4 December 2008

Senate Inquiry Finds No Evidence of Underspending

A Senate Inquiry has found no evidence of underspending in Indigenous Affairs by the Northern Territory Government.

Claims of significant underspending by CLP Senator Nigel Scullion were found to be “not accurate”.

Treasurer Delia Lawrie said that Senator Scullion orchestrated a Senate Inquiry aimed at political point scoring rather than addressing the issues.

“Senator Scullion’s terms of reference should have focused on important issues such as housing and education and what is needed to improve outcomes in these key areas,” Ms Lawrie said.

“The Henderson Government is working hard to Close the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage and the second Indigenous Expenditure Review – released in October – found that more than half of all Government funding is on Indigenous-related services.”

The Senate Inquiry endorsed the recent significant changes in the overall management of Indigenous policy and the provision of services initiated by COAG and the Northern Territory Government’s Closing the Gap program.

“The findings of this Inquiry have put to rest some of the misunderstanding regarding Indigenous funding and expenditure,” Ms Lawrie said.

In its conclusion the Inquiry found that suggestions that the Northern Territory Government receives funding from the GST pool to enable it to make good the deficiencies of infrastructure provision in Indigenous communities is “not accurate”.

Furthermore, the inquiry concluded that the Grants Commission does not have any “funding formula” for expenditure of GST revenue.

“The Henderson Government fully appreciates the enormous amount of work required to Close the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage,” Ms Lawrie said.

“We will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government and Indigenous communities to deliver on our commitments.”

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