

WATER, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE CHARGES

19. Hon KIM CHANCE to the to the minister representing the Minister for Water Resources:

I refer to the Minister for Water Resources media statement of 27 April 2000, that was supported by the Premier's statement of the same day, to the effect that water, sewerage and drainage charges would increase by 2 per cent in the 2000-01 financial year.

- (1) Is it correct that sewerage charges for a typical house in Merredin for which I have provided copies of accounts were \$353 when due on 31 July 1999 and increased to \$369 when due on 31 July 2000?
- (2) Does this increase represent a cost rise of 4.51 per cent, not 2 per cent as claimed?
- (3) Is the imposition of rate increases that are more than double those promised by the Minister for Water Resources and the Premier just two months previously an indication that the Government has miscalculated the impact of the goods and services tax for this service?
- (4) If such a miscalculation is not the reason, what other cause can the minister offer for incorrectly advising WA families about the cost increase for this service?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes, it is correct that sewerage charges that affect houses in Merredin, as per copies of the accounts, have increased by 4.51 per cent.
- (2) Although the 4.51 per cent increase applied to the quoted example, the announced 2 per cent general price increase applied to the Water Corporation's charges, on average.
- (3) There was no miscalculation of the impact of GST on charges for these services, as GST does not apply to charges for water, sewerage and drainage - subdivision 38-1 of A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act.
- (4) The minister has not misled WA families as the 2 per cent reference in the 27 April media release relates to the general price increase that applies, on average, to all Water Corporation charges across the State.