



Senator Alan Eggleston

Liberal Senator for Western Australia
Chair of the Senate Economics References Committee

MEDIA RELEASE

Canberra 'out of touch' with Australia's North

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A recent poll found the Gillard Government lacks real vision for Australia's top end and fails to recognise the needs of families and businesses —confirming what has long been felt by those living in the North West, says West Australian Senator Alan Eggleston.

Senator Eggleston said the Galaxy poll, conducted for the Institute of Public Affairs, found that the majority of Australians believe that decision makers in Canberra have an "out of sight, out of mind" approach to Northern Australia.

Of the 1,063 Australians that were asked if they thought that decision makers from Canberra understood the needs of Northern Australians, 60% answered 'No'. Only 16% said 'Yes' and the remaining 24% answered 'Don't know'.

"The results speak for themselves, Australians do not feel that the Canberra bureaucrats have any understanding of the needs of businesses or families in the North," Senator Eggleston said.

"The Pilbara, Gascoyne and Kimberley regions are already a major drawcard for the Australian economy, and contribute through a diverse range of tourism, mining, fishing and agricultural industries. This poll highlights the Gillard Government's failure to recognise this immense potential."

Meanwhile, more powers and responsibilities are being shifted towards the Commonwealth government instead of being handed to the States.

"Talking with people who live and work in the North West, there is huge frustration towards the federal Government who continue to disregard long overdue road, rail and infrastructure projects in our northern backyard," Senator Eggleston said.

"Local small businesses have long complained about the higher costs of housing, community amenities and the fringe benefits tax and are calling for a clear and positive vision for their future, which continues to fall on deaf ears."

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