



CARING FOR OUR SOIL

INVESTING IN A SOIL HEALTH STRATEGY

The Greens' plan for improving the productivity of our agricultural land

Australia's topsoil is critical to our agricultural productivity, but our soils are being degraded at an unsustainable rate. The Greens will invest in a national soil health strategy to improve our soil conditions, which will also help farmers cut back on their fertiliser and water use.

Topsoil takes thousands of years to form from the breakdown of rocks and organic matter. Like fossil fuels, we have been using (and losing) topsoil faster than it can be replaced.

> REVERSING THE TREND OF TOPSOIL LOSS

As a pivotal resource for agriculture and food production, how we treat our soil has major implications for global food supply now and into the future.

Soil loss is due to a range of factors, but the most significant causes are intensive fertiliser use and erosion caused by land clearing.

Soil loss is having a significant impact on our agricultural productivity. The Greens know that we need to invest in better monitoring and research in order to reverse the loss of our precious topsoil. **This is why the Greens will:**

- **Invest \$75million over the forward estimates to fund the national soil health strategy.**ⁱ
- **Encourage state and territory governments to match this investment.**
- **Support consistent, ongoing research and monitoring over the long term.**

> SECURING BETTER RETURNS FOR OUR FARMERS

Research and development that drives the uptake of regenerative agricultural practices doesn't just have environmental benefits. It also delivers financial returns to our farmers.

For example, the CPD Report *Farming Smarter* found that acting now to improve soil condition could increase wheat production by up to \$2.1 billion per year.ⁱⁱ

The Greens investment in a soil strategy will drive innovation in farming techniques to give Australian farmers a lasting competitive advantage by:

- **reducing the costs of inputs** such as fertilizer
- **reversing the decline in productivity** that results from poor soil quality.

> FRAGMENTED DATA IS FAILING OUR FARMERS

Currently, there are no comprehensive and regularly updated national datasets about our soil.

The last national assessment of the state of our soil and water, *The Australian Natural Land and Water Resources Audit*, was published in 2002. It found that of Australia's nearly 460 million hectares of agricultural land nearly 40 million hectares suffered from unsustainable erosion; over 20 million hectares were severely degraded as the result of acid soils; more than 3 million hectares were affected by salinity and a further 100 million hectares were characterised by sodic soils (soils that contain excessive quantities of sodium, which impedes water penetration and plant growth and causes waterlogging and erosion).ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite this evidence of extensive degradation, government monitoring and intervention has fallen short of what is required. Our plan would ensure that regular landscape monitoring and data analysis occurs in the future.



> A VICIOUS CYCLE: POOR SOIL AND THE RELIANCE ON FERTILISERS

Typical modern agricultural practices are very reliant on fossil fuel inputs to boost soil fertility and control pests. Australian soil is also often lacking phosphorous.

Excess nutrients, pesticides and animal wastes have also resulted in pollution of soil and water resources, causing health hazards for human and animal populations, a loss of biodiversity and the contamination of rivers, coastal waters and lakes.

Both fossil fuels and phosphorous are finite inputs that are being rapidly depleted. So, as well as the environmental impacts, the depletion of the readily available sources of these inputs means that the cost of buying them is increasing, which also puts more pressure on our farmers.

> OTHER RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT INCENTIVES

Australian farmers have a strong track record of adopting new practices. Giving farmers better information will help them restore degraded land resources. Adapting their farming techniques can also ensure they are resilient in the face of new threats such as climate change and profitable in the long-term. Yet, the old parties have let public investment in agricultural research, development and implementation decline for the last two decades. This is why the Australian Greens have also launched an initiative to increase Commonwealth investment in agricultural R&D by 7%, an extra \$300 million, over the forward estimates.

However research, development and extension alone is not enough. If we want to ensure we have prosperous farmers and sustainable landscapes and don't want to pay more for food, other forms of government assistance must be developed.

The Greens already have a strong track record in recognising the need to reward farmers' environmental stewardship, having negotiated a \$1.7 billion for the Biodiversity Fund and the Carbon Farming Initiative, both of which financially reward farmers for sustainable practices, including specific funding to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land managers.

As Australia's first Advocate for Soils, Michael Jeffrey, stated on his appointment: *Farmers and landowners are the key carers of our soils and country; they should be recognised not just for their food production but as stewards of our landscape and if they make improvements... that is something we as citizens should jointly financially support.*^{iv}

It is time to move to a nation-wide system of payments for farmers, linked to clear bioregional environmental stewardship standards.

