

Will Hodgman MP
Leader of the State Opposition
Tuesday June 3, 2008

Lack of devil research funds isn't clever or kind

The State Government has a special responsibility so far as the plight of the Tasmanian Devil is concerned, and must not allow research into the devil facial tumour disease to be held back by a lack of funding.

Leader of the State Opposition, Will Hodgman, said it was important that next week's State Budget provided an appropriate injection of funds for research into the rampant devil facial tumour disease.

The Tasmanian devil has recently been listed as endangered. Meanwhile, a major breakthrough has been recorded with the first immune response to the disease from a devil, but scientists at the frontline have warned there is not enough funding for research, and it is applied by the State Government in an ad hoc way.

Mr Hodgman said the State Labor Government had been outrageously slow to act in its initial response to the disease decimating Tasmanian devils.

"It would be neither clever nor kind for the State Government to again hold up the research effort through a lack of funding, particularly after such a critical breakthrough," Mr Hodgman said.

Mr Hodgman said that with widespread international interest in saving the Tasmanian devil, he was convinced that a "white knight" or knights could also be found to help fund the research effort and the State Government should utilise its presence in the United States, UK and Europe to help attract such much-needed assistance.

The State Opposition has also called for greater transparency of funding donated to research into the disease to ensure that donors can have confidence their money is making a difference.

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