



SCOTLAND'S PARTY MANIFESTO FOR THE SCOTLAND'S PARLIAMENT 1999 ELECTIONS



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INTRODUCTION

The Scottish General Election to be held on the 6th of May is the most important election in Scotland's history.

Our new Parliament, the first in 300 years, can begin to rebuild Scotland. Together we can undo generations of neglect and build confidence in our future.

This is Scotland's Parliament – a Parliament that can focus on our needs and on our potential. The SNP is Scotland's Party – working in Scotland, for the benefit of Scotland and with Scottish priorities at the heart of its concerns.

Scotland's Parliament needs Scotland's Party. A Party in tune with Scottish needs and hopes, and always with Scottish priorities at the forefront of our thinking. A party that does not dance to Westminster's tune.

Our proposals for the first four years of this Parliament are detailed, radical, and focussed on Scotland. Our Penny for Scotland programme invests in our essential services. Our Scottish Public Service Trusts provide a new and better way to build our infrastructure. Our land reform package empowers communities throughout Scotland.

These proposals – all our proposals – are designed to make the Parliament work for Scotland.

But our vision also goes further. Therefore this manifesto also indicates the potential of independence, and what it can deliver to the Scottish people. We are committed, if elected to govern, to a referendum on independence within the first four year term of an SNP government, so that Scotland can move on from devolution to full membership of the European Union and to the full utilisation of our resources.

This manifesto is made in Scotland, for Scotland and by Scotland. It understands our nation and shows the ways in which Scotland's Party can begin to tackle Scotland's problems and possibilities.

Scotland's Party asks for Scotland's support to make Scotland's Parliament work. To make Scotland a nation once again.



Alex Salmond



A NEW APPROACH TO PAYING FOR SCOTLAND'S VITAL NEEDS

'A Penny for Scotland'

At the heart of the SNP campaign for the Scottish Parliament lie three simple promises:

WE WILL NOT INCREASE THE BASIC RATE OF TAX DURING THE FOUR YEARS OF THE PARLIAMENT.

WE WILL NOT IMPLEMENT THE PENNY TAX BRIBE IN GORDON BROWN'S DISASTROUS BUDGET FOR SCOTLAND.

WE WILL DEVOTE THE INCOME FROM THIS PENNY – SCOTLAND'S PENNY – TO EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HOUSING.

This approach to our public finances defines the difference between the SNP and New Labour.

New Labour has taken on Tory principles. Tax cuts, rather than public services, are New Labour's priority.

But Scotland's vital public services have been cut year after year, with results that are obvious to all – run down hospitals, dilapidated and under-resourced schools, and poorer and poorer housing. We cannot afford to cut taxes while such a situation affects everyone of us, and particularly the young, the old and the vulnerable.

Scots have said they are prepared to invest in public services, if given the choice. The SNP is now giving that choice.

If Scotland chooses the SNP, we will implement a three year programme which will result in £690 million of investment in public services – in schools, in hospitals, in homes.

The full details of this programme are published separately. They are in addition to the costed and detailed proposals in this manifesto. They are simply the price of a better future which we are asking Scots to pay.

We will keep the basic rate of tax unchanged. Our proposal freezes income tax at the level you pay now, the level New Labour said was right this year and last.

The average tax payer on £17,000 will forgo only 30p a day to this programme. A low paid worker would turn down as little as 4 pence a day and an MP on high earnings 75 pence. But taken together, all those pennies add up to a major boost to the services we all need.

Brown's election bribe, or Scotland's Penny. It's a clear choice in this election. It is a choice the SNP think Scotland is prepared to make, for the good of our society and our country.

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'The Holyrood Project'

The SNP has also taken a different approach to value for money in the public sector.

The SNP believes that we can gain better value from our public spending. And that we can do so without the type of Tory and New Labour cuts that hit staff and services.

The SNP has set itself the target of securing £122 million per annum from the year 2000 from existing public spending to allocate to new priorities. This is less than ONE PERCENT of total Scottish Office spending. It will not target budgets that are used to pay for staff – we need more teachers, doctors, nurses, administrators and auxiliaries. It will come from things that can be done better, or things we should not be doing at all – like allowing the administration of quangos to absorb much needed resources.

In addition to the £122 million, we have identified projects in the Scottish office spending where value for money is not being obtained. These add up to a further £28 million per year.

Thus we can afford to spend £150 million per year (from the year 2000) on Scotland's real priorities – on enterprise, on compassion and on democracy.

Details of how this money will be spent are given in this manifesto. The full detail of the "Holyrood Project" – the way by which we will release more value from government spending – is given in a separate paper. This includes examples of waste and unnecessary spending, including the considerable amounts spent on unelected quangos and their civil service support.

By securing "Scotland's Penny" for public services, and by undertaking the modern financial management required by "The Holyrood Project" we can provide over £1 billion, over 4 years, for Scotland's priorities – quite different to the New Labour's London priorities that are damaging Scotland and sending the jobless figures up.

ON TO INDEPENDENCE

We will publish separately during the campaign "An Economic Strategy for Independence". Working on the principle that we will seek to take Scotland into the European Single Currency at the earliest opportunity this will set out an assessment of Scotland's position regarding the Maastricht qualification criteria. In particular it will detail our projections for Scotland's fiscal balances over the coming 3 years together. It will also signal our approach to Scotland's entry into Emu and the institutional framework that will be required. Furthermore, it will set out the principles of our approach to economic policy in an independent Scotland.

(Copies of the full documents - "A Penny for Scotland", "The Holyrood Project" and "An Economic Strategy for Independence" - can be obtained from SNP Headquarters, 6 North Charlotte St, Edinburgh, EH2 4JH, Tel: 0131- 226 3661)



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Scotland's Priorities

We will make Scotland a better place to live in. We have identified fourteen key policies which will help us all. These are Scotland's priorities.

- Use "Scotland's Penny" to invest £690 million more in health, education and housing
- Increase the number of doctors and nurses in our health service and teachers in our schools
- Abolish Student Fees and restore grants for 20,000 students from lower income backgrounds.
- Introduce Scottish Public Service Trusts to replace the scandal of Tory and Labour privatisation of health and education.
- Spend an additional £30 for every pupil in Scotland on school text books and library books.
- Create the most extensive Scottish educational resource ever by building a virtual Scotland and supplying e-mail addresses and computer access to all school children.
- Reform Scottish land laws to give all communities a real say in their future.
- Bring water back under local democratic control and so reduce increases in bills
- Abolish the tolls on the Skye Bridge.
- Create new drugs courts to help tackle Scotland's drug crisis.
- Provide a package of measures to promote small businesses
- Establish a network of commercial embassies, based on the existing Locate in Scotland and Scottish Trade International offices, selling Scotland abroad for tourism, exports and inward investment.
- Introduce Proportional Representation in local government
- Hold a referendum within the first four year term of the Parliament to allow the people of Scotland to choose Independence if they so wish.

These key policies are designed to create a modern, accountable and democratic Scotland in keeping with the needs of the people. This manifesto contains details of other policies that will also contribute to the development of Scotland and the welfare and well-being of those who live here.

The SNP intends to be judged by its success in implementing these measures if elected to government on the 6th of May.

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MOVING TOWARDS A BETTER SCOTLAND –
OUR FOURTEEN KEY PROMISES FOR
THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

- ***Use “Scotland’s Penny” to invest £690 million more in health, education and housing***

We will only use Scotland’s Penny to invest in health, education and housing. That is a guarantee. Under the current government spending on education and housing has fallen compared to the Tories, while health is barely keeping pace with inflation. Our Schools are crumbling, our health service is stretched to breaking and our housing is some of the worst in Europe. It is time to call a halt to cuts in spending.

The programme for investing “Scotland’s Penny” is published separately and will form the backbone of the SNP campaign for the Scottish Parliament.

- ***Increase the number of doctors and nurses in our health service and teachers in our schools***

The government’s approach to our most vital public services is alienating those on whom it most relies – the able and committed professionals in our health centres, hospitals, schools, colleges and universities. We are committed to improving the staffing levels through out our health service and providing teachers with the time, support and materials to do what they do best – teach.

We shall commit ourselves to meeting independent pay review recommendations and we will provide assistance to keep and attract health professionals in all parts of Scotland, including our rural and remote areas.

We will reduce the paper work facing teachers by one third and move towards smaller class sizes. We will provide additional teachers in key areas and resource their work properly.

- ***Abolish Student Fees and restore grants for 20,000 students from lower income backgrounds.***

Over the years Higher Education has become available to more and more young people as a right rather than a privilege for those who could afford it. One of the first shameful acts of New Labour was to end the right to free education by imposing tuition fees.

