



AUSTRALIAN
LABOR
PARTY

1999
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Nov Election
Platform
with Family
Parties

Our Natural Assets

Valuing Victoria's natural environment

NOV 1999 ELECTION PLATFORM

Steve Bracks

A new style of leadership

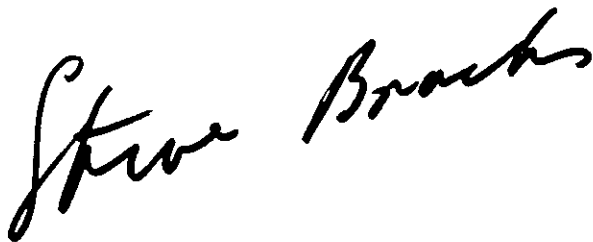
Labor's vision for the natural environment

The permanent care of our natural environment is one of the most important duties of any government.

Governments must balance the enjoyment of the environment today with a responsibility to pass it on intact to future generations. The challenge is to ensure a sustainable future.

Since the election of the Kennett Government, our environment has been under constant threat due to inappropriate commercial development and Government neglect of problems such as pollution, long-term degradation and environmental research.

Labor will end Kennett Government neglect and implement comprehensive new strategies to protect our natural environment and promote a sustainable future for Victoria.



Steve Bracks
Labor Leader



Sherryl Garbutt
Labor Conservation and
Environment Spokesperson

Our precious water resources

Labor believes water is a precious resource that belongs to the community. It is a necessity - not a luxury. Most Victorians are justifiably proud of the good quality of our water. It will be a high priority of a Labor Government to ensure that this standard is maintained and improved upon. We will ensure that country Victorians are not unfairly burdened with the cost of paying for water quality and sewerage up-grades.

Key priorities will include:

- ✓ Changing the Victorian Constitution to ensure the retention of all water authorities in public ownership so that they are directly accountable to the Victorian community.
- ✓ Setting and enforcing strong environmental guidelines for water and waste water services.
- ✓ Providing water authorities with the capacity to undertake essential water quality improvements and up-grades to sewerage treatment facilities, (for specific proposals see Greener Cities).
- ✓ Strongly protecting Victorian water catchment areas, and excluding logging in closed water catchments.
- ✓ Requiring coastal water and sewerage authorities to move to onland treatment of sewerage as soon as technically possible and refusing any new ocean outfalls.
- ✓ Protecting consumer interests, enforcing water quality and oversight and enforcing a fair water pricing system through the Essential Services Commission.

Irrigation

Water is a vital input into our primary industries and of significant importance to economic growth and rural Victoria. Water is now a valuable commodity and farmers require secure water entitlements as the basis for further investment. Environmental flows and water quality are vital for healthy rivers and catchments. There is a further need to improve our irrigation infrastructure to prevent the loss of valuable water through seepage, leakage and evaporation.

Labor will:

- ✓ Maintain our commitment to the Murray Darling Basin Cap.
- ✓ Identify and fund improvements to our irrigation infrastructure to produce water savings.
- ✓ Ensure the sustainable use of all water resources, including groundwater.