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IPENZ – Creating a sustainable NZ

FEEDBACK TO IPENZ WHANGAREI BRANCH MEETING – CANDIDATES' MEETING

1. Q: IPENZ considered that deliberate policies are needed to adopt new technologies if we are to maintain living standards and live sustainably. IPENZ proposes the establishment of a **Technology Commission** to advise government on key sustainability and environmental issues.

A: For the Greens the role of science and technology is to improve the quality of our lives and to sustain and replenish the environment, of which we are a part and on which our quality of life depends. We support technology that allows us to do more with less for longer. The Greens support the creation of an agency, either by expanding the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority or developing other agencies to promote the adoption of technologies which contribute to sustainability. We will not be able in the future to maintain our quality of life with our current levels of consumption, which are clearly unsustainable. We cannot rely solely on technology alone to solve this dilemma. We must also focus on developing resilience in our communities in proactive response to the challenges facing our society.

2. Q: IPENZ sees the need to increase productivity and increase incomes and the skills shortage is an impediment to progress. To address this, IPENZ proposes a **Technology Skills Action Plan** aimed at increasing the pool of technicians, advanced tradespersons, engineers, technologists and experienced technical managers. National commitment is required and 'buy-in' from all sectors of the community.

A: The Greens agree that the skills shortage is an issue for New Zealand. We seek to alleviate the skills shortage in technical fields through increased investment in all levels of education. We support science and technology education within the schools system as an integrated part of the national curriculum. Adult education and industry training also play an important role in diversifying and strengthening our skills base. Where tertiary education is concerned the Greens focus on 'building wisdom not debt'. Student debt surpassed \$7 billion in 2005 and will reach \$10 billion by 2010 under current policies. Debt has amassed as a result of high fees and limited access to a student allowance. The Green Party proposes to reduce the debt burden and encourage tertiary education by: introducing a debt write off system where each year of post study work will earn the write off of a years worth of debt, moving towards a universal student allowance, at the level of the unemployment benefit and reducing fees.

3. Q: IPENZ proposes an **Investment Forum**. The forum would promote a 'whole of society' approach, establish capital needs, discuss issues (current and those arising) and their solutions e.g. current provision of public utilities.

A: The Green Party advocates investment in essential infrastructure for transport, energy and the provision of social services. We would shift taxes to promote investment in sustainable businesses such as these. At present we tax work (wages and salaries); enterprise (business profits) and consumption via GST. The Greens advocate shifting tax from things we want to encourage (like business and enterprise) onto things we want to discourage (like waste, pollution and use of scarce resources). We propose an Ecological Tax Commission to develop and consult on ecological tax shifting.

4. Q: IPENZ proposes a **Resilience to Climate Change Project**. IPENZ considers that a coordinated rather than a sector specific response to climate change is needed. New Zealand needs to be cost effective in its strategies; it needs to manage adverse risks and position itself to take advantage of opportunities.

A: The Greens support a proactive response to the effects of climate change, and would obviously support a coordinated or holistic approach recognising interdependencies of systems. However we must be wary of placing too much emphasis on resilience to climate change over steps to reduce emissions in order to reduce climate change. Cost effective strategies have to be cost effective long term taking into account energy scarcity due to peaking supplies of oil coal and gas. The most effective way to manage climate change risks is to reduce our Greenhouse gas emissions to reduce the impact of climate change.

RELEASE ENDS

WWW.GREENS.ORG.NZ

Contact: The Rev. Paul Doherty
Ph 436 0033, paul@cycletoours.co.nz