

**Will Hodgman MP**  
Leader of the State Opposition  
Tuesday July 1, 2008

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### ***More financial pain for Tasmanian families from today***

The State Government has come under fire for its role in the additional household budget pressures that many families will be feeling at the start of the new financial year,

From today, families will be paying an average 20% more for electricity than they were this time last year. New bus fares that will force the price for some students up from 30c to \$1.20 also take effect today.

And looming large are further power prices next year – before an emissions trading scheme takes effect – new water and sewerage charges, and the promise of an ambulance tax that Labor said prior to the last election it would not introduce.

Leader of the State Opposition, Will Hodgman, said many small businesses were reporting a particularly grim month in June, as households tightened their belts.

“High interest rates, fuel prices and costs of living are biting hard, and that is only compounded by the State Government increasingly slugging Tasmanian families, at the same time as spruiking its own record \$4.1 billion budget,” Mr Hodgman said.

“The State Government has played a major role in the 20% power price hikes this year, as was revealed by the Energy Regulator last year.

“While increased electricity concessions are welcome, they were already years overdue when announced, and many struggling families are not eligible for them.

“Meanwhile, the State Government continues to resist offering incentives to families to help make their homes more energy efficient, and therefore also, more environmentally friendly.

“From today, in the so-called interests of equity, thousands of families will now be charged an extra \$400 on average per child per year to get their child to school on a bus.

“Tasmania’s State Schools Parents and Friends Association has warned that parents may keep their children home from school some days as a result.

“It is the State Opposition’s policy to make school bus travel free for all students and we will continue to urge the State Government to adopt this policy.

“It not only removes an impediment to getting to school but will provide some welcome relief to family budgets at a time when this is sorely needed.”

Mr Hodgman said that while the government spruiked its record \$4.1 billion budget, it was not ensure that all Tasmanians can share in this prosperity. It appeared from the Premier’s answer in Parliament today the government hasn’t even looked at the impact of cost of living pressures on the Tasmanian household budget.

This must be done in order to understand the extent of current pressures in a Tasmanian context and to implement appropriate policy responses.

**Further information: Georgia Warner – 0418 564 073**

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