TREASURER

COMMONWEALTH SLASHES TERRITORY GST FUNDING

15 March, 2013

NT Treasurer David Tollner has slammed his Federal counterpart Wayne Swan and the Gillard Labor Government for slashing the Territory’s GST funding.

Today the Commonwealth Grants Commission released its 2013 update report recommending a decrease in the Territory’s share of the GST pool from 5.7 to 5.4 per cent from 1 July.

Mr Tollner said the Territory was the biggest loser in changes to the GST funding pool due to other states recording a higher number of people identifying as indigenous.

Changes to GST funding are as a result of the 2011 Census data which showed unprecedented increases in the national Indigenous population in southern states – primarily as a result of increased self identification.

“There is no comparison between someone who identifies as indigenous in Sydney and Melbourne surrounded by all modern amenities, and an indigenous person living in poverty in the remotest part of the Territory,” Mr Tollner said.

“The Commonwealth is stripping more than $100 million a year out of the Territory’s budget and this is taking away from those Australians facing the most disadvantage,” Mr Tollner said. “That is the equivalent of ripping $3.7 billion from NSW or $2.4 billion from Victoria and such cuts simply would not happen in either of those southern states.

“The Federal Labor Government has sat on their hands, despite numerous objections from the Territory, and is allowing this slashing of funds to occur.

“The Country Liberals have raised this personally with Wayne Swan three times since December and as recently as two days ago when Attorney General Elferink was in Canberra.

“Labor appears to care more about holding gimmicky roadshows in Western Sydney then making sure the Territory is looked after.

“The Country Liberals will continue to fight this issue as we are unashamedly all about the Territory.

“I call on Lingiari MP Warren Snowdon to indicate his support or opposition to these outrageous cuts.

“The Country Liberals, as the only Territory-based political party, will always place the NT first, second and third.

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