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Targeted support to help with cost-of-living pressures

Guy Barnett

THE state government understands it's going to be a tough winter for many Tasmanians with many of the reasons for increasing electricity prices being caused by global issues outside of our control.

Here in Tasmania, we have a proven track record of helping our most vulnerable and supporting small business in tough times, and will do that again this winter.

Our COVID-19 response was the most generous per capita in Australia for individuals and businesses under stress and we have continued that targeted support through a new Winter Energy Assistance Program to help Tasmanians over the next year.

The state government has announced a

targeted package of measures that will support Tasmanians including a \$180 Winter Buster discount for Tasmania's 94,230 eligible concession card holders costing \$17 million, a boosted and expanded \$50 million energy saver loan scheme for residential customers and small businesses to help families and businesses invest in energy efficiency measures to help future bill shock, no charge for aurora+ from July 1, 2022, and a \$1.7 million Aurora Customer Support Fund to support residential and small business customers experiencing financial vulnerability.

Our long-held policy is for Tasmania to have the lowest, or amongst the lowest, electricity prices in the country and that is still the case today, despite the challenges being faced this year. It seems to have been largely

forgotten that last year prices reduced by 7 per cent for residential and 11 per cent for small business customers while under Labor and the Greens electricity prices increased by a massive 65 per cent.

The National Energy Market is extremely complex, but we cannot afford to take knee-jerk reactions that will make our future energy supply less secure and reliable, if we risk our energy generators looking to take their business elsewhere leaving our island with no way to supply increased energy needs and business growth in the future.

Projects such as Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation and Green Hydrogen are front and centre in energy security, reducing carbon emissions and putting downward pressure on electricity prices. But make no mistake,

the Marinus Link deal must be a good deal for Tasmania or we won't be supporting it.

We continue to have positive discussions with the Federal Energy Minister Chris Bowen who describes Marinus Link as a key national transmission project, while at the same time Tasmanian Labor and Dean Winter continue to question its future, instead preferring to undermine new investments in renewable energy, leaving Tasmania in the dark ages with no plan and no future.

The state government is focused on seeing Tasmania leverage our competitive advantages, grow our economy and keep downward pressure on energy prices and are ready to provide further assistance if it is needed.

|| Guy Barnett, Energy and Renewables Minister

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