



Policy & Position Statements
Victoria State Election
2010

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
CARERS	4
DRUGS	6
ECONOMY	7
EDUCATION	8
ENVIRONMENT	10
URBAN PLANNING	12
FAMILIES AND PARENTING	13
HEALTH AND AGED CARE	14
HOUSING	16
INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY	17
JOBS	18
KINDERGARTEN	19
LAW AND ORDER	20
LIFE ISSUES	21
LIFTING STANDARDS IN POLITICS	22
PETROL	23
POKIES	24
ROAD SAFETY	25
SMALL BUSINESS	26
TRANSPORT	27
WATER	28
WORK AND FAMILY LIFE	30
WORKPLACE RELATIONS	31
YOUTH AFFAIRS	32

INTRODUCTION

FAMILY FIRST wants Australia to be the best country in the world to raise a family.

FAMILY FIRST is the only party that has as its top priority the health and well-being of Australian families – to ensure legislation helps families reach their potential.

Most legislation affects the family in some way. Consider issues such as jobs and working conditions, hospitals, housing, schools, drugs, child abuse, aged care and the environment. While other political parties represent groups such as big business, trade unions and the environment, FAMILY FIRST represents families, and strong families mean strong communities.

A strong voice that represents families will ensure the issues that matter most to families are raised and addressed.

What is a family?

FAMILY FIRST believes “family” refers to relationships that bind grandparents, mums and dads and their children and form the basis of a community. Families grow from heterosexual relationships between men and women. Extended family relationships further enrich family life.

Family life flourishes when couples strive for a stable and loving relationship and are faithful to each other. The best environment to raise children is for them to have both a mother and a father.

CARERS

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes carers do an amazing job. Too often their tireless work goes unrecognized and unrewarded. Many older carers, in particular, who care for spouses and disabled children as well as grandchildren, are struggling financially and worry about the future when they die.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there are 690,000 unpaid family carers in Victoria. This includes 116,600 primary carers who provide most of the support and help needed by their parent, partner, child or friend with a disability or chronic illness. Access Economics has estimated the cost of replacing unpaid friends and family with paid services at \$8 billion a year.

The Government relies more and more on unpaid carers. Carers end up carrying extra burdens due to shorter hospital stays, more day surgery and less access to residential accommodation for people with disabilities. FAMILY FIRST recognises that many carers are worried about the future of their spouse, or disabled child or grandchild.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will campaign for more resources, services, funding and other practical support for carers.
- FAMILY FIRST wants case managers appointed to carers to help them manage and access appropriate support services.
- FAMILY FIRST wants to establish a Disability Insurance Scheme. This scheme will cover every Victorian who is born with a disability or acquires a disability and will provide funding for essential care, support, therapy, aids, equipment, home modifications, and access to the community, education and training.
- FAMILY FIRST wants the government to increase its contribution to the Home and Community Carers (HACC) Program which provides community care services in people's own homes, which is where they want to be.
- FAMILY FIRST wants more financial support and assistance for carers to appropriately acknowledge the significant cost savings to the community of their work.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more funding for respite care - both day and residential - so carers can take much-needed breaks, attend appointments and have holidays.

- FAMILY FIRST will call for more funding to expand day care programs for people with disabilities which helps relieve the burden on carers.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more long term supported accommodation for people with disabilities. It must be provided in metropolitan as well as regional areas so family members can visit and maintain regular contact.

DRUGS

Position:

FAMILY FIRST understands that illegal drugs are a huge worry for parents. Drugs are dangerous, they destroy lives, destroy families and destroy communities.

FAMILY FIRST opposes policies such as giving free heroin to addicts, opening injecting rooms across the country and abolishing penalties for possessing drugs, as these all send the wrong message.

FAMILY FIRST believes we have to send the strongest message that drugs are dangerous, that drug use will never be tolerated and that drug use will be punished.

