

Climate Change Land & Water

An AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS Election Platform

25 Steps to a Healthier Environment

Climate change threatens to destroy civilisation as we know it and we cannot wait another 15 or 20 years to act on the deep emission cuts needed to turn the situation around. The health of our environment - the land, our rivers, our natural biodiversity, our access to clean water and air - calls for tough, immediate action.

Greenhouse

1. Take a lead in the science of climate change and international emissions reduction efforts to stabilise atmospheric concentrations at a level that averts dangerous climate change
2. Set greenhouse reduction targets of 30% of 1990 levels by 2020 and 60 to 90% by 2050, informed by the latest science and without moving to nuclear power
3. Introduce a carbon emissions (black) trading scheme by 2010 the cap to be set to support greenhouse reductions of 60 to 90% by 2050
4. Introduce an energy efficiency (white) trading scheme by 2010 with a mandatory target of 20% by 2020
5. Extend existing renewable energy (green) trading scheme to achieve a target of 25% by 2020 and 50% by 2030
6. Transfer \$10b in fossil fuel subsidies to fund R&D for ultra low and zero emission technology research and to kick-start large scale renewable energy projects
7. Impose a carbon tax on coal exports of \$5 per tonne to approximate a global carbon price and revenue raised (\$600m p.a.) used to reduce householders' energy bills and greenhouse emissions through a million solar rooves program
8. Set 6 star minimum energy performance standards by 2010 and 10 star by 2020 for all buildings, appliances and equipment

Agriculture

9. Include the agriculture sector in an emissions trading scheme
10. Reward agricultural practices that increase carbon in soils

Biodiversity and native habitat – land, riverine, coasts and oceans

11. Offer tax incentives to protect, promote and manage habitat and other vegetation

12. More fully involve Indigenous traditional owners in natural resource management and decisions on their land and sea country, and expand the Indigenous Protected Areas program
13. Phase out broad scale land clearing of remnant and regrowth forests
14. Link land use subsidies and aid programs to biodiversity objectives
15. Prohibit native species exports unless sustainable and protected from inhumane treatment
16. Expand the coast and marine protected reserve system and more tightly regulate aquaculture

Introduced species

17. Prohibit the importation and sale of “black listed” pests and weeds
18. Give invasive species and research into biological controls a priority for NHT funding
19. Improve port and airport facilities to stop species introduction

Rural and urban water

20. Reform rural and agricultural water pricing to reward reduced consumption and fund high efficiency irrigation infrastructure to achieve a better balance of river water extraction and environmental flows
21. Substantially reduce stormwater, sewage effluent and industrial discharge to sea
22. Reform urban water pricing to fund and encourage major drinking water savings by 2012 by refitting 5 million households with dual and efficient flush toilets, household water tanks and grey water reuse systems
23. No new dams and desalination plants until all demand side options and alternatives are exhausted
24. Redesign urban water and drainage systems for maximum water harvest and use
25. Introduce progressively tighter national water standards for appliances and equipment

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Since the Australian Democrats inception in 1977 we have been against Nuclear Power and for the environment. It was the Australian Democrats who introduced the World Heritage Properties Protection Bill 1982 which was the basis for the ultimate salvation of the Franklin River against being dammed.

Since the early 1980's the Democrats have called for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and a halt to climate change. In 1988 we introduced a private senator's bill called the Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations Bill which would ban the production and use of ozone-destroying CFCs. In 1988, the Democrats initiated a Senate inquiry into climate change. The report, *Rescue the future: reducing the impact of the greenhouse effect*, was tabled in 1991 and identified the link between human activity and greenhouse emissions.

“ *If humans pursue a business-as-usual course for the first half of this century, I believe the collapse of civilisation due to climate change becomes inevitable”*

Tim Flannery
The Weather Makers

In 1999 the Democrats negotiated \$400 million for new greenhouse abatement and initiated and chaired another Senate inquiry into climate change: The heat is on: Australia's greenhouse future. This 2001 report was highly critical of the lack of action to date and made 106 recommendations in areas of transport, emissions trading, carbon and the land, energy use and supply, climate change and Kyoto, all of which are still relevant today.

In 1999 we won over 400 amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Bill, to widen the use of Constitutional powers to protect the environment on matters of national significance. The EPBC Act is used widely by individuals, environment groups and the Greens party (though Senator Brown opposed the Bill) to protect the environment.

In 2007, the Democrats continue to use the Senate processes to improve legislation, highlight adverse

impacts to the environment and to propose sound solutions. In 2007, we are still staunchly anti nuclear, pro renewable energy and sustainable practices. Our current campaigns include Save the Mary River, Say No to the Expanding Nuclear Industry, Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and many others.

The Australian Democrats will continue to use the Senate to promote and protect the environment, as we have for three decades.

Action Plans

The issues around our climate change, land and water are complex.

For a more detailed analysis please see our following Action Plans:

Biodiversity Conservation

Coasts and Oceans

Forests

Genetically Modified Organisms

Introduced Species

Rural Water

Urban Water

Greenhouse and Energy

Nuclear Energy

Carbon in soil

These, and many more, are available online:

www.democrats.org.au

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