John Elferink
Shadow Minister for Essential Services
Media Release

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TAXPAYERS LEFT IN THE DARK

The Henderson Government’s refusal to detail whether taxpayer’s will be left out of pocket as a result of the failure of ENI to provide gas supplies to PowerWater has seen the Opposition censure the Minister for Essential Services and the Treasurer.

“Repeatedly during question time the Minister for Essential Services and the Treasurer refused to detail what cost taxpayer’s face as a result of ENI’s failure to deliver gas from Blacktip,” says John Elferink, Shadow Minister for Essential Services.

“The Ministers’ refused to detail what the damages actually are and what the contract provides as the maximum damages that can be paid to PowerWater from ENI.

“In short these Ministers are asking the public to trust them that there will be no further call on the public purse from PowerWater.

“It’s particular telling that PowerWater makes no provision on its books for further payment of damages from ENI. One would expect that any further damages would be an asset for PowerWater and should be recorded on the books as a receivable.

“The same Ministers have repeatedly refused to release the Reeves Report into PowerWater that recommended a 40% increase in the price of electricity.

“The Minister’s are refusing to release the information because it’s politically damaging and that should have taxpayers alarmed.

“When Minister’s hide financial details its taxpayers who are invariably out of pocket.
“The excuse that this information is commercial in confidence adopted by the Ministers’ is no more than a clumsy deception.

“If the information was commercial in confidence why does PowerWater’s 2009 annual report detail that $6.3 million has already been paid by ENI as damages. If damages already paid are not commercial in confidence, why are damages owning?

“The fact is that taxpayer’s have the right to know what contractual arrangements are entered into on their behalf.”

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