

MINISTER FOR WATER — STAFF SALARIES — WATER CORPORATION

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

I have a supplementary question. Let me go a little further, minister. Can the minister explain why union members in the Water Corporation do not have to comply with the government's wage policy —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale!

Dr D.J. HONEY: — especially —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the second time.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will start again. Can the minister explain why union members in the Water Corporation do not have to comply with the government's wage policy, especially given that the McGowan government was able to freeze the salaries of executive officers in the Water Corporation through the Salaries and Allowances Amendment (Debt and Deficit Remediation) Bill 2017, but it was apparently completely unable to contain wage increases for union members?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I do not understand where the member for Cottesloe got it in his head that the enterprise bargaining agreement at the Water Corporation applies only to union members. There are not two sets of wages and conditions at the Water Corporation—one for union members and one for non-union members. Under the laws of the land, the same set of conditions apply to everybody, so the premise of the member's question that we have one set of conditions for union members and another set of conditions for non-union members is completely wrong. As I have explained to the member, my understanding is that the wage increase under the new EBA is \$1 000, which is consistent with the wages policy elsewhere.

I again remind the member for Cottesloe that if he knew anything about the work that the Water Corporation staff do, he would not be so critical of them. This year in Broome, I think it had 12 months' rainfall by the end of February and there were two instances in which the wastewater treatment plant overflowed because of the amount of rain. Water Corporation staff were out there protecting the community. They were working around the clock to protect the community of Broome and, as a result—surprise, surprise—they got paid overtime. When there was a bushfire in Albany recently and the water supplies in Albany and Denmark were threatened, Water Corporation staff were out there doing work to protect the community and the environment, and protecting the state's assets, and—surprise, surprise—they got paid overtime. It is just like the police who were involved in those emergencies; they get paid overtime as well. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services staff also got paid overtime. I do not know what the member for Cottesloe's fixation is. He wants to be the Minister for Water but he clearly hates the Water Corporation staff, no matter how much work they do and no matter how much good service they provide. The member really needs to have a look at himself—at not only his facts, but also his attitude to the staff whom he wants to represent.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.