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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Energy and Renewables

Tasmanian Winter Energy Assistance Package

Following the pricing determination from the independent Tasmanian Economic Regulator, the Tasmanian Government is taking immediate action to assist Tasmanians through a new Winter Energy Assistance Package.

The package will provide targeted support to those most in need, as well as energy efficiency options for families and small businesses, and the tools for Tasmanians to help manage their power bills.

Last year, households received a 7.11 per cent reduction in regulated electricity prices, small businesses received an 11 per cent drop and, since coming to office in 2014, in real terms, regulated energy prices under this Government have decreased by 18 per cent for residential customers and decreased by more than 27 per cent for small business customers.

Under the Regulator's determination today of an 11.88 per cent increase, Tasmanians on concessions with median electricity consumption, will see a yearly increase in their power bill of approximately \$143, while non-concession card holders with median consumption, will see a yearly increase of around \$227, or \$4.37 per week.

The Tasmanian Government understands it is going to be a difficult winter for many, and that is why the Winter Energy Assistance Package includes:

1. A \$180 Winter Bill Buster discount applied to bills for eligible electricity concession account holders, including those in embedded networks. This discount will be made up of the \$61 concession increase that was budgeted to flow to concession card holders this year, plus a bill credit of \$119 to help offset the increase to be provided on eligible customers' next bill from 1 August 2022. This package totals almost \$17 million in assistance.
2. A boosted and expanded \$50 million Energy Saver Loan scheme, providing up to \$10,000 for an interest free loan to private residential customers, small business customers and landlords of residential rental properties to invest in energy efficient products to help lower their electricity bills.

3. No charge for aurora+ from 1 July 2022. By providing greater visibility over their electricity usage, Tasmanians using aurora+ are significantly less likely to experience bill shock and their debt levels are significantly lower than customers who don't use it. Over the next 12 months, Aurora will work to get as many Tasmanians signed up to aurora+ as possible facilitated by the accelerated roll-out of advanced meters.
4. A \$1.7 million Aurora Customer Support Fund and YES incentive payment extension to support residential and small business customers experiencing financial vulnerability with subsidised payment plans and one-off payments. Aurora's YES program (financial hardship) incentive payment will also be extended for another 12 months from 1 July, to provide residential customers who are meeting their payment commitments at their quarterly review with a credit to the value of their next fortnightly instalment up to \$200. This is in addition to \$200,000 recently made available from Aurora to the Salvation Army and emergency relief providers to assist customers experiencing vulnerability.

In addition, the Government continues to invest \$4.5 million each year on upgrading our social housing stock to increase energy efficiency, including things like double glazing, insulation, ventilation upgrades, cladding, heating, hot water systems, energy efficient lighting, floor covering and roofing upgrades.

The Tasmanian Government will also continue to monitor cost of living pressures on Tasmanians and stand ready to respond with further measures if required.

Further details on the Winter Bill Buster payment and Energy Saver Loan Scheme will be available in coming weeks, however any residential customers that need an extra hand are encouraged to contact Aurora's YES Team (Monday to Friday from 9am-4.30pm) on 1300 10 2010 or visit auroraenergy.com.au for more information on Aurora's programs, including signing up to the aurora+ app.

The Tasmanian Government remains committed and continues to deliver on its goal of having the lowest or amongst the lowest electricity prices in Australia.