We will restore the principle of free education in Scotland. We have allocated the necessary £38 million to ensure that Scottish-domiciled students will not pay tuition fees, whether studying in Scotland or furth of Scotland.

In a move which hit poorest students hardest, New Labour are also abolishing student maintenance grants. Students undertaking university courses will be faced with the prospect of a debt approaching some £15,000 by the time that they finish.

Although the restoration of a full grant will not be possible without



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the fiscal freedom of independence, we are determined to start tackling the problem of student poverty under devolution. We propose to re-introduce a maintenance grant of £500 per annum for the poorest 20,000 Scottish students. This will at least begin to tackle the problems of student poverty, and will make the decision to begin a university course less financially challenging for those from lower income backgrounds.

An SNP administration will also end the current discrimination against students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland studying in Scotland by committing resources to pay their fourth year tuition fees.

- ***Introduce Scottish Public Service Trusts to replace the scandal of Tory and Labour privatisation of health and education.***

The Private Finance Initiative was devised by the Tories and has been embraced with enthusiasm by New Labour. However it is really a type of privatisation, with all the disadvantages which that entails.

The effect of PFI is to make the public sector pay over the odds for new schools and hospitals while losing ownership over the new building. The Edinburgh Royal Infirmary is an £180 million hospital – it will cost taxpayers £900 million over the next thirty years, after which the people of Edinburgh won't own a single brick.

We accept that the expertise of the private sector can be harnessed for the public's good, and that competitive rates of finance can deliver high value investment. We believe that this can be done in the public interest in a far better way than that which is provided by PFI.

We will create a Scottish Public Service Trust which will have operating divisions covering the various types of infrastructure projects. Because of the special circumstances of housing, there will be a separate Homes and Communities Trust. These will oversee investment in the public sector, building new schools, hospitals, houses and transport links. They will hold the assets in trust for the nation while they are under construction and in operation, handing them back to the public at the end of the contract period.

They will tender for the most competitive finance and also raise funds through bond issues. They will eliminate the waste, expense, excessive profit and inefficiency of PFI. They are a new and better way of doing business in the national interest. We expect them to quickly crowd out PFI.

- ***Spend an additional £30 for every pupil in Scotland on school text books and library books.***

Scotland's great achievements have been built on the foundations of great education. It is still the case that a good education unlocks potential, expands horizons and leads to a positive contribution to a creative society.

Scottish education should be built not just on the latest technology

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but also on the essential basic skills. Regrettably years of cuts have pared school book budgets almost to extinction.

We will provide Scotland's schools with £20 for every child to fund the purchase of books and basic learning materials. We will also provide £10 for every child to invest in better school libraries.

- ***Create the most extensive Scottish educational resource ever by building a virtual Scotland and supplying e-mail addresses and computer access to all school children.***

Scotland's Millennium Project will provide each Scottish school child with his or her unique e-mail address: resource computer provision in schools so that each child can use the e-mail address and other computer facilities each day : build the definitive Scottish educational web site, reflecting the richness of Scottish life, history and culture, including economic and business matters and make the full resource relevant to teaching in every subject and available to the wider world.

We shall resource this project from monies already allocated for computer projects but increase total spending to £130 million over the final three years of the Parliament.

This project will secure internet access not just from every school, but from every computer in every school.

- ***Reform Scottish land laws to give all communities a real say in their future.***

While others were silent, the SNP stood up for the rights of the dispossessed and the powerless against the unfairness of Scotland's medieval land laws. We have campaigned on this long and hard. We will deliver a radical reform programme which will address ownership, land use and the rural housing crisis.

We will scrap Scotland's feudal land laws and introduce modern legislation. We will introduce community contracts to establish a bond of trust and duty between residents and land owners. We will oblige all absentee landlords to maintain a legally responsible land agent on their property. We will pilot locality land councils as a model for democratic decision making over our land. Where there is proven community intent we will support community purchase of land through a Land Bank, funded through the lottery New Opportunities Fund and establish a right of first refusal for communities when land becomes available for sale. Compulsory purchase will be possible in certain circumstances including willful neglect and persistent bad land management. We will legislate for a right to roam.

- ***Bring water back under local democratic control and so reduce increases in water bills.***

Labour pledged to "bring water back under democratic control" but they have refused to deliver on the pledge, simply replacing the Tory placemen on water quangos with their own appointees. Only the SNP is committed to putting this, the most essential natural



resource, under democratic control.

We will create three supervisory boards, covering the three water regions as currently defined. These will be composed of democratically elected representatives from the councils within each region and will license the existing companies, which will be streamlined. They will ensure the water industry works to the interests of the people and deliver the standards the people want. Using the new Scottish Public Service Trust for infrastructure development we expect to make delivery of water services less expensive, so reducing the year on year increases in charges that have been experienced under New Labour.

- ***Abolish tolls on the Skye Bridge.***

The tolls on the Skye Bridge are a tax on that community – a tax which is paid not just by those who have to travel but on every item taken into and out of the island and the outer isles.

Many New Labour MPs and Ministers paid lip service to the abolition of tolls when in opposition, but refused to help when in Government. The SNP has set as an early priority the buy out of the existing Skye Bridge PFI by the first of the new Scottish Public Services Trust. When that is completed, an SNP government will resource "Shadow Tolls", thus abolishing the charges presently made to those who use the bridge.

We will oppose any attempts to introduce toll roads on main arterial routes.

- ***Create new drugs courts to help tackle Scotland's drug crisis.***

Governments have long worried at the drug crisis but have rarely achieved significant developments. The all party "Scotland Against Drugs" initiative was a useful innovation but New Labour has diminished its impact and tried to re-introduce a partisan approach.

We will continue the all party campaign, but we will bring to it new ideas.

One such idea will be the piloting of a system of Drugs Courts.

Drugs Courts will deal with offenders for whom the underlying problem is drug misuse, providing the mechanism best suited to these cases. Drug Dealers will continue to be dealt with by the higher criminal courts.

Critically, the Courts will be supported by a wide network of rehabilitation services. This will enable the courts to prescribe treatment safe in the knowledge that services will be able to meet these requirements. Drugs Courts have been successful in a number of other countries. We will adapt them to best suit our own legal system and social work structure.



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- ***Provide a package of measures to promote small businesses***

We recognise small businesses as the engine driving our economy. They represent 95% of all businesses and support the livelihoods and ambitions of many. They are also a key source of new jobs.

We will deliver a £117 million package to help small business. £90 million will be targeted at reducing the burden of business rates on small firms. Business rates will continue to be set by the Scottish Parliament.

Small rural businesses are bearing the brunt of New Labour's hikes in fuel tax, putting companies out of business and putting the cost of our products up. We will provide £9 million to help remote and rural business by expanding the present rural rate relief packages.

We will create a Business Innovation Fund for small businesses, thereby helping create new indigenous industries, and will provide £3.75 million to offset the cost of payroll management for the smallest businesses in future years.

- ***Establish a network of commercial embassies, based on the existing Locate in Scotland and Scottish Trade offices, selling Scotland abroad for tourism, exports and inward investment.***

We are strongly supportive of the work done by Locate in Scotland and we will continue to resource that agency in the way that will allow further success.

We will transform Scottish Trade International into a more powerful export agency – Export from Scotland. Its primary aim will be to broaden Scotland's export base and to exploit new export opportunities in the high tech sectors being developed in Scotland, using electronic commerce and the internet marketplace.

We will renew and re-invigorate the Scottish Tourist Board, by transforming it into a new agency called Welcome to Scotland.

Building on the existing international offices operated by and for Scottish Trade International and Locate in Scotland, we will create a cost effective network of commercial embassies which will represent Export from Scotland, Locate in Scotland and Welcome to Scotland in overseas markets. It will also nurture business at home to a position where they can take maximum advantage of international market opportunities.

Our aim for Tourism is to raise standards – we need to make Scotland a high quality, value for money destination. Tourism is one of the



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global growth sectors – we can take advantage of this while protecting and promoting our culture and environment.

Welcome to Scotland will come under the joint “umbrella” of SE and HIE, giving direct access to development funds and training. We will provide secure funding for Area Tourists Boards and remove the dependency on membership while preserving democratic input.

- ***Introduce Proportional Representation in local government***

Local Government can deliver good services for Scotland, and thrive on a strong democratic base. However the present electoral system has led to the creation of discredited and inefficient one party states, particularly in West Central Scotland.

We will introduce proportional representation for all local government elections. This will ensure greater fairness in council membership whilst maintaining the link between councillor and ward. This will ensure that no one party can dominate and abuse local democracy at the expense of local services.

