



Speech by

Dr DAVID WATSON

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Dr WATSON (Moggill—LP) (Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.26 a.m.): Hypocrisy is the word that describes the Treasurer's public comments on the GST and its implications for Queensland. We have persistently heard the Treasurer complain about the GST and the supposed detrimental effects it will have on Queensland. However, Mr Hamill has also written to the Federal Treasurer saying in effect, "Whatever you do, don't exempt anything as it will effect the amount of GST revenue to the State." Mr Hamill was really meaning to say, "Don't exempt many things because it will affect the amount of money that the Premier and I will have to buy our way out of the next election."

In his letter to the Federal Treasurer, the Treasurer stated—

"While I appreciate that the estimated GST revenue from unscheduled dermatological medicines (around \$2 million nationally) may not be material within the context of the total GST revenue pool, changes to the GST-free list for these products may set a precedent for other parties to seek relief from the Commonwealth's GST regime."

An Opposition member: Who said that?

Dr WATSON: The Treasurer said it. He does not want any exemptions under the regime.

The public disclosure of Mr Hamill's letter by the Federal Treasurer not only undermined the State Treasurer and Labor's endless orchestrated attacks on the GST whilst being in a taxation policy vacuum themselves, but also it highlighted the duplicitous nature of the Treasurer and members opposite.

There was nothing in that letter about a fairer taxation system or the promotion of special exemptions. No, there was just a plea to the Federal Treasurer to permit no further exemptions.

In a blatant attempt to minimise the political damage that the Treasurer's letter has caused to the Labor anti-GST campaign, he issued another letter to the Federal Treasurer crying foul and saying that he was misrepresented. And what a mealy-mouthed letter that was! The Treasurer is the one who has been caught with his hand in the cookie jar. Now all Queenslanders are able to see that the Labor Party is willing to cry foul publicly about the GST but privately urge its full implementation and continued operation with its growing revenue base.

Time expired.
