

Media Release

Peter Crisp MLA

Member for Mildura

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STRUGGLING FAMILIES PAY FOR BRUMBY'S "SMART" METER CASH GRAB: CRISP

The Nationals Member for Mildura Peter Crisp today echoed the claims by Shadow Minister for Energy & Resources, Mr Michael O'Brien that Victorian families and businesses are paying billions in higher electricity prices because of the Brumby Government's bungled roll out of so-called "smart meters".

This deceitful grab will fund a multimillion dollar GST windfall for John Brumby.

Victorian households' annual electricity bills will rise by between \$68 and \$135 in 2010 as a direct consequence of the cost of rolling out electricity smart meters. Homes with smart meters face higher peak electricity charges through "time of use" (TOU) tariffs.

"An average Victorian pensioner household may face electricity price increases of \$248 this year as a direct consequence of the bungled smart meter project, John Brumby gets to cream tens of millions of dollars in extra GST revenue," the Shadow Minister for Energy Michael O'Brien said.

Mr Crisp said that the Ministerial Council report shows that struggling Victorian families will be hardest hit by the Brumby Government's smart meter stitch up.

"Struggling Mallee families should not have to start paying for smart meters in order to have the privilege of paying more for electricity.

The report found that low income households often have little opportunity to reduce their peak electricity usage because much of their usage is non-discretionary and these households often rely on older, less efficient appliances.

With John Brumby's smart meters, a wealthy household can use technology to heat its pool off peak and pay less, while a struggling pensioner wanting to cook dinner on an electric stove will have to pay top price.

"This is but another example of how much the Brumby Government's mismanagement of smart meters is costing and hurting the most vulnerable in our community."

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