- ***Hold a referendum within the first four year term of the Parliament to allow the people of Scotland to choose Independence if they so wish.***

The new Parliament is an important step forward, giving Scotland control of some of her own affairs. But Scotland needs control of all aspects of government, and all our resources.

Scotland is the process of independence – and the Parliament is a vital part of that process. The process will only end with independence within the European Union.

In Government an SNP administration will hold a referendum on independence within the first four years of the Parliament.



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AN ENTERPRISING, COMPASSIONATE AND DEMOCRATIC SCOTLAND

The SNP's key policies will influence every part of Scotland, and the lives of all who live here.

But alongside these key commitments there is the need to change and develop much more.

The SNP bases its plans for Scotland on the three pillars of enterprise, compassion and democracy. In each area the SNP will bring forward new thinking, create new opportunities and build a new foundation for national life.

ENTERPRISE:

Scotland should be a fully employed, high value, high growth economy, capable of competing effectively in global markets and achieving a high standard and quality of living for all those who live and work in Scotland.

Scotland can be such an economy, but we will need to recover full control over economic, fiscal and monetary policy in order to fully achieve such a goal.

Such an independent Scotland would be the 7th richest country in the world, in terms of wealth (GDP) per head. Yet under the Union, one third of our people are living in poverty and deprivation. Our unemployment rate is rising while it is dropping in the rest of the UK. Major jobs losses have been announced in the textiles, engineering, shipbuilding and electronics sectors. In total Scotland has lost nearly 15,000 jobs over the past year.

The SNP will :-

- invest in those high growth industries which can generate real new jobs and wealth for Scotland in the 21st century
- diversify our industrial and export base, so that we are not reliant on only four sectors of the economy – whisky, oil, IT and electronics – for over 70% of our total exports, as we are at present
- build on Scotland's reputation for invention and innovation by making Scotland the Science and Innovation Capital of Europe
- build up the human skills base needed to compete in the modern world

We will **Reform Regional Selective Assistance** within the context of the framework for regional development assistance set by the European Union. The reforms will make RSA more flexible, relevant and attractive for Research and Development projects and those projects which involve a high level of capital investment but not many direct jobs.

In the drive to make Scotland the Science and innovation capital of Europe, an SNP Government will **Set Up High Tech Hot Spots for New Jobs and Industry** as world wide centres of excellence



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in advanced technologies.

The key to Scotland's economic prosperity is the development of indigenous high growth industries. Such industries include biotechnology, information technology, high added value engineering, nano-technology, chemicals, renewable energy technologies, and multimedia.

We will support the work begun by Scottish Enterprise and the Royal Society of Edinburgh in encouraging the commercialisation of the academic base in Scotland. Our aim is to ensure that research and development are allowed to progress sufficiently in Scotland for their economic benefits to be enjoyed in Scotland. Too often in the past the fruits of research have directly benefited other countries with Scotland often only securing branch plant operations. We are now in a position where Scotland is at the leading edge of scientific research in a number of important areas, but we must secure the benefits of their commercialisation.

In order to **Develop and Implement a National Skills Strategy** we will lead a fundamental shift away from a supply-led to a demand-led approach to vocational training. We will carry out an immediate review of policy and strategy formulation, with a view to articulating a strategy to reverse our decline in skills performance and we will undertake an independent review of assessment arrangements across vocational training qualifications. We will establish a partnership with the private sector in developing new skills strategies

Scotland needs to **Streamline the Enterprise Agency Network** to make it more effective, efficient and accountable. Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise will remain the principal agencies of economic development. They will be responsible for implementing the economic development strategy of the government and will be subject to scrutiny by the Scottish Parliament. Their non-executive boards will be abolished.

Under the umbrella of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise will operate three key agencies, Export from Scotland, Locate in Scotland and Welcome to Scotland. Based on the existing international offices operated by and for Scottish Trade International and Locate in Scotland, we will create an expanded network of commercial embassies which will represent these three agencies in overseas markets.

Our aim for Tourism is to raise standards – we need to make Scotland a high quality, value for money destination. Tourism is one of the global growth sectors – we can take advantage of this while protecting and promoting our culture and environment. By placing Welcome to Scotland under the joint umbrella of SE and HIE it will obtain direct access to development funds and training.

We wish to remove wasteful duplication and overlap in the local delivery of economic development and to bring tourism into the mainstream of local economic development. We will consult as to

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the best way of achieving this in each local area, but we wish to ensure democratic accountability as well as involving key players in local business, commerce and tourism.

On to INDEPENDENCE...By definition a devolved Parliament is limited in what it can do. With Independence in Europe Scottish business could achieve a great deal more.

For example, an independent Scotland would be able to pursue a macro economic policy designed to meet Scotland's needs rather than those of the south east of England economy, boost the growth rate of the Scottish economy, make the personal tax system much fairer and bring about a major shift in trade and industry policy including following the precedent of Austria, Ireland and Sweden - all small European countries - who have reduced the rate of corporation tax substantially and increased revenues as a result of developing more high value added operations

With the use of our own resources, Scotland could be the 7th most prosperous nation in the world – a nation that can use its wealth for its own priorities, creating not just a rich country but a rich society.

TRANSPORT

The SNP believes that **an integrated transport policy with air, rail, road and ferry links co-ordinated to serve the interests of the public** is a policy aim which can be worked towards in our new Parliament, and then fully realised in the context of independence. The policy should also seek to encourage a move away from car use.

Bus and coach operators will be required to increase co-operation with other transport providers, to facilitate through ticketing and to provide better public information provision. The provision of a **National Integrated Timetable** will allow the creation of an on-line passenger information system. Bus operators must agree to take part in nationally funded **Concessionary fares schemes for the elderly, disabled, students and the unemployed**.

We will undertake a **full review of all planned existing road development schemes** to ensure that road developments are prioritised to deliver the maximum safety, social, environmental and economic benefits. Roads that serve a vital economic purpose and those with a high accident rates will be given priority for development.

The SNP will support city centre charging schemes only when plans for public transport alternatives are underway. The revenue from such schemes would have to be spent on improving transport alternatives. **We will oppose the introduction of tolls on our main arterial roads.**



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In any case **freight and passengers must be encouraged away from the roads and on to rail and other forms of public transport.** Safety, environmental protection and the encouragement of economic activity must all be considered in how this objective is achieved.

We will charge the Scottish Public Services Trust with seeking to assist transport schemes such as developing **the electrification of the Edinburgh to Aberdeen line, the reconstruction of a Borders railway line,** and other key strategic links.

The economic and social importance of Caledonian MacBrayne and the Orkney and Shetland Ferry Companies cannot be underestimated, and Caledonian MacBrayne will be retained as a publicly owned company. We will establish an Independent Price Tribunal to limit ferry fare increases and to assess the economic potential of each of the twenty five routes operated by Caledonian MacBrayne. We will also explore the potential for additional ferry construction through the Scottish Public Service Trust to assist Caledonian MacBrayne to continue to provide the highest level of service.

In addition we will seek powers for the Scottish Parliament to **liberalise the air cargo licensing regime,** thus giving a huge boost to Scottish Airports, which could compete to become major hubs for the onwards movement of freight to Europe. We support the granting of fifth and sixth freedom rights for the carriage of air cargo between Scotland and other UK and European destinations by foreign carriers.

We will resist New Labour's privatisation plans for Air Traffic Control and seek proper investment in this service.

Scottish local authorities will be encouraged to develop and implement cycling strategies and to develop safe routes to schools for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Post bus services are proportionately much more important in Scotland than the UK generally and we will streamline the procedures for obtaining post bus grants.

On to INDEPENDENCE.....with independence Scotland's transport infrastructure would be transformed, and privatisation of Air Traffic Control abandoned. Under Independence we will remove Air Passenger Duty which is an act of gross unfairness to the Highlands and Islands – another measure which makes the case for Scotland gaining more powers than devolution allows.

Energy

We think it is time Scotland began to build a sustainable environment. Although we are one of the best endowed nations on the earth in

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terms of energy resources, our new parliament will have little control over energy policy. We will press for control over energy to come to Holyrood.

We will not authorise any new nuclear plants when the current reactors come to the end of their natural life. We will not allow Dounreay to receive any more radioactive waste for re-processing. Our energy will come from less dangerous sources and where possible renewable ones.

Energy use affects all sorts of other policy areas, and our approach is to develop a strategy that complements other areas of government. Production of oil and gas resources is on the increase, and new reserves are being found in the north and west of the Scottish Sector. A recent study by oil expert Professor Alex Kemp indicated that by the year 2033 97% of offshore investment and reserves will be within the Scottish Sector. We will press for an oil and gas taxation regime which encourages the industry.

