

Welcome to the October edition of the Chifley Update.

Through this publication supporters of the Chifley Research Centre will be able to keep up-to-date with the latest progressive research from Australia and the rest of the world as well as accessing research from academics, research institutes and the CRC itself.

The CRC is Labor's national research centre. As a progressive think-tank, the CRC engages in policy research and public debate. We promote discussion and cooperation with progressive think-tanks and academics and aim to advance progressive thinking and policy goals through our work.

Visit [www.chifley.org.au](http://www.chifley.org.au) for more about the Chifley Research Centre.

## LABOR HISTORY WEBSITE [www.laborhistory.org.au](http://www.laborhistory.org.au)

The *Labor History* website is an interactive portal recording the party's history as well as making that history accessible to the public. The recently launched website allows users to access videos, photos and documents marking key moments in the party's history. Until now, such material could only be accessed by writing a formal letter requesting access to archives at the National Library, and then wading through boxes of files. Now this incredible material is available to everyone with internet access.

The *Chifley Years* are the first completed stage of the party's 118-year history, and a timeline of Ben Chifley's prime ministership is one of the features now accessible.

Website users are encouraged to contribute their own materials to the collection by uploading their own documents, photos or movies that record the history of the party.

## 2009 Chifley ideas space

The Chifley Research Centre recently held a two-day long **ideas space** to facilitate discussion among government ministers, commentators and industry experts to generate new ways of thinking about the policy challenges and opportunities facing Australia.

Visit [www.chifley.org.au](http://www.chifley.org.au) to see footage and video.

### A successful and progressive response to global recession

Treasurer Wayne Swan was joined by *The Australian's* George Megalogenis and David Coats of The Work Foundation (UK) to discuss government responses to global recession both in Australia and overseas. The Treasurer shared his experience of meeting people around the country giving insight into the effect of recession and resulting stimulus on individuals. The Treasurer said he found an overall sense of confidence, not only in the economy, but in the community and in each other. He said that the stimulus gave individuals confidence that they were not alone in facing the global financial crisis and that government was there to assist them. The Treasurer noted at the workforce level there had been enormous concern for the welfare of others—employers have worked hard to keep employees in work, and employees

themselves have worked hard to ensure that other employees keep their job. This coming together in tough times is an encouraging indication that Australia retains a strong sense of community and a fair go.

David Coats of The Work Foundation spoke about the global consensus that an activist fiscal response is a key part of responding to global recession. Will Hutton, also of The Work Foundation contributed to the panel by video. Mr Hutton identified one of the chief causes of the credit crunch as the neglect of fairness and ethics in the banking system.

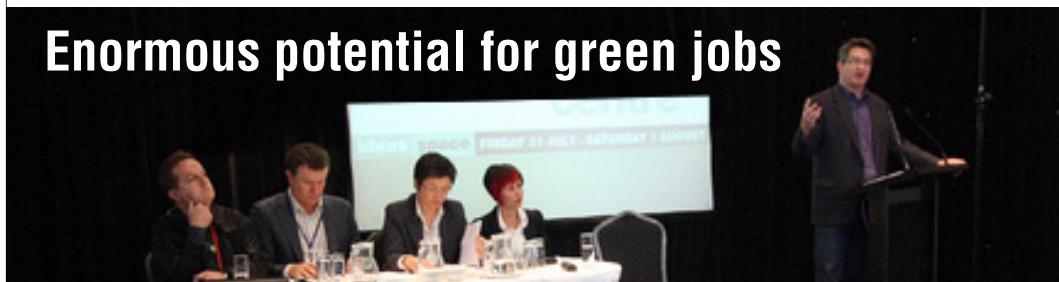
The Work Foundation report, *A Boost for Britain: The Case for activist fiscal policy on why affordable fiscal activism is necessary to reduce the threat of unemployment* is available at [www.theworkfoundation.com](http://www.theworkfoundation.com).

## Enormous potential for green jobs

An **ideas space** panel facilitated by the Climate Institute's John Connor brought together Climate Change Minister Penny Wong, the CFMEU's Tony Maher, Don Henry of the Australian Conservation Foundation and ALP's National President and founder of the Labor Environmental Action Network Jenny McAllister to discuss the potential for green jobs in Australia.