FAMILY FIRST believes the focus must be on prevention through community education and rehabilitation services as well as strong law and order initiatives.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST wants a public education campaign, featuring high-profile celebrities such as sports people and singers, aimed at young Australians about the dangers of drug use, particularly about so-called 'recreational drugs'. This would include the dangers of marijuana, including its links to depression and other mental health problems.
- FAMILY FIRST wants courts to have the power to require people to undergo treatment.
- FAMILY FIRST wants more funding for residential rehabilitation programs.
- FAMILY FIRST wants further research into alternate therapies such as Naltrexone implants (which blocks the effects of heroin) and more promotion of successful 12-step programs modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous.

ECONOMY

Position:

Just as it is important to balance the books at home and stick to a budget, FAMILY FIRST understands that Victoria needs strong businesses and a strong and growing economy to ensure a good standard of living for Victorians.

Economic growth, jobs growth and business success are crucial if families are to prosper.

FAMILY FIRST wants more jobs and a better quality of life for more Victorians.

FAMILY FIRST recognises the vital role of small business. Most small businesses are family – run businesses and employ the majority of Victorian workers.

FAMILY FIRST believes small businesses should be supported and government should interfere as little as possible so they can concentrate on running their businesses and not be bogged down by red tape and government regulations.

Actions

- FAMILY FIRST will support sensible policies to increase jobs and reduce constraints on small business. Businesses operate in a global environment and FAMILY FIRST recognizes that local companies need to be efficient and competitive to succeed.
- FAMILY FIRST will seek to promote and support productive, flexible, competitive and efficient industry underpinned by principles of a fair go and recognizing worker's rights and responsibilities.
- FAMILY FIRST knows that business needs a stable economic climate to operate and supports harmonious industrial relations.

EDUCATION

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes education and learning are the cornerstones to developing and equipping young Australians for the future. Education and learning are also vital for Australia's continued prosperity and to ensure young Australians have the skills demanded in rapidly changing industries.

FAMILY FIRST believes all Victorian children must have access to high quality education programs and facilities from kindergarten to year 12 or equivalent.

Education is not just about academic achievement. It is also about teaching children values, about their social and emotional development and of course physical education. We must also teach children about Australia's history and culture.

FAMILY FIRST acknowledges the diverse beliefs, traditions and values of families and defends parents' rights to choose schools that uphold those values. Therefore, FAMILY FIRST supports Government funding for both government and non-government schools.

FAMILY FIRST believes all Victorian children must have access to current IT technologies. Children should not be disadvantaged in the classroom because of lack of IT resources. All schools should have access to digital broadband.

FAMILY FIRST is particularly concerned about parents of children with disabilities, who suffer financially if they send their children to non-government schools. There are about 30,000 students with disabilities at non-government schools. FAMILY FIRST believes they should receive the same funding and support for their disability as children at government schools.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will promote reducing class sizes and improving basic skills in numeracy and literacy.
- FAMILY FIRST wants school reports written in Plain English so parents can understand them, with additional specific information provided to parents on how they can best help further their child's education at home.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for relationship and financial literacy programs in all schools. Teenagers in particular will benefit greatly from relationships education which promotes marriage and family life. Most teenagers aspire to mature, loving, stable and committed relationships.
- FAMILY FIRST wants more TAFE colleges and promotion of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Vocational Education and

Training (VET) as pathways for students who do not want to go to university.

- FAMILY FIRST will lobby to ensure all parents have genuine choice about the school that is best for their child and supports their family's values. No parent of a child with a disability should be locked into a school for fear of losing vital funding and support.

ENVIRONMENT

Position:

FAMILY FIRST is passionate about caring for Australia's environment to preserve it for our children and future generations to enjoy. Most families want to do the right thing and leave their world in a better state for their children than they inherited.

FAMILY FIRST recognizes that the small environmental measures – like compost bins and recycling bottles, papers, cartons and other household waste – are as important as big decisions such as how we tackle Victoria's water crisis.

FAMILY FIRST believes the Government must work in partnership with industry, agriculture, science and the community to address the serious environmental challenges of water resource management and declining soil quality and biodiversity in Victoria.

FAMILY FIRST believes we must adopt commonsense policies that strike the right balance between maintaining our prosperity and providing more jobs for more Australians while ensuring that we protect our natural environment and wisely use our precious resources.

