

16 October 2008

ACT Labor – making our schools and homes more sustainable

A re-elected ACT Labor team will invest \$2 million to ensure every ACT public school will have a water tank and will introduce new measures to ensure housing in the ACT is more solar efficient.

Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Planning Andrew Barr made the announcement today at Majura Primary School following a letter from year 5 student Patrick Connell.

"Climate change and drought are the most important challenges facing our community," Mr Barr said.

"The ACT Labor team has invested \$100 million in combating climate change and \$20 million to make schools carbon neutral by 2017. In contrast the ACT Liberals plan to slash funding for greenhouse programs by \$17.5 million.

"Everyone but the ACT Liberals realise how important it is that the ACT community minimises water and energy use and prepares for the impacts of climate change.

"Young Patrick Connell knows this which is why he wrote to the Chief Minister asking if his school could have a water tank to help maintain the students' playing spaces.

"So I am very pleased to announce today that a re-elected ACT Labor team will ensure that Majura Primary gets its water tank along with every other ACT Public school through the Weathering the Change program.

"I congratulate Patrick on his initiative to protect the environment, and I congratulate his parents and the staff of Majura Primary for ensuring Patrick and his fellow students understand the importance of looking after our planet in practical ways." Mr Barr said.

ACT Labor will also further reduce Canberra's carbon footprint by prioritising more solar efficient housing, including introducing legislation to protect solar rights.

A re-elected Labor Government will:

- Develop and implement legislation protecting solar rights;
- Mandate passive solar orientation of stand alone blocks in new subdivisions;
- Engage with industry to review the sub-division solar rating tool to allow for a better melding of house design and block orientation;
- Consult with industry to alter the current solar access rules in the Territory Plan to ensure a better mechanism for measuring energy gain rather than just a simple amount of sunlight required; and

Media release

- Work with the community and industry to implement, over the next ten years, carbon targets for entire estates. This would entail identifying a carbon target or limit for the entirety of a new suburb or estate development.

Mr Barr said the measures build on the solar feed-in tariff introduced by the ACT Labor team to encourage Canberrans to generate renewable solar energy and complement ACT Labor's commitment to help Canberrans purchase discounted solar panels for their homes.

"ACT Labor knows the planning of our city has a major impact on our environmental sustainability and we have been working with the community and experts to establish planning policies and regulations that reduce our impact on the environment," Mr Barr said.

"As yesterday's Treasury analysis of policy costings shows, the ACT Liberals will rip money from climate change programs. Only a vote for ACT Labor will ensure continued massive investments in ensuring our community is able to look after our environment and is ready for climate change." Mr Barr said.

Statement Ends

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