This is why the Greens will direct some research funding towards programs that develop more ways to reward farmers for restoring and maintaining the ecosystem.

The Greens will also align financial incentives with the long-term needs of sustainable farming communities, which include preparing communities for more frequent and severe droughts.

ⁱ This reflects the recommendation of the Centre for Policy Development in their 2012 report, *Farming Smarter, Not Harder*.

ⁱⁱ Eadie, L and Stone, C 2012, *Farming smarter not harder*, Centre for Policy Development. P.90 - <http://tinyurl.com/k9vwu3b>

ⁱⁱⁱ Australian National Land and Water Resources Audit 2002, Final Report - <http://tinyurl.com/jwnhjpy>

^{iv} The Australian 2012, Ex-G-G is the first Advocate for Soils - <http://tinyurl.com/l8dgfp6>



STRONG, FLEXIBLE, COMPASSIONATE QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The Greens' plan for better mental health services for all Australians

A caring society looks after everyone. Our mental health system is under pressure to provide care for all who need it. The Greens' mental health plan supports people with mental illness to live full, healthy lives.

The Australian Greens understand the importance of quality mental health care for all Australians. A caring society provides better access to mental health services across the country, and recognises that mental health policy cuts through politics to the very heart of our nation's wellbeing.

Our mental health policies reflect the reality that 45% of Australians will experience mental ill-health at some stage during their lives.ⁱ Decades of under-investment in the mental health system has left thousands of Australians without access to the services and treatment they need.

The Greens are standing up for better access to quality mental health services for all Australians. Our plan is people-centred and designed to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our society. The key features of our \$547.4 million mental health package include:

- **Investing \$150 million, over 3 years**, to establish a National Institute for Mental Illness Research.
- **Increasing funding for the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program** by \$70 million per year, on top of current budget commitments.
- **Reinstating the option of six extra sessions of psychological treatment** in exceptional circumstances under the Better Access initiative, costing \$141.6 million over 3 years.
- **Providing grants of up to \$50,000 to mental health NGOs** through re-establishing the NGO Capacity Grants Program, worth \$7.5 million.
- **Establishing a National Suicide Prevention Campaign** and improving the collection of data relating to suicide with an investment of \$38.3 million over 3 years.

> INVESTING IN RESEARCH

There is a desperate need for the development of new treatments for mental illness. Mental illness is the third highest cause of disability and premature death.ⁱⁱ It costs the Australian community billions of dollars each year in direct and indirect costs. Despite this, only 3.5 per cent of Australia's total medical research budget is spent on research in depression and psychosis.ⁱⁱⁱ

The mental health sector recognises the treatment of mental disorders has not progressed sufficiently, particularly when compared with treatments for cancer and heart disease. The Greens want to see more research, translated into new, effective treatments for people with mental illness.

The Greens will invest \$150 million, over three years, to establish a National Institute for Mental Illness Research (NIMIR) as an overarching supervisory body for mental illness research in Australia. Based on a proposal from the Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre^{iv}, the NIMIR will be a virtual institute comprising a series of collaborating centres across Australia and will coordinate the development of innovative clinical treatments and provide expert advice to government.

We want to see coordination in the development of new, proven treatments for people of all ages with all types of mental illness. We want to see the rapid evaluation and trial of emerging and promising treatments to reduce suffering and improve outcomes.

Fostering a coordinated approach to research and development has the potential not only reduce the burden of disease associated with mental ill-health but also improve the quality of life for thousands Australians.



> MORE MENTAL HEALTH NURSES

The Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP) plays an integral role in mental health service delivery across Australia, but there is scope for a much greater role. The program involves engaging mental health nurses in primary health care services through non-Medicare incentive payments.

Despite being highly regarded by health professionals and consumers alike, the program remains seriously under-funded and many communities continue to miss out on the vital mental health support and treatment provided by mental health nurses. There is an urgent need for the program to be better resourced as it continues to grow in importance and reach.

The Australian Greens recognise the pivotal role for mental health nurses in improving access to appropriate primary mental health care and promoting mental health and wellbeing in the communities they serve.

That's why we will increase the funding to the Mental Health Nurses Incentive Program by \$70 million per year to enable more Australians to access mental health support and services at the primary health care level, promoting early intervention, assisting GPs and taking the pressure off emergency services.

