

WATER CORPORATION — DIVIDENDS

580. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:

I refer to the massive \$4 billion that the Water Corporation will deliver to Treasury through tax and dividends over the forward estimates. Why is the government using the Water Corporation as a cash cow when so many Western Australians are struggling to pay their water and electricity bills?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Treasurer! Premier, the reason you did not hear it was that some of your members were interjecting. Member for Scarborough.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to the massive \$4 billion that the Water Corporation will deliver to Treasury through tax and dividends over the forward estimates. Why is the government using the Water Corporation as a cash cow when so many Western Australians are struggling to pay their water and electricity bills?

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The member seems to roam far and wide, but she does not actually ask a question of the person she shadows. Members opposite all seem to be frightened of my ministers, but not frightened of me!

Dr M.D. Nahan: That was your best observation to date!

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is true! To be fair, I am very easy to get along with and I have a very benign personality, whereas those around me are fearsome, so I understand that!

The question could have been better directed to the Treasurer and/or the Minister for Water, but I note that the Minister for Water helpfully interjected that the forward estimates are largely based upon the forward estimates that we inherited. If they are the same forward estimates that we inherited —

Mr D.C. Nalder: So you're not responsible for the budget?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Hold on. If they are the same forward estimates that were in the previous government's budget figures, what are members opposite complaining about? Are they attacking the former Minister for Water? Are they attacking the former Treasurer? The former Treasurer handed down the budget that had the same forward estimates that the member for Scarborough is attacking. The question asked earlier by the very well dressed young tyro down the back, in which he attacked linesmen working for Western Power, was based upon an enterprise bargaining agreement entered into by the former government. We have a plethora of issues out there at the moment and the opposition is asking me about its own forward estimates! The opposition needs some coaching—it really does—in how to ask questions and how to ask about something that is actually relevant and topical.