FAMILY FIRST believes that our precious flora and fauna need appropriate protection from extinction.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST is calling for new dams to be built in Victoria to boost and secure the state's water supplies for the future (see water policy).
- FAMILY FIRST supports balancing the rights of farmers and other land users against the need to maintaining water quality in the Murray River.
- FAMILY FIRST will promote the use of "grey" water from Effluent Treatment Plants for Agricultural and other purposes.
- FAMILY FIRST will support saline reduction programs in farming areas.
- FAMILY FIRST believes we should implement a national drink container deposit and recycling scheme. This would not only help reduce waste but would also save 8 billion litres of water each year - which would supply more than 24,000 homes with water.
- FAMILY FIRST wants more funding for voluntary community groups which work with EPA Victoria and Major Hazard Facilities operators to develop Environmental Improvement Plans.

- FAMILY FIRST will call for neighborhood environmental improvement plans so local communities can decide on local environmental priorities and solutions that best meet their needs.
- FAMILY FIRST will promote solar heating for domestic and commercial heating.

URBAN PLANNING

Position:

FAMILY FIRST acknowledges the growth in housing developments and greater residential density in some metropolitan areas. FAMILY FIRST is concerned, however, about the potential negative impacts on the quality of life for families and communities and that children's needs may not be adequately addressed. Planning must focus on fostering relationships between neighbours as well as promoting healthy lifestyles.

Actions

- FAMILY FIRST will promote more parks and gardens as part of new housing developments. These areas in local neighbourhoods encourage impromptu and informal interactions. They also promote recreation and leisure activities that revolve around families.
- FAMILY FIRST will examine, as a planning goal, re-establishing neighbourhood schools within walking distance of family homes.
- FAMILY FIRST will support local communities having a greater role in determining the character and development of their neighborhoods.
- FAMILY FIRST will work to change planning laws and other laws to wind back the visible presence of the so called "adult industry" in our neighborhoods and shopping areas.
- FAMILY FIRST will work to change planning laws to give families and local communities greater say to oppose the establishment of "adult industry" businesses in their area.
- FAMILY FIRST will work to change laws to reduce advertising, signage and displays that promote "adult industry" businesses.

FAMILIES AND PARENTING

Position

FAMILY FIRST believes the heroes of Australia are its Mums and Dads. They have the toughest job of all, but also the most important, raising children. FAMILY FIRST believes parents deserve all the help and support they can get.

FAMILY FIRST believes marriage is the best way to ensure strong and stable relationships and strong and stable family life.

FAMILY FIRST believes in the value of supporting newborn babies in the home. These programs would be led by maternal and child health nurses and focus on the health of new mothers and their newborns. First-time mums would receive the much-needed encouragement, support and advice they need. A home visiting program supports new parents at a vulnerable time and helps to identify issues and areas where additional resources and support might be needed. A home visiting program would help reduce the incidence of child abuse and help new parents cope by letting them know they are not alone and do not need to feel isolated.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will call for a Newborn Babies Home Visiting Program for all first-time Victorian parents led by maternal and child health nurses.
- FAMILY FIRST will support more funding and support for:
 - Educating families about financial management and budgeting.
 - Encouraging families to be active and maintain a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating and regular exercise.
 - Helping families cope when a family member suffers depression or other mental illness, when a family member commits suicide or becomes addicted to drugs or alcohol.
 - Programs to have teenage parents to stay at high school, or return to school or vocational training, with childcare support.
 - Youth parenting programs that support younger mothers in their parenting roles.

HEALTH AND AGED CARE

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes healthy families create healthy communities. Good health starts in the family and is fundamental to a person's well-being. Health relates to a person's physical, psychological and emotional well-being.

FAMILY FIRST believes we should focus on prevention as our top health priority. We want to ensure all Australian families have access to quality and affordable health care, particularly when they need medical care.

FAMILY FIRST acknowledges there are particular health policy issues for families living in regional and rural Victoria, such as being able to access medical treatment.

FAMILY FIRST believes the health problems of Indigenous Australians require urgent attention and will support policies to improve the health of our Aboriginal community.

FAMILY FIRST understands that Australians are living longer and Australia has a rapidly ageing population. This creates significant policy issues particularly in health and aged care.

