

# Smart Farming

## Labor's Plan for our Primary Industries

### What Labor has done for you

Labor understands what an important role our primary industries play in Tasmania's economy and our unique lifestyle.

We have turned our economy around from the 'basket-case' we inherited from the Liberals to the fastest growing economy in the nation.

We repaid the \$1.6 billion in Government debt left behind by the Liberals and are now putting back \$150 million each year into the Tasmanian economy.

Tasmania now has record economic growth, record employment growth, record levels of private capital expenditure, record tourist numbers and record population.

All of these factors are good news for Tasmanian farmers. There's increased demand for Tasmania products, an increased focus on the quality of Tasmania products, and an increased focus on Tasmania as a competitive place to do business and to invest.

We want to work with our primary producers to ensure the sustainability of the industry into the future.

#### Supporting Our Veggie Farmers

Labor has clearly shown its strong support for the 640 vegetable growers who drive Tasmania's \$360 million vegetable industry.

It has stood beside vegetable farmers as they took their Fair Dinkum Foods campaign to the nation.

**"We are now putting back \$150 million each year into the Tasmanian economy."**

As part of its response to the issues being faced by Tasmanian vegetable growers, Labor provided:

- a grant of \$4 million for the promotion of Tasmanian produce through a marketing campaign in local and interstate markets;
- a grant of \$420,000 for the Vegetable Industry Development Skills Package to support the development of business and training plans for 45 processing

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vegetable farming enterprises; and

- a grant of \$50,000 to assist the Fair Dinkum Food Campaign in its drive to increase awareness of the challenges facing Tasmanian farmers.

Labor worked with the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) in establishing the Vegetable Industry Taskforce. We are currently working with the TFGA and vegetable farmers to implement recommendations of a comprehensive report by the Taskforce.

### **Working with the TFGA**

Labor is committed to working with the TFGA.

In September 2005 the Premier announced that, following consultation with the TFGA Board, he had approved the establishment of a high level consultative group between the TFGA and the Tasmanian Government.

This group is to advise the Government and the TFGA on the strategic needs of industry and how best these might be addressed by the government and industry working together.

This new partnership will ensure that our farming future will be uniquely Tasmanian, designed by us working together.

### **Improving Tasmania's Biosecurity**

Labor is committed to protecting our primary industries from the impact of exotic organisms through responsible, coordinated biosecurity measures.

Labor has delivered \$4.8 million to improve our quarantine and biosecurity systems, including:

- increasing our quarantine barrier controls to address risks associated with the significant increase in visitor numbers;
- improving our biosecurity investigation and enforcement capacity;
- increasing pest surveillance activity;
- extending our program of plant disease freedom surveys to satisfy international export market requirements; and
- increasing Tasmania's capacity to undertake simulation exercises to determine the effectiveness of our emergency response procedures to the outbreak of an exotic pest or disease.

Labor continues to address Tasmania's biosecurity needs in many other areas including increasing education activities to raise awareness of quarantine requirements, and expanding the State's weed management effort.

Already in the past year we have seen a 45% decrease in quarantine detection levels despite increases in the number of air and sea visitors to Tasmania.

Labor is determined to make sure Tasmania's well-deserved preferential market access status is maintained.

### **A Strong Strategic Approach to Developing Agriculture**

Labor strongly believes that by working together with a strong strategic focus we can continue to improve the competitiveness of Tasmanian products in the national and international markets.

The Food Industry Council and the State of Growth initiative have been critical in setting out the overarching framework for the development of primary industries in Tasmania.

One of the key elements of the State of Growth initiative is the establishment of Industry Action Partnerships. Partnerships have already been established with the stone-fruit, dairy and red meat industry sectors and work is being done to identify projects to be undertaken by the government and industry to support the sustainable growth of these industries.

### **Looking After Our Valuable Water Resources**

Labor has provided \$16 million to implement the Water Development Plan, which underpins sustainable water supply for economic growth and the needs of the community.

Well over 10,000 megalitres per year of additional water storage capacity has been added each and every year since 2000. That's an average of about 165 dam permit applications assessed each year, providing for a significant increase in agricultural productivity.

A record total of 378,860 megalitres of water is now licensed for irrigation purposes compared with an estimated 250,000 megalitres when the *Water Management Act* was enacted in January 2000.

At a conservative estimated farm gate return of \$500/ML, this additional water is providing an extra \$64 million/annum in farm income for Tasmania's valuable farmers.

The Meander Dam is scheduled for completion in 2007 and will supply 43,000 megalitres of water to the region. Previous Liberal Governments talked about building the Meander Dam for years but only stable majority Labor Government has actually delivered on the project.

Environmental flows for the Derwent River have been assessed, enabling the lifting of the moratorium on the

**“Labor has provided \$16 million to implement the Water Development Plan.”**

granting of new water allocations for summer extraction. This will provide up to an additional 100,000 megalitres as year of irrigation water to drive horticultural and dairy developments in the Derwent Valley.

