



# **Sydney Coastal Councils Group Policy Recommendations on the Key Coastal Management Issues Federal Election 2013**

## **Political Party Response Report**



5 September 2013



## INTRODUCTION

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) is a Regional Organisation of Councils representing 15 Councils in the Sydney coastal region. The Group is concerned with the promotion of cooperation and coordination to achieve the sustainable management of the urban coastal environment. See: [www.sydneycostalcouncils.com.au](http://www.sydneycostalcouncils.com.au)

In preparation for the 2013 Federal Election the SCCG resolved to requests that political parties contesting the election outline their policy positions on the following six key coastal management issues: provided to all relevant political parties and attaches responses received from:

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **A National Coastal Council or Commission for Australia**
- **Implementing priority recommendations from the “Managing our Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate – The Time to Act is Now” report**
- **A consistent and coordinated approach to natural hazards management and climate change adaptation in the Australian coastal zone**
- **Funding for Local Government and community coastal programs**
- **A National Coastal Information System for Australia**
- **Maintaining public ownership of and access to and along the coastal zone**
- **A National Marine Management Strategy**

This report provides a summary of the “desired outcome” and “Information request” from the SCCG report entitled “Sydney Coastal Councils Group Policy Recommendations on the Key Coastal Management Issues Federal Election 2013”

[http://www.sydneycostalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/policy\\_recommendations.pdf](http://www.sydneycostalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/policy_recommendations.pdf)

<b>Attachment A:</b>	<b>Australian Labor Party</b>
<b>Attachment B:</b>	<b>Liberal Party of Australia</b>
<b>Attachment C:</b>	<b>Australian Greens</b>

This report has been disseminated to SCCG Member Councils and other regional and national stakeholders prior to the election.

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# SCCG POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS (Summary)

## A National Coastal Council or Commission for Australia

**Desired Outcome:** A National Coastal Council or Commission for Australia.

**Information Request:** The SCCG requests the position of your Party on:

- 1) The establishment a National Coastal Council of Commission for Australia
- 2) In the absence of a National Coastal Council or Commission how your party would achieve the key essential activities outlined above ?

## Implementing Recommendations from the 'Managing our Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate: the Time to Act is Now' Report

**Desired Outcome:** Implementation of recommendations detailed in the House of Representatives committee report: *'Managing our Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate: the Time to Act is Now'*.

**Information Request:** The SCCG requests the position of your party on ensuring that the recommendations identified in the *Managing our Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate: the Time to Act is Now* Report are given the appropriate attention and acted upon.

## A consistent and coordinated approach to natural hazards management and climate change adaptation in the Australian Coastal zone

**Desired Outcome:** An Australian Government strategy and funding commitment to the delivery of consistent and coordinated approaches to natural hazard management and climate change adaptation in the coastal zone.

**Information Request:** The SCCG requests the position of your party on:

- 1) The proposed strategies and processes to manage natural hazards including climate change impacts in the coastal zone as outlined above and
- 2) What additional strategies and actions your party might implement to ensure adaptation and mitigation will be undertaken in an effective manner in the coastal zone.

## Funding for Local Government and community coastal programs

**Desired Outcome:** A significant increase in funding for Local Government and community coastal programs and initiatives.

**Information Request:** The SCCG requests the position of your Party on it's commitment to the allocation of additional funding for initiatives and activities that must be undertaken to assist Councils and communities preserve threatened coastal assets and values.

## National Coastal Information System

**Desired Outcome:** An effective National Coastal Information System.

**Information Request:** The SCCG request the position of your Party on the establishment of an effective, integrated National Coastal Information System that provides publically accessible information at the right scale for regional and local decision making via a consistent national application.

## Maintaining public ownership of and public access to and along the coastal zone.

**Desired Outcome:** Policies and programs that ensure the maintenance of public ownership of and public access in the coastal zone.

**Information Request:** The SCCG requests the position of your Party on

- 1) Protecting coastal public lands in perpetuity and ensure the provision of adequate funds for their management
- 2) Utilising the National Lands Acquisition Act, 1989 by expanding the 'interest' considerations within the Act to purchase private lands in coastal areas that are considered nationally iconic, threatened, unique, and or socially and culturally significant,
- 3) Utilising the EPBC Act to ensure public access and use of foreshore areas is maintained and managed so that fragile ecosystems and habitats are preserved.
- 4) Oppose coastal developments that deny or restrict responsible public access to coastal beaches, foreshores and waters
- 5) Undertaken an audit of national coastal land areas with a view of identifying new opportunities to allow public foreshore access

## A National Marine Management Strategy

**Desired Outcome:** Development and implementation of an intergovernmental National Marine Management Strategy.

**Information request:** The SCCG requests the position of your Party on:

- 1) The development and implementation of a National Marine Management Strategy; or
- 2) In the absence of such a strategy how you would ensure that the national marine environment is managed in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

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For the full report "Sydney Coastal Councils Group Policy Recommendations on the Key Coastal Management Issues Federal Election 2013" please go to:

[http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/policy\\_recommendations.pdf](http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/sites/default/files/policy_recommendations.pdf)



## Attachment A

### Australian Labor Party





## National Campaign Headquarters

### SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS

The Rudd Labor Government recognises the vital role local government plays in making communities more livable and sustainable, and is committed to continuing the important partnership the Federal Labor Government has with local government. Furthermore, the Rudd Labor Government is conscious of addressing the unique issues facing coastal councils. Addressing climate change, natural hazards and reducing barriers to information for coastal councils are priorities for the Federal Labor Government who understand the challenges faced by coastal councils. Please find below Federal Labor's response to each of the specific questions you raised.

