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LACA environment issues for State Election candidates

The Logan and Albert Conservation Association (LACA) has campaigned for better environmental policies and outcomes in the Logan and Scenic Rim areas for more than a quarter of a century. LACA is putting forward the following key environmental issues for consideration by local candidates in the forthcoming State election:

The Great Barrier Reef: Many people in the Logan and Scenic Rim communities regard the Great Barrier Reef as Queensland's greatest natural treasure. LACA is particularly concerned that the Premier's early election call may be a signal that actions such as dredging and shipping on the Reef are about to increase in intensity, and this may lead to UNESCO declaring the Great Barrier Reef a 'World Heritage Area in danger' under the Premier's watch. LACA does not support the Government's Long term Sustainability Plan for the Reef because it proposes weak remedial measures and fails to include any action to halt greenhouse gas emissions, which are one of the most serious threats to the reef. Given the boom and bust nature of mining, people are quite aware that many more sustainable jobs are created by tourism around a healthy reef than by coal mining. **LACA calls upon all candidates to commit to genuine measures to protect the Great Barrier Reef as a priority.**

Electricity/solar: People in Logan and the Scenic Rim love their roof-top solar and many are keenly awaiting the opportunity to invest in the emerging battery storage technologies. However, they have expressed concern to LACA that while over-investment by the Government's own power companies has already increased usage charges to consumers by more than 50%, they believe that, following the election, mandatory fixed charges for electricity supply will be raised to dissuade people from investing further in solar, thereby ensuring an attractive, ongoing market for prospective foreign investors when the Government privatises its energy assets. **LACA asks all candidates to commit to abandoning the privatisation of essential public assets such as electricity and water supply and support the uptake of renewable energy including home solar and battery storage.**

Koala: LACA is very concerned that the Newman Government's rollback of vegetation management laws has seriously set back any effort to protect the Koala in this region. **LACA seeks candidates' commitments to restoring vegetation management laws, at least to their former level, if Koalas are to have any long term chance of survival in the Logan and Scenic Rim regions.** Also, the current Government's offset policy does not stand up to any logical analysis. LACA views offsets as a façade policy designed to create the appearance of something being done for Koalas. Rather than provide secure habitat for Koalas it facilitates the rapid removal of essential habitat throughout this region, with the vague promise of planting some trees elsewhere. **LACA requests all candidates to commit to abandoning the use of offsetting as an 'environmental' outcome of development.**

Donations transparency: People we have talked to in the Logan and Scenic Rim communities have expressed concern about the Government's secrecy around donations after the Newman Government increased the declarable donation amount from \$1000 to \$12,800. LACA believes large political donations can have a huge influence on how the environment is treated. The environment movement in Logan and the Scenic Rim would like to see Campbell Newman reverse the LNP policy to match the Labor and Greens donation declaration policy which is set at \$1000. This way the public will be able to see exactly how much corporations are funding the LNP and whether this influences the Government's decision-making. **LACA seeks commitments from all candidates to a return to the former declarable donation level of \$1000 which provided greater transparency around Government decisions which affect the environment.**

In the History of this State no Queensland premier has ever called a snap election to be held before the end of January. LACA members are angered by the prospect of a short, 25 day campaign, called during the holiday season, which they see as clearly designed to provide little opportunity for voters to get their questions answered. It appears to LACA members, and we believe, members of the community generally, that democracy has been treated by the Premier as a nuisance which is to be brushed out of the way quickly, while everyone is preoccupied with holidays, kids and back to school. **LACA wishes to place on record its anger that the democratic process in Queensland has been treated with such disdain.**

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