We will provide positive support for the Scottish coal mining industry, working towards long term sustainability. Open cast can bring with it environmental damage and health problems for those who live nearby. **We will ensure that the planning system controls open cast coal mining** where unacceptable environmental damage may be caused or where communities suffer disproportionately adverse effects.

On to INDEPENDENCE...with independence Scotland would be able to invest in alternative energy strategies, and take full advantage of its immense wealth in natural resources.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT – A STRATEGY FOR GROWTH

Just as we intend to introduce a new, lean structure for economic development, so we need **an effective modern strategy for rural development**. Agriculture is experiencing devastating times, jobs are going and important services and amenities closing.

Our strategy for rural Scotland is built upon radical reform of the land laws, a strong voice in Europe, attention to the issue of fuel pricing, support for the community and particularly its businesses and schools, and economic development through partnership.

The particular issue of **fuel pricing** will require sustained effort by an SNP Government. The SNP will introduce a system of monitoring rural petrol and diesel pricing, assist rural businesses by means of extending the rural rate relief package, support rural public transport initiatives and bring pressure on fuel companies to consider national



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pricing.

Agriculture

A vibrant agriculture sector lies at the heart of retaining rural communities and the basic strength of rural life in Scotland. Yet Scottish agriculture faces a set of circumstances that have combined to create one of the most difficult periods the industry has known. All sectors of the industry are reporting crisis, but the government's response has been to pursue an economic policy that continues to cripple the industry.

The Scottish Parliament will not be able to alter UK economic policy, or deal with the strong pound, which has seriously depressed market prices and cut the value of support payments from Europe. However our Parliament will be able to provide a package of measures which will tackle some of the main challenges faced today by farmers and crofters.

We will **prioritise European representation on farming issues, and establish a Quality Assurance Scheme** to recover our market position in Europe and in the UK. We must end the great disparity between market prices for livestock and produce and the supermarket through a review of their pricing mechanism and above all **we must restore confidence after the BSE episode.**

An SNP Government will **lift the Beef on the bone ban immediately so that consumers can make their own choice.**

We will establish a **Scottish Meat Promotion Task Force** whilst at the same time creating a **Scottish Food Standards Agency**, based in the North East and funded by banded, not flat rate, contributions. That agency will be instrumental in ensuring a **moratorium on the development and testing of genetically modified food** crops and developing a scheme to ensure that all products containing gm materials are clearly marked.

Farmers in Scotland need assistance in leaving the industry, if they so wish, but the industry also needs new entrants, alive to the possibilities that are developing after so much hardship. We will bring forward **a retirement and new entry scheme** after consultation with the industry and accessing such European resources as are available.

In forestry we will ensure a major expansion of diverse forestry stock of environmental and commercial benefit to many. Through our land reforms tenants and crofters will be encouraged to develop forestry. While money is thrown at the Millennium Dome, some lottery money has been spent wisely on various schemes to develop



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community forests and forests for the new millennium. Such schemes need to be expanded.

Fisheries

The fundamental objective of the SNP fisheries policy is to create a **well-managed and properly conserved fishery**.

Under an SNP government, the conservation of fish stocks – crucial to the survival and development of the fishing industry and the livelihood of Scotland's coastal communities – will be at the centre of policy development.

In particular, the SNP will use the Executive and Parliament to appoint a Fisheries Minister and a Fisheries Committee of the Parliament to focus attention on this vital industry. We will ensure that legislation is enforceable and tailored to meet specific needs by involving the industry fully in the parliamentary process and we will seek to negotiate the transfer of EU fisheries negotiations from Whitehall to the Scottish Executive in recognition of Scotland's dominant position within the UK industry.

In addition to the successful conclusion to the annual negotiations on total allowable catches (TACs) and quotas, a number of important long term issues will be dealt with by an SNP Executive.

Early attention would therefore be given to industry concerns, namely how **to regenerate the fleet** based on the type of vessels Scotland needs in the future, how **to minimise the impact of rising water costs on processing companies**; how **to maximise the opportunities for growth in the processing of pelagic species** and ensure that the regulatory framework supports continued growth in this sector and how to **re-develop the inshore fishery**.

We shall assist the industry in accessing and managing the maximum level of EU and Treasury support for all sectors and further **tackle the problem of quota hoppers**.

We will co-ordinate Scottish representation in Europe in support of the industry and influence EC policy development, particularly to ensure that the founding principles of the original Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) are permanent components of future fisheries agreements - namely **relative stability, the Hague Preferences and historic fishing rights**, whilst at the same time reaffirming that the CFP is not a free-for-all.

Once these principles are locked-in to any future policy, the SNP Executive will seek to secure **the permanent acceptance of the exclusive use by coastal states of the 6 and 12 mile zones** and continue designated protected areas such as the Shetland Box. Scotland's fishermen would be best served by a new framework



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whereby coastal states with the greatest historical interests in specific fisheries would be able to take the key control decisions relating to the fisheries in the waters off their coasts in **Zonal Fisheries Management Councils**.

This would also help in ensuring the continuity, security and stability of supplies for fish processors, which needs to be backed by assistance towards infrastructure costs and training packages. Scotland in the EU must also establish a rigorous but fair policing regime which is equally enforceable in all EU waters and place **a greater emphasis on technical measures to conserve fish stocks**.

An SNP administration will financially support an industry led information campaign to educate young fishermen on the dangers of drug abuse.

European fisheries policy must be designed to better protect areas with a high degree of fishing dependence, population sparsity and peripherality – areas such as the Scottish fishing communities.

Fish farming is an industry which promised economic success for many remote areas but now suffers under a number of commercial and environmental problems. We understand the value of this industry and will seek ways for it to prosper in a sustainable fashion.

On to INDEPENDENCE...an independent Scotland would give Scotland's key rural industries such as fishing and agriculture a much needed direct voice in the Council of Ministers where the big decisions are made. As is demonstrated by the BSE crisis, the surrender on fishing policy and recently by the loss of any Objective 1 status, Independence in Europe is essential for Scotland's rural industries and rural communities.



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COMPASSION:

Traditionally Scots have believed in the values of compassion, community and the common weel. We think these values are still important to our society. Many of us believe that the Scottish Parliament will fail unless it delivers a better, more compassionate society. That is the basis of our "Penny for Scotland" initiative. It is also at the heart of our policy intentions for health, education and housing in this manifesto.

We believe that everybody is entitled to the best health care, free at the point of use. Education should be available to all, and to a standard which will make our classrooms world class again. Every citizen has the right to a dry and secure home. And we believe that all these basic services are connected – our aim is to raise the quality of life for every Scot, so that they can live free of poverty, pain and ignorance.

Health

We are well aware of the damage done both to the Health Service itself and to the morale of its workers by one government enforced structural change after another.

We are pledged to a **period of non disruption** for the Scottish Health Service. We believe that change should come by consensus, not by confrontation and government diktat.

We will establish a **National Health Care Commission**, chaired by the Minister of Health with cross party representation of MSP's, representatives of the health profession and unions together with members of the wider community. The National Health Care Commission will have responsibility for planning the future strategy of Health care in Scotland.

In order to tackle the wide range of factors which contribute to our poor health, we will create a minister of **Public Health**. The Minister will over see not just Public Health, but our anti-poverty programme. Working with the health ministry, the Minister's responsibility will stretch across all policy areas to monitor legislation for its impact on both public health and poverty.

Local health care co-operatives will be encouraged to construct a code of best practice regarding the organisation and function of primary care teams. Currently many services are only provided by hospitals, such as chemotherapy for cancer patients. We will ensure that some of these services are brought closer to the community and where possible made available at community clinics, GP surgeries and even the home.

We will promote the use of information technology to provide expert care to our remote communities, building on the best practice already developed.

We will introduce a **national framework for standards in community care** and transparency in the transfer of funding from health service to social work. We will also facilitate greater joint





planning and commissioning of services between the health service and local authorities. We will encourage the streamlining of access to community care services whether provided by local authorities or the health service.

We will create a **national joint inspection unit** while extending its responsibilities to cover domiciliary care.

The role of carers within our communities is invaluable and we will target their needs.

Mental health problems are becoming one of the largest causes of ill-health in our society. We will involve mental health organisations in the National Health Care commission and we will develop a national strategy. Access to GP health care will be guaranteed, with GPs obliged to state in writing why they wish to remove a person from their list, and with a right of appeal for the patient.

