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media release
Tasmanian Liberals

Will Hodgman, MP
Leader of the State Opposition
Thursday June 19, 2008

Introduce rebates and public transport incentives now

The Leader of the State Opposition, Will Hodgman, is pushing for the Bartlett labor Government to implement rebates for climate-friendly household installations, and to make bus travel free for all students travelling to and from school and college.

These were two of several key initiatives in Mr Hodgman's Budget Reply, and today in Parliament the State Government was asked to adopt them.

Despite Premier Bartlett professing to be open to good ideas, the government rejected both.

Environment Minister, Michelle O'Byrne, fobbed the rebate issue off as one for the Federal Government, while Mr Bartlett falsely said free bus travel for students would put public transport on an unsustainable footing. In fact the cost of this policy, estimated at $8 million according to the government's own core passenger services review, would be borne by government and as well as helping families, would promote greater use of public transport.

Meanwhile, the Opposition's $7.5 million recurrent policy to promote practical action against climate change would provide rebates of up to $1000 for the installation of solar and reverse-cycle hot water and rainwater tanks, and up to $500 for improved installation.

Such incentives were a glaring omission in last week's Budget.

"Treasurer, Michael Aird, has revealed that not one Cabinet Minister made a submission to him for the introduction of such incentives in the Budget, despite the fact that Tasmania already lags so far behind the rest of the nation in this area," Mr Hodgman said.

In his Budget Reply today, Mr Bartlett suggested the Opposition's policy could double up on rebates offered for photovoltaic solar installations at a federal level. Mr Bartlett should get his facts right. The State Opposition's rebates are for solar and reverse cycle hot water systems, rain water tanks and insulation improvements, not for photovoltaic installations.

"The State Labor Government is out of touch with the community when it comes to climate change.

"Nevertheless, the Budget is in a position whereby this policy could easily be adopted by government now, and implemented in the next financial year with no detrimental impact to the fiscal situation.

"I will continue to urge the government to adopt and implement what are good ideas."

Any suggestion by the State Government that this is a single solution to climate change is a shallow contribution to a complex debate.

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