Labor reached a tripartite agreement with Hydro Tasmania and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers leading to the transfer of more than 30,000 megalitres each year of water from Hydro to irrigators in the South Esk Basin.

Labor has also signed the National Water Initiative which gives us the opportunity to access the \$2 billion Australian Water Fund.

The Tasmanian water monitoring network has been expanded to 54 stream-gauging, 39 water quality, 60 river health and 54 pesticide sampling sites.

Since spring 2003, the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment has been routinely undertaking a biannual comprehensive Statewide river health monitoring program of 60 sites.

Hydrological models for surface water in 15 catchments have been completed to ensure that water allocation and use are maintained within sustainable limits.

### **Helping Farmers Develop New Skills**

Our Tasmanian farming industry is a knowledge-based industry where skills, education and training are crucial to the Industry's future. Labor is committed to investing in the "people behind the ploughs".

To that end Labor has provided \$2.8 million to the FarmBis Program.

With matching funding from the Australian Government, this Program has supported over 4,800 primary producers taking part in training activities in farm business management and natural resource management.

In the past six months alone more than 1000 Tasmanian primary producers have received support to attend over 27,000 hours of training activities.

Skills development is also promoted through field days, Department of Primary Industries Water and Environment training activities on a wide range of issues and through programs such as TOPCROP, Edge network and 8x5 programs.

### **Supporting Primary Industry Research and Development**

Labor believes that investment in research and development is vital to ensuring the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of Tasmania's primary industries.

Labor has strongly backed the undertaking of outstanding research into our primary industries with new 10-year agreements with the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research and the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute.

### **Our Aquaculture Industry**

Tasmania's salmon farming industry is now worth \$115 million per year to Tasmania's economy. Reviews have been completed of the D'entrecasteaux Channel and Huon and Port Esperance Marine Farming

*Tasmania's salmon farming industry is now worth \$115 million per year to Tasmania's economy.*



Development Plans to provide for their on-going development needs.

Labor helped substantiate the environmental sustainability of the \$135 million a year marine farming industry with a comprehensive report into Tasmanian Marine Farming Environmental Monitoring.

Labor has also entered into a Partnership Agreement with the Tasmanian Aquaculture Council for the long term management and funding of the Tasmanian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program. This Program is essential for ensuring market access and consumer confidence in Tasmanian farmed shellfish which now has a farm gate value of \$17 million each year.

## What Labor will do for you

Labor understands that an innovative, competitive and sustainable primary industry sector is vital to Tasmania's long-term economic development.

That is why we have developed SMART Farming – Sustainable Management of Agricultural Resources in Tasmania.

SMART Farming requires farming practices that are ecologically sound, economically viable and socially responsible. It allows the farming and fishing sectors to continue to grow economically while managing the environmental and social impacts of farming.

Tasmania is ideally placed to take advantage of the benefits of smart, sustainable farming and to become a world leader in sustainable farming practices.

Labor will work in partnership with communities and industry to put strategies in place to help maintain and grow markets for Tasmanian agricultural products, and to ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the Tasmanian rural economy, community and the environment.

A strong focus on SMART farming practices will:

- ensure that Tasmania profits from the benefits of sustainable agriculture, including economic growth, environmental protection

and the preservation of the family run farms and rural communities that are a key part of the State's identity and farming future; and

- ensure that Tasmania takes full advantage of growing consumer demand for 'clean green' and safe products by putting systems in place that measure, improve and recognise sustainable farming practices.

### New Agricultural Research Centres to Drive Competitiveness

Labor will continue to improve the competitiveness of our important agricultural sector.

We will re-establish the Forthside and Elliot research stations in North-West Tasmania as state-of-the-art research centres to be operated in partnership with the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR).

These new research centres will work hand in hand with the private sector and other research bodies to identify ways in which our farmers can become even more nationally and internationally competitive.

We will provide an extra \$1 million to each research centre to refit and re-invigorate their existing facilities.

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Each Centre will then be provided with additional funding of \$500,000 each year to undertake their research and development activities. It is expected that this level of funding will assist in gaining significant additional funding from the University and national research bodies.

### Helping SMART Farmers

Labor will invest in increasing the knowledge, and business and farming skills, of Tasmanian farmers and fishers to give them the ability to constantly improve their economic and environmental performance.

It is vital that Tasmanian farmers and fishers have the most up-to-date information available to them in areas such as the latest developments in modern day farming practices or changing market conditions and trends.

