TREASURER

DELIA URGED TO BACK PWC REFORMS AFTER NATIONAL SUPPORT

5 May 2014

The Treasurer today urged the Leader of the Opposition to back the Government’s reforms to Power and Water Corporation (PWC) when they are debated in Parliament tomorrow.

Last week, the inaugural meeting of the COAG Energy Council adopted a motion which acknowledged and supported the continued reform process being undertaken in the Northern Territory.

The meeting further noted that the separation of PWC was the last remaining part of the National Energy Market puzzle after nearly two decades of reform and that PWC was perhaps the last government monopoly to be reformed in line with the COAG process.

Treasurer Dave Tollner said the two Labor Ministers, South Australia and the ACT, both supported the motion.

“These states have been through considerable reforms and know they have resulted in consumer benefits and a lowering of their State debt for utilities.

“But in the Territory, all we get is entrenched ideological opposition from the Leader of the Opposition and support for a financially unsustainable model,” Mr Tollner said.

The Opposition Leader, when Treasurer, started PWC on a path towards $1.6 billion of debt. This equates to $7,000 for every man, woman and child in the Territory. The interest on this alone is $1,400 every year for the average household.

Mr Tollner said this came at a time when the rest of the country was splitting up their inefficient monopolies and trying to cut their costs and debts.

“The Opposition Leader was even on the Federal Ministerial Council on Energy for that entire time and did nothing to change these inefficiencies or adopt the reforms that she voted in favor of at the ministerial council,” he said.

“It’s clear that the Leader of the Opposition continues to sit in the way of reforms, which even her Labour mates in other States have been doing for decades.

“These reforms are in the interest of the Territory but Labor prefers inefficiencies and debt in PWC rather than using the money for schools, roads and hospitals.”
Mr Tollner said the scare campaign on the Government’s reforms was designed to cover up Opposition Leader’s lack of leadership of the NT economy, which itself is in debt.

“Not once has she clearly stated why this simple reform process should not happen, not one economic or rational reason why she is opposing it.

“She then resorted to thuggish personal attacks on the Managing Director of PWC, John Baskerville, who has done a fantastic and professional job in managing the change process and personally handling the blackout in March.

“This is typical of people who are covering up their mistakes.

“Its clear the Leader of the Opposition is living in the past and has no concept of running an economy or even a business. If she had any interest in the Territory’s future she would vote for these reforms.”

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