> ENSURING BETTER ACCESS

It is estimated more than 30,000 Australians were affected by the removal of the six extra 'exceptional circumstances' sessions included in the Better Access program in January 2013.^v Our plan is to ensure these Australians can once again receive the care and assistance they need to function well in everyday life.

Mental health professionals and consumers have spoken about the importance of the extra sessions for Australians with mental ill-health.

The Greens are committing to re-introducing the option of six extra sessions, while retaining the existing ten-session allowance and refining the 'exceptional circumstances' criteria. This will involve an investment of \$141.6 million over three years and will ensure those with mental ill-health can continue to access effective and cost-efficient psychological treatment under the successful Better Access Initiative.

> GROWING MENTAL HEALTH NGOS

Our mental health plan includes \$7.5 million over three years, for grants to mental health non-government organisations (NGOs). We will re-establish the NGO Capacity Grants Program, enabling NGOs working across the mental health field to apply for up to \$50,000 through a one-off competitive grants round.

These grants will help NGOs manage operations like governance, financial management, IT, business planning, or a specific area of organisational enhancement.

Working at the grassroots level, mental health NGOs provide crucial recovery-focused and community-based care. We are committed to increasing and supporting the capacity of these organisations to promote wellbeing and recovery and enable consumers to participate in their own goals for living and self-care.

The grants program will benefit at least 150 NGOs operating within the mental health sector.

> SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide Prevention Australia explains that suicide 'attracts a unique kind of stigma, which impacts on people with lived experience of suicide by damaging social relationships and removing help-seeking avenues for those in need.'^{vi}

Our mental health policy includes an investment of \$38.3 million for a suicide prevention campaign which will address the stigma and lack of awareness surrounding suicide. The campaign will seek to educate the Australian public about the complexity of suicide and how communities and organisations can work together to reduce suicide rates and the incidence of suicidal behaviours.

We believe that all Australians need access to advice on how to seek and provide help for those experiencing suicidal feelings. As recommended by the Senate Community Affairs Committee in its 2010 report *The Hidden Toll: Suicide in Australia*, our plan also includes funding for implementing reforms which will improve the accuracy of suicide statistics. The 2010 Senate Inquiry showed that suicide is underreported because current reporting systems are complex and different across states and territories.

The accurate, timely provision of data is crucial in notifying public health authorities of emerging suicide clusters while ensuring the true extent of suicide rates are not being 'masked' by inaccurate reporting.

> FOCUSING ON PEOPLE

Investment in a robust, people-centred plan for mental health means better outcomes for Australians.

The impacts of mental ill-health are far-reaching and can affect many aspects of a person's life: education, employment, relationships, housing and general health.



Decades of under-investment and fragmented services in the mental health arena have left many Australians unable to live the kind of life we would all like to lead.

Strong mental health policy makes good economic sense. But most importantly it protects some of the most vulnerable members of our society. The Greens' plan will enable people to receive the most effective treatment available for their mental health, and access services to help them live full, healthy lives in our community.

ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007), *National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results*, <[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/6AE6DA447F985FC2CA2574EA00122BD6/\\$File/43260_2007.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/6AE6DA447F985FC2CA2574EA00122BD6/$File/43260_2007.pdf)> (7).

ⁱⁱ Kulkarni J (2010), *To defeat mental illness, you can't short-change the research*, Sydney Morning Herald, <<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/society-and-culture/to-defeat-mental-illness-you-cant-shortchange-the-research-20100615-yd61.html#ixzz2d1wNTy7>>

ⁱⁱⁱ Kulkarni J (2010), *To defeat mental illness, you can't short-change the research*, Sydney Morning Herald, <<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/society-and-culture/to-defeat-mental-illness-you-cant-shortchange-the-research-20100615-yd61.html#ixzz2d1wNTy7>>

^{iv} Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre <<http://www.maprc.org.au/>>

^v Australian Psychological Society (2013), *Better Access Survey: Preliminary Data*, <<http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/2013-APS-Better-Access-survey-preliminary-data.pdf>> (1).

^{vi} Suicide Prevention Australia (2013), *Stigma and Suicide Statement*. <<http://suicidepreventionaust.org/statement/stigma-and-suicide/>>



TAKE THE PRESSURE DOWN

AN URGENT NATIONAL RENTAL SUPPLY BOOST

The Greens' plan to increase the supply of affordable and sustainable rentals

The private rental market is a critical part of the Australian housing system, but it is broken and failing us as a nation. Australians are under severe pressure from a chronic gap in supply, lack of choice and growing unaffordability.

