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Ecological Sustainability - Social Justice - Peace and Non-violence - Grassroots Democracy

Mr James McCall
A/CEO
Australian Automotive Industry Association
Locked Bag 5012
Darlinghurst NSW 2010

14 August 2010

Dear Mr McCall

Thank you for your interest in the policies of the Australian Greens. We respond to the issues raised in your letter below.

Employment Relations

The Greens value skills development and training and are supportive of appropriately funded measures to support the automotive industry to attract and retain young people in the industry through apprenticeships. We support appropriate subsidies to encourage employers to engage apprentices.

The Greens support the current unfair dismissal provisions in the Fair Work Act. We also support the increase in compulsory superannuation to 12%.

Small business

The Greens have a strong record in the Senate of supporting small business across a range of issues including anti-competitive pricing. We recently announced a Small Business policy which includes initiatives to improve the fairness, competitiveness and efficiency of small business' access to finance, including:

- legislation to require lenders to offer small business 'fixed interest gap loans' with an interest rate set at a negotiated margin above the lender's cost of funds;
- cap exit fees on loans to small business at the cost to the lender of the early termination and
- support the introduction of portable bank accounts.

The appointment of a small business ombudsman is an interesting idea. The Greens will raise the proposal with other small business groups to test support, and investigate what role the Commonwealth Government might play.

Unfair contracts and Franchising Reform

The Greens support unfair contract legislation and its extension to businesses such as franchises. We are interested to further discuss how to develop an appropriate unfair contracts regime for business-to-business contracts.

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Authorised by Ebony Bennett, Australian Greens, Canberra

The Greens have a strong record of advocating for stronger protection for consumers and small business under the Trade Practices Act from the anti-competitive practices of dominant corporations. Most recently as a result of the Senate Economic Committee's inquiry into the dairy industry, Greens Senator Milne secured consensus support from the Committee for a full review of National Competition Policy. We understand the dangers of 'creeping' acquisitions leading to concentrated markets.

The Greens are supportive of appropriate industry codes of conduct being developed through independent processes.

Luxury car tax

The Greens believe that income redistribution objectives should be managed through the income tax and social welfare system and that car taxes should drive other outcomes, such as reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

In 2008 the Greens argued that the luxury car tax should be phased out and replaced with a tax on all vehicles based on fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions. The Government agreed to refer this question to the Henry tax review. Consistent with this view, when in 2008 the Government moved to increase the luxury car tax from 25 per cent to 33 per cent, the Greens secured an agreement to exempt cars worth between \$57,000 and \$75,000 from the increase if they had fuel consumption of 7L/100km or better.

Taxation

The Greens were disappointed that the Government ignored the vast majority of recommendations made by the Henry Tax Review. We support the original Mining Super Profits tax proposal, including that proposition to reduce company tax from 30 per cent to 28 per cent.

Red tape and Government Imposed Administration

The Greens understand the burden of red tape for small business and are keen to further discuss the best means of achieving a reduction in the bureaucratic burden. We are on the record supporting reasonable measures to reduce the impact of regulation on small business, including our support for the Superannuation Clearing House which assists small business with superannuation administration. We do however support the requirement on employers under the recently passed paid parental leave scheme.

Yours sincerely

Emma Bull
on behalf of the Australian Greens

Australian Greens

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