

## 2007 STATE ELECTION ENVIRONMENT POLICY PLATFORM

The following responses have been provided to the LGSA's specific environment policy recommendations:

**Waste levy funded waste reduction programs** – In 1999, the NSW Labor Government promised the hypothecate 55 per cent of the waste levy to waste avoidance, reduction and reuse programs. However, in 2003 and 2004 the entire levy went into consolidated revenue. In 2005 the Labor Government abolished the Waste Fund altogether, at the same time raising the size of the waste levy very significantly.

The NSW Labor Government has replaced the single purpose Waste Fund with a grab bag of environmental program under the City and Country Environment Restoration program. These include setting waste reduction targets for councils and providing financial incentives for those that meet or exceed them. This was NSW Coalition policy, announced at the Waste Management Conference in July 2005, so we support this plan – except that we doubt the NSW Labor Government's commitment to implementing it. The Government will rake in \$1.3 billion from the waste levy fund over five years – two thirds of this will go into consolidated revenue.

A NSW Coalition Government will establish a four year Recycling Infrastructure and Markets Support program, to be known as RIMS, modelled on the very successful Infrastructure Grants run by Ecocycle Victoria, now incorporated into Sustainability Victoria's Sustainability Fund. Grants will be available from this program for council as well as industry, and will support both alternative waste technology and industry projects. We also want to assist groups of councils to set up drop-off centres to better manage difficult wastes such as computers, televisions, batteries, paint and household chemicals.

**Native vegetation** – The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition recognises the difficulties many landowners and councils are experiencing because of the current unworkable native vegetation regulations. We will make the regulations simpler and fairer to protect the environment while allowing farmers to work their land and reduce red tape.

**Compulsory container deposit legislation (CDL)** – The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition does not support CDL, as we believe it will undermine the economics of kerbside recycling. The LGSA may estimate that the cost to the State Government would be negligible but the cost to consumers and to the beverage industry would be very substantial. A 24 – pack of soft drinks, for example, would go up in price by \$2.40 at the checkout with a 10c deposit.

Environmental issues are amongst the most important challenges facing the people of NSW. The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition is committed to implementing a comprehensive plan to tackle climate change and other environmental issues facing NSW.

**The NSW Coalition has committed to establish a \$300 million Clean NSW Fund for climate change and environmental projects throughout the state.**

Specifically, the NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition will:

- Support renewable energy by promoting solar energy, solar hot water systems and investment in the CSIRO Energy Centre and clean coal;
- Encouraging alternative fuels through greater use of ethanol, LPG and registration fee cuts for LPG and hybrid electric vehicles;
- Clean our waterways to restore our rivers,
- Foster biodiversity by controlling noxious weeds and feral animals in National Parks, improving fire management, and by rewarding landowners and providing wildlife refuges;
- Improve waste management by working with local councils to achieve waste minimisation targets and green waste collection programmes; and
- Tackle climate change by setting mandatory renewable energy targets and rolling out smart meters to reduce energy use in homes.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

A NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition Government would drive renewable energy in NSW by mandating renewable energy targets based on renewable energy generated in NSW.

We will legislate for a renewable energy target (NRET) of 10 per cent of electricity bought by NSW retailers by 2010 and 15 per cent by 2020 with the bulk of the target having to be achieved here in NSW.

The NSW Labor Government is the biggest greenhouse gas emitter in Australia and electricity generation accounts for more than 36 per cent of green-house gas emissions in NSW. Any climate change strategy must include reducing emissions from electricity generation in NSW.

Our goal is to achieve 20 per cent renewable energy by 2025.

This will drive investment in renewables, including solar, geothermal, biomass and wind in this State and help create new jobs and new industries in rural and regional NSW.

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition would close the cost differential between base load coal and renewables using the NSW Government's Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme (NGAS).

We will change the rules of the NGAS so that it will apply only to genuinely new projects with preference given to renewable energy projects in NSW.

Our aim is to see a vibrant new industry created in NSW without increasing electricity costs to families and businesses.

NGAS needed to be overhauled because the current scheme was grossly inefficient.

A NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition Government will tackle and reduce emissions with measures including:

### *Solar Energy*

The NSW Coalition will allocate \$58.5 million to provide incentives to increase solar energy use in new and existing homes. The incentives provide a \$500 new installation rebate on new solar hot water systems installed into new homes and a \$1,000 rebate to homeowners who replace existing peak hot water systems with solar hot water systems.

Currently in NSW there are around 448,800 peak electric hot water systems and just 64,000 solar hot water systems. By installing a solar hot water system each NSW family can reduce energy consumption for heating purposes by up to 75 per cent, prevent up to 4 tonnes of greenhouse gases entering our atmosphere and slash their household energy bill by as much as \$400 per year. If we replace 50,000 peak electric systems and install 17,000 solar systems in new homes, NSW can stop 250,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from entering our atmosphere every year – the equivalent of taking up to 50,000 cars off the road.

