

Office of the  
Leader of the Opposition



Mr Chris Segaert  
National President  
Printing Industries Association of Australia  
25 South Parade  
AUBURN NSW 2144

Dear Mr Segaert

I refer to your letter of 24 May 2004, in which you asked for Labor's policy position on a range of issues.

I have attached the answers.

Thank you for your interest in Labor's policies.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Cook'.

John Cook  
Adviser

16/6/04 .

## **PRINTING INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION**

### **ALP POLICY RESPONSE TO ISSUES 24 MAY 2004**

#### **Industry specific issues**

##### **Employee relations – unfair dismissals**

Labor supports measures to simplify the federal unfair dismissal system to reduce compliance costs and simplify procedures.

The Government has previously rejected Labor proposals that would have:

- Cut legal costs by reducing the role of lawyers in the early stages of unfair dismissal claims;
- Improved unfair dismissal procedures; and
- Reduced uncertainty and confusion about unfair dismissal laws.

##### **Employee relations – GEERS**

See attached press release.

##### **Employee relations – maternity leave**

- Labor's commitment to paid maternity leave is satisfied by its Baby Care Payment policy, the details of which are contained in attached press release. These payments will be fully government funded.
- Labor supports the view that in considering whether family friendly work practices are reasonable for a particular business, the size and nature of the business should be considered.

##### **Taxation – GST – books**

##### **Taxation – GST – anomalies**

Labor's detailed tax policy will be released in due course, in time for the coming election.

##### **Tax – BAS**

Labor has given a commitment to fix key areas identified by small businesses as being critical improvements to their business environment. Labor will reduce the compliance burden, especially the time taken to complete the quarterly and annual GST reconciliations.

##### **Compliance burden**

Labor will give businesses the option of a simpler method of calculating GST payments, and will help small businesses get their big business suppliers to pay on time and to pay interest if they do not. We have announced that in government Labor will amend the Trade Practices Act—especially section 46—to give the ACCC the teeth it needs to prevent big business from exploiting their uneven power against small business.

### **Australian made**

Labor in government will restore Government purchasing as a key industry policy tool supporting Australian industries and creating jobs. Governments across Australia spend in excess of \$45 billion on goods and services. Where there is value for taxpayers' money over the life of the product or service, governments should have a buy Australian policy. Full details of Labor's government purchasing policy will be released prior to the election.

### **Environmental labelling**

Labor supports a life cycle approach to the evaluation of environmental impacts of goods and services. Where there is a significant variation in environmental impact between comparable products, Labor supports eco-labelling to provide the consumer with the necessary information to make informed purchasing and lifestyle decisions.

### **Corporations law – insolvency**

The voidable transactions provisions of the Corporations Act are currently being considered by the Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services as part of its inquiry into the operation of Australia's insolvency laws. Labor will consider its position on the need for reforms to current arrangements when the inquiry reports within the next few months.

### **Industry development**

Labor recognises that the Australian printing industry is a very important industry employing around 115,000 people with a turnover of \$17 billion. It is a prime example of a value adding manufacturing industry investing in new technologies that will create high skill and high wage jobs for future generations.

PRINT21 is a future growth blueprint for your industry and Labor recognises that the industry has put a great deal of work into this long-term strategy. The printing industry's commitment to analysing impediments to growth and, more importantly, promoting recommendations to overcome these impediments, demonstrates to Labor that it is possible to work together to strengthen the industry and create future jobs.

### **Industry rationalisation**

Labor is committed to working with your industry to explore ways to develop profitability and continued growth. We hope that alternative exit strategies will not be necessary. Should significant rationalisation occur, it will be necessary to ensure there are labour adjustment measures in place and that training and educational opportunities are available. This will be a key issue that will need to be discussed in reviewing PRINT21 and refocussing government effort on implementation of your recommendations.

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### **Industry research and development**

Research and development is a key driver of future productivity in the printing industry, and for the Australian economy as a whole. Private sector investment in research is well below the OECD average, has fallen nearly every year of the Howard Government, and Labor will deliver new policies to strengthen our national innovation system. Incentives to assist the private sector to invest in R&D will be the centre piece of Labor's industry policy.