#### National Coastal Council or Commission for Australia

There is already a mechanism for intergovernmental discussions through the Council of Australian Governments Standing Council on Environment and Water (SCEW) which considers a national partnership approach to building resilience in response to climate change, and the conservation of the landscape. Underneath this body sits the National Environment Protection Council. The Australian Local Government Association is represented at the Council.

Commonwealth, state and territory officials under the Standing Council interact and progress the work plan for coastal adaptation through an Adaptation Working Group.

#### Implementation of recommendations for 'Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate: The time to act is now'

The Federal Labor Government's response to the 47 recommendations in the *Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate: The time to act is now* report was submitted in November 2010. Federal Labor has since implemented a number of the recommendations, including a Productivity Commission inquiry into the barriers to effective adaptation in Australia.

The Federal Labor Government recently released the *Climate Adaptation Outlook: A Proposed National Adaptation Assessment Framework*. This report proposes a framework to assess progress in adapting to the impacts of climate change, including on the coastal zone. It will help shape the response that is needed by business, government and communities. Federal Labor encourages you to outline your concerns to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science Research and Tertiary Education (please email: [adaptationoutlook@innovation.gov.au](mailto:adaptationoutlook@innovation.gov.au)).

Commonwealth, state and territory officials under the Standing Council interact and progress the work plan for coastal adaptation through an Adaptation Working Group.

## Climate Change and Natural Hazards

The Rudd Labor Government understands that councils in the coastal zone will face specific challenges in responding to the impacts of climate change. A re-elected Rudd Labor Government will continue to work with all levels of government to ensure an effective response to climate change.

Effective mitigation is the best way to reduce the potential impacts of climate change on the coastal zone. The Rudd Labor Government is committed to taking strong action to reduce Australia's carbon pollution. Since taking Government, Federal Labor has implemented an integrated set of policies that will drive deep reductions in our carbon pollution and enable us to achieve more ambitious reductions in the longer term to secure our clean energy future. Central to this is the emissions trading scheme which puts a legal limit on the pollution from Australia's 370 largest polluters and will cut pollution in the cheapest and most effective way. That limit will reduce year on year and ensure we meet our pollution reduction targets.

Some climate change is unavoidable regardless of global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Australia's coastal zone is highly vulnerable to the impacts of rising sea levels and increased storm surges as a result of climate change, with associated risks of damage to housing, infrastructure and natural ecosystems. While the most serious impacts may not be felt until later this century, decisions taken today will determine Australia's vulnerability to future sea level rises.

Adapting to climate change will require that governments, businesses and planners are able to make informed decisions. That is why the Federal Labor Government is already investing in programs such as the Australian Climate Change Science Program to help decision makers understand and manage likely climate change impacts, including its impact on coastal zones.

The Federal Labor Government is planning for the impacts of climate change, and recently released the *Climate Adaptation Outlook: A Proposed National Adaptation Assessment Framework*. This report proposes a framework to assess progress in adapting to the impacts of climate change, including on the coastal zone. It will help shape the response that is needed by business, government and communities. Federal Labor encourages you to outline your concerns to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science Research and Tertiary Education (please email: [adaptationoutlook@innovation.gov.au](mailto:adaptationoutlook@innovation.gov.au)).

In addition, the Federal Labor Government has led the development of the *National Strategy for Disaster Resilience – Building the resilience of our nation to disasters* (the Strategy), which was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments on 13 February 2011. The Strategy marks a positive shift in Australian emergency management policy, moving towards rebalancing a 'response and recovery' approach to one more heavily focused on 'preparation and mitigation'.

The purpose of the Strategy is to provide high-level guidance on disaster management to Federal, state, territory and local governments, business and community leaders and the non-profit sector. The Strategy focuses on priority areas to build disaster resilient communities across Australia and recognises that disaster resilience is a shared responsibility for individuals, households, businesses and communities, as well as for governments.

Endorsement of the Strategy is the first step in a long-term, evolving process to deliver sustained behavioural change and enduring partnerships. The Strategy is supported by a National Partnership Agreement, through which the Commonwealth is providing around \$110 million in funds over four years to support state and territory disaster mitigation efforts.

In February, the Federal Labor Government announced it will contribute up to \$47 million over eight years to ensure that the valuable work done by the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre can continue while developing a complementary natural hazards research program into flood, earthquake, cyclone and tsunami events. Communities across Australia were again severely impacted by bushfires, floods and severe weather events last summer. This increased investment in research will improve approaches to mitigation, operational responses and community resilience to natural hazards.

The expanded focus of the new Cooperative Research Centre appropriately reflects the impact of broader natural hazards on the Australian community. The new centre will conduct coordinated and interdisciplinary research, including work with communities, to improve disaster resilience and reduce the human, social, economic and environmental costs from bushfires and other natural hazards.

### **Funding for Local Government and community coastal program**

The Federal Labor Government supports environmental management of our natural resources through the ongoing initiative of *Caring for our Country*.

