

WATER CORPORATION — LATE PAYMENTS — INTEREST RATE

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

I refer to the Reserve Bank of Australia cash rate of 0.75 per cent and the WA Treasury borrowing rate of three per cent. Why is the minister's government charging struggling Western Australians a massive 11.71 per cent for late payments of their water bills?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I am so pleased to get a question from the member for Cottesloe! It was in fact 27 November when I got my last question from the member for Cottesloe—27 November 2018!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is a question a long time in the making.

The member for Cottesloe has asked me about the interest rate that the Water Corporation charges on late payments. This is a question that I raised when I was in opposition, because the significant rate of interest that the Water Corporation charges for late payments is a practice that continued for the eight years under the previous Barnett government.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: You've been there for three years and you did nothing!

Mr D.J. KELLY: The member for Scarborough —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms S.E. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo! I call you to order for the first time.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Throw her out!

The SPEAKER: Who wants to go out? Is that you, member?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The policy that the member is complaining about is a policy that the former government had in place for the eight and a half years it was in government. The explanation that the Water Corporation had given, and continues to give, is that it does not want to be the lender of last resort. It does not want people to put the Water Corporation bill to the back of the queue so they can pay off other bills, like their credit card, that have a higher interest rate.

I have to say, member, that it is timely that he asked this question, because I have in fact asked the Water Corporation to look at the interest rates that it charges on credit cards. It is something I raised with it in opposition, it is something I raised with it in government, and it is something I have asked it to review. I thank the member for the question. It is very timely, after a year and a bit,