

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

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### ***Labor's tourism marketing sham exposed***

The State Government has today been exposed as having artificially inflated its expenditure in tourism marketing in recent years.

When quizzed over a \$3.3 million cut to tourism marketing in this year's State Budget, Tourism Minister, Paula Wriedt, confessed that this money "has effectively never come in."

She said this was because that money had been spent on corporate overheads associated with tourism being in the former Department of Tourism, Arts and Environment, but they were no longer required now that tourism was in a new department of Economic Development and Tourism.

Leader of the State Opposition, Will Hodgman, has demanded answers on what appears to have been extraordinary extravagance in the past, that Labor tried to dress up as marketing funding.

"Taxpayers are entitled to know why they were spending millions of dollars more in corporate overhead costs when tourism was in its former department, as opposed to now," Mr Hodgman said.

"We have requested a detailed breakdown of these costs, as the Minister, drawing yet another line in the sand, refused to explain arrangements in her previous department and why they appear to have been so lavish.

"It would seem that taxpayers were spending millions more than necessary in previous years to support Ms Wriedt's former department – and the government was not only happy with that wasteful arrangement, but happy to claim that these dollars were going into tourism marketing, when that was a complete sham."

Concerns were also raised in Budget Estimates hearings about the hit that tourism, recreation and culture have taken in this year's State Budget.

Mr Hodgman quizzed the Tourism Minister, Paula Wriedt, about a reduction in the proportion of government infrastructure expenditure in tourism recreation and culture from 7.8% of expenditure in 2007/08 to 3% in 2008/09 – despite the government having a record \$4 billion to spend.

“It's a concern that the Bartlett Labor Government seems to be placing a reduced priority on our tourism industry, which is so critical for our State's economy and future, and which is facing real challenges at the current time,” Mr Hodgman said.

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