### **Full restoration of tariff concession system**

Labor does not have a firm position on this issue, but will consider the printing industry's point of view as we develop our trade and industry policies.

### **Industry training**

Labor is committed to increasing the number of apprentices - particularly in areas experiencing skill shortage such as printing.

Labor has already announced two major policies that will go some way to address issues raised by the printing industry. Labor's Aim Higher policy will fund an additional 20,000 TAFE places per year. Labor's Youth Guarantee policy will encourage young people into training in traditional trades. There will be 7,500 new training places per year for 15 - 18 year olds. The Youth Guarantee will also see a Latham Labor Government paying the TAFE fees of secondary school students wanting to undertake training.

Labor will be announcing policies before the next election in relation to workforce skill development including initiatives to encourage training opportunities for the mature aged workers.

### **General issues**

#### **Taxation - general**

#### **Taxation - bracket creep**

#### **Taxation - personal tax rates**

#### **Tax - superannuation surcharge**

Labor's detailed tax policy will be released in due course, in time for the coming election.

### **Bank fees**

Labor will act to ensure that banks meet their social responsibilities, including the provision of affordable bank accounts and services.

**Australian constitution**

Labor's policy is for simultaneous fixed four year terms for the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Office of Mark Latham MP  
Federal Labor Leader  
16 June 2004

**FOR MEDIA**

**CRAIG EMERSON**

**Member for Rankin**

**SHADOW MINISTER FOR WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

2 April 2004

**FACT SHEET ON LABOR'S  
EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS SCHEME**

It has been Labor policy since 2000 to abolish the Government's inadequate taxpayer-funded employee entitlement scheme and establish a new scheme that would cover all employee entitlements and superannuation.

This policy was re-announced by the then leader, Simon Crean, on 11 March 2002.

The new scheme will:

- cover 100 per cent of employees' unpaid entitlements in the event of employer collapse, including unpaid superannuation;
- be funded by a 0.1 % levy on businesses with more than 20 employees, collected along with compulsory superannuation contributions;
- replace the General Employee Entitlement and Redundancy Scheme (GEERS) at a saving to taxpayers of \$75.8 million a year.

Labor's scheme will therefore impose no new costs on small business.

*Contact: Craig Emerson 0418 781 386 or Nada Delavec 0419 584 241*

## **Baby Care Payment**

**Jenny Macklin - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Education, Employment and Training and Wayne Swan - Shadow Minister for Family and Community Services and Mark Latham - Leader of the Opposition**

### **Media Statement - 31 March 2004**

Labor will introduce a new Baby Care Payment worth \$3,000 in 2005 and rising to \$5,380 by 2010. This will provide a substantial boost in financial assistance to new mothers – those who are working and those at home.

After the birth of the baby Labor will give eligible mothers a simple, flexible and easy-to-access Baby Care Payment paid in fortnightly instalments.

Mothers can choose to receive the payment over a minimum period of 14 weeks, or up to 12 months.

When fully phased in by 2010 the Baby Care Payment will be the equivalent of 14 weeks pay at the Federal Minimum Wage after tax.

The Baby Care Payment delivers on Labor's commitment to introduce 14 weeks paid maternity leave for Australian women.

The Baby Care Payment will be tax free and means tested.

Around nine out of ten mothers are expected to receive a payment.

All women whose family income is below the Family Tax Benefit Part A cut-out will be eligible for the full Payment. For each additional dollar above the cut-out, the Baby Care Payment will be reduced by 30 cents.

The simple and easy to understand payment will relieve the financial pressure on families at the time a baby is born.

The Baby Care Payment is superior to the Government's Baby Bonus delivering significantly more assistance at the time when families need it most – when the baby is born.

From 1 July 2005, Labor will phase out and cap the Baby Bonus. The Baby Care Payment will replace the Maternity Allowance, but the Immunisation Allowance will remain.

Over the next four years the Baby Care Payment will cost \$2.2 billion.

The Baby Care Payment is fully costed and funded. It will be paid for by the Commonwealth Government and will place no financial burden on business.

Families need extra financial support when a baby arrives so they can devote all their attention to the baby at this crucial time. Labor's Baby Care Payment will relieve the financial pressure on families.