24th April 2007

GOVERNMENT POWERING TERRITORY INFLATION

The Martin Government has made another attack on the living standards of ordinary Territorians by jacking up the price of power, water and sewage by 4.4% this year, says the Territory Opposition.

“Having made Darwin the inflation capital of Australia, the Treasurer now adds fuels to the fire by choosing to increase the price of essential services by 4.4%,” says Richard Lim, Shadow Minister for Essential Services.

“Territorians already pay too much for petrol, too much for groceries, too much for housing and now they are being asked to pay more for essential services.

“If the Treasurer wants to link price rises to the CPI he should use the national figure for his calculations. If he had done that this time, the increase in power, water and sewage would have been just 2.4%.

“Electricity and water aren’t luxuries to be taxed at the whim of the Government of the day – they are basic necessities of modern living and need to be provided at the cheapest price possible.

“Indeed the effect of a sharp increase in the price of electricity goes well beyond household quarterly electricity bills, as electricity feeds into the cost of so many other goods.

“In effect, electricity is an embedded cost in the price of anything that needs to be chilled.”

Recently, the Treasurer said that he would be applying an “efficiency dividend” of 1% to all agency budgets except Health and Community Services, Police and Education, which would attract a lower dividend of 0.25%.

“The Government should have been demanding Power Water provide a 1% efficiency dividend to enable the price rise to be kept below the rate of inflation,” says Dr Lim.

“If our overstretched hospitals can produce an efficiency dividend, as well as our teachers, why not Power and Water?

“I don’t think the Government has been active enough in searching for ways to keep the price of power and water down.”

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