

Key Policy Points

(Resources and Energy)

1. Creation of a National Energy Grid facilitating :- resource development, the decentralisation of population and continuous access to clean energy resources, specifically solar, bio-fuels, wind and geothermal. Government commitment to the clean energy projects along the North Australia Clean Energy Corridor section of the grid is essential to achieving a range of policy objectives common to both the ALP and Liberal Party. Whilst the two giant projects, the Kennedy Wind Farm and the Pentland Solar Bio-fuels plant, require little financial assistance, they do require a strong government commitment.

(Treasury)

2. The removal of the tax on Australian-produced bio-fuels and the introduction of a statutory 10 per cent bio-fuel (ethanol) content in all petrol rising to 22 per cent (as in Brazil). Such to be overseen by a production and marketing implementation board controlling prices from farm gate to bowser and allocating production centres (sugar and grain). Such board to exclude representatives of the oil corporations and Woolworths and Coles. This will restore self sufficiency in oil; removing the aromatics and small particle emissions – both carcinogenic; reducing the price of fuel to Brazil/USA prices – 73c/L and 84c/L respectively. These are Sao Paulo and Minnesota prices in 2008. The Australian price at the same time was \$1.38 per litre. This process will reduce the carbon footprint, restoring viability to the grains, cattle and sugar industries and creating 30,000 jobs in rural Australia.

(Trade)

3. The two chain oligopoly – market concentration – in the Australian food retailing sector to be addressed.

- The option of divestment (a maximum market share for any chain of 22.5 per cent only) and /or the European approach of a maximum mark-up of 100 per cent between the farm gate/factory price and the retail price with a board to determine “unders and overs” and exceptions to the rule; or some other similar proposal to restore a fairer and/or more competitive marketplace.

- To preserve the Trade Practices Act as it is (including the sanctions on predatory pricing) and to amend Section 46 to remove the requirement to prove motive with respect to anti-competitive behaviour.

- The provision of a proof of sale between the farmer and the wholesaler or agent/merchant (the Farm Mandatory Code of Conduct) – a simple sales docket is all that is asked for here.

(Treasury)

4. No carbon tax. No emissions trading scheme – both would involve a cost imposition upon electricity users, and virtually every person in every walk of life. It would tend to render all our export industries non-competitive. Carbon and pollutant reduction to be achieved by renewables – solar/biomass and other government initiatives and incentives (refer to ethanol).

(Treasury)

5. No mining tax. Having regard to the funding implications of such, to in lieu impose a customs duty of 5 per cent on all imports (excluding services). Such to be in compliance with the GATT agreement Article XII.

(Environment; Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry)

6. Return of recreational freedoms enabling an increased access to traditional pursuits of fishing, camping and outdoor sports and activities. As part of this restoration, we include the removal of the Wild Rivers Legislation and other such sanctions which have deprived, among others, our First Australians from any hope of achieving economic self-determination and independence (aquaculture, cattle, farming and tourism. All are seriously impeded – some precluded by what has been rightly described by Noel Pearson as theft – the seizing and confiscation of these rights when no compensation was provided or offered.)

(Prime Minister's Department)

7. The provision of title deeds providing ownership of homes, businesses and farms – a right enjoyed by every other Australian and most people on Earth. Such deeds to be inalienable – that is, cannot be sold to non-community residents – otherwise they are simple, ordinary freehold title. This privately owned title deed is essential for the foundation of an economy or even any economic activity. The building of all First Australian housing to be by exclusively local indigenous labour. Probably 2000 homes in Queensland in the mid-late 1980s were built exclusively by local indigenous labour¹.

(Attorney-General's Department)

8. The enactment of legislation to ensure that the constitutional right to full compensation for the taking of property by government be extended also to the taking of any property “rights” by government.

(Treasury)

9. Commitment to the use of some part of the Future Fund for the creation of a national development corporation aimed at lending/investing to major infrastructure and strategically important industries. Such monies only to be allocated where government backing and guarantees for the initiatives are provided. Terms of reference for the management of this fund should give priority to long-term goals achieving Australian self-sufficiency in food and fuel. Examples of such initiatives would be multi-user mining infrastructure, ports, rail and energy corridors, dams for irrigation, seeding capital for ethanol, funding for Australia to “buy back the farm” (mining, milk processing, sugar processing – all these industries, once Australian-owned, are now predominantly foreign-owned). Again, such initiatives would naturally entail tight, prudential constraints.

