

WATER CORPORATION — STAFF

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

I refer to the minister's response to my question on notice. Can the minister confirm that the total number of staff in the Water Corporation has increased from 2 654 in 2016 to 3 429 in 2020, which is an increase of 775 or 29 per cent?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

Again, I thank the member for Cottesloe for the question. I congratulate the member on getting two in a calendar year. I am very pleased that the member managed to get himself up the totem pole to that.

Mr F.M. Logan: They don't trust him with more.

Mr D.J. KELLY: They do not trust him with more. There is always tomorrow or when we come back.

I am really pleased that the member for Cottesloe asked me that question. There has in fact been an increase in the number of staff at the Water Corporation. It may have missed the member's attention that, under this government, we have brought back in-house a number of services that were privatised under previous Liberal governments.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! Members!

Mr D.J. KELLY: Essentially, maintenance for metropolitan operations was privatised under the Court Liberal government back in 1997, I think it was. Under this government, we brought that work back in-house. That was about 250 staff who are happy now to be back employed directly by the Water Corporation. I went to a morning tea that the Water Corporation put on to celebrate those staff coming back in-house. I remember one gentleman came up to me and said that he had worked for the Water Corporation, as he saw it, for over 40 years. He started with the Water Authority of Western Australia, and then his job had been privatised. He had essentially done the same job but the logo had changed on his shirt. He had seen contractors come and go. He was now, he said, in a position in which he could proudly retire as a directly employed employee of the Water Corporation. That was the mood at that morning tea. People worked hard but they were proud that they were finally again being recognised as direct employees of the Water Corporation.

In addition to that, there was a contract—the Aroona Alliance—which I think was let in 2012, again by the previous Barnett Liberal government. That was operating a lot of our wastewater treatment plants, the dams and those sorts of activities and those major bits of infrastructure. I think at the time about 400 staff came back into the Water Corporation as direct employees. Again, I went to a similar morning tea for that group when they came in. They were suitably chuffed that we on this side of the house think that the work that they do for the public of Western Australia is so important that they can be now directly employed by the Water Corporation. I have to say that when we were hit by COVID-19 and the Water Corporation had to quickly alter the way that it managed a lot of those services, having those staff directly employed and in their direct line of sight was of great assistance.

The member for Cottesloe is right; there has been an increase in the number of staff at the Water Corporation largely due to those two contracts coming back in-house, and they are decisions I am very proud of.

WATER CORPORATION — STAFF

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

I have a supplementary question. Can the minister confirm that he cares more about growing union membership than he does about —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: No, that is not a supplementary. It is not a supplementary.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Under the standing orders, I understand that a supplementary question should relate to the original question that was asked. The member for Cottesloe was asking a question about the workforce.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. That is the end of question time.