



## **TRANSPLANTING LABOR'S EASTERN STATES SPIN MACHINE INTO WA WON'T FIX LABOR'S PROBLEMS**

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Commenting about the internal affairs of our main political opponent is not something we do often, nor should we. However, stories about Federal Labor attempts to improve its electoral prospects in WA at the upcoming Federal election by handing control of its WA spin-machine to a Victorian Labor Senator deserve consideration.

For a whole week now we've seen a procession of senior WA Labor figures seeking to justify an Eastern States takeover of the WA Labor Party – most recently Foreign Minister Stephen Smith and long serving WA Labor Senator Mark Bishop.

Those WA Federal Labor MPs have their priorities wrong if they think transplanting an Eastern States Labor Party spin machine into WA is going to fix its electoral problems.

Labor has lost support in Western Australia because of the Eastern States-centric, anti-WA policies of the Rudd Government, not because it lost its ability to spin.

As Federal representatives for Western Australia, Stephen Smith and Mark Bishop should be standing up for WA, advocating for better policy outcomes for Western Australia.

Handing over control of WA Labor's spin-machine to a Victorian (in newly elected Senator David Feeney), when Victoria is one of the States WA is competing with for public policy attention, is hardly going to make Labor any more electable here in Western Australia.

Obviously I'm biased, but how anyone in Western Australia could vote Labor when the Rudd Government is so clearly short changing Western Australia compared with the Eastern States is beyond me.

Surely, West Australians reflecting on the Rudd Labor Government's disastrous record in Western Australia will feel compelled to send Labor a clear message at the ballot box.

In Opposition, during the last federal election campaign, Kevin Rudd sought to appeal to our parochial sentiments, when he said that "The West gives so much to the nation's economic development. The West is currently being short-changed. We intend to make sure that changes."

Instead, during its first year in office the Rudd Government has pursued a comprehensive list of anti-WA measures, waved through without dissent from WA Federal Labor MPs and Senators, including:

- Implementing a \$2.5 billion additional tax on our North West Shelf gas project – the second highest single tax measure, used predominantly to fund services on the east coast, but forcing industry in Western Australia to cop it on the chin, and families, businesses and pensioners in WA to pay more for their domestic gas and electricity;
- Short changing Western Australia in its \$4.7 billion ‘nation building package’;
- Pursuing a generally flawed Emissions Trading Scheme, which will make it harder for our WA economy to pursue value-adding opportunities, and which among other things will see an estimated 90 per cent of compensation for the coal industry targeted at Victoria and South Australia. Federal Labor did not even realise that Western Australia was not part of the national electricity grid ignoring our particular policy needs when it comes to ensuring our energy security in Western Australia;
- Proposing to hand control over workplaces back to union bosses, which will be particularly bad for our resources sector in Western Australia;
- Watering down the previous Government’s strong commitment to border protection, resulting in an increased number of illegal arrivals off the WA coast;
- Reducing funding for federal services in Western Australia, even when increasing funding for equivalent services over East – for example the number of Federal Police, dental services for Australians with chronic disease, and others.
- Completely ignoring the accelerating crisis in aged care in Western Australia (and to be fair in the Northern Territory). The Government seems to be relaxed that everything is “healthy and competitive” in aged care, as long as everything is fine in NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

This is in no way a complete list. There are many other examples where Labor has pursued and continues to pursue bad public policy for Western Australia.

Of course, then there was the recent outburst of WA Labor Senator Chris Evans – Leader of the Government in the Senate - against the duly elected Treasurer of Western Australia. Outrageously, he thought it appropriate that Western Australia was excluded from an important pre-COAG strategy meeting at which important national reforms in health and education were to be discussed.

There is no doubt that Labor in Western Australia has problems. But Labor’s problems are not a lack of ability to spin its message – the problem is the message itself, and unless and until Labor can fix that West Australians should continue to support the Liberal Party.

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