*Caring for our Country* supports communities, farmers and other land managers to protect Australia's natural environment and sustainability, including our productive lands. *Caring for our Country's* aim is to achieve an environment that is healthier, better protected, well managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

In the first phase of *Caring for our Country* (2008-2013) the Federal Labor government invested more than \$2 billion to protect and build the resilience of our environment. Starting from 1 July 2013, we have committed an additional \$2 billion to continue this valuable work.

Federal Labor provides support for Australia's coastline through a number of funding streams. Our approach has been to address the conservation of the marine environment from waterways to dune care. More specifically, *Coastcare* and coastcare-type activities were allocated \$71.8 million over 5 years (2008-13) through small grants and larger open-call grants. Grant funding will also be available in the current round of *Caring for our Country* that is yet to be announced. More information can be found at <http://www.nrm.gov.au/>.

### **A National Coastal Information System for Australia**

Local governments increasingly require high quality spatial data to understand the impacts of climate change and support effective adaptation to climate change. The Federal Labor Government is supporting the development of this spatial data to meet these fundamental needs. The Coastal Urban Digital Elevation Modelling project, delivered in partnership with the Cooperative Research Centre for



Spatial Information and Geoscience Australia, is developing high resolution elevation data and imagery which will improve understanding of the risks of climate change for vulnerable coastal regions. Sea level rise maps for key urban centres, such as our capital cities, are available through the OzCoast website at: [www.ozcoasts.gov.au](http://www.ozcoasts.gov.au).

The Federal Labor Government has invested almost \$110 million into the Integrated Marine Observing System. The system is designed to be a fully integrated national array of observing equipment to monitor the open oceans and coastal marine environment around Australia. The Integrated Marine Observing System collects data on physical, chemical and biological variables. All data is freely and openly available through the Integrated Marine Observing System Ocean Portal for the benefit of Australian marine and climate science as a whole.

In addition, the Federal Labor Government has invested \$4.5 million to develop effective approaches to managing coastal climate risk and assets. Thirteen projects were funded to develop leading practice approaches to better manage future climate risk to coastal assets and communities.

### **Maintaining public ownership of and access to an along the coastal zone**

This is a state, territory and local government issue. We encourage you to liaise with the relevant level of government about concerns regarding public ownership of land along the coastal zone.

### **A National Marine Management Strategy**

The Rudd Labor Government is proud to be delivering the world's largest marine reserve network. The comprehensive management plans that have passed through the Parliament will secure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of Australia's precious oceans.

These plans are a culmination of more than 20 years of work that began under the Keating Labor Government.

The new Commonwealth marine reserves were only established after an unprecedented consultation process. There have been five rounds of consultation on marine reserves over the past four years. Over 250 public and stakeholder meetings were held right around the country that were attended by about 2,000 people. Over 750,000 people participated in our public consultation process and provided feedback.

We have used the best available science, talked to the public over many years, made and revised plans based on community consultation and delivered the world's most comprehensive marine reserve network - with only around a one per cent impact on commercial fisheries and minimal impact on recreational fishing.

What the Rudd Labor Government has achieved is a sound balance between protecting Australia's marine biodiversity and supporting the sustainable use of our marine resources.

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## Attachment B

### Liberal Party of Australia



**Please note:**

The Liberal Party provided no direct response to the SCCG Policy recommendations.

The following three press releases were provided to the National Seachange Taskforce as the Liberal party's response to request for policy information as part of the Australian Coastal Advocacy Alliance (in which the SCCG is a member). See [www.coast.org.au](http://www.coast.org.au).

Press releases attached are:

- Reef 2050
- Whale and Dolphin Plan
- Coalitions Policy for a green Army



## Media Release

### The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage

Monday 2 September 2013

### Coalition announces *Reef 2050 Plan*

The long-term environmental protection of the Great Barrier Reef will be assured with the Coalition committing \$40 million for the creation of a Reef Trust as part of its *Reef 2050 Plan*.

The Great Barrier Reef is Australia's greatest natural asset and is vital for tourism and jobs along the north coast of Queensland.

Australians, and in particular Queenslanders, are proud of the role we play as guardians of the Reef for future generations.

Against that background, the challenges facing the Reef include nutrient run off, Crown of Thorns damage, protection of iconic species such as dugongs and turtles and the need for a strategic approach to future development.

In particular, we will work with the Queensland Government on an agreed strategic assessment for the future of the Reef.

Beyond the strategic assessment, the Coalition has three major components to our *Reef 2050 Plan*.

#### **1. Reef Trust:**

The Coalition will commit \$40 million to establish a Reef Trust. The Reef Trust will combine both Commonwealth and private funds to focus on improving coastal habitat and water quality along the Great Barrier Reef.

The fund will be jointly co-ordinated with the Queensland Government and Commonwealth advice will be provided by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

(GBRMPA) and other agencies. The focus will be a strategic approach to improving water quality and coastal habitat.

After an initial injection from the Commonwealth, funding will also be derived from the pooling of offset funds for significant projects under Federal Law.

This would be provided as an alternative to the current practice of individual acquisitions. This will enable a far more effective, strategic and transparent approach rather than the current ad hoc purchasing requirements which are not part of a strategic Reef improvement plan and which in many cases provide limited environmental benefit. The Trust will ensure that there is deep co-ordination of coastal and water quality management.

“This is a major investment in the long-term sustainability of the Reef. It will enable us to break away from ad hoc projects or private acquisitions and allows for long-term strategic investment,” Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage, Greg Hunt said.

