

WATER CORPORATION, LOSS OF REVENUE

606. Hon M.J. CRIDDLE to the Minister for Government Enterprises:

- (1) What will be the impact on the Water Corporation of the \$36 million loss in income as a result of water restrictions?
- (2) Will the minister guarantee that water rates will not rise, particularly in country areas?

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS replied:

I thank Hon Murray Criddle for raising the very important issue of the lack of water supply to much of the State, especially to many parts of the rural area and the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, which is dependent on the metropolitan area for its water supply and the wheatbelt, which is reliant on scheme water. The amount of money that may be forgone as a result of the water restrictions announced so far is estimated to be in the region of \$36 million, although that loss has not occurred yet; it is an estimate. This is a very serious situation that continues to be monitored.

It is the Water Corporation's job to supply water, drainage and sewerage services to the communities of Western Australia for which it is licensed. Members will be aware that the Water Corporation does not have responsibility for providing those services to the whole of the State.

I take a whole-of-state approach to whether changes will be made to rates and charges, particularly for country people. We are all in this together. There is no intention to increase rates and charges. These are very difficult times and it is important that the community work together to minimise the impact of the lack of rainfall. If we adopt a cooperative approach our prospects will improve.