

RESIDENTIAL ENERGY BILL RELIEF OFFSET

A. BACKGROUND

On 9 December 2022 the Commonwealth Government announced the National Energy Bill Relief Fund, providing eligible residential customers with relief on their electricity bill and addressing the impacts of rising global energy prices in the form of an electricity offset applied to an eligible customer's bill.

On 11 May 2023 the State Government announced the WA Energy Bill Relief Offset to all eligible residential customers.

Funded by both the Commonwealth and WA State Government, the different offset payments will see residential customers receiving a minimum of \$400 paid over two instalments with Energy Assistance Payment (**EAP**) customers receiving \$500 payable over two instalments.

These Terms and Conditions have been determined by the WA State Government to enable Synergy to determine eligibility and distribute the National and WA Energy Bill Relief Offset (**Offset**).

B. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The payments will be GST free and will vary based on residential customer status such as concession card eligibility as well as being funded from a combination of state and commonwealth sources.

The details of the payments are outlined below:

- a) Residential customers who receive an EAP from the WA State Government and have an active account on 9 May 2023 and 23 November 2023 and the payment dates of 8 July 2023 and 2 December 2023 (**qualifying dates**) will receive a \$350 offset payable over 2 instalments of \$175 each with the first payment being made on 8 July 2023 and the second payment being made on 2 December 2023. This payment is co funded by the WA State and Commonwealth Governments.
- b) Customers receiving the EAP on the qualifying dates will receive a further \$150 payable over 2 instalments of \$75 each with the first payment being made on 8 July 2023 and the second payment being made on 2 December 2023. This payment is funded by the WA State Government in isolation.
- c) This will bring the total payment for EAP customers to \$500 payable over two instalments.
- d) Residential customers receiving a Carer Allowance or Family Tax Benefit A&B on the qualifying dates will receive \$350 payable over 2 instalments of \$175 each with the first payment being made on 8 July 2023 and the second payment being made on 2 December 2023. Co funded by both the WA State and Commonwealth Governments, this payment will also be topped up by the WA State Government.
- e) This will bring the total payment for customers currently in receipt of a Carer Allowance or Family Tax Benefit A&B to \$400 payable over two instalments.

- f) All other residential customers who do not qualify for the \$500 Offset but have an active account on the qualifying dates will receive a \$400 Offset (payable over 2 instalments of \$200 each with the first payment being made on 8 July 2023 and the second payment being made on 2 December 2023. This payment is funded by the WA State Government.
 - g) Customers will be limited to one Offset type as outlined above per eligible account. For example, a customer will not be eligible to receive the EAP Offset of \$500 and the Residential Offset of \$400 on the same account. The customer will receive the higher value offset of \$500 in this instance.
2. For the purposes of the payments, a Synergy customer will be assessed as having an **Eligible Residential Account** if:
- a) they are a residential customer supplied with electricity under a Synergy electricity contract as of the qualifying dates;
 - b) for the purposes of the National Offset for EAP customers, a Synergy customer must hold a valid Centrelink Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Commonwealth Seniors Card, Department of Veteran Affairs Commonwealth Seniors Card, Veteran Affairs Pensioner Card, or Veteran Affairs Gold Card;
 - c) for the purposes of the National Offset for a Carer Allowance or Family Tax Benefit A & B, a Synergy customer or be a recipient of a Carer Allowance or Family Tax Benefit A & B benefit;
 - d) for the purposes of the Offset payable to all other residential customers; and
 - e) the supply of electricity is made under one of the residential electricity retail tariffs that are (**Eligibility Criteria**):
 - i. tariff A1 (residential tariff) as specified in the *Energy Operators (Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation) (Charges) By-laws 2006*; or
 - ii. all non-standard residential electricity supply products including the Midday Saver, Community Energy, EV Add On Plan and grandfathered products including Smart Home Plan, SmartPower and PowerShift; or
 - iii. a tariff charged to a residential pre-payment meter customer who is supplied in accordance with the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers 2022* (WA); or
 - iv. published by Synergy.
3. Even if the Eligibility Criteria is met, each of the following accounts are not Eligible Residential Accounts (**Excluded Accounts**):
- a) the supply is made under the Tariff K1 (general supply with residential tariff) as specified in the *Energy Operators (Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation) (Charges) By-laws 2006*; or
 - b) the supply is made under the Tariff B1 (residential water heating tariff) as specified in the *Energy Operators (Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation) (Charges) By-laws 2006*; or