FAMILY FIRST believes there should be more doctors and nurses in Victoria especially in regional and rural Victoria. There is a worldwide shortage of nurses and Victoria has to compete for them. Many nurses work in agencies for the better pay and flexibility.

FAMILY FIRST recognizes that families are sometimes waiting years for years to have elective surgery.

FAMILY FIRST acknowledges that mental health is a huge issue and increasing numbers of Victoria have mental health problems. Substance abuse is a particular problem and early intervention and treatment is vital.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will call for more money to fund doctor training places in Victoria.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for subsidies for public indemnity insurance for doctors and surgeons who work at least 25 hours a week in rural or remote communities.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for reduction in stamp duty for doctors who relocate to rural or remote areas to set up practice, so long as they commit to stay there at least 5 years.

- FAMILY FIRST calls for a state-wide campaign to encourage people to become nurses and raise the status of nursing as a valued profession.
- FAMILY FIRST will work to reduce waiting times in elective surgery by funding more hospital beds and calls for more funding to keep Operating Theatres at maximum capacity.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more state government funding for the Home and Community Care (HACC) program which provides aged care services to people in their own homes, which is where people want to be.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more state government funding for respite care so carers of older Victorians can take a much-needed break, either for a few hours, a day or a few days.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more funding to increase the number of Crises Assessment Teams (CATs) so people can be diagnosed quickly and receive appropriate treatment.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more supported accommodation places in the community with strong links to mental health services so people can be supported and treated.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more drug and alcohol detoxification centers, particularly in regional and rural Victoria.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more promotion of voluntary self-help fellowships such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

HOUSING

Position:

FAMILY FIRST wants Victorians to be able to afford their own home. Home ownership is the Great Australian Dream as it gives people stability and gives families security.

Increasing numbers of Victorian families are caught in the rental trap and are close to giving up on their dreams of ever being able to own their own homes. The average house price is beyond the reach of most couples, who are working harder than ever and dream of starting a family.

Exorbitant stamp duty is crippling families and the Brumby government has become addicted to stamp duty revenue. Stamp duty in Victoria is also much higher than other states adding further pressure to families trying to get into the housing market.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST is calling for stamp duty to be abolished for all first homebuyers. This will apply for new homes to the value of \$400,000. Victorians buying a \$300,000 home would save almost \$14,000 while those purchasing a \$400,000 home would save almost \$20,000. FAMILY FIRST estimates its policy could cost the Government up to \$500 million in lost revenue.
- FAMILY FIRST wants the Government to release more land for housing and restore growth areas in the west, south-east and north.
- FAMILY FIRST wants the Government to invest more money in infrastructure in growth corridors. We need to make sure our growth corridors are family friendly by ensuring there are community centres, sporting facilities and other infrastructure which will keep them self sustaining.
- FAMILY FIRST wants increased Government funding for more public housing to take pressure off long waiting lists.

INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes we should be doing everything possible to ban Internet Pornography and protect our children from this vile material. Our children's welfare must always come first.

FAMILY FIRST believes Internet Pornography is a huge community concern. Parents want a safe internet environment for their kids yet feel powerless because we cannot be watching over their shoulders all the time to monitor what they are seeing.

FAMILY FIRST supports providing free filter software for public libraries but is concerned because libraries are not currently required to install it. The Victorian Government provides funding to councils and should create a safe Internet environment for our kids.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST has long been calling for mandatory filtering at the ISP level. It is only by mandatory filtering at the ISP level that we can help protect all children from exposure to pornography.
- FAMILY FIRST believes that, as a first step, we should filter the worst sites at the ISP level because that also sends a message to industry that it has a role in helping to protect our kids. FAMILY FIRST proposes a system that allows adults who want unrestricted internet access to 'opt in' and access it.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for mandatory filtering in all Victorian primary and secondary schools and public libraries across the state.

JOBS

Position:

FAMILY FIRST wants more jobs for more Victorians.

FAMILY FIRST recognises that the growing casualisation of the workforce and fears about job security are a fact of life for many Victorians, which places tremendous strain on families and relationships.