The situation for Australian renters is dire. With a current supply gap of 539,000 affordable and available rental dwellings in Australia, the time to stand up for renters is now urgentⁱ.

The average Australian rent has at least doubled in every city since 2000; and in Brisbane, Perth, Darwin and Canberra the rent has tripled since 2000. The Anglicare 2013 rental affordability snapshot found less than 1% of 65,000 listed rental properties were affordable to anyone on a low income, and only 4% were suitable to a family on the minimum wageⁱⁱ.

> IT'S TIME

The Greens are committed to urgently addressing this gap and standing up for Australian renters.

The Greens will invest over \$200m to build 85,000 new affordable rentals over the next decade, benefiting more than 220,000 people and reducing the acute pressure in the rental market.

The Greens Rental Revolution package will:

- **Review and fund another 50,000 homes under the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)** and provide an additional incentive to ensure they are exemplary green buildings and come with solar PV
- **Provide funding for 20,000 student rentals through a new University NRAS scheme**
- **Provide funding for 15,000 new rental homes through our 'Convert to Rent' Initiative**
- **Include a target of one third pre-fabricated, fast build, modular housing**
- **Review the effectiveness of Commonwealth Rent Assistance**

> ANOTHER 50,000 HOMES UNDER THE NRAS PROGRAM

The National Affordable Rental Scheme (NRAS) was introduced in 2008 increase the supply of new affordable rental housing by 50,000 new dwellings, and to encourage large-scale investment and innovative delivery of affordable housingⁱⁱⁱ. It was targeted to low and moderate income households and the first of such schemes in Australia. At December 2012 almost 11,000 NRAS properties had been delivered, and around 1 in 5 NRAS properties house someone with a disability, and almost 1 in 4 are allocated to sole parent families^{iv}.

The Greens want to provide much needed certainty to the program and see it extended to another 50,000 dwellings from 1 July 2013, as the government originally promised.

The Greens have some concerns with the scheme and so would formally review the scheme to improve it.

The Parliamentary budget Office has estimated another 50,000 NRAS incentives would cost \$53 million over forward estimates.

> GreeNRAS

The Greens believe the next NRAS scheme provides the perfect opportunity for the government to show leadership in building homes that are exemplary in design and sustainability. The opportunity for the Australian government to show leadership in this area should not be squandered.

We believe there is no good reason why the next 50,000 NRAS dwellings should not come with solar PV (or an equivalent on site or local new renewable energy source) as a mandatory feature. Nor is there reason why the future NRAS homes would not be designed to the highest green building standards.

World class sustainable housing does not need to be more expensive to build.



Many examples exist locally and internationally that demonstrate this can be done at well under the average cost of \$350,000 budgeted per dwelling. For example:

- An existing NRAS project at the Clayton Campus of Monash University has also achieved 5 Star Green Star certification^v.
- Housing NSW has delivered two social housing developments in Sydney on cost-neutral budgets that achieved 5 Star *Green Star* ratings. The Redfern Housing Redevelopment has 66 apartments, 40 townhouses and two community rooms, with a high proportion of adaptable and accessible housing for older people and people with a disability and features many benefits including design that reduces energy consumption by 74 per cent^{vi}.
- In July Environmental Scientist and Gardening Australia presenter Josh Byrne completed two 10-star rated 3x2 homes \$1200 per sqm (the standard dwelling cost) using standard building methods. The house also included a 3kw solar system, rainwater tank and Greywater system, and will save about \$1600 per year in energy bills and \$400 in water^{vii}.

The Greens will provide an additional up front incentive of **\$2000 per dwelling** to provide Solar PV (or alternative localised renewable energy) and meet the highest sustainable building benchmarks (detailed below)^{viii}. **We're dubbing this initiative GreENERAS.**

This measure would add benchmarks to the NRAS guidelines to ensure that the desired outcomes are understood and can be measured. The incentive would be available for developments that include (for example):

- 1) Renewable energy generation on site via PV cells or alternative.
- 2) A minimum of 20% - 50% reduction in buildings' energy consumption and predicted greenhouse gas emissions compared to the standard practice energy benchmark
- 3) A minimum 10% improvement on the regulated thermal performance standard in the relevant jurisdiction and
- 4) A minimum 60% by mass of construction and demolition waste is reused or recycled and a Waste Management Plan is provided.
- 5) A minimum 20% reduction in mains water consumption including rainwater harvesting and provision for greywater recycling
- 6) A minimum 20% reduction in embodied carbon in building materials through more sustainable materials
- 7) Protection of existing ecological values of the site and increased biodiversity values on site

These benchmarks could be achieved through ratings tools including the NABERS 5 star (energy and water) rating and the Green Star Multi Unit Residential certified rating or the One Planet Action Framework^{ix}

This initiative would support the next generation of green builders, auditors and practitioners.