As part of that commitment Labor will:

- develop an information service that collects and disseminates market intelligence on market trends, farming innovations, new crops and quality assurance systems;
- develop 'FarmPoint', a web based business tool that facilitates greater interaction between farmers and governments and allows easy access to information on all aspects of farming;
- in partnership with industry, investigate and promote, if appropriate, alternative farming models, particularly Farmer Controlled Businesses (FCBs) and the cooperative model, as a way of reducing production costs and more effectively marketing produce; and
- cooperate with industry to promote practical succession

planning and retirement strategies for farmers and fishermen; and

- continue support for farmer business skills training.

### Promoting Smart Farming Practices

Labor will continue to work with the farm sector to promote smart farming practices.

We will continue to work with the Australian Government, industry and community groups to promote soil management.

We will also work with industry and educational research facilities to develop new farming and fishing methods that bring both economic and ecological benefits particularly:

- enhancing knowledge and management of conventional inputs like water, fertiliser and chemicals to maximise benefits while reducing use and reliance, including IPM;
- developing efficient biological systems of pest control that do not need high levels of conventional inputs; and
- adopting farming practices that conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Labor will also explore opportunities for the development of export and domestic niche markets building on Tasmania's reputation as a producer of safe, high quality, nutritious food.

We will encourage greater use of information technology by providing second hand departmental computers to farmers who undertake courses on using computers to improve their businesses.

We will improve arrangements for Quality Assurance and Environmental Management Systems, to encourage greater uptake of

audited systems among Tasmanian farmers, allowing them to verify the quality and sustainability of the products and farming practices.

Labor will also work with industry to increase awareness and use of the principles of 'value chain management'. This will help to improve relationships between farmers and other sectors in Tasmanian agricultural industry chains including wholesalers, packers, processors, retailers and consumers.

### Supporting Smart Farming

In addition to developing SMART farmers and SMART farming practices, Labor will support SMART farming through important biosecurity measures, water strategies, research and development, and marketing and promotion.

Labor will:

- provide a new Dairy Industry support package to promote the development of the dairy industry through an industry strategic plan that increases farmer skills, investigates new sources of investment, new methods of farming practices, better effluent management and the acceleration of *Dairy 500*;
- support National Water Initiative strategies that improve sustainable access to ground water, provide incentives for farm water development, increase the availability of surface water stream-flow information, and strengthen government regulations regarding farm dams to maintain farmer and public confidence in dam safety;

**“Labor will work with industry to promote strategic marketing and strategic supply of Tasmanian product to export markets.”**

- continue to develop the Water Information Service of Tasmania (WIST) as an online resource to increase public access to data on the environmental management of water including water flows and results of chemical testing;
- continue to improve the measurement and regulation of chemical use by working in partnership with the Australian Government;
- extend ABARE benchmarking to ensure Tasmanian farmers have up to date information about the drivers for competitiveness and new market opportunities;
- establish a Competition Index for major agricultural and fisheries products to enable Tasmanian agricultural industries to compare their major costs with those of their competitors;
- work with industry to undertake an analysis of current RD&E strategies and programs to determine whether they best meet the future needs of the industry;
- continue our commitment to the National Livestock Identification Scheme;
- continue to invest in and support Brand Tasmania and the development of a logo for Tasmanian products to enable producers to more effectively market their goods to a wider public;
- support programs encouraging greater consumption of fresh and processed fruit and vegetables in Tasmania;
- work with industry to promote strategic marketing and

strategic supply of Tasmanian product to export markets;

- work to retain export accreditation for abalone and rock lobster and working with processors and fishers to develop export market strategies;
- work with the aquaculture industry to develop a pre-commercialisation study of striped trumpeter;
- provide continued support for scientific research into the translocation of rock lobster.

### Protecting Tasmania's Biosecurity

Labor knows that protecting Tasmania's biosecurity is vital to the future of our agricultural industries, and vital to protecting our "clean green" advantage.

Labor will build on our high class and effective quarantine barrier measures through a range of new initiatives, including:

- additional funding for an increased focus on checking the biosecurity status of containers entering Tasmania. This will include the undertaking of internal checks on containers entering the State, as well as checks on the external cleanliness of containers to ensure that they are free of soil borne and bird faeces borne pests and diseases;
- nine full-time and 14 part-time quarantine officers to help ensure that Tasmania remains disease and pest free.
- two new positions to provide extra testing of imported grains and seeds and the certification

of the quality of Tasmanian seed exports.

### Helping Our Young Farmers

Labor recognises that in a buoyant economy young Tasmanians are faced with many different career opportunities.

We believe that it is very important for the continued success of our primary industries that young Tasmanians have the opportunity, and are encouraged and supported, to become farmers.

While interest rates are currently at low levels compared to previous years, the size of the loans often required to be entered into by young farmers often means that the associated interest costs are a very heavy burden to bear for a young business.

Labor wants young farmers to be concentrating their energy, skill and enthusiasm on making a success of their farming business and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations rather than always having to worry about the cost of their debt.

