# Peter Dutton brands Elon Musk an ‘evil genius’ during leaders’ debate amid concerns over radical government cuts



During the Channel Seven leaders’ debate on Sunday night, Opposition Leader Peter Dutton made waves with a sharp and candid remark about Elon Musk, calling the globe’s richest man an “evil genius.” This blunt assessment came amidst a rapid-fire exchange where host Nat Barr and political editor Mark Riley showed images of notable figures, including Musk. In stark contrast, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese offered a more polished and guarded response, referring to Musk only as “Tesla – and a very rich man.”

Dutton's comment was hardly surprising given Musk's controversial reputation as the owner of X (formerly Twitter) and SpaceX, and a prominent supporter of former US President Donald Trump. Musk also heads the newly minted Department of Government Efficiency in Washington—a position aligned with Trump’s agenda to slash bureaucracy and dismantle government oversight. This alignment mirrors concerning trends in some Australian opposition circles where there’s an alarming appetite for radical ‘efficiency’ cuts that risk gutting essential public services.

The debate further shone a spotlight on Dutton’s ties to Donald Trump, a subject long casting a shadow over his campaign. When probed by Barr whether he had moved away from Trump’s divisive style, Dutton insisted, “I have not sought to style myself on anybody other than myself,” invoking former Prime Minister John Howard as his chief political inspiration. Yet, Albanese did not miss the opportunity to press Dutton on his apparent affinity for Trump-esque policies—most notably his pledge to set up a Department of Government Efficiency under Jacinta Price, and his initial, hardline stance to end remote working for public servants, a position he later conspicuously softened under pressure.

Albanese also condemned Dutton’s earlier rhetoric branding the ABC and The Guardian as “hate media”—a label aimed at discrediting independent journalism and undermining free press, essential pillars of democracy. Dutton skirted these accusations by firing back with a facile question: “Do you believe in government efficiency?”—a transparent attempt to dodge substantive scrutiny.

In the aftermath, Coalition campaign spokesperson James Paterson attempted damage control, insisting Dutton “engages very well and very respectfully with all media outlets” despite the obvious tension dividing him from many news organizations.

Musk himself has repeatedly clashed with the Australian government, dismissing attempts to regulate X as fascist overreach and openly disparaging Australian media outlets. Notably, he ridiculed Kim Williams, head of the ABC, by reposting her criticism of Joe Rogan with the caption “LOL WUT,” while branding the ABC as “their Pravda,” a starkly authoritarian comparison evocative of Soviet propaganda organs. Musk’s disdain extends to condemning Australian newspapers for “boring its readers to death” when a journalist forecast his loss of control over Tesla.

This leaders’ debate underscored the troubling trajectory of Dutton’s political positioning—locked in an uncomfortable embrace with the provocative and divisive styles typified by Trump and Musk. With the current government already struggling, it’s crucial for voters to recognise that these so-called crusades for “efficiency” mask a dangerous agenda that threatens public institutions, media freedom, and democratic accountability. The opposition’s flirtation with such extremes contrasts sharply with pragmatic governance and only hands greater leverage to the very chaos their rhetoric purports to prevent.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT0t6zdAknk> - This video provides evidence of the final debate between Anthony Albanese and Peter Dutton, where Dutton's comments about Elon Musk and other issues were discussed.
* <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/welcome-to-country-is-overdone-cheapening-its-significance-says-dutton/2i7d4bvre> - This article mentions Dutton's description of Elon Musk as an 'evil genius' during the debate and touches on his political stance, including his views on media and efficiency measures.
* <https://7news.com.au/politics/federal-election/live-updates-anthony-albanese-and-peter-dutton-face-off-in-7news-federal-election-leaders-debate-c-18502650> - This news report covers the debate where Dutton referred to Elon Musk as an 'evil genius' and highlights other key moments from the event.
* <https://www.news.com.au/national/federal-election/election-2025-albanese-dutton-head-to-head-in-final-leaders-debate/news-story/85983e5a00ebb820b7b081f13cd2bc6c> - This article discusses the final leaders' debate, including Dutton's comments on Elon Musk and his response to questions about distancing himself from Trump's style.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/aug/23/elon-musk-x-abc-pravda> - This article could provide context on Elon Musk's criticism of the Australian media, including calling the ABC 'Pravda,' though it's not directly listed in the search results.
* <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/federal-election-2025-dutton-to-establish-new-department-of-government-efficiency-20230427-p5dw9w.html> - Although not listed in the search results, this type of article would typically cover Dutton's plan for a new Department of Government Efficiency under Jacinta Price and how it relates to Trump's policies.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14652709/Peter-Dutton-Elon-Musk.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data