



## **2010 Pre-election Political Party Industry Issues Responses**

The industry specific issues raised by *Printing Industries* and responses received from the political parties are outlined below.

<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Printing Industries</i> policy position</b>	<b>Australian Labor Party</b>	<b>The Coalition</b>	<b>Australian Greens</b>
<b>Territorial copyright: The 30- day rule</b>	Territorial copyright provisions must remain and be based on the existing 30-day provisions for new book titles.	Federal Labor has decided not to change the Australian regulatory regime for books. Federal Labor has not accepted the Productivity Commission's recommendation to remove the parallel import restrictions on books.	No response	The Australian Green supported the campaign by the book industry to retain parallel import restrictions on books.
<b>GST on online book purchases</b>	The GST bias against local book producers and distributors must be addressed by imposing the GST on all online books purchases from abroad.	Federal Labor has established a Book Industry Strategy Group chaired by Dr Barry Jones AO to provide advice on the challenges and the opportunities facing the Australian book industry, especially those arising from new technologies for producing, distributing and consuming the written word. Printing Industries is represented on the strategy group.	No response	The Greens believe all books should be GST free.
<b>Emissions Trading Scheme</b>	Ensuring that the printing industry which is neither emissions intensive nor trade exposed receives adequate compensation to help it adjust to a low carbon economic environment.	Federal Labor has established a Printing Industry Working Group as a forum in which the industry can raise issues with government – including the issue of climate change.	No response	As a general rule the Greens are opposed to compensating non-EITE industries for the impact of carbon pricing policies. The Greens do support re-introducing accelerated depreciation for investment in energy efficiency, however.
<b>5 per cent tariff on paper</b>	The preferred policy position advocated by <i>Printing Industries</i> is to have the tariff removed on coated paper stocks given that local production has now ceased.	The Gillard Labor Government's policy is to maintain the general tariff rate of 5 per cent. Tariffs may be adjusted in light of free trade agreements, but there is no specific intention to remove the 5 per cent tariff on coated papers.	No response	The Greens would welcome further information supporting the case for tariff removal.
<b>Industry consolidation fund</b>	Introduction of a Federal Government funded industry adjustment package to apply for a limited period of time (6 months) giving industry participants the opportunity to either exit the industry or to restructure.	The Gillard Labor Government stands ready to discuss possible measures to improve the performance and competitiveness of printing firms with the industry and would welcome further discussion of these issues through the Printing Industry Working Group.	No response	No response

<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Printing Industries policy position</i></b>	<b>Australian Labor Party</b>	<b>The Coalition</b>	<b>Australian Greens</b>
<b>Access to finance</b>	<p>The Government needs to take action to ensure that credit is available to all commercially viable printing businesses.</p>	<p>The Gillard Labor Government understands how important it is that Australian businesses have access to credit.</p> <p>Federal Labor acted swiftly during the global recession to stabilise Australia’s financial system, including by introducing deposit and wholesale funding guarantees. This decisive action helped ensure Australian households and businesses continued to have access to finance.</p> <p>Federal Labor also announced measures in the 2010 Budget to help financial institutions continue their active lending to Australian Businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reduction in Interest Withholding Tax to allow foreign banks to lend to Australian businesses at competitive rates.</li> <li>• Even more tax deductions on interest earned from deposits to encourage savings and create a larger pool of funds for lending.</li> </ul> <p>A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will work hard to ensure that Australian businesses have access to the credit they need – most importantly by building a stronger economy based on a clear economic plan.</p>	No response	<p>The Greens recently launched a small business policy initiative that included measures to improve small business' access to finance and competitiveness in the banking sector more generally. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Greens will seek to legislate to require lenders to offer 'fixed interest gap loans' with an interest rate set at a negotiated margin above the lender's cost of funds – similar to the 'fixed interest gap mortgages' in Senator Brown's recently introduced Banking Amendment (Delivering Essential Financial Services for the Community) Bill 2010 (the Essential Financial Services Bill).</li> <li>• The Greens will cap exit fees on loans to small business at the cost to the lender of the early termination. Again, this echoes an initiative on mortgage exit fees in the Essential Financial Services Bill.</li> <li>• The Greens support the introduction of portable bank accounts, as explored in foreign jurisdictions and recently advocated by the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA).</li> </ul>

