

GST DISTRIBUTION

54. Mr H.T. JONES to the Premier:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's responsible management of Western Australia's finances. Can the Premier outline to the house what the federal Labor government's guarantee to protect WA's fair share of the GST means for Western Australia; and can the Premier advise the house of whether he is aware of any credible threats to Western Australia's share of the GST?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

I thank the member for the question, and it is a beaut! It provides me with the opportunity to say that we have just seen the Albanese government come to Western Australia en masse, as a cabinet, for the third time in just two years—its time in office. Anthony Albanese is a great friend of Western Australia and the people of Western Australia. In the two years he has been in government the Prime Minister has been to Western Australia more times than the previous three Prime Ministers combined. That is a sign of his commitment to Western Australia, Western Australian jobs and the Western Australian economy. It was great to see his entire cabinet in town, providing great opportunities for people in the community, and industry leaders, to engage with the cabinet, with the Prime Minister's government, to make sure that it can continue to support Western Australia—which, the Prime Minister observed, is the engine room of the nation's economy.

Not only did the Prime Minister commit to continuing to support Western Australia being the engine room of the nation's economy, he also committed, once again—should it have needed to be recommitted—to Western Australia's fair share of the GST arrangements. The GST deal is locked in under the Anthony Albanese Labor government. I hear the sighs coming from the member for Vasse! The Liberal Party was the chief protagonist in the concocted lie that there is somehow a threat to Western Australia's fair share of the GST, but locked in it is, under the Albanese government.

The Prime Minister knows that although we comprise 11 per cent of the nation's population, we secure only 7.5 per cent of the GST pool. This guarantee has given WA the certainty necessary to make investments in great schools and great hospitals, and to assist us in continuing to provide cost-of-living relief. Just today there was investment into a \$130 million project to provide social and affordable housing for inner city residents at the Pier Street site. Without the GST reforms in 2023–24, which were secured by a WA Labor government, WA would now receive less than 10 per cent of our population share—only \$900 million from an estimated \$86 billion national GST pool. With just 70¢ in the dollar this year, WA will still contribute \$2.8 billion to support the other states in 2023–24. The PM has been unequivocal in his support for the current GST arrangement. In his words, WA drives the national economy.

But there are threats to our fair share of the GST, and one of them is none other than Peter Dutton. The most notorious GST sceptic is the federal Leader of the Liberal Party. That is the biggest threat.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.H. COOK: Member, it is not that long!

The most notorious sceptic of the GST is, of course, Peter Dutton. But, luckily for the member for Vasse, she does not have to take my word for it; she just has to listen to senior Liberal Party members. Former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said something in his book, released in 2020, about when the then federal cabinet was discussing the GST deal. He said —

... there remained enormous anxiety around the cabinet table when discussing the GST deal, especially from Peter Dutton.

Julie Bishop, a great friend of Western Australia, a senior Western Australian Liberal in a former federal Liberal government said in *The West Australian* in March 2019 that Peter Dutton “fought against WA getting a better GST deal”. She also said —

“Peter Dutton is on record as arguing against WA getting a better GST deal.”

But it gets worse. Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison said at a press conference in 2018 that if Dutton was PM, he would “scuttle” the WA GST package.

Another great friend of Western Australia is the former WA Liberal cabinet minister Ken Wyatt, who said in 2018 that Peter Dutton's plan for our state's GST would be “walking back from and walking away from Western Australians”.

When the staggering hypocrisy from the Liberal Party was exposed on the floor of Parliament just the other day and it was pointed out that Dutton's GST plan was to walk back the WA GST deal, federal Liberal representative Rick Wilson, the member for O'Connor, said Peter Dutton's position does not matter. It does. Peter Dutton's words do not even weigh as much as the hot air that comes from his mouth. The biggest threat to the WA GST deal is a Liberal Party government, and Peter Dutton is the head of the Liberal Party. We know what will happen if

Western Australians trust the Liberal Party ever again: it will walk back the GST deal and Western Australians will be the poorer for it. Peter Dutton and the Liberal Party are the biggest threat to the WA GST deal.