

MINISTER FOR WATER — STAFF SALARIES — WATER CORPORATION

402. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Water:

I welcome the students from John XXIII College in the diverse electorate of Cottesloe.

I refer to the minister's response to question on notice 503 in the Legislative Council when he outlined that 134 workers at the Water Corporation earn more than 50 per cent above base salary and in one case a mechanical tradesperson has a base salary of \$85 000 but will take home more than \$200 000.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the same mechanical worker under the new Water Corporation bargaining agreement, in addition to earning more than double their salary, will receive an additional \$5 000 remuneration this year?
- (2) Can the minister explain the justification for an increase five times the increase for police, nurses and teachers?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

Again, I thank the member for Cottesloe for the question.

- (1)–(2) He has really chosen to attack the government on some very strange bases. The day before, during the debate on the space agency, he criticised the government's performance —

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I draw the minister's attention to the question. He is not answering the question. There is no relevance.

The SPEAKER: He has only just started, member. Let us give him a chance to flesh it out; I am sure he will.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.J. KELLY: If the member for Churchlands listened, he would see where I am coming from. During the debate on the space agency, he criticised the government for the number of students doing science, technology, engineering and mathematics. He cited figures that dated from 2010 to 2015, a period during which his party was in government. Now he is attacking the wages and conditions of Water Corp employees. The figures to which he referred derive from an enterprise bargaining agreement negotiated during his party's term of government. He is complaining about the wages paid to Water Corporation employees negotiated by the Liberal–National government. Does the member not see that it is a bit ironic? He does not realise that for some of the employees' wages that he is criticising, a substantial component is a regional employee's allowance. The member is criticising the additional money that staff receive for working in regional areas. Is that what he is doing? Does he realise that is what he is doing? He is criticising paying people additional rates of pay to attract them to work in regional areas. Yesterday, he criticised the Premier over a superannuation arrangement that exists in the Water Corporation. Does he know how long that superannuation arrangement has been in place? It has been in place for 21 years. It was put in place under the Court government.

Dr D.J. Honey: Two per cent increase under you.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The member for Cottesloe continues to say that it is a change by us. Twenty-one years ago, a scheme was put in place whereby if a Water Corporation employee contributed an extra three per cent in super, the Water Corporation would put in another two per cent. It was one of those schemes; it happened with a lot of arrangements whereby if someone put in extra, their employer would put in extra. That was put in place under the Court government. The Water Corporation's policy applied during the Court government, during the Gallop government and the Carpenter government and then under the Barnett government. It is now still in place under the McGowan government. The only change that I understand is taking place is that instead of it being a policy, it will be reflected in the next enterprise bargaining agreement as registered by the commission. It has not yet been registered, so it has been in place as a policy for 21 years. It will now be reflected in the EBA. There is no additional money, it will just change from being a policy to a term of the EBA. I understand that the salary increase people will get under that EBA is \$1 000, as per the broad government policy. As the Premier pointed out, even though the Water Corporation, as a government trading enterprise, is not bound by government wages policy, it is limiting its pay increase to \$1 000, just like everybody else.