“I hope that in 2050 we look back and note that this was a turning point in how we addressed the threats to the Reef in a focused and strategic way. A particular focus will be to help farmers reduce nutrient run off and therefore maintain or lift productivity while improving water quality on the Reef.”

LNP MP for Herbert, Ewen Jones said: “The Reef Trust will be deeply welcomed by the North Queensland community. We care passionately about the Reef and we also know that its health is critical to our economic health and local tourism and related jobs.

“Labor has let down the Queensland and Australian communities as a result of its poor management of the Reef.

“We know Queenslanders are proud of the Reef and will always ensure that it is protected. The Reef Trust will provide the resources to do that and sends a clear signal to the rest of the world that we take our responsibility in caring for the Reef seriously.”

## **2. Run Off Reduction and Crown of Thorns Eradication Plan:**

The Crown of Thorns is posing the most significant immediate risk to the Great Barrier Reef. Research by the Australian Institute of Marine Science confirms that it has accounted for 42 per cent of damage to the Reef over the past two decades.

The link between nutrient run-off and serious outbreaks of the Crown of Thorns confirms the need to immediately address this issue to limit the damage. Funding for this will be a high priority of the Reef Trust.

Farmers have played a significant role in reducing run-off and adopting new techniques. The funding will assist in giving farmers the support they need to continue that work and ensure it is targeted in the high risk areas.

We will also re-prioritise Reef Rescue Funding to focus on farm run-off and nutrient reduction.

In addition, the Reef Trust will allocate a further \$2 million to be invested with the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) for direct work to help eradicate the Crown of Thorns. The RRCC will work with the Australian Marine Park and Tourism Operators.

Scientific breakthroughs have allowed for a significant reduction in the Crown of Thorns population through direct treatment in high value sensitive areas. This work is currently undertaken by the Australian Marine Park and Tourism Operators with increasing success rates, and this funding will enable that work to be expanded.

### **3. Dugong and Turtle Protection Plan:**

The dugongs and turtles along the Great Barrier Reef will receive greater protection under a \$5 million plan.

The Coalition will implement a *Dugong and Turtle Protection Plan* which will work to protect the majestic dugong and turtle populations of Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands from the threats of poaching, illegal hunting and marine debris.

As part of this important environmental and marine conservation task, the Coalition will provide \$5 million for dugong and turtle protection, including:

- \$2 million for specialised **Indigenous Ranger Programs** for marine conservation along the Far North Queensland Coast and for strengthened enforcement and compliance;
- \$2 million for an **Australian Crime Commission** investigation into the practice of illegal killing, poaching and transportation of turtle and dugong meat;
- \$700,000 towards **cleaning up marine debris** along the Far North Queensland Coast, the Torres Strait Islands and in the Coral Sea. Marine debris – especially ‘ghost nets’ – provide significant risks to dugongs and turtles; and
- \$300,000 to support the **Cairns and Fitzroy Island Turtle Rehabilitation Centres**.

Within six months a Coalition Government will also:

- introduce Federal legislation tripling the penalties for poaching and illegal transportation of turtle and dugong meat;
- establish a *National Dugong and Turtle Protection Plan* through the threatened species process; and
- work with Indigenous leaders towards an initial two-year moratorium on the taking of dugongs.

**Media Contact: Wendy Black 0418 532 534**





## **Media Release**

### **The Hon Greg Hunt MP**

Shadow Minister for Climate Action, Environment and Heritage

Friday 23 August 2013

## **Coalition announces whale & dolphin protection plan**

Australians have a deep love of our marine and coastal environments and in particular the iconic whale and dolphin species.

A Coalition Government will allocate \$2 million for the protection of whales and dolphins along our coastal waters and the establishment of a National Whale Trail to encourage coastal tourism.

Shadow Climate Action, Environment and Heritage Minister Greg Hunt and Shadow Tourism Minister Bob Baldwin, today joined the Liberal Candidate for Robertson, Lucy Wicks in making the announcement at the Point Cook Lookout at Copacabana near Gosford.

As part of the plan, a Coalition Government will allocate \$750,000 to a National Whale Stranding Action Plan to identify the most effective means of preventing and responding to whale strandings on our coastline.

A further \$750,000 will be provided for a National Dolphin Recovery Plan and to advance important conservation work, including an emergency response capability.

“It’s distressing when we see whales and dolphins stranded on a beach,” Mr Hunt said.

“Government authorities have a range of response systems, however a national approach is needed to ensure resources and knowledge can be shared and directed quickly. Time can be crucial so it’s important that there is a co-ordinated response.”

Mr Hunt said the reason why whales and dolphins became stranded was still not fully understood.

“By bringing together the work of the range of coastal conservation groups, government authorities and researchers, we will attempt to provide further answers. In that way, we will minimise the strandings and ensure our response is swifter and more effective.

“In addition, \$500,000 will fund the creation of a National Whale Trail to support tourism and education about the annual migration of whales along our coastline.”

The funding will provide grants for the communities to improve viewing facilities and land-based whale watching, which has become a tourism boom for towns along the coast during the whale season.

“We want to have a network of places such as Point Cook Lookout along the coast, so people can watch as the whales pass. They are magnificent creatures and it is breathtaking to watch them migrate each year,” Mr Hunt said.

Mr Baldwin said tourism from whale watching had become an important business for many coastal communities and the funding would assist in creating a National Whale Trail that people could follow.

