



Media Release

Energy price increases will hurt

3 June, 2009

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service today expressed its deep concern with the proposal by Aurora Energy to increase electricity prices for households by an average of 7% from July 1.

'Tasmanian households will really feel the pinch if these price rises are approved,' TasCOSS CEO Tom Muller said. 'The increase will come at the same time as the first of three 10% jumps in water and sewerage charges and we are concerned that some households will not be able to manage.'

Mr Muller said, 'TasCOSS recently published *Just Scraping By*, a report on our conversations with low income Tasmanians. The report clearly demonstrates that many Tasmanians are finding it difficult to manage paying for essentials like food, clothing and power already. These price rises will make it even harder.'

'Electricity price rises for businesses will also have an impact on Tasmanian households as the increased costs are passed on to consumers of goods and services.'

'We're concerned that the 7% rise in residential prices that Aurora is seeking is an average only, some households – and especially those who use large amounts of electricity – will see even higher price rises,' Tom Muller said.

'Electricity concessions are currently indexed to the CPI but they really need to be linked to price increases since, like water prices, electricity prices are rising higher than the general Consumer Price Index,' Tom Muller said.

'We would also like to see Aurora Energy review its hardship policy to ensure that it is doing all it can to assist those households in financial stress.'

Tom Muller is available for interview and additional comment

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