



Police voice pay fear

Budget cap 'could skew negotiations'

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THE State Government may be banking on Tasmanians breaking the law to prop up its ailing coffers but the police who will be collecting those fines are among the nation's worst paid, it has been claimed.

The Police Association of Tasmania yesterday expressed concern that the State Budget factored in only a 3 per cent wage rise for all public sector employees, which includes police.

It comes amid concerns across the public sector with Community and Public Sector Union assistant secretary Mat Johnston questioning how divisions could continue operat-

ing without salary increases factored into the Budget after massive job cuts last year.

"We also have some concerns about the Budget's failure to deliver on non-wage items. At the moment everyone knows that the costs of doing business are going up, yet that's not reflected in the Budget," Mr Johnston said.

More than half of expenditure in Thursday's Budget is for salaries and that is predicted to rise.

The State Budget shows that the entire wage cost for the public service is \$2.2 billion.

Premier David Bartlett said yesterday responsible savings had been made. He said the

Government had saved \$14-\$16 million over the course of the forward estimates when it merged two departments last year.

"This Budget has 40 new park rangers and I would rather have that than 40 bureaucrats sitting in Hobart and you can bet your bottom dollar that half of those rangers will be in the North," he said.

Police Association president Randolph Wierenga said that with pay deal negotiations about to start next month, if wage rises were capped in the Budget it could mean jobs would have to be cut and front-line staff would have to pick up the slack.

With the Budget showing Treasury predicting a rise in the collection of fines to bring in \$33 million in revenue over the next year – a \$7 million rise – Sergeant Wierenga called for the Government to provide assurances to the entire public sector that there was not an artificial ceiling placed on wage rises.

"Our concern is that this wage cap may alter the good faith with which the negotiations should be conducted," he said.

The association wants a 6 per cent rise in wages to match a national average of \$50,286 based on a first-year constable wage.

ADDING IT UP

For a first-year constable:

- Tasmania..... \$47,285
- National average ... \$50,286
- Victoria \$45,271
- Queensland \$46,348
- South Australia \$51,158
- New South Wales..... \$51,759
- Northern Territory... \$52,300
- Western Australia..... \$55,877