We will provide \$10 million per year over forward estimates to implement our policy.

> 20,000 NEW STUDENT RENTALS

The Greens will introduce a new scheme to build 20,000 new affordable rentals for students on higher education campuses over ten years.

There are 1 million full time students in Australia but no federal department will take the responsibility for housing them. In Melbourne alone it's estimated by the Victorian Treasury that about 70,000 students compete for 19,000 beds, leaving a gap of 51,000 (or a 72% shortage).

Universities have great potential to provide more housing for students and capitalise on the fact many universities and education institutes already own land and buildings that could be used for development.

The Greens UNI NRAS scheme also allows the universities to bypass the states altogether – provided they already own the land, and their applications meet strong environmental, design, and tenancy management conditions; and that the dwellings remain as student housing in perpetuity (and are not sold off after ten years).

Our scheme will cost \$28 million over the forward estimates.

> 15,000 NEW HOMES UNDER 'CONVERT TO RENT'

Our Convert to Rent policy will create 15,000 new rental dwellings out of existing empty or underutilised buildings. The program includes a 15% target for modifications suitable for people with a disability. The proposal suits a matched funding model from state or local governments, but matched funding is not mandatory.

The Greens Convert to Rent Initiative will increase the amount of affordable rental housing, and revitalise local neighbourhoods and economies.

Our initiative provides financial assistance worth \$21,000 to property owners to help convert vacant or unused space into rental units to provide affordable housing to low income households.



The program was successfully introduced in the City of London, Canada in 2008 and could be readily and cost-effectively implemented in Australia.

At the 2011 census there were 934,500 dwellings that were unoccupied, representing a vacancy rate of 10%, or 1 in 10 dwellings across Australia vacant on Census night. While many of these vacancies can be accounted for as holiday homes or residential turnover, abandonment is also a cause^x. There are also thousands more vacant commercial buildings across our cities and towns.

This initiative turns these empty, abandoned or underutilised into affordable housing opportunities, benefiting renters and owners.

The scheme will cost \$32.5 million per year to fund 15,000 new conversions over the next decade.

The Canadian example

The Government of Canada introduced a national program in 2006 to rehabilitate and convert empty properties to affordable rentals, and it's been successfully adopted in many provinces and cities across Canada. In 2008 for example the City of London in Canada implemented a Convert to Rent program which in the first two years invested \$1.9m to convert 112 new rentals across 13 different sites and house 170 people. The federal government made co-contributions of \$7.7 million.

The UK Example

An estimated 14 per cent of British high street shops are currently empty or boarded up after the credit crisis ripped through the retail sector. Online retail has also changed the way people shop, showing we need to change the way we think about the retail mix in traditional high streets. The British Planning Minister has put forward a proposal for traditional high streets by saying empty or boarded-up shops should be turned into housing, and has released a consultation paper that suggests councils throughout England should concentrate their efforts to revitalise shopping to just one or two "prime streets". The rest can be converted. The Minister will also allow farmers to convert rural buildings into housing.

How the Convert to Rent Program works

Convert to Rent offers a \$21,000 grant on the condition the owner keeps the conversion as an affordable rental for at least 20 years, and sets the rent at no more than 75% of the market rent valuation or at 25% of the tenants' income.

The program would be open to all owners with properties that are structurally sound and could feasibly be converted to residential accommodation, including private entrepreneurs and not for profit organisations. Conversions encouraged would

include a diverse mix of studios and 1-4 bedroom apartments to suit a range of demographics. Eligible tenants would be low to moderate income earners including key workers such as teachers and nurses who cannot afford the median rent.

The program, including tenant management, would be administered by the community housing sector and 1.5% of the package has been allocated for this service. This is to ensure the program is as attractive as possible to building owners who might want to put their building to a more productive use but do not want to become (or be suitable as) landlords.