We will introduce an **Incapable Adults Act** that protects the vulnerable while providing more efficient, less expensive procedures for managing their financial and legal affairs, when they are not able to do so. These procedures will also be designed to minimise the risk of exploitation. There will be no provision for so-called Living wills.

On to INDEPENDENCE.....only with independence can we give our old people the dignity they deserve, get rid of the indignity of means testing for residential care, introduce a cold climate allowance, establish decent pensions, end the New Labour attack on the disabled and those most in need and create a social security and pensions system that is fit for a rich, compassionate nation.

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

The voluntary services fulfil a vital role in our urban and rural communities – usually as non profit making organisations, depending on good will and public spirit. They distribute over £1 billion a year, and employ local people, thus further enriching our communities. This is the social economy and we are committed to nurturing this rich resource.

Over half the population of Scotland take part in some voluntary activity and 700,000 are members of voluntary organisations. Over 10 million work hours are freely contributed each year, at an estimated value of over £4 billion. There are over 40,000 voluntary organisations across Scotland and repeated cuts to local authority budgets have meant an ever increasing workload, often matched by a steady reduction in grants and funds.

We will deliver a **real voice for the voluntary sector** through the people's assembly and a **real millenium project**, backing voluntary groups with cash for important social projects throughout the year 2000 and beyond.



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On to INDEPENDENCE - and a favourable tax regime for the social economy

EDUCATION

The SNP in government will stop the endless political meddling in education and the curriculum. We will make sure that teachers can be free to do the job they are employed to do - work with their classes and educate our young people.

We will establish a standing **Education Convention**, which will provide all those with an interest in education – teachers, parents, local authorities, the churches, employers students and lecturers - with the opportunity of discussing and developing education policy at a pre-legislative stage.

The SNP will provide **a nursery education place for every three and four year old** whose parents wish it. Recent schemes to tackle basic literacy and numeracy at an early age have been positive. We are keen that this work should be expanded in accordance with local needs. We will encourage local authorities to place particular emphasis on schemes which strengthen the relationship between parents and schools, assisting parents to support their children's learning.

It is important that children enjoy a smooth transition from nursery education to primary school. To ease this transition, the SNP will encourage the employment of nursery nurses in P1 classes. We will review the 5-14 curriculum in P1 to P3 to allow teachers more time to teach the fundamentals – reading, writing and numeracy.

We will aim to reduce the maximum class size for P1 to S1 from 33 to 30 over a period of 6 years. In the long term, it is our aim to further reduce class sizes to a maximum of 25. This move – which requires major investment in teachers and buildings – will only be possible when we have control over all our resources in an independent Scotland.

We are determined to raise standards in Scotland's schools. However it is important to realise that every school in Scotland is unique. The SNP will allow schools, in consultation with local authorities and school boards, to set educational targets that reflect their particular circumstances. We will create a dynamic link between government, teachers and those examining standards by ensuring that inspection teams include working teachers on secondment and that inspectors have recent and relevant experience of classroom teaching.

We will tackle the crisis of resources in Scotland's schools, **providing more books and re-furbished laboratory and sports equipment.**





We will reduce paperwork for teachers by one third within the lifetime of the first Scottish Parliament. We will provide more auxiliary/administration staff to ensure teachers are freed to teach pupils.

We will develop the role of the existing structure so that designated 'teachers of trust' are protected in law to offer a service of confidential counselling to pupils who are having problems. We will promote dialogue between schools, the community, parents and the education authority to encourage the adoption of best practice in the tackling of bullying.

Schools are often the focus of their community especially in the case of rural primary schools. It is therefore our policy to protect these schools against the effects of budget cuts and we will change the regulations to ensure any rural school closure requires the approval of the relevant Minister. We will seek to **place schools at the heart of Scotland's communities** and ensure that no child is disadvantaged by having nowhere to study. We will promote the establishment of homework clubs and similar initiatives.

The SNP will ensure that Scotland's diverse linguistic and cultural heritage, including the Gaelic and Scots languages and Scottish History have an enhanced place in the classroom. The SNP recognises and welcomes Scotland's cultural and religious diversity. Multicultural education should be 'mainstreamed' into all areas of the curriculum. In particular, schools should be able to use their own discretion in deciding the Religious Education syllabus, in order to ensure that this is tailored sensitively to the ethnic and religious profile of the school.

We continue to support the retention of Catholic schools for as long as the Catholic community wishes them. This is enshrined in law, and will remain so.

Schools serving large ethnic communities, where there is a considerable proportion of pupils from those communities, should have the opportunity to develop the syllabus to reflect the cultural and religious needs of those communities.

Further Education – we will inject new money to tackle the funding crisis in FE colleges and conduct **a review of the FE sector**. In particular, we will ensure that college boards are representative of their communities. Board members will include councillors, trade unionists and local business, as well as college staff and members of local enterprise companies, in order to ensure that colleges provide courses tailored to local needs. We shall review the provision of life long learning opportunities and bring forward proposals for initiatives that are more closely targeted to real possibilities and potentials than present government schemes such as the little used and little known Individual Learning Accounts

Higher Education funding in Scotland for 1998-99, including fees income, rose by a mere £4 million on what was available in 1997-98

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– a 5% cut in real terms. An SNP administration will provide targeted new money for Higher Education. We will abide by the recommendations of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education and prevent such a cut in future years.

Government policy and spending on Higher Education will be subject to scrutiny by a sub-committee of the Parliamentary Education and Culture Committee. We will maintain the role of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council.

We will legislate to ensure all Scotland's universities have an elected Rector with a right to chair their respective university court.

On to INDEPENDENCE.....with a student grants scheme restored, with better facilities at all levels and with education once again at the heart of a vibrant, learning, confident and outward looking Scotland.

HOUSING

We are committed to ensuring that every person in Scotland has access to affordable, warm and dry accommodation of a high standard. We will transform the housing of those families who are badly housed or live in overcrowded accommodation. We will tackle the issues of people sleeping rough on our streets and the wider issues of homelessness. We will meet the particular needs of the young and the disabled people. We will meet the needs of women and families seeking refuge from violence, and the needs of ethnic minorities. We will provide housing support for rural areas.

Good housing can help improve health, educational opportunities, job creation, community development and environmental responsibility. Our housing policy will be co-ordinated with health and social policy in regenerating communities and building a stronger society and we will bring all publicly funded housing under democratic control. We will incorporate housing into our National Anti-Poverty Strategy.

We will abolish the quango board of Scottish Homes and create an accountable executive agency called Housing for Scotland. Local authorities will be responsible for regulating the implementation of statutory responsibilities and benchmark standards on a local basis cross-tenure and have strategic responsibilities for community planning which will become increasingly important under the SNP.

The key difficulty of public housing in Scotland is the weight of debt which drags down investment in new housing. With Independence we could over a period of time transfer local authority housing debt to the national debt, and so allow rents to be spent on new standards, not old debt.

In the meantime, however, we will set up a **Public Service Homes and Communities Trust** to allow housing providers to begin a massive programme of investment in new and refurbished housing.



This initiative will allow well run local authority housing departments to provide new houses and repair deteriorating stock without having to transfer the ownership and management of their stock as under Labour's New Housing Partnership proposals.

We will seek to relax the 75% clawback rule that prevents local authorities re-investing proceeds from right-to-buy into new housing. In reforming right-to-buy we will consult on measures to ensure the proceeds from public sector assets are ploughed back into social housing need.

Homelessness legislation will be updated and improved particularly to assist any person who does not have a home registering as a homeless person.

Our homelessness package will

- Reduce the number of people sleeping rough
- Reduce the number of people becoming homeless
- Prevent avoidable homelessness
- Reducing recurring homelessness
- Tackle problems faced by homeless families and children

The Rough Sleeper's Initiative will continue and we will increase resources to assist and improve relevant projects. We will give councils greater powers in being able to place homeless people with different local housing providers and will examine the introduction of 'compulsory letting orders'. We will also examine the ability of the local council as local housing regulator being able to introduce 'suspended possession orders' in cases of repossession in the private sector in order to find alternative accommodation for people in hardship.

We will pilot a rent deposit scheme in rural areas. We will improve the crofters loan scheme.

We will introduce a **single local housing register** to make it easier and more efficient for people applying for a home in the public or social rented sector. We believe tenant's needs come first in housing issues and we will aim to take the politics and ideology of tenure out of housing. We will adopt a **'Tenants first, tenure second'** approach.

We will introduce a New Secure Tenancy that will apply cross tenure - this will safeguard tenants rights.

We will **double the number of women's refuges** and provide more support for family workers as part of our programme to help victims of domestic violence.

We must also find ways of **assisting private homeowners**. We will increase improvement and repair grants and pilot low cost loans and grants for communities with properties in urgent need of repair.



