

# Press Release

To: All Media Outlets  
From: Simon Cocker  
Date: 3 October 2007  
Re: Minister Urged to Reject User Pays Policing

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Unions Tasmania has written to Police Minister David Lewellyn urging him to reject the proposal to allow the Police Commissioner to levy charges on protests and demonstrations as reported in the media recently. Unions Tasmania has the deepest reservations about any such plan and considers it a very grave step for the government to take. It clearly crosses an important demarcation line in the separation of the role of the police and the courts in response to events that could not in any sense be seen as an emergency situation Unions Tasmania Secretary Simon Cocker said today.

Mr Cocker also said

“Tasmania Police are funded from the public purse and are required to enforce the laws of Tasmania in whatever situations they serve in an impartial and non political way. If a protestor has broken the law the State should only be able to recover costs via penalties determined by the Courts and not by decision of the Police Commissioner.”

“For the Police Commissioner to have a power that allows a determination that under some circumstances police time will be on a user pays basis would be to introduce both an element of political judgment to policing that is unacceptable and a form of closed police trial and allocation of penalty that is also unacceptable.”

“Tasmania prides itself in being a democracy where the right of assembly and free protest are a precious fundamental and not one where the Police Commissioner can decide which protest is acceptable and which will bear the imposition of the Commissioner’s penalty.”

For further comment or query Simon Cocker on 0419 402377