



Mr Greg McFarlane
Vegan Australia
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Dear Mr McFarlane,

ALP response to Vegan Australia and Vegan NSW Federal Election Survey 2019

Thank you for your contact requesting the Labor Party respond to the Vegan Australia and Vegan NSW 2019 federal election survey.

Our responses related to the policy issues raised by the survey are set out below.

ANIMAL WELLBEING

Labor has developed a comprehensive plan to re-establish national leadership on animal welfare.

We will provide \$1 million to establish an independent Inspector-General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports as an independent statutory position operating from within the Department of Agriculture. The Inspector-General will advise on the protection of animals in all Commonwealth-regulated activities and report directly to the Minister of the day on issues concerning live exports, animal welfare standards and guidelines. The Inspector-General will also work with the states and territories to establish an independent Office of Animal Welfare to oversee animal protection and welfare activities nationally.

Labor will also re-establish state and territory cooperation on animal welfare matters to ensure animal welfare matters receive the consistent national approach they deserve.

Labor will work with state and territory governments, industry and animal welfare groups to update and renew the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy for the coming decade. We will draw on the best available research and evidence to develop a strategy that confirms Australia as a leader in our region for the care and protection of animals.

To provide more transparency and accountability, under Labor, the Minister for Agriculture will provide quarterly reports to the Parliament on matters including, allegations of breaches of animal welfare standards and investigations undertaken, and any sanctions or other action taken for breaches of Australia's animal welfare standards.

Labor will immediately ban the northern summer live sheep trade and propose a plan which would phase out the live sheep trade within five years. The only way to ensure scientific animal welfare standards are met, community expectations on animal welfare are met and for certainty to be provided for our farmers is to ban the northern summer live sheep export trade and to implement an orderly phase out over a five year period.

Labor will introduce a domestic ban on elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn. Australia's domestic market is unregulated and at the moment there's nothing to stop people buying and selling products containing ivory and rhino horn if they manage to get them into the country. Labor will ban the trade and develop appropriate penalties and new offences for individuals and companies which circumvent the ban.

Labor has also secured stronger measures to phase out cosmetic testing on animals. Labor first introduced legislation to ban cosmetic testing on animals in 2016. The legislation and the related rules will bring Australian cosmetic testing laws in line with those in other countries which have moved towards banning cosmetic testing on animals.

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

A Shorten Labor Government will provide urgent action and overdue leadership to step up the fight to protect Australia's environment and hand on a better environment to the next generation.

We will invest more than \$1 billion in new environment programs to tackle the extinction crisis; cut single-use plastics; protect our beaches and coastlines; clean up the nation's rivers; double the number of Indigenous Rangers caring for country; and protect the Great Barrier Reef.

In February the Liberals confirmed Australia has suffered the first global mammal extinction directly as a result of climate change. A Shorten Labor Government will initiate a national campaign to save Australia's native species by creating a \$100 million Saving Native Species Fund.

A Shorten Labor Government is committed to taking real action on climate change – we are determined to pass on a better deal to the next generation. Labor is committed to reducing pollution by 45 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030 and reaching net zero pollution by 2050.

As part of our Climate Change Action Plan, Labor will help the land sector to cut pollution while giving farmers and the forestry industry new opportunities to earn income: strengthening carbon farming initiative so farmers benefit from reducing pollution.

Broad-scale land clearing also needs to be brought under control to ensure Australia has a robust offset market and so we can meet our Paris targets. Land clearing creates pollution and removes vegetation that absorbs pollution. Rates of land clearing more than doubled in Queensland after the LNP abolished virtually all controls, peaking at about two-thirds the rate of the Amazon's deforestation and killing millions of native wildlife. While Queensland

has re-instated sensible land clearing laws to reduce pollution and protect nature, including the Great Barrier Reef, sensible national vegetation protection controls are needed.

A Shorten Labor Government will reinvigorate the land offset market and support reducing land sector pollution by:

- Supporting the meat industry's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 through a strategic Red Meat Industry plan, with funding of \$2 million over the forward estimates.
- Reviewing and strengthening the Carbon Farming Initiative with the aim of increasing land sector abatement opportunities and ensuring Carbon Farming Initiative methodologies are robust. This will include exploring the establishment of 'premium' land sector credits which provide substantial environmental, biodiversity and other co-benefits.
- Ensuring the Federal Government can intervene to put in protections to stop broad-scale land clearing. Where states and territory properly regulate land clearing, such as Queensland, Labor will take no action.

HEALTH

A Shorten Labor Government will improve the health of all Australians with a \$115.6 million investment to promote health and prevent disease.

Prevention is better than cure, and yet, the statistics show that almost two in three adults and one in four children are overweight or obese and there are high rates of other 'modifiable risk factors' including alcohol consumption and smoking.

These risk factors cause chronic diseases such as cancer, arthritis, asthma, back pain, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes and mental health conditions. Almost one-third of this burden of disease is preventable – meaning millions of Australians could live longer, healthier lives with national action to promote health and prevent disease.

Action on these risk factors is also cost-effective, with estimates that every \$1 spent on preventive health has almost \$6 in health and productivity benefits.

- A Shorten Labor Government will tackle obesity by implementing Australia's first National Obesity Strategy. While all jurisdictions have committed to develop a Strategy, progress has stalled under the current government. Labor's National Obesity Strategy will include specific plans to increase physical activity and improve nutrition, and consideration of mandating the Health Star Rating system and food reformulation targets. Because of the urgency of action on overweight and obesity, Labor will also make several down-payments on the Strategy, including:
- Investing \$39 million over three years to roll out LiveLighter as the national anti-obesity campaign. In Western Australia and Victoria, this proven campaign has reduced the consumption of sugary drinks and fast food, as well as purchases of junk food.

- Investing \$6 million to restore federal funding to the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, which teaches kids about food in a fun, hands-on way. Labor's commitment will restore support for around 800 schools that have already implemented the program, and support at least 1,200 additional schools and early learning centres to implement the program.
- Reviewing junk food advertising to children. Labor will conduct a comprehensive review of the regulatory framework for food and drink advertising and marketing to children, in conjunction with relevant health, media and advertising bodies, to ensure the framework is fit for purpose in the contemporary media environment.

Labor will also work with consumers and experts to develop a national platform for consumer information on health and wellbeing, building on existing models such as Victoria's Better Health Channel.

CONSUMER INFORMATION AND ACCESS

Labor strongly believes that all consumers have the right to clear and accurate information to inform their choices, including choices made on the basis of ethical beliefs.

Labor strongly supports the role of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in enforcing the Australian Consumer Law. The Australian Consumer Law was introduced by the previous Labor Government, and ensures our law requires goods and service providers cannot engage in false advertising, or misleading and deceptive practices.

In Opposition, Labor has proposed increasing penalties for such conduct, with fines of up to \$50 million per offence, where consumers are misled.

So long as labelling of food products comply with relevant accurate labelling laws, Labor does not propose to change laws to specifically prevent the use of "cheese", "mince" etc on vegan or vegetarian variations or alternatives to these products.

Labor supports the current exemption of GST on fresh and healthy food. This helps to ensure consumption taxes do not create an additional barrier to healthy foods like fresh fruit and vegetables.

The above are areas we believe where Government intervention is warranted. Largely matters of options available in a variety of circumstances are driven by consumer demand. Labor recognises that ensuring the regulatory settings are correct will facilitate greater consumer choice and availability of the products they desire.

Yours sincerely

Australian Labor Campaign Headquarters

www.alp.org.au