- c) an account held by a local government authority, council or entity created pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1995 (WA)*; or
 - d) an account held by a Western Australian or Commonwealth Government statutory authority, trading enterprise, department or agency; or
 - e) an account held by a telecommunication company that is, for example part of the corporate group of, Telstra, Vodafone, Optus or the National Broadband Network; or
 - f) an account held by an authorised deposit-taking institution that is, for example part of the corporate group of, Westpac, Australian and New Zealand Banking Group, Commonwealth Bank or National Australia Bank; or
 - g) an account held by a major mining or resources operator, that is, for example part of the corporate group of, BHP, Rio Tinto, FMG, Chevron and Woodside; or
 - h) an account for temporary electricity supply for the purposes of constructing premises; or
 - i) an account where the consumption at the premises exceeds 50MWh in the 12 months prior to 9 May 2023.
4. Synergy customers who have an Eligible Residential Account are not required to apply for the Offset and will receive a non-refundable Offset that is:
- a) for a pre-payment meter customer, applied to the pre-payment meter balance from 8 July 2023 and 2 December 2023; or
 - b) for all other customers, applied to the account balance from the first scheduled meter reading from 8 July 2023 and 2 December 2023 and displayed on the bill as an Offset on a separate line item with the description:
 - i. For EAP customers there will be two credits for each payment period with the description:
 - 1. “National Energy Bill Relief Offset” for the \$175 component
 - 2. “WA Energy Bill Relief Offset” for the \$75 component.
 - ii. For all other eligible residential customers there will be two credits applied with the description:
 - 1. “WA Energy Bill Relief Offset”
5. On or before 5:00 pm WST on 31 March 2024 a Synergy customer may apply to Synergy to have an account, which is not an Eligible Residential Account or an Excluded Account, to be considered as an **Otherwise Eligible Account**, in relation to an Offset, where it would have been an Eligible Residential Account except that:
- a) the customer failed to meet the Eligibility Date due to accommodation issues, including but not limited to moving houses, homelessness, temporary accommodation or building a new dwelling; or

- b) there was an error in the tariff applied to an account, where a residential customer was on an incorrect tariff that would not meet the requirements set out in clause 2(e) of these Terms and Conditions.
6. Once Synergy has applied the Offset it will remain on an Eligible Residential Account or an Otherwise Eligible Account, until the earlier of:
- a) the termination of the contract under which the account is supplied, in which case any remaining amount of the Offset will be forfeited, unless clause 10 of these Term and Conditions applies;
 - b) a change in tariff occurs that is not a tariff specified in clause 2(e), in which case any remaining amount of the Offset will be forfeited; or
 - c) the utilisation of the full amount of the Offset with respect to charges incurred and billed for the supply of electricity for that account (including historical debt).
7. Provided a customer applies to Synergy before 31 March 2024 Synergy retains discretion to consider a customer who does not meet the requirements in clause 2 or 5 of these Terms and Conditions as eligible for the Offset (**Special Circumstances**). If Synergy, in their discretion, determines that a customer is eligible for the Offset, then these terms and conditions will apply.
8. Subject to clauses 7 and 11 of these Terms and Conditions, the Offset can only otherwise be applied against amounts owed to Synergy in respect of the supply of electricity for an Eligible Residential Account or an Otherwise Eligible Account.
9. Except in circumstances where clauses 10 and 11 of these Terms and Conditions may apply, where the Offset is applied to an Eligible Residential Account or an Otherwise Eligible Account, no customer or their authorised representative is entitled to:
- a) a refund or cash-out any amounts from Synergy in respect of the Offset; or
 - b) any other application, payment, or transfer of the Offset from Synergy, Horizon Power or Revenue WA.
10. A customer may apply for any unutilised balance of the Offset that remains on an Eligible Residential Account or an Otherwise Eligible Account to be transferred if:
- a) where the customer has moved to a new premises supplied by Synergy:
 - i. the customer has entered into a new contract with Synergy before 31 March 2024; and
 - ii. the new account meets the Eligibility Criteria and is not an Excluded Account, or
 - b) where the customer has moved to a new premises supplied by Horizon Power:
 - i. the customer has entered into a new contract with Horizon Power before 31 March 2024; and

- ii. the new account and contract meets any eligibility criteria, with respect to residential tariffs, set out in the Horizon Power Offset Scheme Terms and Conditions.

11. Provided a customer applies to Synergy before 31 March 2024 for the unutilised balance of the Offset to be transferred to the new Synergy account and the customer has entered into a new contract by that date, Synergy retains discretion to transfer any unutilised Offset funds when a customer does not meet the requirements in clause 9 of these Terms and Conditions (**Compassionate Circumstances**). Compassionate Circumstances can include consideration of issues including but not limited to the account holder having passed away, family violence, power of attorney being established or a change of contract holder due to a deceased estate.

12. In assessing whether to provide the Offset or to arrange a transfer of unutilised Offset, Synergy will consider:

- a) all factual circumstances of the customer; and
- b) the State and National Governments' policy intent behind the Offset.