short film shows the Great Gardens' team creating a sustainable garden for the lucky winners of the Synergy Sustainable Garden Makeover competition.

Valued at \$10,000, the makeover took two days and transformed a normal suburban garden into an energy-saving oasis.

The Synergy Great Garden Workshops run in locations across Perth throughout the year, and are free to attend. To find a workshop near you and to register to attend, go to [www.synergy.net.au/sponsorships](http://www.synergy.net.au/sponsorships)

### Top tips to turn your garden into a natural air conditioner:

- Plant deciduous trees near windows to block out the sun in summer and let in the sun in winter
- Install awnings to the outside of windows to block out the sun during summer



Image courtesy of Apple

For your chance to win a 15 inch Apple MacBook Pro valued at over \$2,000\*, simply answer the following two questions (you'll find the answers in this newsletter).

Once connected to the web, the lucky winner will be able to jump online and learn more about our energy saving tips - or even vote for their favourite tip on the Let's Save Energy website.

1. Name two (2) tips for making your garden a 'natural air conditioner'
2. Name one of Synergy's Switch the Future campaign, energy-saving tips.

Visit [www.synergy.net.au/win](http://www.synergy.net.au/win) before 30 September 2011 and follow the prompts to enter.

Good luck!

## Western Power service standard payments

Did you know that you may be eligible for a service standard payment if Western Power is unable to meet certain standards of service?

Western Power has a range of payments that can be made to residential customers if its service falls short of legislated standards.

### These payments include:

- A \$20 payment if a written complaint or query is not responded to within 20 business days
- A \$20 payment when 72 hours advance notice of a power outage hasn't been given
- An \$80 payment if the electricity supply to your home was interrupted for more than 12 continuous hours.

For more information about your eligibility and how to apply for payments go to [www.westernpower.com.au](http://www.westernpower.com.au)



More than 18,000 customers have registered for My Account for their chance to win an energy-saving appliance package worth \$2,000\* - and the good news is that Synergy is extending the competition to 31 August, 2011 to give even more customers the chance of winning.

My Account is a quick and easy way to manage your electricity account online. It's absolutely free, and it means you can keep a close eye on your energy usage - because all your previous bills are available for you to view at any time.

And as you can see, registering for My Account gives you lots more benefits too.

**Convenience** – Access all your Synergy bills – current and previous - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Safe and secure** - Our secure log-in means details of your

account are for your eyes only.

**Hassle-free** – Registering is easy. There's no need to waste time paying bills over the counter or on the phone.

**Control** – My Account makes it easy to keep track of your energy usage in your own time - by letting you instantly compare your bills.

Register for My Account anytime before 31 August, 2011 to be automatically entered into the draw to win. To register and for details visit [www.synergy.net.au/myaccount](http://www.synergy.net.au/myaccount)

## SYNERGISTICS

A recent survey conducted by Synergy found that ...



42% of Western Australians consider energy efficiency as important as water efficiency.



47% of households consider mums to be the main promoters of energy efficiency in the home.



19% of households think their energy usage is higher than average.