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We will initiate a long term measure to introduce log-books for houses listing when it was sold and for how much and what major improvements had been completed and also listing planning consents, helping to reduce the expense and time of document searches.

As part of this initiative we will consult on, and hope to introduce a 'seller's survey' to save purchasers having to pay for a number of surveys and to help first time buyers into the market.

We must also develop more **energy efficient housing**. We will expect local Housing Plans to identify the opportunities to introduce new and innovative heating systems e.g. solar heating and energy efficient planning techniques. We will monitor the damage to the environment caused by energy deficient housing. We will increase home efficiency grants.

We will also introduce two special programmes for targeted action: **Homes and the community:** Our Housing and Communities Investment programme which will replace the failed New Housing Partnership policy will ensure funding for housing in terms of bricks and mortar is matched with ideas, policy and funds to regenerate communities.

We will provide affordable homes for young people in rural areas to stay in their local area and help sustain rural communities.

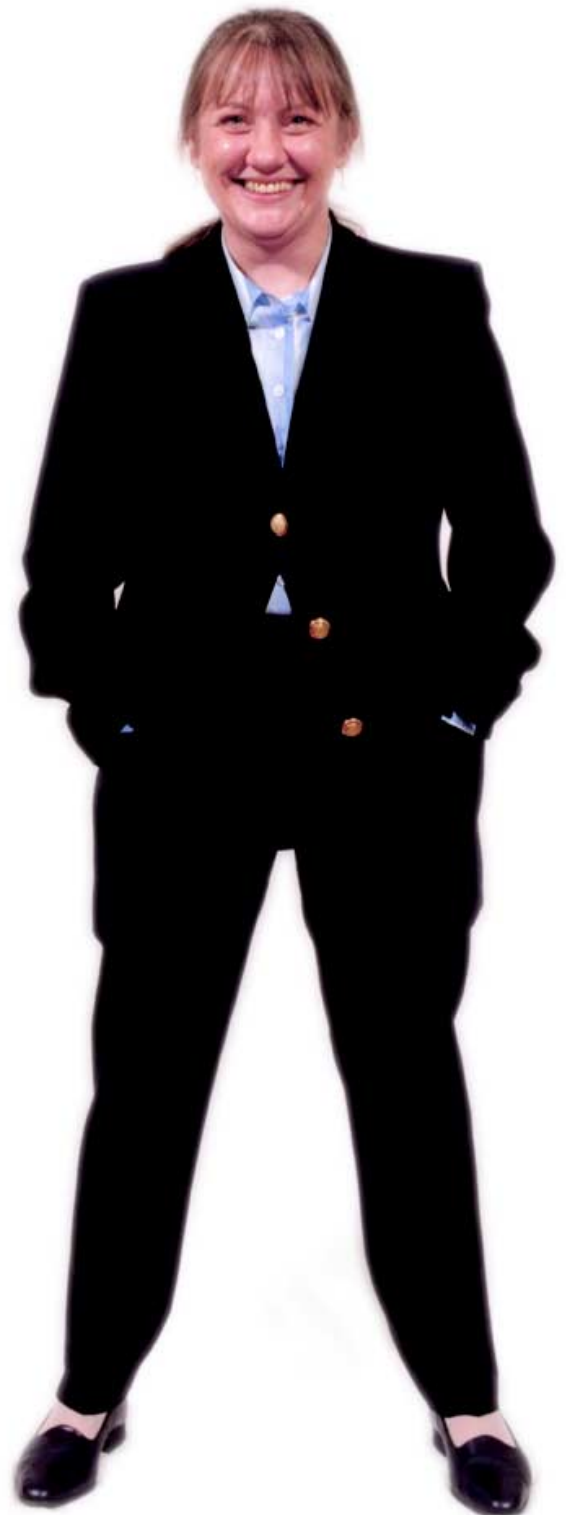
We will promote measures to deal with anti-social neighbours. Where possible we will encourage the use of counselling and cross service action. We will require councils to speed up complaint process and where possible recommend the use of independent professional witnesses to provide firm information and avoid further harassment.

We will ring-fence grants for adaptation of homes to meet the needs of disabled people. Tenants of public and social sector housing will be given the right to have a say in how houses and estates are planned.

A Children's Challenge: The Children's Challenge is a challenge to the devolved Parliament and all housing agencies to improve the lives of the children who live in bad housing with its effect on health, prescription costs and days lost at school because of ill health.

Co-ordinated action to prioritise children in the housing debate will include action on insulation and action on families in temporary accommodation. We aim to considerably reduce the number of days off school taken by children suffering from illnesses related to dampness, overcrowding and homelessness, and the treatment time and cost for such children.

On to INDEPENDENCE...and we will look at innovative ways of dealing with the issue of housing debt. We will be able to accelerate our programme to eradicate dampness. We will build homes and communities for our children and future generations.





An Anti-poverty Strategy:

Poverty is endemic through much of Scotland. One in three children grow up below the poverty line ; shameful statistics indicate that more than half of Glasgow's children are from backgrounds too poor to feed or clothe them without state assistance.

Simple infrastructure improvements are not enough. Through focussing on the root causes of poverty, it is possible to target other social problems such as ill-health, higher child mortality, shorter life expectancy, social exclusion, and drug issues. Tackling unemployment, and poorly-paid employment and increasing job opportunities is therefore a priority.

A co-ordinated approach is necessary to tackle all of these issues. It is therefore essential that communities are given the opportunity to tailor solutions to their own needs. Improvement to infrastructure, such as housing should come as part and parcel of wider community regeneration.

Accordingly the SNP in government will take a number of key actions to institute its anti-poverty strategy:

- The appointment of a Public Health Minister leading an anti-poverty ministerial task force to implement the strategy and co-ordinate all government activity.
- The publication of poverty indicators, to show that poverty is being tackled and eradicated
- The publication within the first six months of government of a costed programme of initiatives designed to eradicate poverty.
- As part of our Children's Challenge, the piloting of Children's Centres across Scotland offering children maximum opportunity and parents maximum choice. All pre-school, nursery and childcare provision will be offered under one roof. In a true public/private voluntary partnership councils will be encouraged to site centres in schools in rural areas or peripheral urban estates.
- The resourcing of a benefit take-up programme to ensure that all of Scotland's people receive all the benefits and support they are entitled to if out of work, disabled or elderly.
- A concerted attempt to press the utility and power companies to consider a policy of the removal or reduction of standing charges for pensioner households.

Sport

We will **abolish the Sports Council quango** and radically reform it's structure. At the moment of the £20 million lottery money it distributes, too much goes on administration. There is also disturbing evidence of large sums being directed at private institutions like



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private schools. We will deliver a more accountable, more efficient sports council.

We firmly endorse the plans for a **Scottish Institute of Sport** so that our sports people can achieve excellence. We will accelerate the provision of School Sports co-ordinators. Once the inventory of sporting facilities has been completed we will be better able to judge what further assistance is needed to help facilities be integrated into communities.

We will improve the **provision of exercise in schools**. We will encourage sport and dance throughout school careers and invest in sports equipment, neglected in repeated rounds of budget cuts. We also propose a number of measures to encourage the involvement of volunteers and improve the link between schools and sporting clubs.

Local sports clubs have played a vital role over the last century, but many now suffer from a lack of resources and equipment. We will renew the bond between local clubs and local communities by promoting investment from local authorities and businesses in sports clubs. We will support the network of local sports councils, empowering them and their co-ordinating body with national resources and encouraging them to learn from international best practice, particularly concerning means of widening participation in sport.

Arts and Culture

The Scottish Parliament should mark a new phase in the confidence of our cultural life. We know the Arts are a vital area of national life, which bring important social and economic benefits. We would expect this to be reflected in the committee structure of the new parliament, for example in the Education and Culture committee where we would also expect to see a Gaelic sub-committee established.

An SNP Government will **radically review the Scottish Arts Council** in order to ensure a strategic approach to arts development and funding (including the very significant levels of lottery funding) and to reflect the needs and aspirations of people throughout Scotland. The involvement of artists, local authorities and the voluntary and private sectors will be integral to the process together with a small national panel of experts able to advise on and co-ordinate grant giving decisions.

The SNP recognises the importance of our national orchestras, opera and ballet companies in enhancing Scotland's cultural reputation and providing employment and training for musicians and artists.