Convert to Rent will:

- Provide a \$21,000 grant to property owners to convert their unused buildings in to long term affordable rentals
- Provide additional funding of \$5000 for buildings modified for people with a disability
- Provide 1.5% of overall funding to the community housing sector to manage the scheme
- Require state governments to conduct a state-wide audit of vacant residential and commercial space to determine how much is going to waste – as a first step
- Examine tax reform and other incentives that currently offer perverse incentives to keep buildings empty.

> FIXING COMMONWEALTH RENT ASSISTANCE

1.1 million Australians currently receive Rent Assistance at a cost of around \$3 billion a year. 72% of Austudy recipients, 77% of students on Youth Allowance, and 46% of families on the parenting payment remain in housing stress at the full payment. Additionally, many low income households struggling with rental costs don't receive it but arguably should^{xi}.

In the last decade Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) has risen by just 9% (\$35) yet private rental prices have tripled. A single student on Austudy currently earns \$377 per fortnight with an extra \$113.40 Rent Assistance, to a total of just \$245 a week.

Increasing rent assistance by \$25per week for example would pull 100,000 households out of housing stress and improve the lives of 1.1 million people trapped in the private rental market and already receiving the maximum rate of rent assistance.

The Henry Tax Review called for maximum rates of Rent Assistance for income support recipients to be increased and linked to movements in market rents. Housing and welfare peak bodies have called for a review of CRA and a 30% increase across the board.



The Senate Select Committee Inquiry into housing affordability (*'A good home is hard to find'* 2008) recommended the Australian Government commission an independent evaluation of the CRA program to ascertain its effectiveness and cost effectiveness in improving housing affordability and to make recommendations regarding future directions for the program. The committee also recommended increasing support CRA for older Australians living in private rental accommodation.

The Greens agree the review should be undertaken in the context of a more comprehensive review of all government initiatives, both supply side and demand side, aimed at improving housing affordability.

We will provide \$180,000 to the Productivity Commission to review rental assistance in 2014-15. The Greens would then look to reform and increase Commonwealth Rent Assistance based on the findings of the Review.

> ONE THIRD MODULAR TARGET

Our proposal to build 85,000 new rentals includes a 1/3 target for sustainable prefabricated or modular housing. This is because modular housing can be delivered in significantly less time and at up to half the cost of conventional housing. In suburban Perth a one bedroom house was recently delivered in just 14 weeks from the time of order to delivery on site – at a cost of around \$75,000 it can be installed in 10 hours by four people^{xii}.

Modular and prefabricated housing is also far more sustainable and cheaper to run: its high level of insulation means the house is far easier to heat in winter and keep cool in summer, and typically use just 10% of the energy of a five star home. Prefabricated homes can also be built to any design and are extremely well suited to infill developments in urban centres.

> THE OTHER PARTIES

The private rental market has not produced an adequate supply of affordable rental housing for current needs and the demand for affordable rental housing will increase in the next few decades. The problem is structural, not cyclical^{xiii}. What is needed is long term vision and funding.

Labor introduced the NRAS scheme in 2008 but has refused to commit to extending it as promised if the scheme was successful. It also tried to cut the target from 50,000 to 35,000 and use the savings to spend on the Queensland flood reconstruction effort.

The Coalition does not have a housing policy and cannot be trusted to invest in affordable rental housing or care for those most hard hit by the housing crisis. Tony Abbott has twice

refused to sign on to the government's commitment to halve homelessness by 2020.

Fact box – Rental affordability and supply in 2013

- About one third of Australian households are renting.
- Renters tend to be younger and have lower incomes than homeowners.
- In 2010-2011 only 5% of homes sold or built nationally were affordable for low income householdsⁱ.
- In 2012 a household on the minimum wage paid 72% of its income on a median priced rental compared to 35% in 2003ⁱ.
- Rental demand is expected to double in 20 years
- There are 856,000 households in Australia on very low income (in the lowest income quintile) who either do not own their home outright or are not in public housing. These households are under extreme pressure either in the private rental market or in crisis accommodation.
- One in four private renters are in housing stress
- By 2021, 40% of households will be single and over 65 years – with many of them renting
- Private renters have emerged as a new cohort of homelessness
- There are about 225,000 households on the social housing waiting list, with long waiting times and undersupply adding more pressure to our rental market
- The ACOSS 2012 Community Sector Survey revealed that the highest area of unmet need for disadvantaged Australians is access to housing and homelessness services.