### *Cutting Vehicle Emissions*

#### **LPG and Hybrid Electric**

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition will commit \$34 million for two landmark initiatives to encourage the use of environmentally friendly vehicles in NSW:

1. We will cut registration costs by \$50 for all LPG or hybrid electric vehicles; and
2. All LPG and hybrid electric vehicles will be approved for travel in transit lanes. These vehicles will receive a 'Transit Access' sticker when registered.

For NSW families, this will cut the price of registration for the average small LPG or hybrid electric car by almost 25 per cent<sup>1</sup>. For NSW businesses it will

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<sup>1</sup> Roads and Traffic Authority Website, 'Registration Fees', retrieved 5 January 2007 from <http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/registration/registrationfees/index.html> in combination with the registration subsidy.

cut the price of registration of the average small LPG or hybrid electric car by more than 15 per cent<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Ethanol***

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition has developed a \$6 million **Ethanol Action Plan** to boost ethanol production and distribution in NSW to 10 per cent by 2011.

The NSW Coalition's **Ethanol Action Plan** includes:

A \$5 million commitment to help fund the conversion of existing service station infrastructure such as fuel tanks for E10 storage and for signage associated with the sale of E10 at service station outlets. Our target is the sale of E10 at up to 500 service stations across NSW. Up to 50 per cent of the costs incurred in these activities will be reimbursed to a maximum \$10,000. This funding will be in addition to existing Commonwealth initiatives.

\$1 million for a marketing plan in co-operation with the NRMA and environmental groups with the objective of raising public awareness of and confidence in ethanol blended fuels.

The mandatory use of E10 fuel in all possible state government vehicles.

If necessary, mandating ethanol usage in NSW according to a timetable.

### ***Better Public Transport – CBD Light Rail***

A NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition Government will immediately move to expand the existing light rail system from Central to Circular Quay and conduct urgent feasibility studies on other metropolitan areas and:

- Establish a city loop route through the CBD from Central to Circular Quay removing buses from the streets where light rail operates;
- Assess the potential expansion of light rail from Central to other suburbs in Sydney including Burwood via Parramatta Road, Bondi, Maroubra via Anzac Parade and Mascot;
- Assess the potential to expand light rail in other areas of Sydney and greater NSW including Parramatta, Strathfield, Northwest Sydney, the Northern Beaches, Newcastle and an appropriate mass transit option for Wollongong.

CBD light rail will slash up to 20 minutes off Circular Quay to Central bus times and enable the movement of up to 37,400 passengers through the CBD each day. The reduction in the number of buses entering the CBD will ease traffic congestion and take pressure off the CBD heavy rail stations.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on a car size of tare weight less than 975 kg.

There are currently about 7,400 buses travelling through the CBD each weekday, predicted to rise to 9,400 buses by 2021 without a new public transport solution.

### *Water*

The environmental challenges posed by climate change are not confined to greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change has contributed to one of the most defining challenges of our time – the conservation and management of water. The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition's response to the LGSA's water policy platform outlines our commitments in this area. However, one of the NSW Coalition's important initiatives in this area relating to rainwater tanks is set out below:

#### ***Rainwater Tanks Rebate – Use It. Don't Lose It.***

The NSW Coalition will increase and expand rainwater tank rebates to encourage the installation of more rainwater tanks in NSW. The increase and restructuring of the Sydney Water rebate will provide an incentive for people to plumb rainwater tanks to their toilets and/or washing machines.

A \$1500 Rainwater Tank rebate will be provided for all households who purchase a rainwater tank with a capacity of 2,000 litres or greater and connect it to their toilet and/or washing machine

#### ***Better Playing Fields***

The drought and related water restrictions have resulted in the closure of many playing fields because they are unsafe for use.

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition will allocate \$40 million to upgrade playing fields across NSW, including;

- \$10 million to be allocated for grants to install lighting or carry out other upgrades at local playing fields across NSW.
- \$30 million for grants to install rainwater or stormwater harvesting equipment to enable watering of local playing fields across NSW, including the installation of rainwater tanks and irrigation equipment.

## FIXING OUR LOCAL WATERWAYS

#### ***The Cooks River Rescue Plan***

The NSW Coalition will spend \$5 million in the first term of government to clean up the Cooks River including the installation of fish regeneration areas in concrete sections of river.

#### ***The Sydney Harbour and Parramatta River Rescue Plan***

The NSW Coalition will:

1. Commit an additional \$15 million to clean up Homebush Bar and remove all dioxin hotspots to make it safe to fish again in Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River.
2. Commit \$500,000 to carry out an assessment of environmental risks at the Camellia industrial site.
3. Fast track the remediation of Kendall Bay.
4. Commit \$2 million to install stormwater filtration on the Hawthorn and Dobroyd Canals that lead into Iron Cove to stop heavy metals etc. passing through the canals into the bays.
5. Allocate a further \$2.5 million for additional remediation and clean-up work along the Parramatta River as required.

***The Tuggerah Lakes Rescue Plan***

A NSW Coalition Government will commit \$20 million to restore Tuggerah Lakes by;

1. Restoring the ecology of Tuggerah Lakes;
2. Improving facilities in and around the Lakes;
3. Restoring water quality in the Lakes; and
4. Maintaining creek mouths at Tumbi Creek, Wyong River and Ourimbah Creek.