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Media release

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Launch of the Wellbeing Manifesto

Carmen Lawrence and Tim Costello will today participate in the public launch in Melbourne of a new political program known as the Wellbeing Manifesto.

The Wellbeing Manifesto, developed by the Australia Institute, went online five weeks ago and already nearly 3000 Australians have given it their endorsement, including several high-profile ones.

The Manifesto is founded on the belief that governments in Australia should be devoted to improving our individual and social wellbeing rather than focussing relentlessly on the economy and increasing incomes.

It declares:

There is widespread community concern that the values of the market—individualism, selfishness, materialism, competition—are driving out the more desirable values of trust, self-restraint, mutual respect and generosity. Many people feel alienated from the political process; the main parties seem too alike and think of progress only in material terms.

The Manifesto proposes nine areas in which governments should act to improve national wellbeing. They include calls for a 35-hour week, a greater emphasis on high-quality jobs, restrictions on advertising, environmental tax reform, reversal of the commercialisation of universities and schools, and replacement of GDP with better measures of national progress.

“Contrary to the claims of political conservatives, history has not ended”, said Dr Clive Hamilton, Executive Director of The Australia Institute.

“It is not futile to hope for far-reaching social change aimed at creating a flourishing society. Australian democracy offers people the opportunity to shed their cynicism and commit themselves to building a better future, instead of just a wealthier one.”

The launch is being held at the BMW Edge Theatre, Federation Square, Melbourne, and begins at 5.30 pm.

The Wellbeing Manifesto and list of those who have endorsed it can be found at:

www.wellbeingmanifesto.net