



March 2004

The Howard Government is working for the environment

Protecting our natural environment is a priority for most Australians, and the Howard Government has an outstanding track record on environmental issues. Since coming to office, the Howard Government has taken some major steps for our environment. Here's some highlights:

THE EPBC ACT: The landmark Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act enables the Federal Government to have a direct role in environmental matters for the first time. It paves the way for rigorous environmental assessments for projects likely to impact on matters of national environmental significance. These include World Heritage properties, wetlands of international significance, listed threatened species and ecological communities, listed migratory species, the Commonwealth marine area, and nuclear actions, including uranium mining.

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST: The \$2.7 billion Natural Heritage Trust represents the biggest financial commitment to environmental action by Government in Australia's history. Since 1996, the Trust has invested much-needed funds to help local communities deliver cleaner beaches, healthier waterways, less air pollution, more productive agricultural land and save our threatened species. To date, \$1.4 billion has been invested in the Trust and related programs for more than 11,900 projects around Australia. More importantly, an estimated 400,000 Australians have been involved in these projects.

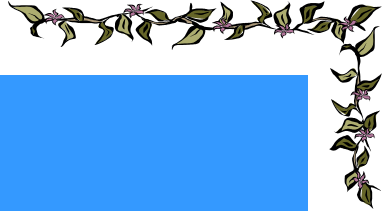
NATIONAL GREENHOUSE STRATEGY: The National Greenhouse Strategy provides the framework for advancing Australia's domestic greenhouse response. It focuses on limiting net greenhouse gas emissions, in particular to meet our international commitments, to foster knowledge and understanding of greenhouse issues, and to lay the foundations for adaptation to climate change. The establishment of the Australian Greenhouse Office in 1998 was a world first.

Protecting the environment is important to us all.

Please take the time to read through my newsletter for more environmental news.

Kind regards

Alan Eggleston



How does the Howard Government compare?

Our environment under the Howard Government

- ◆ Since 1996 the Howard Government has committed \$2.7 billion to the Natural Heritage Trust, the largest and most successful environmental restoration program in Australia's history
- ◆ Through the Natural Heritage Trust, the Howard Government empowers communities to identify and solve environmental problems in their local community
- ◆ In October 2000 Prime Minister John Howard announced a \$1.4 billion plan to attack salinity and improve water quality across Australia, declaring salinity the greatest environmental hazard confronting the country
- ◆ The Howard Government is working with industry and environmental groups, other levels of government and the broader community to meet Australia's Kyoto Protocol target (of 108% of 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by 2012)
- ◆ Doubled funding for the Living Cities Program to reduce atmospheric pollutants, reduce pollution in urban waterways and reduce stormwater systems carrying refuse into our beaches
- ◆ Introduced new national fuel quality standards for petrol and diesel from January 1 2002 which will cut emissions from motor vehicles for cleaner air and better health.

Our environment under Labor

- ◆ The ALP **opposed the creation** of the Natural Heritage Trust, the largest environmental restoration program in Australia's history
- ◆ Labor **did not invest** in the environment. In 2002/03 the Howard Government is spending 2.5 times in nominal or 2 times in real terms more on targeted environmental programs than Labor in their last year in office. Good economic management means that we can now afford to spend more on the environment
- ◆ The ALP **opposed the improvement** and streamlining of Commonwealth environmental laws, **voting against** the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
- ◆ During 13 years in office **Labor did nothing** to protect whales. Labor then acted to spoil the Howard Government's aspirations to conserve these species by blocking the EPBC Act, which enables us to establish Commonwealth whale recovery plans for species such as the highly endangered Blue whale and Southern Right whale
- ◆ Labor has **refused to pass** national legislation to protect Australia's heritage.





New lookout to boost ecotourism

It was my great pleasure to open the Golden View project at South Ledge, a striking viewing platform overlooking Mundaring Weir.

This platform is a new and exciting tourism destination in the Perth Hills region and will help create a much stronger base for the growth of tourism in the district.

I am confident that it will be a catalyst for a variety of indirect jobs expected as a result of increased visitor numbers to the site, particularly in local cafes, hotels and other businesses.

The Federal Government is proud to be associated with this project — funding of \$500,000 through the Regional Assistance Program was a major contribution to the project.



