



Sharon Bird MP

Federal Member for Cunningham

\$180 million each year could be saved from John Howard's spending habits

Taxpayers could save at least \$180 million each year from changing the way John Howard's Government spends money, according to a Federal Australian Labor Party *Waste Watch* report released today.

Federal Member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird, said that the *Waste Watch* annual report highlights just how easily the Howard Government spends taxpayers' money on advertising, media monitoring, consultants and opinion polling.

“Over a fully 3-year Parliamentary term, changing the way Mr Howard spends the money of hard-working families could save \$180 million each year or \$540 million.

“This report compiled by Labor using information gathered from Senate Estimates Committee hearings and constant *Questions On Notice* in the House of Representatives and Senate confirm that Mr Howard's Government spends hundreds of millions of dollars on itself”, Ms Bird said.

She said that the savings identified each year could be re-directed to address many problems, including the skills shortage crisis.

For example:

- **\$1.2 million** spent by the Department of Health and Ageing on media training for bureaucrats could have been **allocated for the Wollongong Hospital MRI licence***
- **\$2,025** on exit surveys of patrons of the Old Parliament House Café could have funded one apprentices **Trade Completion Bonus*** proposed by the Labor Party

The *Waste Watch* report also highlights many other examples of Howard Government waste of taxpayers' money, including:

- \$25,000 to replace carpet in the Cabinet Room because it was the wrong colour (grey instead of light blue)
- \$5,000 a chair for new chair in the Cabinet Room (total \$25,000)
- \$5,000 for voice projection training for the Minister for Small Business and Tourism, Fran Bailey

- \$24,071 to a consultant for advice on paper products for the Department of Family and Community Services

A copy of the Waste Watch report can be obtained by contacting Ms Bird's office.

Editors note: Cost estimate for the MRI licence is approximately \$1 million. The *Trade Completion Bonus* is a Labor Party initiative to address apprenticeship completion. The *Trade Completion Bonus* proposed by Labor provides \$2,000 tax free to an apprentice.

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Contact: Sharon Bird MP 4228 5899