

WATER PRICES — INCREASES

39. Mr D.C. NALDER to the Minister for Water:

I have a supplementary question. We are not asking for redistribution. We are saying that the minister is overcharging for water. Does the minister still intend to slug struggling households with a six per cent increase in water costs in the next budget, as in the forward estimates that the Premier said yesterday are critical; and is the minister still intending to slug people and use Water Corporation as a cash cow of \$4.5 billion in taxes and dividends over the forward estimates?

Point of Order

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: This is not a supplementary question. It is a preamble or a monologue, but it is not a supplementary question.

The SPEAKER: That is a point of order. You just have one question; you do not make a speech, member. If you can just narrow it down to one question, I will accept it.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.C. NALDER: It was one question, Mr Speaker. Does the minister still intend to slug struggling households with a six per cent increase in water costs in the next budget, as is pointed out in the forward estimates?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I would have thought the member would be happy with a six per cent increase in water charges, because that is the budget that the previous government went to the election with. Your forward estimates had a six per cent increase in water charges.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The budget —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Yes, and you are called to order for the second time, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am surprised the member asked that question. As he knows, we will consider all these issues in the formulation of the budget.

Ms M.M. Quirk: It's in the pipeline!

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is in the pipeline—that is right—as the member for Girrawheen so helpfully said to me!

What we will not be doing is changing the way that we charge for wastewater, as recommended by the ERA, so that we have a flat rate across the suburbs and people in affluent suburbs get a decrease and people in lower and middle socioeconomic suburbs get a massive increase in their sewerage charges. If that is what the opposition wants, it can argue for it.