

TOP 10 POLICIES FOR BUILDING THE GREEN ECONOMY

Setting the Scene for the 2010 Federal Election & Beyond

Early opinion polls suggest the new Gillard Government is winning back a swag of green-orientated voters following Labor's leadership change – but will they be able to keep them? Facing a much tighter election fight, the Abbott-led Opposition will be forced to pay close attention to its environmental policies. Post the upcoming election, according to leading political pundits, The Greens will probably hold the balance of power in the Senate in their own right. Will this provide an opportunity to get serious about building a greener and more sustainable economy?

TEC/Green Capital's Top 10 Policies for a Green Economy

Total Environment Centre and Green Capital have identified our *Top 10 Policies for Building the Green Economy* which we will promote to all political parties and candidates for the nation's 2010 election contest.

1

MARKET-BASED PRICE ON CARBON – The next Australian Government must quickly return to mandating a national, market-based carbon-pricing mechanism, such as an emissions trading scheme or carbon tax. This should be implemented by the end of 2012 along with an array of effective complementary measures. A price signal on carbon is vital to the suite of measures Australia needs to significantly cut the nation's greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and beyond. The National Greenhouse & Energy Reporting (NGER) scheme must be progressively strengthened and deepened to underpin a carbon pricing regime.

2

PUT SUSTAINABILITY INTO TAX – The Henry Tax Review has prepared the ground for environmental sustainability to become a key pillar of the future tax system for Australia. Priorities for the next Australian Government should include making a major allocation for sustainable infrastructure development such as rail and public transit and the 'smart grid' from any new resources tax; initiating the shift to a user-pays model for motoring and road transport; and targeting tax concessions and/or environmental bonds to support green investment.

3

NATIONAL ENERGY MARKET REFORM – The National Energy Market (NEM) needs to be transformed through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to accelerate a) the closure and decommissioning of traditional coal-fired power stations, starting with older, ultra-dirty brown-coal ones such as Hazelwood in Victoria, and b) the development of a smarter, more efficient electricity grid with widespread large and small-scale distributed generation. Also, the construction of any new traditional coal-fired power stations should be banned, and investment in carbon capture and storage R&D should be reallocated to genuine renewable alternatives and soil carbon.

4

NATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY TARGET – Australia must set a strong energy efficiency target of at least one-third of current electricity consumption by 2020, including peak power, backed by a national scheme using tradeable 'white certificates' that can operate in tandem with a price signal on carbon.


5

VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKET SUPPORT – A Green Capital survey (March 2010) found overwhelming support for voluntary carbon credits to be sourced from Australian projects including wind, solar and energy efficiency. With or without a mandatory carbon price, the voluntary carbon market is and should continue to be an important driver of early action on reducing CO₂-e emissions. All voluntary reductions should be made additional to any official Australian target (e.g. Kyoto currently and any future cap that may be imposed by national and/or international agreement).

6

EXPAND RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET – The 20% by 2020 Renewable Energy Target (RET) needs to be expanded further, matching the accelerated decommissioning of the dirtiest coal-fired stations, by promoting additional wind and fast-tracking solar thermal and other emerging technologies to deliver a significantly increased RET by 2020.

7

NATIONAL WASTE & RECYCLING POLICY – For resource efficiency, toxic materials safety and carbon reduction reasons, Australia needs to build on action in the past few years to establish a National Waste and Recycling Policy. This should deliver a new regime of extended producer responsibility (EPR) including a national container deposits scheme; other 'take-back' schemes for key problem wastes; and minimisation of waste to landfill with energy and nutrients recovery maximised.

8

GOVERNMENT-LED GREEN PROCUREMENT – As a major purchaser of goods and services, government should overtly drive more sustainable processes and products in key areas including buildings, energy supply, fleet vehicles, travel, fit-outs, technology improvements, infrastructure design and delivery. This needs to cover all major spending areas for government including health, education, social services and defence. At the same time, the integrity of green marketing and environmental claims for products and services, and relevant industry self-regulation, has to be closely monitored through the ACCC and also specific procurement policies.

9

PROTECTION OF LANDSCAPES, AIR QUALITY, WATERWAYS & BIODIVERSITY – A strategic and sustained upgrade of measures to protect and restore the nation's ecological assets must include selective use of market-based instruments for resource management, pollution control and conservation purposes (e.g. tax relief, grants, restrictive zoning, and tenure change programs).

10

NATIONAL GREEN TECHNOLOGY, SKILLS & JOBS STRATEGY – A national strategy for genuine skills development and job training should be developed and implemented to support greening the mainstream economy and the growth of a vibrant 'green economy' industry sector. New technology opportunities should be utilised, including the National Broadband Network (NBN), clean energy and other clean-tech alternatives, and transport reform should be instituted from vehicle manufacturing to transit systems.



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