



National Campaign Headquarters

16 August 2010

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Bill Haylock

President

Tiffany Thomson

Vice President (Australia)

Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand

GPO Box 211

Melbourne

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Dear Mr Haylock and Ms Thomson

Thank you for your correspondence of 30 July 2010 regarding the upcoming federal election. We welcome the interest and engagement of the key professional body representing environmental practitioners in Australia and New Zealand in this campaign.

### **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act**

This Act is one of the most powerful and fundamental tools for biodiversity protection available to the Federal Government. Federal Labor has set the bar high on environmental regulation, enabling ecologically sustainable development while protecting our threatened species and ecosystems.

Late last year the final report of Dr Allan Hawke's review of the EPBC Act was received. Amongst other things, this report recommends linking bioregional planning and strategic assessment to broader environmental policy objectives and using environmental markets and offset arrangements to achieve the desired level of conservation of our precious biodiversity. In our second term, a re-elected Gillard Labor Government will bring forward a comprehensive response to this review.

### **Population: robust, detailed and strategic resource assessment process**

Prime Minister Julia Gillard, has made it clear she supports a sustainable Australia, not a big Australia. We need to get the balance right between communities which are already under pressure and other communities which are in desperate need of more workers.

Federal Labor has committed to developing the nation's first ever Sustainable Population Strategy. This Strategy will look at issues including infrastructure needs, environmental sustainability, water availability and employer needs.

Three panels have been established to underpin and inform the Strategy:

- Sustainability issues (chaired by former NSW Premier Bob Carr).
- Employment, growth and business issues (chaired by Chief Executive of the Australian Industry Group, Heather Ridout).
- Population planning (chaired by Professor Graeme Hugo from the University of Adelaide).

The sustainable population strategy will build on other important initiatives already announced by Federal Labor to deal with issues relating to population growth.

These include:

- A \$37 billion investment in nation-building transport infrastructure.
- More than \$12 billion through our *Water for the Future* package.
- Measures to improve housing affordability and to encourage regional housing infrastructure.
- Measures designed to deliver highly skilled workers to the Australian economy by restoring the integrity of the skilled migration program.

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## **Educate and disseminate climate change information**

The Gillard Labor Government is investing in new green jobs and training opportunities to build a stronger and greener Australian economy.

Federal Labor is reforming Australia's training system to produce high quality green skills that are essential to meet the growing demand for energy efficient homes and buildings, and to power the industries of the future.

We have negotiated a new National Green Skills Agreement with the States and Territories. It will ensure all young tradespersons in Australia possess the green skills of the future.

This Agreement makes practical sustainability training a fundamental part of all vocational training programs. As a result of the Agreement every new trade apprentice who commences their training after 1 January 2010 will graduate with a core set of green skills and knowledge as part of their training.

The Agreement also establishes new national sustainability standards in vocational training. This includes revised Training Packages and professional development for vocational education and training (VET) instructors and teachers, to build on the skills they already have and acquire new skills to train the apprentices of the future.

The Gillard Labor Government has invested \$200 million in 32 projects for TAFE institutes and TAFE-led consortia, including dual sector universities, with a significant focus on sustainability and green skills. This provides the modern training infrastructure needed for training in sustainability principles. Green training projects have been funded in most States and Territories and include new facilities in key sectors such as building and construction, electro-technology, automotive, engineering, agriculture and other sectors with major impacts on the environment.

A special round of the Education Investment Fund has funded major research and development projects in green chemicals, energy, engineering and sustainability.

In May this year, Federal Labor sponsored the Sustainability in Higher Education Roundtable to consider environmental issues in higher education. Recommendations from the Roundtable will be considered in the next term of government, if we are re-elected.

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The Gillard Labor Government is funding a sustainability website for Australia's higher education sector that will provide students and academics with information about what is being offered in sustainability education in every State and Territory in Australia. The website will provide access to a rich source of material and include indicators of good practice, which should lead to the take-up of innovative ideas as well as reducing duplication. The website will include details of short courses, sub-majors, majors, work integrated options, cross-disciplinary, discipline-specific and trans-disciplinary courses as well as double degrees and postgraduate options from graduate certificate to doctorate. It will also give details of learning pathways and different approaches to leadership and support.

Federal Labor has a strong track record of building the capacity of our education systems to incorporate and develop the knowledge and skills needed to tackle climate change. Under Federal Labor environmental issues in education have moved to the centre of educational knowledge, infrastructure and policy.

Sincerely

Campaign Information  
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