ⁱ National Housing Supply Council (2012) Key Affordability Indicators 2012 at http://www.nhsc.org.au/content/publications/housing_supply_affordability/downloads/using_supply_affordability_report.pdf

ⁱⁱ http://www.anglicare.asn.au/site/rental_affordability_snapshot.php

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/housing-support/programs-services/national-rental-affordability-scheme>

^{iv} http://housingstressed.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/DOC_120226_-AAH-budget-statement-2013-14-Final.pdf

^v <http://www.gbca.org.au/project-directory.asp#1125>

^{vi} <http://www.gbca.org.au/green-star/redfern-housing-redevelopment/2905.htm>

^{vii} 'Tassie turning on to energy-efficient homes', The Mercury, Monday March 12, 2012

^{viii} The house plans and detailed information and fact sheets on 'Josh's House' are freely available at <http://joshshouse.com.au/welcome/>. Note the star rating tool refers to the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) which is based on a scale of 0-10, with 10 being the highest rating score and requiring no heating or cooling. 6 stars is the minimum energy efficiency standard required under the Building Code of Australia.

^{ix} Note 5 Star Green Star signifies 'Australian Excellence' and 6-star Green Star is the highest rating available under the Green Star system and signifies that a project has 'World Leadership' benchmarks

^x One Planet Framework at <http://www.oneplanettoolkit.org/about/framework/>

^x <http://blog.id.com.au/2012/australian-census-2011/the-where-and-how-of-vacant-dwellings/>

^{xi} See "Easing Housing Stress Budget Statement 2012-13" page 7 for full breakdown – *Australians for Affordable Housing* at www.housingstressed.org.au

^{xii} Cockburn Herald 'Pre-fabulous', September 15 2012

^{xiii} Professor Judy Yates (2011) Developing a national policy and program agenda for investment in Affordable and Accessible in Rental Housing: Women's Housing Security.



CARING FOR PEOPLE BETTER PALLIATIVE CARE

The Greens' plan for better quality of life, right to the end

It isn't much talked about, but everyone dies sometime. Most of us hope for a "good" death, with minimal suffering and our wishes respected. Only the Greens will improve palliative care so this can be achieved.

We tend to avoid discussions about dying. But that means our families and friends might not know what our wishes are, and so the care we receive may not be the sort of care we want.

Reticence to discuss these matters is needlessly depriving ill Australians and their carers and families of a better quality of life. The Australian Greens recognise this, and that's why we're announcing a plan for better palliative care, to make it easier to talk about issues surrounding life-threatening illness and dying, and to make care arrangements that respect people's wishes.

> MAKING PALLIATIVE CARE BETTER

Improving palliative care improves people's quality of life.

The Greens will deliver:

- **An extra \$15 million per year over 4 years for palliative care**
- **Model legislation for advance care planning**
- **Better information for patients and their families about palliative care.**

> WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing life-threatening illness. It prevents and relieves suffering by early detection and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual.

Palliative care can be needed by people of any age from newborns to children and young people to adults in their 20s through to their 90s. It may be provided in hospital, an aged care facility, a hospice or at home.

Palliative care involves the patient themselves, carers and family, and a variety of professionals and others who may come from the public health system, private business, or a charity or not-for-profit organisation.

Palliative care is not necessarily end of life care. People may move in and out of palliative care as symptoms are treated and managed.

> \$15 MILLION PA MORE FOR PALLIATIVE CARE

People often think of palliative care in connection with terminal cancer. However, as Australia's population ages and our life expectancy increases, more people are experiencing other life limiting illnesses that require palliative care, for example dementia and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

Up to 72,000 Australians are expected to need palliative care each year.

Palliative care is provided by States and Territories, with Commonwealth funding support.

Only the Greens are ready to meet the needs of the increasing number of people who need palliative care. We'll increase community care funding relating to palliative care within the existing claims and distribution system by \$5million per year over 4 years, and we'll also increase general palliative care funding within the existing system to the States by \$10 million per year over 4 years.

That totals a Greens commitment of an extra \$15million per year for palliative care for four years.



> BETTER ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Dying is something that happens to everyone sooner or later. Advance care planning lets people make plans for their future care.

For example, many people want to die at home not in a hospital. Home is a familiar environment where the patient can have friends and family nearby, and retain some level of independence. Other choices patients may wish to make include organ donation, treatment choices, and who they trust to look after their affairs and make decisions for them if they become incapable.

Advance care planning supports people having control over their own life and their wishes respected, removes the stress of decision-making from others, reduces scope for family disagreements about what the patient would want, and provides guidance if patients can no longer make their own decisions and/or have no family to make decisions for them.