Labor will introduce an interest rate rebate on commercial farm loans for Tasmanian young farmers.

Young farmers will still have to create successful long-term businesses, but this assistance will give them a helping hand along the way.

### Supporting Our School Farms

Labor appreciates how important our school farms are for our rural communities. These school farms provide a pathway into employment

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or further training in the agricultural industries.

Labor will invest an extra \$300,000 over 3 years to improve the infrastructure of school farms. Additional support will also be sought from schools and rural industries. The additional funding will secure the continuation of existing programs and allow new programs to be offered.

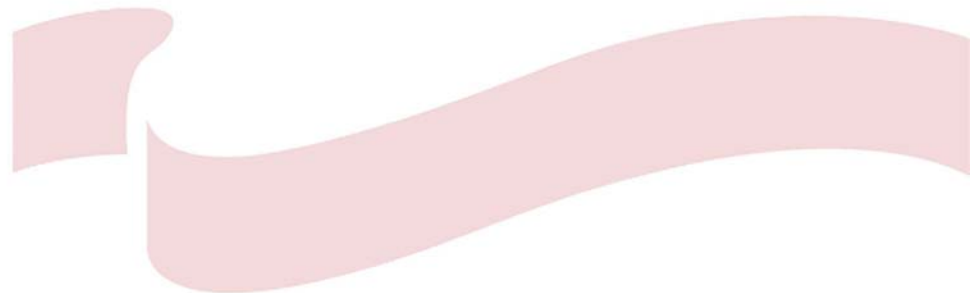
A new policy will also be developed with key stakeholders to secure the future of school farms and remove

confusion over financial and governance arrangements.

### **Fisheries Research Development Corporation**

Labor is committed to seeing further development in Tasmania's vital fishing industries.

To further encourage development of the fisheries and aquaculture industries Labor will match payments by industry to the Fisheries Research Development Corporation on a dollar for dollar basis - up to \$350,000 per annum.



**Labor's policies and programs focus on the priority areas of Tasmania *Together* to maximise progress toward the Community's long-term social, economic and environmental objectives**

## Labor's SMART Farming Policy

### Our Detailed Financial Information

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>2006- 07 \$'000</b>	<b>2007- 08 \$'000</b>	<b>2008- 09 \$'000</b>	<b>2009- 10 \$'000</b>	<b>Total \$'000</b>
Agricultural Research Centres	3 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	6 000
Helping Smart Farmers	350	350	150	150	1 000
Promoting Smart Farming Practices and Supporting Smart Farming	2 600	3 100	2 450	900	9 050
Protecting Tasmania's Biosecurity	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	4 000
Helping Our Young Farmers	150	300	450	450	1 350
Supporting Our School Farms	-	-	-	-	-
Fisheries Research Development Corporation	350	350	350	350	1 400
<b>Total SMART Farming Policy</b>	<b>7 450</b>	<b>6 100</b>	<b>5 400</b>	<b>3 850</b>	<b>22 800</b>

### Our Funding Commitment

The Labor Government's proven strong financial record has delivered:

- Three international credit rating agency rating upgrades.
- Budget surpluses.
- Record funding for health and education.
- \$1.6 billion in General Government net debt paid-back.
- A cut of \$150 million in annual interest payments.
- Record tax cuts of \$850 million.

The exciting initiatives detailed above will be funded and delivered in accordance with the Labor Government's clear financial fundamentals:

- The Consolidated Fund will remain in surplus and not dragged back into deficit.
- General Government Net Debt will remain in the black and not recklessly spent back into the red.
- There will continue to be no new State taxes.
- There will continue to be no increase in any existing State tax.
- There will be no forced redundancies.

## What the Liberals did to you

Minority Liberal Government took Tasmania to the brink of bankruptcy.

Unemployment was almost 11%, and even higher in regional areas. Around 3000 businesses went bankrupt in just three years with many of these hard working farmers. Tasmanian farmers were the second most heavily taxed farmers in the nation.

Our young people were leaving in droves.

Our population declined for the first time since World War II.

The Liberals ran up \$1.6 billion in state debt which brought with it a \$150 million dollar lead weight year after year.

The Liberals raided hospital trust funds to pay their bills.

... And they are poised to do it all again.

The Liberals have already racked up more than \$1 billion in unfunded promises, and counting.

To keep those promises they would have to run our economy back into debt.

Farmers know all about the impact of debt.

Labor has a strong and clear vision for Tasmania and our primary industries.

Labor has shown that it is prepared to take a stand with our farmers.

**You can choose strong, stable majority government, that only Labor can provide, or weak minority government.**



**Don't risk it.**

If you want to continue  
Building a Better  
Tasmania

**Vote Labor.**

For copies of Labor's policies, phone 1800 061 082 or visit our website: [www.labor2006.com](http://www.labor2006.com)

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