

## PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Position:

- FAMILY FIRST is passionate about caring for Australia's environment to preserve it for our children and future generations to enjoy;
- FAMILY FIRST believes that protecting our environment starts at home. FAMILY FIRST wants to help families live the environmentally responsible life because the best way to improve our environment is for everyone to take responsibility and do their bit to reduce their energy and water use;
- FAMILY FIRST believes we must adopt commonsense policies that strike the right balance between maintaining our prosperity and providing more jobs for more Australians while ensuring that we protect our natural environment and wisely use our precious resources;
- FAMILY FIRST believes the impact on families has been ignored in the debate over the environment and climate change and fears families will be worse off. Too often the debate involves highbrow discussions of things removed from the everyday realities of families, such as carbon trading and renewable energy targets;
- FAMILY FIRST believes it is important to recognise that households account for less than 10 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, with the bulk coming from the electricity sector, gas, water, agriculture, forestry and fishing, but FAMILY FIRST recognises that families can play an important role in greening their homes by investing in energy efficiency;
- FAMILY FIRST believes that our precious flora and fauna need appropriate protection from extinction;
- FAMILY FIRST is concerned about nuclear energy and supports a debate but believes that solar thermal and geothermal energy may be more viable alternatives, without the problem of long term nuclear waste;

- FAMILY FIRST believes Australia should only consider introducing an emission trading scheme after a truly global scheme is adopted. FAMILY FIRST believes this should include the big emitters of the US, China, India and Brazil. However, FAMILY FIRST is concerned that the cost to business of complying with an emissions trading scheme will be transferred to families through increased costs of goods and services, because FAMILY FIRST does not believe markets always serve families well. FAMILY FIRST is concerned that the cost to business of complying with an emissions trading scheme will be transferred to families through increased costs of goods and services. The *Report of the Task Group on Emissions Trading* confirmed that families will be slugged with even higher petrol costs and electricity bills.

### **Actions:**

- FAMILY FIRST believes that Australia should set targets based on hard scientific data from a detailed Australian report and solid evidence about the potential impact on jobs and livelihoods;
- FAMILY FIRST calls for any emissions trading scheme that is implemented to also include compensation for families, particularly low-income families who could face financial ruin;
- FAMILY FIRST calls for any targets or pricing of household consumption of energy to take into account the number of people in each household;
- FAMILY FIRST wants the Government to provide genuine relief to families by using revenue from the sale of permits to offer innovative financial assistance packages to help families reduce their energy costs, such as subsidies and low-interest loans to buy energy efficient products;
- FAMILY FIRST also wants the Government to consider ways of compensating businesses that have competitors in countries that have not taken equivalent action to address greenhouse gas emissions. The survival of these businesses and the employment they provide would be at risk without adequate arrangements as part of an emissions trading scheme;

- FAMILY FIRST calls for a significant increase in investment in new low emission technologies, but there must be balance between non-fossil and fossil-based technologies;
- FAMILY FIRST believes we need to consider how we employ other technologies to combat global warming including renewable fuels and our land and transport use, making sure that the use of renewable fuels made from crops does not push up food prices for families;
- FAMILY FIRST wants higher energy efficiency standards for new cars including European fuel efficiency standards by 2010. FAMILY FIRST would support assistance for the Australian car industry to help them meet those standards;
- FAMILY FIRST calls for the Federal Government to make a substantial investment in public transport to supplement state government investment. FAMILY FIRST wants a priority given to public transport investment in the outer suburbs and regional areas;
- FAMILY FIRST calls for more funding for alternative energy research such as renewable solar energy. FAMILY FIRST wants to increase funding to the Australia Research Council (ARC) and the Photovoltaics Centre of Excellence (University of New South Wales) to boost cutting edge research in this important area;
- FAMILY FIRST wants to expand the system of minimum energy performance standards to a broader range of appliances and equipment and phase out the sale of appliances that do not meet minimum standards. New and improved standards should be introduced by 2010;
- FAMILY FIRST wants the Federal Government to lead by example, ensuring the buildings it occupies have a five star energy efficiency rating, which will help to drive the move to more energy efficient buildings;
- FAMILY FIRST supports the House of Representatives' Environment and Heritage Committee's recommendation for the establishment of a national "Sustainability Commission" as an

independent statutory body to negotiate a sustainability charter and offer expert advice to the government;

- FAMILY FIRST wants the Government to increase funding to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, to support its work protecting this magnificent marine environment;
- FAMILY FIRST supports more effective strategies to treat and recycle waste;
- FAMILY FIRST wants incentives to reduce waste and pollutants in the environment;
- FAMILY FIRST wants new dams built to boost and secure water supplies for the future.