



# School staff on-call in pay claim

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THE State Government may be forced to pay back more than 30 years' worth of unpaid overtime — estimated to be in the millions — that is owed to public school staff.

Shadow treasurer Peter Gutwein yesterday demanded to know how Treasurer Michael Aird was going to find an estimated \$20 million needed to cover 32 years of unpaid out-of-hours penalties owed to public school staff.

The Community and Public Sector Union has been fighting for two years to recover the 80c per hour allowance that was paid to administrative staff who were on call

after hours in case of an emergency or if someone needed to access the school on weekends, school holidays or public holidays.

The discrepancy was uncovered during a renegotiation of the public-sector award last year.

During the negotiations it was agreed to lift the allowance from 80c to \$2.30 but general secretary Tom Lynch said it was then discovered that many staff had not been paid — with one owed more than three decades of the allowance.

"A lot of staff simply have not been getting the allowance and we have been fighting for over two years now trying to compensate them but we have

not succeeded yet," Mr Lynch said.

"We have not been formally advised yet, but we understand the Education Department has told principals they must repay the amounts but it has to be paid out of the school's resource package.

"We want to know if that is true because it is totally unfair that the money comes from a fund that is used to provide equipment and school trips for our kids."

Mr Gutwein said that with more than \$1.1 billion in election promises needing to be funded in the June Budget, unplanned expenses such as owing overtime to hard-working school staff would affect

the already strained bottom line.

"The Treasurer needs to explain how much Treasury estimates the cost will be and, importantly, how it will affect the Budget bottom line," he said.

"As the Budget is finely balanced, will this push the Budget further into deficit or send the state back into a net debt position?"

Mr Aird and department deputy secretary Greg Glass refused to comment in detail on the matter because it was before the Tasmanian Industrial Commission.