



## **Greg Piper MP**

### **Member for Lake Macquarie**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**4 December 2009**

### **Another Utility Rip-Off**

Greg Piper, Member for Lake Macquarie, has expressed grave concerns over the rationale behind the Government's \$400 a year electricity increase as foreshadowed this week by the Independent Pricing and Regularity Tribunal (IPART).

Media reports this week show that a draft IPART report foreshadows 60% price rises over the next 4 years, with half of this being the cost of an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

"It is interesting that half of the foreshadowed increases are attributed to the proposed ETS, even though it has not been approved by the Senate and this is increasingly unlikely in the near future.

Mr Piper revealed that the Auditor-General's Report to Parliament 2009 (Vol3 p6) shows a 6.7% decrease in the wholesale price of power in NSW last year and he questions the \$400 electricity increases in light of that figure.

"I suspect that these IPART increases have little to do with higher production or distribution costs and much to do with pumping up the profits and subsequent sale price of the Government's electricity retailers," Mr Piper said.

"IPART is supposedly an independent authority, but it has only one client - the NSW Government," Mr Piper added. "IPART has already given Hunter ratepayers a massive increase in their water rates earlier this year and I question both their method and their motive in arriving at this new increase in electricity charges."