



National Campaign Headquarters

18 August 2010

Dr Graeme Blackman

Chair

Australian Council of National Trusts

PO Box 413

Campbell ACT 2612

Dear Dr Blackman

Thank you for your letter of 11 August 2010 concerning the 2010 Federal Election.

The Gillard Labor Government values the important work of the National Trusts in preserving Australia's natural, physical and cultural heritage; recognises the voluntary efforts and time that many members dedicate; and appreciates the roles of the Trusts in assisting the Government to develop robust national heritage policy.

The significance that Federal Labor places on heritage issues is indicated by the fact that the portfolio is held by a Minister of cabinet rank and by the unprecedented investments that have been in heritage sites and issues since Labor's election in November 2007.

Actively conserve heritage of national and international significance

The Government supports a strong and independent Australian Heritage Council and recently appointed Professor Carmen Lawrence to chair the Council, which has overseen the significant expansion of the National Heritage List since 2004. The Council has provided important advice on the rollout of \$60 million investment in heritage conservation through the Jobs Fund.

The Gillard Labor Government, if re-elected, will continue to engage with key heritage organisations through the Minister's Heritage Working Group to develop heritage policy. As an initiative of the Labor Government, we will continue to ensure representation on the Minister's Heritage Working Group from the Australian Council of National Trusts.

As you would be aware, Federal Labor announced the National Historic Sites program in the 2009/10 Budget and allocated new, ongoing funding of \$5 million per annum to protect, conserve and maintain places important to our history and heritage. Importantly, this funding is specifically targeted to those places on the National, Commonwealth and state heritage lists.

The Gillard Labor Government will also provide dramatically improved environment water flows and provide certainty for farmers reliant on the Murray Darling Basin.

Since the Government started buy backs in February 2008, Federal Labor has bought back one out of every twenty litres of the Murray Darling Basin's irrigation water and returned it to the rivers - some 900 billion litres of water entitlement. This is nearly five times Adelaide's yearly water supply.

By contrast, for over nearly 12 years in government, the Coalition did not buy a single drop of water for the Murray.

By the time the Murray Darling Basin Plan comes into effect in 2014, a re-elected Gillard Labor Government will have returned one out of every seven litres of irrigation water to the rivers, through a combination of buy backs and more efficient irrigation.

We anticipate that by the time the Plan comes into effect, Federal Labor's buy backs and infrastructure investment will have already delivered much of what the rivers will require to be sustainable. However if re-elected, we will bridge any remaining gap between what has been returned and what is required to be returned by the independent Murray Darling Basin Authority.

The Gillard Labor Government will do this by continuing to buy back water each year beyond 2014, until we have returned all the water the Authority determines our rivers need in the final Basin plan next year.

The Gillard Labor Government is determined to provide the rivers with the water they need.

Support the work of the National Trusts of Australia

Federal Labor has provided direct funding support for the Australian Council of National Trusts through an investment in 2009-10 of \$927,000 to support activities that increase public awareness, **T + AUTHORISED N.MARTIN for the ALP, 5/9 Sydney Ave. Barton ACT.**

PO BOX 20429 WORLD SQUARE NSW 2002

T 61 2 9384 2222 F 61 2 9264 2271 E campaign10@alp.org.au ABN 38 318 251 221

understanding and appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage, and enhance and promote its conservation and assist the Trusts to advocate and work for the preservation and enhancement of Australia's cultural heritage.

If re-elected, the Gillard Labor Government will continue to resource and support the activities of the National Trust movement.

The \$60 million heritage program of Federal Labor's Jobs Fund was the largest ever investment in the protection and conservation of Australia's heritage. This program included a number of separate components focused on:

- National Heritage-listed places - a total of \$16 million, with individual grants of \$50,000 to \$2 million.
- National Trust properties - a total of \$12 million, with individual grants of \$20,000 to \$2 million.
- Community heritage places (large projects) of local, state or national significance - a total of \$11.4 million, with individual grants of \$100,000 to \$2 million.
- Community heritage places (small projects) - a total of \$10 million, with individual grants of \$20,000 to \$100,000.
- Natural heritage places, particularly World Heritage - a total of \$8.6 million, with individual grants of \$200,000 to \$2 million.

The program has involved 190 heritage projects, supported more than 2750 jobs around the country and was developed as part of the Australian Government's Jobs and Training Compact.

Deliver better conservation outcomes of natural and cultural heritage throughout Australia

The Cooperative National Heritage Agenda (CNHA) was originally created four years ago as the basis for enhanced national cooperation between the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments on heritage issues.

Last year the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand undertook a review of the original priority list and sought Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC) agreement to revitalise the list by adding several new priority projects. As a result the Agenda includes:

- National standards for data collection and reporting measure.
- Cooperation on research.
- Heritage and environment sustainability (domestic heritage buildings).

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- Heritage and environmental sustainability (commercial heritage buildings).
- Heritage economics research.
- Historic Shipwrecks National Collaborative Research Project.
- A comprehensive national heritage inventory and information portal.
- National standards and guidelines for conservation and management of heritage places.

Last year Federal Labor received the *Implications of Climate Change for Australia's World Heritage Properties: A Preliminary Assessment* report.

The Gillard Labor Government recognises that climate change effects are likely to exacerbate the current problems associated with human-induced changes to the landscape through deforestation, fire, urban expansion, water extraction, tourism development and visitation as well as non-anthropogenic factors such as the spread of exotic pests and diseases.

Needs identified by the preliminary assessment include:

- Climate change management plans for Australia's World Heritage properties, climate change information sharing systems, and communication networks and climate change training for managers.
- Global climate change models for fine-scale prediction relevant to World Heritage properties, including enhanced data collection with ecological and genetic baseline data and palaeo-climatic data.
- Fire-related research into ecosystem responses and a national database of species responses.
- A further assessment of vulnerability of cultural World Heritage values to climate change.
- Strategies to avoid habitat fragmentation and enhance ecological connectivity of World Heritage properties in their landscape and ecosystem contexts.
- Reclamation strategies to provide refuge habitat for threatened species of World Heritage value.

A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will make the management of the climate change risks to our national heritage a priority for its next term.

Kind regards,
ALP Information Services

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