“People want to be able to see the whales from these land-based vantage points,” he said.

“They also want information about the types of whales and their migratory patterns, and this education will be an important part of the National Whale Trail.”

Mrs Wicks said that tourism was an important part of the local Robertson economy.

“Whale watching is a growing business and having a National Whale Trail will only add to that whilst creating local jobs,” she said.

“We can see the local interest by the work already being done by the Central Coast Marine Research Centre. It’s organisations like this that will benefit from this funding.”

A Coalition Government will also continue the action to stop whaling in the Southern Ocean.

The Coalition supports the international legal case taken by the Australian Government against Japanese whalers.

Should the whaling season continue, the Coalition commits to sending a Customs vessel to the Southern Ocean. It is important that Australia has a Southern Ocean presence given the ongoing risk of confrontation between whalers and protestors.

**Media Contact: Wendy Black 0418 532 534**



# The Coalition's Policy for a Green Army

July 2013



## KEY POINTS

The Coalition will create a standing 'Green Army' that will gradually build to a 15,000 strong environmental workforce.

The Coalition understands that a stronger economy is fundamental to giving us the ability and the personnel to embark on environmental restoration, to lower carbon emissions and to develop cleaner technologies.

The Coalition has a strong track record of delivering on-the-ground environmental projects and tackling environmental issues head on.

The Coalition's Green Army policy will build to 15,000 young people, the largest standing environmental workforce in Australia's history, to provide real and practical solutions to cleaning up riverbanks and creek beds, re-vegetating sand dunes, re-vegetating mangrove habitat, and a host of other environmental conservation projects.

The Green Army will work with, and complement the work undertaken by, local land care groups, bush care groups, foreshore communities, Natural Resource Management (NRM) Groups, local catchment authorities and councils in their work restoring and protecting the local environment.

Our Green Army policy will not just deliver tangible benefits for the environment. It will boost workforce training and productivity by providing meaningful, practical and hands-on environmental skills and experience for thousands of Australians.

The Coalition believes in the importance of caring for the environment, both now and for future generations.





# INTRODUCTION

The Howard Government implemented the Green Corps programme in 1996 to employ young people in environmental projects to preserve and restore our natural and cultural environment.

The Green Corps provided young people with improved career and employment prospects through accredited training, on-the-project training and personal development while participating in environmental and heritage projects.

Over the life of the Green Corps programme under the Howard Government, participants delivered the following outcomes:

- propagated and planted over 14 million trees;
- erected more than 8,000 kilometres of fencing;
- cleared over 50,000 hectares of weeds;
- collected more than 9,500 kilograms of seeds; and
- constructed or maintained more than 5,000 kilometres of walking track or boardwalks.

Specific projects funded under the former Coalition Government's Green Corps programme included:

- the Peel Waterways Foreshore Protection and Rehabilitation Project, which focussed on improving the waterway health of the Peel-Yalgorup Wetlands system; and
- the Jarrahdale Heritage Park project, which focussed on implementing revegetation works to the Gooralong Brooke Foreshore.

Under the Rudd-Gillard Government, the successful Green Corps programme was replaced with the National Green Jobs Corps, which effectively re-classified unemployed people who continued to receive an income support payment, and was then abolished altogether.

A cleaner environment is an essential part of restoring hope, reward and opportunity for all Australians because we should leave our country in better shape than we found it.



The Coalition will create a standing 'Green Army' that will gradually build to a 15,000 strong environmental workforce. We will create and properly resource the Green Army, as a larger and more lasting version of the former Green Corps. It will be Australia's largest-ever environmental deployment.

It will mark the first time that Australia has approached environmental remediation with the same seriousness and level of organisation that we have long brought to bushfire preparedness and other local and regional priorities.

Australia's unique landscape instils in us a deep appreciation of the fragility of the natural environment and the requirement to protect it.

The Green Army complements our 'Direct Action' approach to climate change.

Direct Action provides Australians with the opportunity for individuals, communities, organisations and companies to help address our environmental challenges.

Our Direct Action policy will ensure reductions in carbon emissions take place within Australia without slugging families, businesses and the economy with a great big carbon tax.

Our policies will make a real difference to improving the environment in our own backyard and addressing climate change.

Our vision for Australia is a country where, individually and collectively, we can more often be our best selves.

Australians are generous, decent, optimistic and committed people who want to do the right thing by those around them.





## THE PLAN

The Coalition's Green Army will build to 15,000 young people, the largest standing environmental workforce in Australia's history. The objective of the Green Army is to combat land degradation, clean up our waterways, provide real and practical solutions to cleaning up riverbanks and creek beds, re-vegetate sand dunes, re-vegetate mangrove habitat and a host of other environmental conservation projects.

The Coalition believes in encouraging hands-on, practical, grassroots environmental action as a means of fixing environmental problems, as well as tapping into the knowledge of local communities, encouraging them to identify and fix their own local problems.

This approach fosters teamwork, local ownership and community spirit.

The Green Army will provide funding to work with, and complement the work undertaken by, local land care groups, bush care groups, foreshore communities, Natural Resource Management (NRM) Groups, local catchment authorities and councils in their work remediating the local environment.

Importantly, the scheme will provide on the job training for young people.

Participants will receive a training allowance, as well as gaining valuable work skills and potential qualifications in different areas of environmental remediation.

