

Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Energy
Minister for Resources
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Ms Ruth Forrest
Chair
Legislative Council Government Business Scrutiny Committee A
C/- Ms Jenny Mannering
Email: jenny.mannering@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Forrest

Thank you for your letter of 15 December 2020. I will respond to your letter for ease of reference in the same order as the Committee's questions.

Aurora Energy

1. What consideration was given to providing free access to the app for all Aurora concession customers?

In developing the Aurora Pay As You Go replacement product (now broadly available to Aurora Energy customers as aurora+), full consideration was given to product pricing.

Following feedback from consumer advocacy groups, the Product Service Fee was reviewed and the decision was made to waive the Fee for customers participating in Aurora Energy's hardship (Your Energy Support) program, particularly given the benefits of the product in increasing visibility around daily energy costs.

At this time, consideration was also given to waiving the fee for customers receiving a Concession, however, this option was not viable due to the high proportion of the customer base (over 90,000 customers) this segment represent.

2. How much of the support provided under the \$5m COVID-19 Customer Support Fund was in the form of direct assistance with bill costs (as distinct from waiving a fee or charge)?

Every customer supported via the Fund has been provided with direct bill assistance.

3. How many customers have received assistance under this Fund with bill costs (as distinct from waiving a fee or charge)?

A total of 1,789 customers have received bill support from the \$5M COVID-19 Customer Support Fund.

4. What proportion of those assisted with direct bill costs were concession customers?

Of the residential customers who have received direct bill assistance through COVID-19 Customer Support Fund 46 per cent also receive an electricity concession.

5. Of the employees currently on maximum term contracts, how many of those have had contracts rolled over/extended since first being engaged with the company, and over what period of time/number of extensions?

In line with the last round of Enterprise Agreement negotiations in 2018, it was agreed to move away from maximum term contracts and engaging employees on temporary basis. This change has resulted in 69 per cent of Aurora Energy employees being employed on a permanent basis at 30 June 2020. Two employees who remain on a maximum term contracts have had their contracts extended. One of these employees has recently been offered permanency, and the other employee has been offered a contract extension to March 2022. The latter employee has been with the Company since June 2019 and has had their contract extended once.

6. What was the number of concessions customers prior to COVID and what is the current number.

The following figures were provided in-session in response to this question – At 30 September 2020, 91,981 customers were receiving an electricity discount under the Concessions scheme. This compares in 88,694 at 30 September 2019, representing a 3.6 per cent increase for the period.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (IN CAMERA)

The below information is strictly Commercial in Confidence and has been provided by Aurora Energy for the express purpose of informing Legislative Council Committee members.

1. Costing for the development of and ongoing costs associated with Aurora.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

■ *Do the contracts require AE to take all the LCG's from Cattle Hill Wind Farm?*

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Barnett'.

Hon Guy Barnett MP
Minister for Energy

Date: 18 December 2020