Senator Eggleston opens the Golden View project at Mundaring

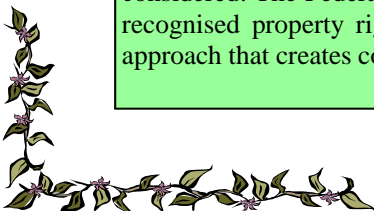
How Green Corps projects are helping our environment



The Howard Government established the Green Corps program to employ young people on environmental projects and reserve and restore our natural and cultural environment. Around 5500 young people with an interest in the environment have been given the opportunity to receive quality training while participating in projects addressing significant environmental issues. To date, Green Corps participants have removed 27,500ha of weeds, planted 3.8 million trees and shrubs, constructed or maintained 1600km of walking tracks, erected 1900km of protective fencing and collected 4800kg of seeds. Green Corps projects are located mainly in rural and remote areas of Australia. Projects focus on areas where environmental and heritage restoration and conservation are a high priority.

What are we doing about salinity?

One of the greatest environmental challenges facing the nation is the problem of salinity. The \$1.4 billion National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality announced in October 2000 combines the States and Commonwealth in tackling this problem. The plan identifies high priority, immediate actions to address salinity and deteriorating water quality in key catchments across Australia. It is by far the biggest program between the Commonwealth and the States on natural resources undertaken in our history. Funding responsibility is split equally with the states to attack salinity across 21 priority regions. In addition to the salinity problem, the broader question of the efficient use of our water resources is being considered. The Federal Government believes that clearly defined and nationally recognised property rights for water use are fundamental including a national approach that creates consistency across state borders



Why the Howard Government won't ratify

There is no doubt that on nuclear power to meet their exceed those of the developed world in this decade, do not there has been change greenhouse targets! have to meet the same stringent in our climate but, The Kyoto protocol is not a obligations required of recognising these genuine global agreement. A mammoth 75 per cent of global developed nations. effects, the Howard government emissions are not covered by Unlike developed nations, is committed to reducing the Kyoto protocol, severely developing nations do not have greenhouse gas emissions and the Kyoto protocol, severely developing nations do not have accordingly has instituted a limiting its efficacy. It is to meet the emission reduction wide range of effective policy estimated that Kyoto will targets but can choose to measures to achieve this goal. probably reduce global participate in emission The Howard government is greenhouse gas emissions by a abatement activities through firmly of the belief, however, mere one per cent by the end of c l e a n d e v e l o p m e n t that it is not in Australia's the first commitment period in mechanisms. This is a serious interests to ratify the Kyoto 2012. weakness in the existing Kyoto protocol at this stage. The This compares to a need, based arrangements. Kyoto treaty is fatally flawed, on the best science currently It is also a serious weakness in our view, and it requires available, to reduce global that there is currently no extensive revision before emissions by some 60 per cent pathway for the involvement of Australia would be prepared to based on 1990 levels. developing countries in serious ratify it. Notwithstanding this, Yet the Kyoto protocol is greenhouse gas reduction. It is Australia is on track to meet the aiming to cut emissions by only important to remember that Kyoto requirements even five per cent. So the Kyoto these developing countries have though we have not signed the protocol is fatally flawed and greenhouse gas emission levels treaty. In this regard, it is will go nowhere near to which will exceed those of the interesting that 12 of 15 of the reducing greenhouse emissions developed nations by the end of current EU nations are not by the amount needed. this decade. The agreement is meeting their Kyoto targets — Under Kyoto, developing flawed and will not meet its and many of them are relying countries, whose emissions will objectives.

Did you know? The envirofund



Community groups are encouraged to apply Australia-wide and more for money under the Australian money is being made Government Envirofund to help them available through Round Two to help local undertake projects to restore and conserve community groups take important practical their local environment. action to protect our land, waterways, coasts, vegetation and threatened species. The Envirofund is the local community component of the Australian Government's "Applications for the second round of the \$2.7 billion Natural Heritage Trust, the Envirofund for 2003-04 closed on Friday largest environmental rescue effort ever 30 January 2004. Community groups and delivered by any Australian Government. individuals will have another opportunity to Through the Envirofund, community apply for funding from the Envirofund in groups can apply for grants from just a few mid-2004," Senator Eggleston said. hundred dollars up to \$30,000. Senator "I encourage all environmental groups to Eggleston said over \$11 million had just apply. Application forms are available from been awarded under the Howard my office or by telephoning 1800 065 823 Government Envirofund to 766 projects or visiting the website at www.nht.gov.au."