Each project will be unique in its focus, with training tailored to specific local environmental priorities including:

- propagation and planting of native seedlings;
- weed control;
- re-vegetation and regeneration of local parks;
- habitat protection and restoration;
- improving water quality by cleaning up waterways;
- re-vegetation of sand dunes and mangroves;
- creek bank regeneration;
- foreshore and beach restoration;
- construction of boardwalks and walking tracks to protect local wildlife; and
- cultural heritage restoration.



There are a range of potential projects that have already been submitted for consideration to the Coalition including:

- **Weed eradication**

Undertaking weed eradication and fuel reduction activities in natural bushland reserves to improve native vegetation and reduce bushfire risk to homes close to bush areas on the fringe of metropolitan areas.

- **Coastal**

Protecting beaches from further erosion through the construction of sea walls and coastal stabilisation works.

- **River clearing**

Remediation projects along rivers by rehabilitating foreshores, stabilising riverbanks, reducing weed density to improve water flow and improving water quality.

- **Indigenous focused**

Local Indigenous communities working to maintain and protect local significant sites through weed management, cleaning up of local creeks, revegetation and regeneration of local parks.

- **Rural projects**

Restoration plans to link up old walking tracks through weed eradication, vegetation management, bush regeneration, protecting cultural sites and historic places, through activities including erosion control, fencing and revegetation works.

The work a person undertakes as part of a Green Army programme would normally be counted toward the requirements of a training course such as a Certificate 1 or 2 in land management, park management, landscaping or horticulture.

Green Army projects will run for up to 26 weeks (full-time). Projects will deploy nine participants led by a supervisor who will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the project.

Funding will be provided to each Green Army team for materials and equipment to allow participants to carry out their work.





The scheme is an opt-in programme initially for 17-24 year olds.

Participants can apply as school leavers and gap year students and the unemployed can also opt to join the Green Army as an alternative to Work for the Dole programmes.

Upon completion, there will be opportunities for participants to undertake further education and training or potential employment with councils, state and national parks, as well as undertake careers in the thousands of environmental businesses across Australia.

The Green Army programme will be managed by the Environment Department.

To streamline application processes for both potential projects and Green Army applicants, the Department will conduct project assessments once every six months.

Projects will be assessed on a merit basis against their environmental benefits, their contribution to the local community and their potential to enhance skills training for participants.

Participants will be assessed on a merit basis against their employment status, location relative to approved projects, commitment to skills training, and contribution to the community.

This workforce will be capable of supplying the skilled, motivated and sustained attention that large-scale environmental remediation needs.

The Green Army will be available on an ongoing basis (over and above the existing efforts of councils, farmers, volunteers and national parks personnel) to tackle the environmental tasks that most urgently need willing hands to do the job.

There are hundreds of organisations and local environmental groups across Australia that are already doing some of this work, mostly on a volunteer basis, and they deserve our recognition for making this country a better, cleaner and safer place. These groups, plus local councils, could submit conservation projects that require a significant labour force.

The Green Army will renew the type of work done through the Natural Heritage Trust under the former Coalition Government. Between 1997 and 2007, \$5.1 billion was invested to help more than 800,000 volunteers to support threatened species in over 1.4 million hectares of habitat; reduce pests and weeds across over 15 million hectares and help protect eight million hectares of wetlands.

Our Green Army will deliver tangible benefits for the environment, skills development for thousands of young Australians, and will strengthen local community involvement.



## THE CHOICE

The Coalition's Green Army will be Australia's biggest deployment of personnel for environmental restoration.

It will be the first time that we have approached environmental remediation with the same seriousness and level of organisation that we have brought to bushfire preparedness or other local and regional priorities.

The Coalition previously rolled out the successful Green Corps programme that saw over 17,000 young Australians participate in over 1,700 projects – projects that provided real benefits for the environment, tangible skills training for participants and strengthened local communities.

The Labor Government, by contrast, stripped the former Green Corps programme and transformed it into a programme where young long-term unemployed Australians were re-classified and continued to receive an income support payment, but with very little done to help the environment.

Labor's programme did little to motivate the long-term unemployed to move into employment. The programme was not designed to assist those specifically interested in conservation of our natural environment to participate.

Labor's approach to the environment is to hit families, businesses and the economy with a great big new tax that not only increases the cost of living, but according to the Government's own forecasting, will actually see an increase in Australia's carbon emissions by 2020.

The Coalition's Green Army programme will encourage hands-on, practical, grassroots environmental action as a means of fixing environmental problems, as well as tapping into the knowledge of local communities, encouraging them to identify and fix their own local problems.





## COST

The Coalition's Green Army will begin with 250 projects in 2014-15, building up to 1,500 projects in 2018-19.

By 2018-19, it is estimated that there will be a standing force of 15,000 people who will be taking part in the Green Army each year.

The Coalition's Green Army will cost up to \$50 million in the first year starting on 1 July 2014 and \$300 million over the forward estimates period (with total costs capped at a maximum of \$300 million).

It is expected that this will provide for over 1,500 Green Army projects over the forward estimates period.



Hope.  
Reward.  
Opportunity.



