

Will Hodgman, MP
Leader of the State Opposition
Monday June 23, 2008

Bartlett hot air on climate change

Premier David Bartlett's attack on the State Opposition's policy to get households energy and water-smart has backfired, with his admission today that he got a key element of his argument wrong. Mr Bartlett also tried to mislead the public in terms of the details of the policy.

Last week in his Budget Reply, Mr Hodgman announced that a Liberal State Government would provide up to \$7.5 million recurrent funding for rebates of up to \$1 000 on new installations of solar or reversible-cycle hot water and rainwater systems, and up to \$500 on improved insulation, which will enable up to 9 000 Tasmanian households per year to take up these climate-friendly measures.

Tasmania trails the nation in terms of the initiatives it offers to support practical action in the fight against climate change.

Rather than look at adopting the Opposition's policy, Mr Bartlett attacked it, firstly by implying that it related to photovoltaic solar electric panels.

The Premier is wrong.

"Mr Bartlett was in Parliament to hear me announce the Liberal's plan – which was not about photovoltaic solar systems.

"For someone who boasts of wanting to engage in a competition of ideas, it is galling that the Premier is so keen to misrepresent what Opposition has said.

And from this false premise Mr Bartlett quotes a cost of about \$20,000 to install solar panels.

"The cost of installing a solar hot water unit in Tasmania is nowhere near that, as a visit to a local dealer last Friday confirmed.

Mr Bartlett often asserts that he bases his arguments on 'data and the evidence' however, in this case he is at odds with information provided by Tasmania's energy retailer.

The Premier based his attack on solar water rebates by claiming that 'according to Aurora the average Tasmania household consumes about 3 000 kilowatt hours of electricity each year'

However, Aurora's own website states "the average household in Tasmania uses around 10 000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity per year"[i][i].

"This Liberal policy is a smart investment which whilst not being a single solution to the climate change challenge, is one positive practical step that will allow Tasmanians to play their part in an environmentally friendly future' Mr Hodgman said.

That the Premier is prepared to dismiss it out of hand, based on a flawed argument is not at all clever.

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[i][i] http://www.aurora.com.au/save_energy/green_scheme_house.asp