Casualisation of the workforce and fears about job security has had a dramatic impact on the ability of men to form stable relationships and families. It has also contributed to the growth in the number of single mother households with children, according to an important study by the Monash Centre for Population and Urban Research, *Men and Women Apart: Partnering in Australia*.

The benefits of having a job go well beyond a weekly pay packet. There is dignity in work and workers feel a greater sense of self-esteem and have more confidence when they use their skills and talents in a workplace. Economic security and the social recognition and rewards of having a job underpin stable families and are important to the long term well-being of children.

Action:

- FAMILY FIRST will call for an inquiry into whether the current level of payroll tax is a disincentive to employers creating more jobs for more Victorians.

KINDERGARTEN

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes high quality early childhood education is critical for children's development. The benefits of universal access in a child's third and fourth years far outweigh the associated costs. Early screening for developmental delays or other problems can happen at kindergarten and allow for appropriate interventions.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will call for early childhood play based education programs for all 3 and 4 year olds in kindergartens.
- FAMILY FIRST wants a non-means tested and fully indexed \$750 education subsidy paid directly to parents when their child starts kindergarten.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for all Victorian children to have at least 4 half day sessions per week of kindergarten for four terms before starting school.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for children aged 3 to have at least one session of kindergarten a week.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for specialist intervention programs across metropolitan and regional area to help children with developmental or other problems. Specialists will include speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, special education teachers and other allied health staff.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for free transport services for children with special needs to help their families access specialist programs.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more specialist intervention and education programs for children and teenagers with psychological or behavioural difficulties in schools.

LAW AND ORDER

Position:

FAMILY FIRST understands that Victorian families want to feel safe and secure. We need to build strong communities and we need a criminal justice system that the community supports.

Many families are concerned about the safety of our streets and neighborhoods. They are particularly concerned about the release of dangerous offenders into the community and worry about their kids.

FAMILY FIRST believes we must be tough on serious offences but that we should also have alternative punishment for people convicted of minor offences.

FAMILY FIRST is concerned about critical staff shortages in police stations across Victoria. Our police force is severely stretched and cannot meet the growing demands of an increasing population.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST wants to see a reduction in alcohol fueled violence on our streets. FAMILY FIRST would like to see a ban on takeaway bottle shops selling liquor between midnight and 7am, and a removal of the link between alcohol advertising and sport which is encouraging a culture of binge drinking in our youth.
- FAMILY FIRST supports minimum sentences for serious offences. Violent and highly dangerous criminals who are a high risk to the community must be kept off the streets.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for an investigation into a system of restorative justice, where, in appropriate situations, a criminal who has injured or damaged a victim must work to pay back the victim. This system has been successful in New Zealand and makes the offender realise the consequences of their actions. It also ensures some compensation to the victim.
- FAMILY FIRST wants more police and specific policies to retain older and more experienced police officers, including more flexible and part-time opportunities. Retired members could be employed during busy periods on weekends or recruited for crime prevention programs, schools and education and youth programs, to ease the load on current members.

LIFE ISSUES

Position:

FAMILY FIRST supports the full legal protection of human life from conception through to natural death. FAMILY FIRST is therefore opposed to abortion and euthanasia.

As steps towards actively reaching this goal of full legal protection of human life, FAMILY FIRST would propose the following measures:

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will call for more funding to expand independent counselling and practical support services for pregnant women, particularly for those in difficult circumstances, as well as to help women experiencing post-abortion grief.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for a campaign to promote adoption. FAMILY FIRST believes it is a serious issue where there are thousands of Australians wanting to become parents but only a handful of babies are put up for adoption each year.
- FAMILY FIRST supports pregnant women having at least 72 hours in which to fully consider the advice and information received on abortion, from an independent counselling session, before making a decision to proceed to termination.
- FAMILY FIRST will urgently lobby for conscientious objection rights for medical workers and healthcare provider organisations who do not wish to perform abortions or have any direct or indirect involvement with the abortion process.
- FAMILY FIRST supports ethical medical and research practices, and therefore opposes current practices that harm or destroy human embryos. FAMILY FIRST will also seek further funding for the promising frontier of adult stem cell research, induced pluripotent stem cell and umbilical cord stem cell research, which are areas where many successful advances have been made.
- FAMILY FIRST will propose a substantial increase in the allocation of funding for palliative care facilities for the terminally ill, and will oppose the decriminalisation of euthanasia.