Minister Wong noted that climate change is more than an environmental issue—it is also an economic challenge. She said one of the key economic opportunities presented by the move to a carbon-constrained world is the creation

of 'green jobs' and that the government has an important responsibility to encourage the creation of these 'green jobs'. Mr Henry said Australia has a particular advantage in creating green jobs in sectors like sustainable water systems, biomaterials and green buildings. Ms McAllister outlined some of the factors that should be present in projects that receive government funding, like the presence of a large potential market, flexibility and long-term sustainability. Ms McAllister also thanked Tony Maher for his work in engaging the union movement in the conversation about climate change opportunities.



## Benefits of paid paternity leave for babies

Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing and Indigenous Affairs was joined by leading experts on child development to discuss the benefits of paid paternity leave for babies. ACTU President Sharon Burrows opened the session and spoke about the development of the paid maternity leave campaign within the union movement, and the importance of paid paternity leave in protecting people's rights at work. The **ideas space** audience also heard from a young woman who struggled to care for her prematurely-born baby because she was forced to return to work soon after her son was born. The Minister was joined by video-link by Professor Stuart Shanker, leading international brain development expert and President of the Council for Early Child Development, who outlined some of the scientifically proved benefits of paid paternity leave for infant development. Professor Shanker said of all infant development programs, it is programs of

paid parental leave that produce the greatest benefits for everybody.

Professor Shanker brings his knowledge of infant brain development to bear on the question of which policies and programs best enhance infant development. He explained that infant brains lack executive function, which means that infants cannot regulate their emotional responses. It is by being regulated by their caregivers that infants develop this executive function, for example mothers learn what stimuli calms their child enabling them to begin to communicate to those around them. This regulation can occur only through incredible amounts of close contact. The role of paid paternity leave in enabling mothers and fathers to care full-time for their children is thus vital to infant development. The Minister congratulated those who had been campaigning for so long for the provision of paid paternity leave.

## Long-term planning vital for infrastructure

Infrastructure Minister Anthony Albanese participated in a panel with Sydney Water's Dr Kerry Schott, David Roseman of Macquarie Group and Simon Barrett of LEK Consulting. Hosted by the Transport and Tourism Forum's Chris Brown, the panel discussed the key role of infrastructure in advancing policy aims across a range of areas like climate change and trade. The members of the panel spoke about the importance of national coordination in developing infrastructure to encourage efficiency.

Minister for Infrastructure Anthony Albanese aims to create an infrastructure development process that will remain functional and relevant for years to come. At the **ideas space** the Minister and industry experts discussed some of the key benefits for 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure created by Infrastructure Australia (IA). The IA process improves the development of infrastructure

in Australia by decoupling politics from planning and the process of competitive submissions encourages parties to engage in long-term planning and prioritising. The Minister noted that while IA's priority list often receives the most media attention, just as important is the 'pipeline' of projects, which creates a long-term nation-building plan for Australia. Dr Schott of Sydney Water also endorsed the Australian Government's actions in institutionalising a national perspective on infrastructure development. She noted that the quality of submissions to IA was often poor because there had never before been a system which required state and local governments to put the case as to why some projects were more important than others. Simon Barrett similarly highlighted the importance of having a coordinated, long-term plan behind any one project, and credited the IA submission process with encouraging this.

For links to articles discussed in the *Chifley Update* and many other useful publications visit the Chifley Research Centre website

### IN BRIEF – ideas space

- Jubilee Australia hosted Prof. Ross Buckley and Dr Elizabeth Thurbon of UNSW to discuss the global dimensions of the current financial crisis. The participants discussed the potential role of the United Nations in formulating a global response to the crisis.

[www.jubileeaustralia.org](http://www.jubileeaustralia.org)

- Catalyst hosted Jeff Blodgett, State Director for Obama's Campaign for Change in Minnesota and director of Wellstone Action! – a unique centre for training and leadership development in the US. Along with the LHMU's Damian Ogden, participants discussed techniques to engage people in political campaigns.

[www.catalyst.org.au](http://www.catalyst.org.au)

- The Whitlam Institute presented findings from its *Young People Imagining a New Democracy* project. Researchers shared what they have discovered about younger Australians' attitudes towards participation in the democratic process and the potential policy implications of these findings.

[www.whitlam.org](http://www.whitlam.org)