The SNP will ring fence monies for libraries in local authority budgets, providing the necessary assistance to do so whilst encouraging library services to diversify into modern technologies including soft



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ware and hardware where appropriate. Libraries as “Information Points” for communities will be encouraged. We will prevent the introduction of admission fees to galleries and museums as free access is of enormous benefit to society as a whole, and to young people in particular. English, Gaelic and Scots must co-exist on an equal basis in Scotland, and we will grant Scots and Gaelic “secure status” in the Parliament and national life. We will actively support Gaelic medium teaching and Scots language initiatives as well as art and culture expressed in other languages in common use in Scotland. This will include promoting Asian arts as well as art that arises out of cross cultural experience.

We will promote a ‘young designers in industry’ scheme, seeking to give industrial design a boost and recognition, and will also showcase the results of such a scheme. An SNP government will promote a partnership between architects, academia and Government to promote quality architecture and architectural innovation.

And SNP government will review the role of “Scottish Screen”, encouraging it to strengthen its constituent parts and to prioritise development, marketing and distribution. Through lottery and other funding we will encourage the development of a Scottish Museum of the Moving Image. We shall seek to establish a major commercial studio operation in Scotland and will continue to support the production of Gaelic television.

The critical mass of permanent jobs in the popular music market – production, sales, marketing, etc, largely pass Scotland by, despite our successful bands. We will seek to attract the necessary ‘critical mass’ of music industry investment in Scotland.

We will promote community arts projects, similar to the Gaelic *feisean* movement in their work in promoting traditional music, dance and song, extending these to cover Scottish culture as a whole. We will seek means of establishing an Academy of Scottish Traditional Music and Dance, and investigate the establishment of a National Theatre for Scotland when resources and demand permit.

Broadcasting

The current government refuses to allow Scots control over broadcasting. The SNP will continue to campaign for the devolution of broadcasting legislation but in the meantime will establish a **Broadcasting Committee of the Parliament** to support Scottish broadcasters, monitor and analyse broadcasting output and examine broadcasting in Scotland and those responsible for it furth of Scotland.

On to INDEPENDENCE....with autonomous broadcasting institutions, giving and reflecting the best of Scotland: with national arts structures such as a Scottish Academy and a tax system that can encourage film production and other artistic endeavour.

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DEMOCRACY:

We believe that the people of Scotland are sovereign and have the absolute right to determine their own political future.

As people in Scotland see at first hand how they can deliver better policies on health and education services, they will want to manage the whole economy and decide our own future in all areas of national life. Ownership of the Parliament is vested in the People of Scotland. It belongs not to the politicians, but to the people. We will make the new parliament work. And work well.

An SNP administration will undertake **a complete review of all the appointed bodies in Scotland**. This review – part of the Holyrood Project – will seek to identify quangoes that are not required and whose abolition is already predicated by other policy decisions made by an SNP government, or rendered redundant by the establishment of a Parliament. These will include the non executive boards of bodies such as Scottish Enterprise.

We will introduce a **Freedom of Information Act** to ensure that all citizens have the same right of access to information as the decision-makers. The only exception will be information which could prejudice the rights of an individual or which is commercially confidential.

The SNP will put equality at the heart of government. There will be a **Parliamentary Committee on Equality**, empowered to address existing inequality in society and promote equality in all the Parliament's activities. The Committee will be able to co-opt members to ensure that all of Scotland's communities are represented in the Parliament.

The Committee's work will be supported by Commissioners with responsibility for particular groups in society, such as women, ethnic minorities, children and young people, disabled people, elderly people, gays and lesbians. A key role will be to consult with communities to ensure that policy making is well informed and tackles the real issues.

We recognise strong public concern on animal welfare, and, within the restrictions of the Scotland Act, will update legislation and support practical measures in this area. This issue is one that will provide a model for pre-legislative consultation, bringing many interests groups and concerned individuals together to find the right solutions for Scotland.

Based on the social partnership practised by many of our continental partners we will establish a **People's Assembly** which will involve representatives from the business community, trade unions and the voluntary sector as well as civic Scotland. Legislation should be encouraged, developed and scrutinised by the whole of civic society and this mechanism will fulfil that aim.





The Assembly will meet throughout the year, both in Edinburgh and around the country. A small secretariat, working closely with the Business Committee of the Parliament, will organise its business.

Local Government

The SNP runs three of the best mainland councils in Scotland. That's the conclusion of not one but two Independent surveys. Our local authorities are in the front line of providing vital services and we believe everyone has the right to expect high standards and good value.

We will introduce legislation that will give local authorities the freedom to introduce fresh ideas and initiatives without political interference from central government – the so called “**power of general competence**”. Citizens should be able to see the work of their councils, decisions should be clearly explained, and the public should have access to meetings so an SNP Government will include local authorities in its freedom of information legislation.

We see a place for enhanced Community Councils, and hope to pilot certain aspects of our land policy through some Community Councils. The use of postal ballots for the election of community councils, and the devolution of some present local authority local committee responsibilities to community councils will be encouraged as pilots for possible national implementation.

Councils are responsible for raising very little of their budgets. Consequently, every central government cut to council finance means a huge increase in council tax. We will therefore initiate a wide-ranging **review of local government finance** after seeing the general conclusions of the Macintosh Commission on local government.

Rejoining the world

Holyrood, like any national parliament, will want to ensure that its relations with other parliaments and neighbours are both good and constructive. We will establish an **External Affairs Ministry**. This Ministry will manage relations with the European Commission and the European Council of Ministers and also will promote good relations with the Westminster parliament and positive Scottish involvement in the Council of the Isles.

We will establish mechanisms to influence and monitor European policy developments and provide direct contact with EU institutions. We will also manage and evaluate European funds to Scotland's best advantage.

In Holyrood there will be a parliamentary committee to monitor this ministry and to consider amongst other matters, responses to EU directives and policy directions. A Scottish-European Assembly will be a forum for MSPs, MEPs and members of the Committee of the Regions. The Assembly will act as a base point for a process of networking and alliance building throughout European

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institutions.

We want to see the Council of the Isles building a new partnership based on common interests and shared experiences. The Council of the Isles is an idea we endorse and wish to make successful. To assist in the Council's effectiveness we will foster direct relations between Holyrood Ministers and Committees and their equivalents elsewhere.

We will provide support to the various humanitarian groups and agencies based in Scotland. Funding will be provided for development education here at home and to help train staff and volunteers for work overseas. The intention is to match Scottish skills and services with global needs. We will build a strategy of sustainable development and poverty reduction targeted towards the world's most vulnerable people.

A voluntary secretariat – “**Aid from Scotland**” – will co-ordinate a unified approach and provide a single point of contact for Scotland's aid agencies, ensuring a quick response to global emergencies.

On to INDEPENDENCE....and the opportunity to make our own decisions on matters such as conflict resolution, international relations and foreign policy, such as the removal of the Trident missile system from Scotland. And we will be able to introduce a written Constitution and a Bill of Rights, making all Scots citizens, not subjects - guaranteeing their protection before the law and from unjustified government interference or inequitable action.

Justice

The Scottish legal system has long been viewed with pride and rightly so. Yet for too long it has been treated with scant respect by successive Westminster governments, whose approach has been to tinker with a system about which they have no real knowledge or understanding. As a result, Scots law has suffered unnecessarily.

From the outset of the Parliament the SNP will **defend the independence of the Scottish legal system** and the high standards it has set

We believe in a safe and just society where access to justice is available to all, no matter their wealth. We believe that citizens have the right to be protected from criminal activity. Victims and witnesses of crime must be supported. Offenders should not just be punished but actively helped in avoiding re-offending.

Within that context people must know that they are being well and continually protected from criminal activity, and particularly from violent and sex related crime. Sentencing guidelines for such crimes will be reviewed and strengthened. Courts will be encouraged





to see such offences as ones which have to be eliminated by showing societies clear abhorrence of such actions.

While taking action at home, we will also work towards ensuring that criminals deported from overseas are given the same post-custodial supervision as they would have received if convicted in Scotland.

In situations where the alleged perpetrators of **sexual assaults** are exercising their right to defend themselves, and in so doing, wish to cross examine the victim, then we will provide the facility for such cross-examination to take place by way of live television link, in order to spare the witness the undoubted ordeal otherwise involved.

We shall also support **the victims** of such crimes. Those organisations which have as their principal role the support and counselling of people caught up as victims or bystanders must have their work properly recognised. These are essential support services. The SNP will increase funding for such organisations and believes that the time has come to fund such organisations centrally rather than through local authority budgets. In this fashion, a more appropriate pattern of essential provision will be achieved throughout Scotland.

With regard to violence against women, there must be proper, centralised and consistent funding and national standards of support. Through our **Charter for Action on Violence against Women**, the SNP will ensure this is implemented.

