

VOTE THE ENVIRONMENT

The recent Queensland state election was a litmus test for furthering the environment agenda at forthcoming state and federal elections.

ACF worked with The Wilderness Society and the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society in marginal electorates, advising voters that the Greens, Democrats or Labor deserved their vote ahead of the Coalition. The Green Party favoured the Coalition, directing preferences to it in key marginal electorates, especially those along the route of the South-East Motorway.

ACF and the other two groups gave Labor their preferences only after a detailed evaluation of the environment records and policies of the major parties. In the case of ACF, the decision also involved ballots of ACF Council. We did so because Labor's proposals were excellent, and included:

- a ban on woodchipping in our native forests

DIRECTOR ACTION

- protection of old-growth forests from logging
- the establishment of the Greater Southern Forests Parks system. This will protect 30 per cent of Queensland's endangered flora and fauna
- a ban on mining, grazing and logging in designated wilderness areas
- legislated land clearing controls
- legislative amendments to strengthen protection and recovery of rare and threatened species
- the Cape York conservation zone protecting a 1,300-kilometre stretch of one of this country's highest quality coastal wilderness
- substantial extensions to marine parks and World Heritage nomination of the Cooloola region.

On the other hand, the Coalition's environment policies were underdeveloped, with no comprehensive strategy

and very poor positions on Cape York, forests, Tully Millstream, land clearing and biodiversity protection. They relied heavily on taking opposite views to Labor on issues such as the South-East Motorway and Byfield.

In no way did we suggest Labor was perfect. In fact, we have been publicly very critical of Goss's position on tollways, Hinchinbrook and Skyrail.

However, if we are to be influential, we have to inform the public of our evaluation of environmental issues at election times. We have been effective in the Queensland election. Our advice to voters affected outcomes in marginal electorates, playing a role in Goss's re-election.

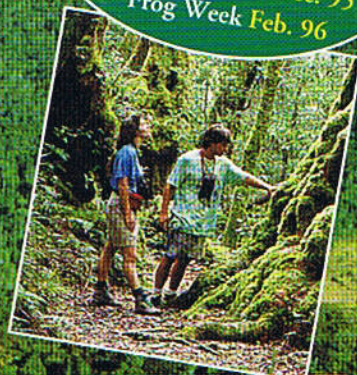
This means we will now be able to help ensure that the Goss environment agenda is implemented with speed and gusto, setting a high standard for the greening of all political parties right around the country, in other state elections and in the forthcoming federal election.

Tricia Caswell

Find yourself in the Wilderness

Call for Details

- Tree Weekend Nov. 95
- Bird Week Nov. 95
- Mammal Week Dec. 95
- Frog Week Feb. 96



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