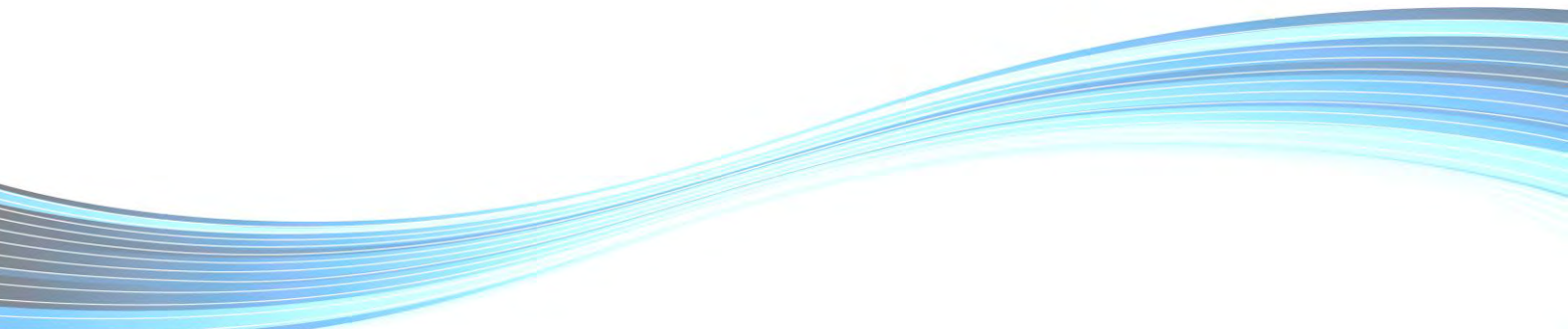
**THE NATIONALS** *for Regional Australia*

For further details of the Coalition's Plan go to  
[www.realsolutions.org.au](http://www.realsolutions.org.au)



## Attachment C

### Australian Greens





## **SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS 2013 FEDERAL ELECTION SURVEY**

### **A National Coastal Council or Commission for Australia**

The Greens agree that coastal zone policies, particularly with respect to climate change adaptation are poorly coordinated. If supported by coastal councils nationwide, the Greens would be supportive of new coordinating body such as a National Coastal Council, particularly to clarify the role of each tier of government in relation to coastal management.

### **Implementing priority recommendations from the 'Managing our Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate – The Time to Act is Now' report.**

The Greens support the top ten recommendations identified by the SCCG. In 2009, in welcoming the report Senator Christine Milne said:

*Mitigation, as vigorously and rapidly as we can, is the best insurance against the worst of the projected coastal impacts. Obviously this is a global task, but as a country with a very high percentage of population and infrastructure in the coastal zone, it should be a high priority for Australia that the international community achieves an effective mitigation strategy at Copenhagen.*

*The government is running up the white flag on Australia's coastline and the 711,000 residences on that coastline. For every metre of sea level rise, you can talk about up to 100 metres of incursion in vulnerable coastal areas. Australians must take notice of the House of Representatives committee report but they must then come back and say to the Prime Minister and to Minister Wong, 'You cannot look us in the eye and tell us that your targets are in any way going to mitigate this outcome.'*

### **A consistent and coordinated approach to natural hazards management and climate change adaptation in the Australian coastal zone.**

The Greens agree that Australia needs a more coordinated approach to natural hazard management and climate change adaptation, in coastal zones and nationwide.

We are very concerned that in recent years Australia has suffered through more extreme heat waves, floods, fires, cyclones and storms. In response we initiated a Senate Inquiry into extreme weather events to identify the gaps in our preparedness for the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

In our Additional Comments to the Committee report we said:

*All tiers of Government are responsible for preparation for and recovering from natural disasters and extreme weather events. The evidence presented to the Committee makes it clear, however, that existing plans are frequently*

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*unimplemented and preparations are uncoordinated. These failures must be sheeted home to the Commonwealth. The Greens strongly endorse the Committee's observation that:*

*5.131 At the same time, national leadership by the Commonwealth government is also required. The Commonwealth government's own position paper on climate change adaptation identifies the importance of leadership at a national level in terms of managing and responding to extreme weather events. Rather, during the course of the inquiry, it became apparent to the committee that the Commonwealth government's oversight of its response to climate change and extreme weather events has not achieved all that is required. Key documents, such as the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework, have not been reviewed or properly implemented. Promised reports measuring Australia's progress on adapting to climate change, such as the 'Climate Futures Report', have not materialised.*

*The Greens contend, however, that is not sufficient for the Committee to simply recommend that the Commonwealth Government should implement the findings of the Productivity Commission inquiry into Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation. Rather, we believe the Committee should condemn the Government for its failure to lead and coordinate efforts to prepare for and recover from natural disasters and extreme weather events. The buck passing, particularly onto local Government's which frequently lack the required capacity, needs to cease.*

### **Funding for Local Government and community coastal program**

The Greens believe that the Australian Government is failing to adequately invest in reducing the risk of natural disasters. Additional funding is needed nationwide to allow additional protective works including barrages for unusual tides, levee banks, sea walls, properly maintained fire breaks and access trails, improved flood drainage and dams.

According to the Insurance Australia Group, the emergency management community generally accepts that one dollar spent on risk mitigation can save at least two dollars in recovery costs. But Australian Government spending on mitigation initiatives represents around only 3 per cent of what it spends on post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.

The Productivity Commission recently reached a similar conclusion, noting that effective emergency management requires striking the right balance between preventing and preparing for disasters on the one hand, and responding to and recovering from them on the other. The Commission highlighted that compared to the \$6.7 billion spent on disaster recovery over the last 6 years, only \$0.18 billion has been spent on disaster mitigation.