LIFTING STANDARDS IN POLITICS

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes Australians are fed up with the major parties and are looking for something different. Australians should be able to respect the nation's political leaders. They certainly want them to lead by example, instead of behaving like school kids in a playground, or even worse. Victorians deserve better.

FAMILY FIRST recognizes that actions speak louder than words.

FAMILY FIRST wants to restore the public's faith in politics and politicians and raise the standards in Parliament and public life by sticking to our values. Many visitors to Parliament are appalled by the behavior of politicians and think it is a joke. They should be impressed by the behavior of their lawmakers.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will ensure Ministers take responsibility for decisions of their Departments and are accountable to the public. Too often politicians take the public for granted when the public are the ones who elect them and pay their salaries.
- FAMILY FIRST will campaign for stronger Freedom of Information legislation so decision-making in the public service and Government is more open and transparent.
- FAMILY FIRST will support the Ombudsman in their job of ensuring the Government is accountable to the public.

PETROL

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes petrol is a big issue affecting Victorian families and small businesses. Most families have at least two cars and are crying out for relief at the bowser, especially families in outer suburban and regional Victoria. They are hit the hardest as they rely on road transport and do not have other transport options, like public transport. Family life is suffering due to crippling petrol prices. Trips to family and friends are disappearing and even weekend sport for kids is burning a hole in the family budget. Children are missing out on visits to grandparents and cousins due to soaring petrol prices.

More than 50 cents of every litre of petrol goes in taxes to the State and Federal Governments. The Federal Government collects 38 cents. The Federal Government also collects an extra 13 cents, which they then hand on to the Victorian Government in the form of GST.

At the federal level, FAMILY FIRST has been campaigning for the Federal Government to cut the petrol tax by 10 cents a litre, which would make a huge difference to families.

Before the GST came in, the Victorian Government collected 8 cents a litre from motorists in state excise. Now it collects almost 13 cents a litre in GST. Every time the petrol price goes up the Victorian Government collects more money in petrol GST. Not only that, but the GST is applied to the price of petrol that includes the federal petrol tax of 38 cents. The GST is a tax on a tax!

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST calls on the Victorian Government to cap the petrol tax they collect at 8 cents a litre and hand back 5 cents a litre to Victorian families and small businesses. This measure, coupled with the Federal Government reducing petrol tax by 10 cents a litre, would mean 15 cents off every litre of petrol, which is significant.

POKIES

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes poker machines have inflicted a devastating toll on thousands of Victorian families, particularly children, and the problem is only getting worse.

The Victorian community is demanding action. A recent report revealed three in four Victorians believe pokies do more harm than good and gambling was too widely accessible.

The Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation reports that there are over 55,000 problem gamblers in Victoria. Each problem gambler has a negative impact on up to 7 other people. Poker machines are listed by 84.2% of problem gamblers as being their preferred form of gambling.

FAMILY FIRST recognizes that many Victorians gamble responsibly and enjoy it which is why we will keep machines at the casino, which is the place for them.

FAMILY FIRST believes poker machines plaguing our suburbs have caused family breakdown and financial devastation and the Government has turned a blind eye to the devastation. The Government's failure to cull the number of poker machines proves it is drunk on pokies tax. It is a tragedy that the Government sends "problem gambling kits" to schools instead of tackling the problem itself and culling the number of machines.

It is also a joke that the Government has ordered a report into how gambling affects kids. If the government really cared it would get rid of the machines.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST wants pokies out of our suburbs and limited to Crown Casino.
- FAMILY FIRST would also allow some pokies at country racetracks so people in regional Victoria would not have to travel to Melbourne.
- FAMILY FIRST wants to slow down the speed of machines, limit bets to \$1 per spin and impose maximum load up limits of \$20.

ROAD SAFETY

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes that the road carnage (deaths and injuries) is unacceptably high, with 290 deaths in 2009 alone.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will seek to have sentencing laws changed so that treatment and rehabilitation of repeat drink-drivers can be included as part of sentences for these crimes.
- FAMILY FIRST will provide full funding of mandatory advanced driver programs for P plate drivers and driver education counseling for L plate drivers.
- FAMILY FIRST is concerned about the high accident toll and traffic congestion at level crossings around Victoria, and will construct overpasses at the most dangerous locations.

