

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, COMPENSATION FOR SENIORS' RATE REBATES

183. Mr EDWARDS to the Treasurer:

I refer to the latest announcement by the State Government about rebates to rates and charges for holders of Seniors Cards. Will the Treasurer compensate local authorities for the administrative and corporate service costs incurred in the implementation of this State Government initiative?

Mr RIPPER replied:

I thank the member for his question.

This matter was discussed during debate on the relevant legislation. The Government will not provide additional assistance to local government for any additional costs incurred by this initiative. There are two reasons for that: the first is that local government ratepayers will benefit from this concession, as will local government. If it is easier for people to pay their rates, local government will have fewer difficulties with arrears and debt collection problems. The second reason relates to the state of the budget left by the member's colleagues when they were in government.

Mr Board: How long are you going to run this line?

Mr RIPPER: I will keep explaining this because it is a serious problem. A \$485 million problem was left by members opposite. The funding of election commitments is being achieved through the savings that the Labor Party promised.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr RIPPER: Every time people ask for something to be spent beyond the Labor Party's election commitments, the answer I will give is, "Ask the Leader of the Opposition why we had the Barnett budget blow-out."