

WATER CORPORATION — RSPCA REFERRAL

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

I refer to a letter of demand sent by post and email on 22 May by a senior consultant of Water Corporation's finance solutions team to a Water Corporation customer and primary producer located in the agricultural region affected by recent water shortages. The letter informs the customer that if their water bill is not paid by 30 May, the water flow on their property will be reduced to a trickle, and threatens that the RSPCA will be notified of the reduced flow and it will need to determine whether the flow of water is sufficient for the animals to remain on the property.

- (1) Under which section of which act does the Department of Water have the authority to send this letter referring action to a non-government entity?
- (2) How many of these letters have been issued to Water Corporation customers in the agricultural region?
- (3) Of those letters issued, how many had reference to a referral to the RSPCA?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

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

- (1)–(3) I thank the honourable member for drawing this letter to my attention. I understand that 10 of these letters have been sent to customers over the past six months. I am advised that letters referring to the RSPCA were issued in all of the years of the previous Liberal–National government. The implied threat of referral to the RSPCA is not considerate or appropriate. I have therefore asked that the practice cease and that the new CEO of the Water Corporation review processes for handling overdue farmer accounts, particularly in light of the current dry season.