SMALL BUSINESS

Position:

FAMILY FIRST is proud to represent small business, which is often ignored in Parliament. A total of 97 per cent of businesses in Australia are small businesses (fewer than 20 employees) and most are family businesses, including family farms. Small business is the backbone of the economy and the biggest employer of Victorian workers, which is why they need extra support and fair competition.

FAMILY FIRST wants a genuine level playing field so small businesses and farmers can compete fairly with big businesses which wield huge influence.

FAMILY FIRST believes there is more work to do to provide adequate incentives and assistance for small business, to cut red tape and to simplify business startup.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will call for a streamlining of statutory reporting systems.
- FAMILY FIRST has called on the Federal Government to exempt start-up small businesses from paying tax for the first 3 years.
- FAMILY FIRST is lobbying the Government to cut red tape by further simplifying the Business Activity Statement (BAS), and other business taxation, so small businesses do not have to pay experts to fulfill their responsibilities.
- FAMILY FIRST will examine setting up Small Business Hotlines to advise small businesses on a range of complex issues such as employment laws and tax compliance.
- FAMILY FIRST will promote a culture of corporate responsibility to workers, families and the community.
- FAMILY FIRST has introduced legislation to stop big business using predatory pricing to force independent supermarkets, petrol retailers and pharmacies out of the market. Powerful retailers drop their prices in one suburb to drive out competitors, before raising their prices later on. This forces some small retailers to shut up shop because they can no longer compete, and prices rise due to less competition.

TRANSPORT

Position:

FAMILY FIRST recognises the different transport needs of metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria as well as the increasing inequity between inner city residents and Victorians in the outer suburbs and regions. Families in the outer suburbs and regions have fewer transport options and scarce public transport services are spread over wider geographic areas.

FAMILY FIRST wants Victoria's rail network improved so that key growth corridors have a viable and safe alternative to road transport.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST calls for a feasibility study for a tunnel connecting the Eastern Freeway to the Tullamarine Freeway.
- FAMILY FIRST wants Victoria's most dangerous and congested intersections and railway crossings improved.
- FAMILY FIRST calls for more incentives and strategies to encourage families to use the metropolitan transport system Metlink, particularly on weekends.
- FAMILY FIRST wants guards on trains for safety and security.
- FAMILY FIRST wants conductors on all trams for safety reasons and to reduce fare evasion.
- FAMILY FIRST wants Zone 2 tickets in the Metcard system abolished with a new one zone system implemented, making public transport cheaper for people in the outer suburbs. This would reduce traffic congestion, cut pollution and lead to fewer road accidents.

WATER

Position:

FAMILY FIRST understands that Victoria has a water crisis and desperately needs more water. The situation is critical. We need to boost and secure the state's water supplies for the future. All Victorians also need to do a lot more to save water and understand how precious a resource it is.

Victoria desperately needs new dams. Banning new dams is stupid. Yet for the last 20 years or so no politician has even dared talk about building more dams. With continued population growth, a 'no dams' policy is simply not an option. FAMILY FIRST is disappointed the major parties are reluctant to speak about dams because the topic is too controversial and they fear a public backlash. Victorians want their politicians to lead, to tackle difficult issues and make tough decisions if required. This is a test of our next Government's resolve.

New dams would be exciting nation-building projects. They would create thousands of new jobs for Victorians and pump billions of dollars into our economy. The Thomson Dam in Gippsland, opened in 1983, was the last major dam built in Victoria and it supplies 60 per cent of Melbourne's water. Melbourne will have one million more people by 2030 and it is estimated another reservoir of similar size to the Thomson would give Melbourne up to 1,068,000 megalitres of water.

It has been more than 20 years since a detailed study was done on dams. The 1985 Rural Water Commission report revealed 143 sites for a new dam with six most likely, including the Goulburn, Thompson and Macalister rivers.