Most recently the Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer Communities has called for an annual program of Australian Government expenditure on pre-disaster resilience of \$250 million. The Roundtable makes three key recommendations each of which the Greens strongly endorse:

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- 1) Improve co-ordination of pre-disaster resilience by appointing a National Resilience Advisor and establishing a Business and Community Advisory Group.
- 2) Commit to long term annual consolidated funding for pre-disaster resilience.
- 3) Identify and prioritise pre-disaster investment activities that deliver a positive net impact on future budget outlays.

The Greens are also very supportive of the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF). Its role has been to lead the national research community in generating the information needed by decision-makers in government and in vulnerable sectors and communities to manage the risks of climate change impacts.

There have been 144 research projects involving several hundred researchers around the nation. Outputs from these studies are now feeding into decision-making in the public and private spheres. For example, the NCCARF assists local communities in interpreting the results of complex climate models, to help them make effective, science based decision about land-use planning.

Numerous witnesses to the recent Senate Inquiry into recent trends in and preparedness for extreme weather events have made it clear that NCCARF has been a very effective institution that is central to climate change adaptation policy and planning and that it should be retained.

In response to these issues the Greens recently committed to:

- a) Expanding the existing National Disaster Resilience Program by:
  - Substantially increasing funding from around \$50 million to around \$350 million per year.
  - Ensuring projects are appropriately prioritised and targeted by appointing a National Resilience Advisor and establishing a National Resilience Advisory Group.
  - Removing the existing limitation that the Commonwealth will contribute up to only 50% of the cost of a project, in recognition of the fact that some state and local governments will be unable to match the Commonwealth's spending power.
- b) Maintaining the National Climate Change Adaptation Facility with \$10 million per year for a second 5 years funding round.

### **A National Coastal Information System for Australia**

The Greens believe a major problem exacerbating the poor targeting of risk mitigation investment is the fact that Australia lacks a standardised national approach to the collection and publication of hazard data – including in relation to coastal zones.

The recent Productivity Commission review into Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation noted that the government has recently committed to establishing a flood risk information portal to provide a single access point to flood mapping data. The Commission recommended, however, that the initiative should “be expanded over time to encompass other natural hazards” and that “Guidelines to improve the quality and consistency of risk

information should also be regularly updated and take climate change into account where feasible". The Greens agree with this assessment.

Our plan to expand the existing National Disaster Resilience Program by substantially increasing funding from around \$50 million to around \$350 million per year identifies as an eligible activity the development of nationally consistent data collection and analysis and nationally consistent post-disaster evaluation. An effective, integrated National Coastal Information System would obviously meet these criteria well.

### **Maintaining public ownership of and public access to and along the coastal zone**

The Australian Greens strongly support the principle of retaining public ownership of coastal lands and ongoing adequate funding for management.

The Greens recognise the ecological and cultural importance of our coastal lands around Australia, and the significant pressures many areas face - particularly from the ever intensifying development along our coastlines.

As part of the Greens recently announced three year \$120 million plan to protect Australia's threatened species and ecosystems, the Australian Greens propose to provide \$30 million per annum to:

- Fund comprehensive studies to identify and map important habitat nationally, (including protected ecological communities, areas of critical habitat for threatened species and important wildlife corridors);
- Protect that habitat through bioregional plans that guide development and establish clear no-go zones for different activities within each region across Australia.

These bioregional plans would be developed in partnership with state and local governments where possible, and rolled out progressively with priority on high risk biodiversity areas – as such it would be anticipated our coastal regions under pressure would be prioritised for assessment and protection.

The Australian Greens have also committed to restoring the Labor Government's \$470 million cuts to the Biodiversity Fund, which the Greens helped establish as part of the Clean Energy Package, to promote habitat restoration and management, including along our coasts.

The Greens' election platform, including each of these commitments, will be fully costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office, and all spending will be balanced by revenue measures.

The Australian Greens are also fighting to ensure that federal veto powers over Australia's most environmentally damaging projects must remain with the federal government and are not given away to the states. Of great concern to the Greens and many environmental experts and community groups across Australia is the Coalition's plans to deliver on big business' wish to have state governments in total control of our nationally important environmental assets. Despite the Greens' best efforts, Labor refused to work with us to

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“Abbott-proof” our national environment laws by outlawing any hand off of approval powers to state governments.

Utilising the National Lands Acquisition Act 1989 by expanding the ‘interest’ considerations within the Act to purchase private lands in coastal areas that are considered nationally iconic, threatened, unique and or socially and culturally significant.

### **National Marine Management Strategy**

We are committed to a cooperative national and international approach to management of our marine environment, with ecosystems-based management being the most sustainable and appropriate model for management of Australia’s marine territories and support the development of an intergovernmental National Marine Management Strategy.

The Australian Greens will continue to work to achieve ecosystems-based bio-regional marine planning that identifies and manages all uses and impacts including climate change and industrialisation; a stronger national approach to eradicating marine pests; and national standards for the ecological health of all marine and coastal bio-regions.

For over ten years the Greens campaigned for a national network of marine protected areas based on rigorous scientific analysis. This has finally been achieved but for it to successfully protect marine animals and plants in the long term, the Greens believe that excellent management is vital. For our position on how we consider Australian’s marine environment should be managed, I refer you to the Australian Greens Marine and Coastal Areas policy, accessible here: <http://greens.org.au/policies/marine-coastal-areas>.

23 August 2013





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