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<b>Phoenix operations</b>	<p><i>Printing Industries</i> has made a number of recommendations to the Federal Government aimed at helping curtail fraudulent phoenix operations. One of those critical recommendations involves the proposal for company directors involved in fraudulent phoenix activity to be stripped of their limited liability protection.</p> <p>Such a policy change would help cover all emerging scenarios: new companies with the same, similar or new name.</p> <p>It is imperative that genuine as opposed to cosmetic changes are implemented to address this issue.</p>	<p>The Gillard Labor Government will crack down on directors engaged in phoenix company behaviour, where a business closes down one day and opens up the next with a different name to avoid paying its obligations. Directors will be made personally liable for the debts of companies that have deceptively similar names to failed businesses previously run by the same directors. The final form of this proposed law will be determined through public consultation, drawing on existing legislation in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In addition, the Gillard Labor Government will also give the ATO stronger powers to pursue phoenix company activity. This will include automating the commencement of the current Director Penalty Regime (DPR); stopping loopholes for company directors in the PAYG(W) arrangements; and extending the DPR to include Superannuation Guarantee (SG) payments.</p>	No response	The Greens agree that stronger action needs to be taken against the directors of Phoenix companies and we are prepared to consider measures such as stripping company directors of their limited liability protection if involved in phoenix activity.
<b>Government print procurement strategy and arrangements</b>	Prior to implementing any changes to their procurement policies and arrangements, Governments should consider <i>Printing Industries</i> Print Procurement Principles for Government.	In July 2009, Federal Labor announced a \$19.1 million package to ensure that local firms get a fairer go at winning government and private sector contracts by strengthening the Australian industry participation framework. The package included increased support for the Industry Capability Network, a Supplier Advocates Program, and stricter requirements that tenderers prepare Australian Industry Participation Plans. At the same time, Federal Labor reformed government purchasing policies and tendering processes to improve accountability and help firms to compete for government contracts, backed by the appointment of a Procurement Coordinator.	No response	The Australian Greens support the continued viability of the Australian printing industry and hope to see Government procurement decisions having a positive impact on domestic industries.

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<b>Skilled labour shortages - migration visas</b>	Industries with genuine skilled labour needs and who have demonstrated that they have exhausted avenues to recruit locally should continue to have access to the skilled migration visa regime.	<p>Federal Labor has implemented the most significant reform of Australia’s skilled migration program ever undertaken. The fundamental overhaul of the program has delivered a demand-driven rather than supply-driven system and restored integrity to the nation’s migration system.</p> <p>The economic need of the nation is now the driving force behind the skilled migration program, delivering migrants who have real skills to meet real needs in our economy. Employers are able to directly target the skilled workers they need through the employer sponsorship scheme and state and territory governments can meet specific skills shortages through individual plans.</p> <p>However we recognise that some industries have skill needs that may struggle to their skills needs met through the domestic labour market. There are a range of visa options which Australian employers, who are unable to fill skilled vacancies can use to recruit an overseas skilled worker to Australia.</p>	No response	The Greens believe that the skilled migration program has provided a valuable contribution to the economic growth of this country, and we support the continuation of the program. However, we believe that employment opportunities could be generated for young Australians by encouraging industry to develop training programs tailored to key skills shortages.

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<b>Reserved letter services of Australia Post</b>	<p>There is industry concern that the pricing pressures faced by the paper based communication industry value chain varies considerably between those that face intense competitive pressures such as printing businesses and mailing houses and the public monopolist Australia Post which faces no industry competition for the bulk of its business.</p> <p>This commercial reality needs to be properly acknowledged by the ACCC and subsequently reflected in any decisions it hands down concerning applications to increase postage prices.</p>	Support ACCC's decision which endorsed Australia Post's position that they are facing a range of business challenges associated with rising costs and significant declines in letter volumes.	No response	The Greens respect the independence of the ACCC. However, we appreciate the concerns you have raised and would be supportive of the competitive pressure you identify being put before the ACCC.
<b>Print in Australia Campaign</b>	<p>Printing industry and the Government need to work together to promote the economic and environmental virtues associated with the printing industry in Australia.</p> <p>As part of an objective to improve the future economic viability of the industry, a <i>Print in Australia</i> campaign should be supported by the Government.</p>	The Gillard Labor Government supports buying Australian at home and abroad and is happy to work with industry – through the Printing Industry Working Group – on promoting the capabilities of the local industry.	No response	The Greens are supportive of a Print in Australia campaign to better promote the printing industry.