In order to be consistent about all sentencing we will establish a **National Sentencing Review Commission**. What is required is a consideration of sentencing across the board with a view to achieving both a simplification of the law and a balanced and consistent approach in keeping with both society's expectations and the best methods of dealing with the perpetrators of crime.

Imprisonment will always be a necessary tool in the criminal justice armoury. However, as well as punishment custody should also be about rehabilitation. There is widespread agreement that overcrowding in Scottish jails must be addressed and steps are already being taken in that direction. The SNP has welcomed and supported moves to expand the range of **non-custodial sentences** available to courts and would wish to continue with that work. The SNP remains totally opposed to private prisons.

There will be a **Judicial Appointments Board** to ensure that appointments of Judges and Sheriffs are fair and open.

The SNP in Government will also initiate a **review of Summary Procedure** to investigate ways of freeing up resources in the criminal justice system. Many likely proposals would not require legislation and indeed we would wish to see some implemented immediately - for example, the mandatory disclosure of prosecution precognitions to defence agents.

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Scotland's police forces provide one of the cornerstones of the criminal justice system and their local links and local responsibilities are of primary importance. The SNP is totally opposed to the notion of a single Scotland-wide police force. The adequate resourcing of the existing forces is an essential part of our strategy .

We welcome the use of **CCTV** as a deterrent and as a means of helping the police and will legislate to ensure its fair and proper use.

The SNP will end civil appeals to the House of Lords. The final court of appeal for criminal cases is in Scotland and there is no reason why the Inner House of the Court of Session should not be the final court of appeal in civil cases.

The SNP will also reform the Law in relation to personal sequestration so as to better ensure that honest business failure does not impact negatively on the debtor's family and future security.

Finally, the SNP in Government will enact a **Chronically Sick and Disabled People Act** and an **Incapable Adults Act** in order to better protect and enhance the rights of all in our society. These Acts will go through the normal pre-legislative process to ensure good legislation which is able to be properly implemented.

We will continue to press for the Lockerbie trial to take place in the Netherlands as soon as is possible and, in Government, will support the trial and any post trial arrangements that require to be made, as responsibility for these matters will lie with the new Scottish government.

Sustainable development and the Environment

Although full environmental powers are not yet devolved, the new Parliament can play a key role in developing attitudes towards, and policies that will improve, our environment.

We will call a **National Environmental Summit** to establish a national partnership and set a national agenda for sustainable development. The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency will be given powers to prosecute, as its equivalent south of the border already has.

We will resist all attempts to find or use Scottish sites for the dumping or storage of imported nuclear waste.

We will legislate to protect Scotland's clean air. We will bring forward legislation on ground water abstraction. Current controls are reactive – what is needed is an active approach which licenses and monitors water abstraction. Small domestic users will, however, be exempt from such controls, but will have to register their activities.

We respect and support the environmental summits at Rio and then Kyoto, and commit Scotland to not simply meeting the EU's guideline reduction in CO2 emissions, but surpassing it.

We will reform building regulations to ensure that the next generation of homes are designed for a sustainable and energy



Scotland's Party



efficient future, and current public housing stock will be brought up to such standards as resources permit. We will also undertake a full **review of planning law**, seeking to modernise legislation that affects most communities and many individuals. We recognise the need for consistency in regulation and application across Scotland.

We will place **renewed emphasis on recycling** and composting in place of landfills. We will encourage the use of Energy Recovery Units at landfill sites.

Following the quite proper EU ban on dumping sewerage at sea, parts of the countryside are in danger of being used for spreading huge amounts of sewerage.

We will introduce safeguards which will include much **tighter controls on the spreading of sewerage** which is not heat treated and pathogen free. We shall give SEPA powers to monitor and regulate this matter.

SEPA will also undertake an annual audit on this matter in the general context of better Scottish waste management.

Geologists say we have potentially significant deposits of gold, base metals, industrial minerals and other stones – a resource no nation would reject. The SNP is committed to encourage the exploration and **development of Scotland's mineral resources**, but in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.

Such developments will create jobs – often in rural areas – and renew local communities. In Government the SNP will undertake a wide ranging consultation on the establishment of a minerals exploration and development programme and thereafter will consider responsible proposals from the international mining industry and appropriate legislation.

On to INDEPENDENCE...and an environmental policy for our nation that sustains us, protects our great natural assets, makes us internationally responsible and yet still allows us to grow economically and socially.



EnterpriseCompassionDemocracy

MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK

The Scottish Parliament will be led by a Scottish Executive, presided over by a Scottish First Minister. That much is already known, but the detailed structure of the Executive will be a matter for the Parliament to decide and approve once elected.

The SNP proposes a structure for government that learns much from best practice in Europe and further afield. It brings together key issues in a “holistic” structure for governance. Such a structure arises out of the identification of “core issues” that the government must address, and to which government resources must be targeted. The present Westminster structure creaks with age and tradition – a new structure can be much more responsive and much better tuned to the needs of the 21st century.

Furthermore any new structure must be cost effective – **new government must not mean more government.**

The SNP intends to establish 9 Government departments, reflecting nine “core issues”.

1. First Minister

Core Issue: To select and appoint Ministers and to take overall responsibility to the Parliament and the People for the governance of Scotland and the achievement of the manifesto commitments and pledges of the government.

A political “**Cabinet Secretary**” (an MSP appointed to the office and in full membership of the Cabinet) will work within the First Minister’s department to ensure government decisions are carried out and will also have responsibility for government information.

2. Finance

Core Issue: “To ensure the effective and prudent use of Scotland’s public finances and to monitor the efficiency and quality of Scottish public spending. To monitor the performance of the Scottish economy.”

3. Health , Housing and Social Policy

Core Issue: “To improve the quality of life for the people of Scotland and eliminate the effects of poverty”

4. Education and Culture

Core Issue: “To develop and enhance the skills and talents of the people of Scotland”

5. Enterprise

Core Issue: “To harness what measures are available to create the competitive environment needed to deliver a dynamic enterprise economy competing in global markets”

6. Public Services

Core issue: “To secure efficient public services delivered by the public and private sectors “



7. Europe and External Affairs

Core issue: "To ensure productive and harmonious relationships between Scotland and its government with the rest of the UK, Europe and the wider world"

8. Justice

Core issue: "To deliver a justice system which is both fair and effective."

9. Resources and Rural Affairs

Core Issue: "To ensure a productive but sustainable use of Scotland's resources and the economic and social development of Scotland's rural areas."

This will result in 9 executive members, who will be joined at the Cabinet table by three others – the political secretary to the Cabinet, a Chief Whip and the Government's Business Manager. The Government's Law Officer, the Lord Advocate, will be in attendance at Cabinet meetings. Junior ministers will be appointed as necessary.

This structure will allow an SNP Government to tackle problems that lie across departmental boundaries at present. It is modern, open and easily understood. It stands in contrast to the cluttered and compromised Westminster system.

The SNP has a commitment to the decentralisation of government departments. Early in an SNP administration, work will be undertaken to headquarter a number of major departments and agencies outside Edinburgh, including Enterprise in Glasgow, Resources and Rural Affairs in the Highlands and the South of Scotland, Export from Scotland in Tayside and the Food Standards Agency in the North East.

An SNP Government, taking this lead at national level will expect local authorities to come forward with plans to similarly decentralise their departments and functions within their own areas.

In the pursuit of making the best policy for Scotland the SNP has already followed this model in preparing this manifesto. We have worked across boundaries to develop the key pillars of enterprise, compassion and democracy.

All Ministers will be members of the Scottish Parliament. All SNP Members of the Scottish Parliament will be subject to a clear and binding code of conduct that will banish the type of sleaze and double dealing that has besmirched the political process at Westminster in recent years.

EnterpriseCompassionDemocracy

SNP – 1, 2 and 3.....

The elections on May 6th are different from any elections held in Scotland before.

You will get three ballot papers when you enter the polling station:

Ballot Paper 1 (*Purple*) is for your local member of the Scottish Parliament

Ballot Paper 2 (*Peach*) is for the party you wish to represent you in your area

Ballot Paper 3 (*White*) is for your local councillor

The Parliament is made up of 129 members, 73 of whom represent local areas. These are the local members elected on your first vote.

There are 56 other members, seven elected in each of eight electoral regions. They are elected by means of support shown for their parties on the second vote.

All Scotland's Councils are being elected on the same day as the Scottish Parliament vote. Your third vote elects your local councillor.

VOTE SNP on all three papers

SNP - 1, 2 AND 3.....

Only Scotland's Party can make Scotland's Parliament and Scotland's Councils work for you.

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you have
3 VOTES
on 6 May
it's got to be...
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for all three

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