(Workplace Relations)

10. Assurance that employees will maintain their current rights to collective bargaining, as well as their right to arbitration. That these same rights be restored to Australian farmers and that where a majority of farmers in an industry request collective bargaining arrangements, that such be provided with rights the same as those enjoyed by every Australian employee. It must be noted that Australian farmers enjoy an average subsidy/tariff support of around 5 per cent,

¹ CDEP labour should be restored and utilised for house building, as in the 1980s.

whilst their competitors in the OECD countries (including EU and USA) enjoy average support levels of over 35 per cent. In the non-OECD countries, the Philippines for example, wages are \$AU4.05 a day. On the other hand, our farmers selling on the Australian markets have effectively only a two-supermarket monopoly to sell to. (The two giant supermarket chains hold over 85 per cent of the market.)

(Health)

11. Agreement that rural and country hospitals and dental services will be placed under the control of a restored local hospital board and that funding be delivered from Canberra directly to these hospital boards.

(Trade; Attorney-General's Department)

12. Agreement that where a food or plant import licence has not been approved, approval can only be granted when the country of origin can establish that it has no endemic diseases that can be imported into Australia (diseases that would threaten our native flora and fauna as well as our food production). The administration for this Act should be placed under a more legalistic jurisdiction (the Attorney-General's Department has been suggested) providing objectivity, judicial review and avenues of appeal. Also, that there be enacted laws to ensure statutory obligations for testing and assessment of all imported food and plant product and that such be much more frequent than the current regime (of which current requirements are, in any event, not mandatory).

(Water)

13. The utilisation of 3 per cent of northern Australia's abundance of water to enable irrigation for small areas of agricultural land sufficient to guarantee a healthy growth in Australia's agricultural sector and to provide food security for our people. Australia is already now an importer of pork, fruit and vegetable and seafood. The Murray-Darling utilises 42 per cent of its water for agriculture and this currently provides around half of Australia's agricultural produce, but this is soon to be cut dramatically, further removing Australia's self-sufficiency in food. The northern one-third of Australia has 305 million mega litres of water; the other two-thirds has 83 million mega litres and yet accounts for almost all of Australia's farming)

(Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development)

14. Agreement to the establishment of a three-department infrastructure taskforce to, within four months, prepare a Cabinet submission to secure action to provide:

- Sea safety on the north-east coast of Australia through the provision of safe, all-weather anchorage roughly every 30km. The initiative is to be prioritised in the high-use boating and tourism areas between Cooktown and Ingham. (Nil finance required; cost of a draft plan should be done in-house.)
- To achieve micro resource development, the utilisation of land and water. This requires projects at five towns in the Queensland Gulf and Mid-West, such Cabinet submission to be completed within three months of taking government. (Negligible finance required; cost of the draft plan should be done in-house.)
- The provision of a port to service the southern Gulf of Carpentaria.
- Upgrading of the McEwen highway in North Queensland. Much of the highway is still one lane with high shoulders. This upgrading provides an alternate route to the existing National (coastal) highway, currently the only access corridor to Far North Qld. This will provide all-weather access to one of Australia's major horticultural and tourism areas. The

coast (Bruce) Highway is cut off regularly during Northern Australia's annual flood and cyclone season. (Small but significant funding is required.)

(Ageing)

15. To help overcome the stress and financial burden placed upon pensioner aged Australians and other people on fixed government allowances, assistance in the form of, for example, government-provided solar hot water systems and/or other measures to reduce the money problems on our older generation caused by rapidly escalating costs for rates, electricity, insurances, car registration and other similar charges, which, increasingly, they are unable to meet.

(Families)

16. A family policy that includes equal rates of government-funded parental assistance for not only working mothers, but stay-at-home mums as well.

(Prime Minister's Department)

17. An agreement that the Commonwealth meet with the Queensland Government and secure relaxation of restrictions on land sub-division and boundary realignment prohibitions and to establish a joint department to fast track such applications. The purpose of which will be securing the release of suitable land for housing development, thus presenting a substantial reduction in the price of housing and encouraging further decentralisation of population out of south-east Queensland and Sydney. Affordable housing for our young people, heading off toxic home lending and a respect for the rights of property holders are just some of the essential considerations.

(Treasury)

18. The government to provide assurance that it will address the unfair and artificially high value of the Australian dollar, on which upward pressure is placed by interest rates that are out of step with international benchmarks (*Reserve Bank of Australia 4.5% compared to Bank of Canada 0.75%, Bank of England 0.50%, European Central Bank 1.00%, Bank of Japan 0.10%, Federal Reserve Bank of NY 0.13%* . Source: *F13 International Official Interest Rates – Reserve Bank of Australia*).

(Foreign Affairs)

19. Introduce an open, public registry of foreign ownership of farm land, housing, public and private corporations and re-examine the thresholds on foreign ownership requiring FIRB approval.

(Treasury)

20. A review of zone allowances for remote areas. There has not been a review since John Howard's review in the early 1980s. Tax should be levied on "real purchasing, not monetary purchasing power". \$100 buys a lot less goods and services in Cloncurry than it does in Brisbane. Any review would clearly point to offsets.