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September 2011

Liberal cost of living policy a step closer to reality

The Liberal policy to tackle the cost of living by merging the four water and sewerage corporations into one is now a step closer to reality after Local Government and the water corporations followed our lead and agreed to consider the issue.

This is another example of the Liberals leading from Opposition with strong policies to tackle the important issues of the economy, jobs and the cost of living.

We first announced this policy in our Alternative Budget in June this year, when it was attacked and dismissed by the Premier who has consistently refused to act on this issue, including as recently as the 7th September when she said that the sector was “reformed out”.

For Ms Giddings to now adopt our policy and try to claim it was Labor policy all along is about as credible as her pre-election promise never to do a deal with the Greens.

On a broader front, the past two weeks of Parliament have seen issues relating to the forest industry and compensation to Gunns, as well as the effects of budget cuts on vital frontline services dominating the agenda.

This week I tabled a petition signed by 5,500 Tasmanians calling on the Premier to tear up the disastrous forest deal, which she has no mandate for, or to call an election. This strong show of discontent with the Green-Labor Government about the disastrous Forest Agreement is indicative of wider concerns within the community.

Subsequently, the Legislative Council voted 12-2 (only the Labor members against) not to support the forest deal. With no mandate and now no ability to implement the deal, the Premier should tear it up and work instead with the Liberals to grow the forest industry, not shrink it as she is doing.

We have also continued to pursue the advice behind the Green-Labor Government's decision to pay Gunns \$34.5 million in taxpayer funds for their commercial decision to exit native forestry. Yet despite the Legislative Council passing a motion requiring the release of the Solicitor General's legal advice on this payment, the Premier has stubbornly refused to be open and transparent.

If it was good enough for then Premier Paul Lennon to release legal advice regarding the \$650,000 payout to ex-Governor Richard Butler, you have to ask why Ms Giddings refuses to act in this case.

Finally, following a question on notice, we revealed annual expenditure of around \$6 million on hundreds of unelected Government boards and committees, expenditure that we think should be slashed by \$2.5 million, as outlined in our [Alternative Budget](#).

With beds in our public hospitals being closed, elective surgery being delayed, and police numbers being reduced, we need to prioritise our spending on the services that matter to Tasmanians.

Will
Leader of the Opposition

Hodgman

In other news...

[Premier all talk, no action over delayed Cost of Living Strategy](#)

Tasmanians suffering with cost of living pressures will have to keep waiting if they want help from this incompetent Green-Labor Government.

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Giddings' forest policy: no mill, no forest industry, no Triabunna, \$34.5m poorer

The Premier has locked up half of our forestry industry, tolerates crippling protests and has given Gunns \$34.5 million of taxpayers' money.

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Liberals' positive plan for small business

Today I visited a number of small businesses in the Hobart CBD with Denison MP, Elise Archer, to better understand the challenges they are facing and to discuss the Liberals' positive plan to re-boot the economy.

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