



The Environment Centre NT – Since 1983

The Martin Government's promises for the NT environment 2005-09

Implementation scorecard prepared by *Environment Centre NT*, June 2007

Set out below are all 25 environment promises announced by the Martin-led Labor Party in the course of the 2005 NT election campaign, and ECNT's assessment of their implementation after two years back in government. These promises were set out in a series of policy statements during the election campaign. Copies available from ECNT.

(A) Environment Protection Authority

1. "Establish a strong EPA with an independent board and the necessary resources including the best environment protection laws in Australia."
 - ***Not done: Interim Board created; NT government (NTG) has accepted Board's recommendation that the EPA NOT have assessment or regulatory powers, i.e. merely an advisory body!***
2. "Enact the new Environment Protection and Management Act to provide the statutory basis for EPA."
 - ***Not done: Promised for second half of 2007***
3. "Immediately reorganize the Office of Environment and Heritage and appoint the new three person [interim] EPA board."
 - ***Done***
4. "Eight new staff and additional \$1.1 million in stage 2 of EPA creation (from 2007)."
 - ***Partially done***
5. "Produce NT's first *State of the Environment Report*."
 - ***Not done: Task probably will be handed to new EPA when finally created – although this is not clear yet.***

(B) Daly River

6. "No commercial cotton growing and no dams."
 - ***Done [but only by policy, not law]***

7. "\$3.5 million for new monitoring program."

- ***Partially done***

8. "Moratorium on land clearing and pastoral lease subdivisions to continue until monitoring program in place" [said by Minister Chris Burns to mean "2007"].

- ***Partially done – land clearing approvals continue to be granted in large areas of the Daly catchment outside of the 'focus area'.***

(C) Living Rivers legislation

9. "A new Living Rivers program, with new legislation, to give special status to NT's 'icon rivers', including the Daly."
 - ***Not done: No timetable for completion. In the meantime, NTG has approved diversion of the McArthur River for mining.***

(D) Indigenous rangers

10. "Establish two more Indigenous and Marine Ranger programs in the Top End; establish an Indigenous Ranger program in Central Australia."
 - ***Partially done***

(E) Legislative reform

11. "Rewrite our major environment laws with community input."
 - ***Not done: No timetable for completion. EPA looks likely to be asked to advise on reforms.***
12. 'Overhaul NT Water Act to meet world's best practice.'

- ***Not done: No timetable for completion.***

(F) Marine and coastal

13. ‘Protect more mangroves along the coastline in addition to Darwin Harbour.’
- ***Not done: Plans to destroy large areas of mangroves north of Darwin for the proposed Glyde Pt industrial estate still being considered by government.***
14. ‘Commence a comprehensive marine planning process.’
- ***Partially done (just beginning).***
15. [Although not explicitly addressed in the ALP’s 2005 election promises, there is a longstanding government commitment to creation of Bynoe Harbour Marine Park].
- ***Partially done: A broader marine parks identification strategy has commenced.***

(G) Mining and nuclear

16. “No new uranium mines in the NT” [statement to ABC by Chief Minister, 17 June 2005]; “No uranium mine at Koongarra in Kakadu.”
- ***Not done: Chief Minister subsequently announced support for new uranium mines in the NT; uranium exploration permits being issued across NT; mine at Koongarra still possible despite Traditional Owners opposition.***
17. “No nuclear waste dump in the NT.”
- ***Done: NTG continues to oppose Commonwealth plan to impose a radioactive waste dump on the NT.***
18. “Ongoing clean up of Mt Todd mine.”
- ***Partially done: ‘Emergency’ protection works carried out; little real rehabilitation work commenced; new company (Vista Gold) has since taken over minesite and it is unclear where the rehabilitation plan goes from here.***

(H) Invasive species (weeds, cane toads, feral animals)

19. “\$30 cane toad trap subsidy.”
- ***Done***
20. “Tackling Territory Invaders program and summit.”
- ***Partially done: Parliamentary inquiry established; some progress on weed risk assessment; chronic underfunding and legislative/policy vacuum continue to undermine any clear changes.***

(I) Greenhouse

21. “Double funding for the Cool Communities (COOLmob) program – for household energy (and now water) audits and efficiency education.”
- ***Done***
22. “Minimize greenhouse emissions by better fire management, land clearing controls and mandatory public reporting of emissions by major industries.”
- ***Not done: Overall fire management is still major problem despite some good initiatives in some areas; land clearing approvals continue to be granted almost every time an application is submitted to government, without regard for cumulative impacts; no mandatory reporting of emissions implemented as yet.***
23. “Develop an air quality monitoring network.”
- ***Not done***

(J) Other

24. “\$50 rebate to encourage water conservation in Central Australia – to purchase water saving devices.”
- ***Done??***
25. “Create a Rapid Creek Environment Hub – free space for community environment groups.”
- ***Partially done: space and occupants identified; refit commenced Feb 2007.***

SCORE: Done: 6/25 (25%)

Partially done: 9/25 (35%)

Not done: 10/25 (40%)

NOTE: We are also still awaiting the finalisation and implementation of the long-promised NT Parks and Conservation Masterplan.