

WATER CORPORATION — STANDPIPES — CHARGES

**672. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Water:**

I refer to the Water Corporation's removal of concessional prices for water drawn from regional standpipes from 1 July 2019 and that it will be up to local governments to decide whether they will pass the increases on to landholders or absorb them.

- (1) Does the minister realise that this will increase the price of standpipe water by up to 200 per cent for primary producers?
- (2) Is the minister aware that water in some areas will be charged at \$8.35 a kilolitre compared with less than \$2 a kilolitre for metropolitan residents?
- (3) What is the rationale for this rise in standpipe fees at a time when low rainfall is having such an impact on vulnerable farmers and growers?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question. The following information has been provided by the Minister for Water.

- (1) Regional households and local government authorities are still able to access standpipe water at concessional rates. The new pricing for fixed standpipes ensures that commercial operators are not inappropriately accessing water at concessional rates. These changes prevent the situation in which the community is effectively subsidising water use for commercial operators, as under existing arrangements, most standpipe users are incorrectly charged the concessional rate.
- (2) Regional households that rely on accessing water from fixed standpipes will still be charged the concessional rate when filling from a community standpipe, and this is consistent with metropolitan households. The higher charges apply only to large standpipes that are used for commercial purposes. Regional households accessing scheme water will continue to be subsidised so that they pay the same as metropolitan customers for their initial entitlement.
- (3) These changes will ensure equitable pricing across the state. The changes are being put in place precisely because water is a precious resource. These changes prevent the situation in which the community is effectively subsidising water use for commercial operators.

I acknowledge the hardship that is being experienced across the communities of Ravensthorpe, Lake Grace and Kent where water deficiency declarations are in place. In local government areas where a water deficiency declaration is in place, implementation of the new standpipe arrangements have been suspended for the period of the declaration.