

Don't give anyone a tax cut: Greens

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

The Greens are standing out against the bipartisan consensus that tax cuts are needed for middle and lower income earners.

They are ruling out supporting all the budget's tax relief, and say they are also opposed to the package of larger cuts the opposition has proposed, which would be confined to people in the lower and middle income ranges.

Instead, the funds should be spent on services, the Greens say.

The Coalition tax package will be a focus of this parliamentary fortnight, which sees the House of Representatives sitting and the Senate holding estimates hearings.

The legislation will be passed in the House, while estimates will be used by the opposition to seek the annual cost in the latter years of the seven-year plan, which the government has so far declined to provide. Treasury is before the estimates hearings next week; the Prime Minister's department is up this week.

The opposition has submitted ahead of time a list of detailed questions about the tax package to try to prevent the delay of answers by officials asking for questions to be put on notice.

Labor supports the first stage of the three-part plan, is vague about the second stage, but has expressed opposition to the third stage, which flattens the tax scale and favours high income earners.

The government says it will not split the bill. It is not clear whether the opposition would vote against the legislation if the government holds firm, or whether the government would be flexible if pushed.

Don't give anyone a tax cut: Greens

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

The shadow cabinet meets on Monday night, when the legislation is set to be discussed.

Labor's alternative tax cuts, announced in Bill Shorten's budget reply, would be confined to those on incomes up to about \$125,000.

While the immediate concentration is on the future of the government's legislation, the uncertainty of a post-election Senate also raises the issue for Labor of whether an ALP government could get its legislation through.

The Greens said in a statement that the government's proposed income tax cuts were just a bribe to get the massive company tax cuts passed. People on the minimum wage wouldn't even see \$4 a week, while the wealthiest would benefit the most.

"Both parties' plans will worsen inequality, and see us lose vital revenue for the essential services people rely upon," the Greens said.

Greens leader Richard Di Natale said with inequality rising, reinvestment in public services should be the priority.

"For years, politicians have been telling Australians that the budget doesn't have money to properly fund our public schools, build a world-class NBN, or take action on climate change," Di Natale said.

"Yet when an election is rolling around both old parties are giving away cheques like a breakfast TV show trying to increase their ratings."

"This reckless tax auction is nothing more than a distraction from the millions of dollars stripped from our schools, hospitals and social safety net over the past decade.

Don't give anyone a tax cut: Greens

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

"While Turnbull is busy squabbling with Labor over how much they want to rip out of Australia's institutions, the Greens are proud to stand up for Medicare, our public schools and hospitals and the environment".

Michelle Grattan does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

Authors: Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

Read more <http://theconversation.com/dont-give-anyone-a-tax-cut-greens-96899>