Actions

- FAMILY FIRST is calling for new dams to be built in Victoria. Building dams is arguably the cheapest, and most sensible, way of addressing our water crisis.
- FAMILY FIRST is calling on the Government to immediately investigate the best sites for new dams as well as the social, environmental and economic impacts of each potential site.
- FAMILY FIRST is calling on the Government to hold an extensive community consultation process to hear the views of the Victorian community.
- FAMILY FIRST wants a comprehensive water plan prepared for Victoria until 2030.
- FAMILY FIRST will increase rebates for households to install water tanks.

- FAMILY FIRST wants to make it mandatory for new housing developments to install water tanks and have third-pipe schemes which allow centrally recycled water to be used to flush toilets and water gardens.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for an investigation into ways to increase the waste water we recycle.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for more rebates for Victorians who buy water-saving products like various shower heads.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for a water-saving awareness campaign aimed at children.

WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

Position:

FAMILY FIRST understands that balancing work and family life is a huge issue for Australian families.

FAMILY FIRST believes that parents have the toughest, and the most important, job of all – raising children.

As far as FAMILY FIRST is concerned, workers with children are parents first and workers second.

FAMILY FIRST is very concerned about Australia's declining fertility rate and the fact that many families delay having, or indeed decide not to have, children because of financial pressures and fears about job security.

There are numerous economic factors – such as declining housing affordability, rising education costs, crippling petrol prices and the casualisation of the workforce – that make it harder for families to have real choice about how they structure their work and family life.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will campaign for more workplace flexibility so families have greater choice about childcare options and support for breastfeeding mothers.
- FAMILY FIRST will call for an investigation into ways to provide childcare as close as possible to workplaces so parents can spend more time with their children and to help breastfeeding which is highly beneficial for children's health.
- FAMILY FIRST wants to examine ways to allow parents to care full-time for young children for as long as they like, if they choose. This will include how parents can re-enter the workforce and what training they might need.
- FAMILY FIRST will promote the value and status of the work of stay at home parents and household management to encourage greater acceptance of such choices in workplace culture.
- FAMILY FIRST will encourage fathers to become substantially involved in the care and upbringing of their children.

WORKPLACE RELATIONS

Position:

FAMILY FIRST believes the vast majority of employers, and the vast majority of employees, do the right thing.

Our workplace relations system should balance business needs for a stable economic climate and workplace flexibility with the needs of workers to be treated fairly and have good conditions.

The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness must apply as must the rights of all workers to a just wage and all businesses to a just profit.

FAMILY FIRST acknowledges that workplace relations outcomes must reflect what is just and fair for all parties in light of economic constraints on the business and economy.

FAMILY FIRST supports enterprise bargaining and believes employers and employees are best placed to directly negotiate wages and conditions that are best for them. As far as possible, workplace disputes should be settled at the workplace level. If that is not possible, there should be a strong, efficient and independent system of conciliation and arbitration to resolve disputes in a timely manner and with particular regard to minimizing legal and cost barriers.

FAMILY FIRST supports the role of trade unions to act on behalf of workers if that is what workers want.

While FAMILY FIRST believes that a system of Awards, Australian Workplace Agreements and Enterprise Bargaining has generally met the needs of Australian workplaces, it acknowledges that many issues remain, particularly about the increasing number of casual workers and 'outworkers' in unregulated and low paid industries.

YOUTH AFFAIRS

Position:

FAMILY FIRST values the contributions of young Victorians and wants them to participate fully in family and community life.

Teenagers and young people benefit greatly from positive and supportive relationships with their parents, siblings, extended family and friends.

Teenagers in particular flourish in family and community cultures where parents have enough time to share activities and conversations with them and where loving guidance is given. Studies have shown that small things like sharing family meals are very effective in reducing the risks of young people having developmental or behavioural problems.

FAMILY FIRST believes we need to love, support and encourage our young Victorians so they can develop their self esteem and feel confident about who they are and their intrinsic worth.

Actions:

- More funding for programs in schools and local communities that focus on improving young people's self-esteem and confidence and equipping them with life skills such as relationship education and financial management.
- More support for programs to reduce the high rate of youth suicide, particularly in regional Victoria.
- More rehabilitation and treatment to tackle substance abuse.