Some advance care planning decisions can be formalised legally via an Advance Care Directive. Unfortunately however, there is inconsistency between the laws of the States and Territories so that if a person moves interstate their Advance Care Directive may not be recognised and/or the terminology may have a different meaning. The result may be that the person's wishes are not respected.

After listening to patients and people from the palliative care sector about these problems, in October 2012 a Senate Committee chaired by the Australian Greens¹ recommended that national model legislation for advance care planning be developed and all governments pursue harmonisation of laws as a high priority.

The Senate Committee also recommended that the Australian government immediately fund a national public awareness campaign around advance care planning and directives.

As one witness to the Senate Committee put it: "I do have a choice on how I can exit this world, and I am going to choose the most comfortable. That is my best explanation of palliative care: choosing to exit first class, not fourth class."

> BETTER INFORMATION ABOUT OPTIONS AND SERVICES

The Greens-chaired Senate Committee also identified a strong need for better information for patients and their carers and families about palliative care options.

Palliative care services are often fragmented and hard to navigate. This is a huge stress people do not need when they or someone they love is facing a life-threatening illness. "Show bags" of brochures that people in crisis are expected to wade through are not helpful. The Committee recommended that the government, with the assistance of the Council of Australian Governments, take steps to improve the provision and timeliness of information to palliative care patients, their carers and families, so that they are provided with the right amount of information, in the right format, at the right time.

Life-threatening illness is hard. We don't want it made even harder. The old parties choose to look on, but the Greens will make sure government does what it can to reduce the burden.

¹http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=clac_ctte/completed_inquiries/2010-13/palliative_care/report/index.htm



BETTER SERVICES FOR VETERANS

CARING FOR OUR VETERAN COMMUNITY

The Greens' plan for supporting veterans and their families

The Greens believe that if we are prepared to send men and women to serve Australia on our behalf, we have a responsibility to care for them properly when they return. Our plan will ensure our veterans receive the care they deserve.

Veterans face unique challenges to their health and wellbeing which require strong and caring policy responses.

Whether they have recently returned from Iraq or Afghanistan or from service decades ago, many veterans suffer mental ill-health as a result of their experiences. We need to make sure that mental health services are readily available to veterans and their families and that we are responsive to the changing needs of the veteran community.

The Greens believe in appropriately recognising the service of groups who have been ignored by previous governments, and addressing the current unfairness which disadvantages service personnel who are injured during deployment.

> CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

The Greens care about people – that’s why we have a plan to ensure that all veterans are adequately looked after when they return to Australia, whether it be from conflict zones or other service on our behalf.

The Australian Greens’ plan will:

- **Dedicate \$6 million to develop effective mental health** support programs for veterans, namely Mates4Mates and Men’s Sheds.
- **Fund research** into the specific needs of female veterans.
- **Recognise the service** of British and Commonwealth Occupation Forces, SEATO nurses and the Australian Women’s Land Army, giving them access to the services and benefits they deserve.
- **Ensure injured service personnel** are not financially disadvantaged while they are being treated.

> BETTER WELLBEING SUPPORT

We know that many veterans returning from war and conflict will face challenges in adjusting to civilian life. Sadly, others will experience long lasting and significant impacts and continue to struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health conditions. Families and carers of veterans share the consequences of their service and this struggle.

We are now looking at a large group of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. We must learn from the experiences of past veteran groups to ensure we care for our veterans in the best possible way, while making sure programs respond to the unique needs of veterans returning from current conflict zones.

The challenge of stigma has long been a barrier to veterans seeking the help they need. Community-based programs like Mates4Mates and Men’s Sheds have been effective in countering the stigma around mental ill-health and supporting those who need help in a safe environment.

The Greens want to see Mates4Mates expand nationally, so veterans in each state and territory can benefit from the program. This not-for-profit project, established by the Queensland Branch of the Returned Services League, provides effective, peer-based support for veterans and their families. Our funding boost of \$1 million per year would help to start its national expansion, assisting veterans in other states.

The Greens also recognise the important role Men’s Sheds can play in providing peer support. A place where mental wellness is promoted, Men’s Sheds can provide a connecting point for men who are often facing similar experiences or challenges in life. We will fund the Australian Men’s Shed Association to develop veteran-specific support services in Men’s sheds and to support veterans’ sheds which are already being established, with a grant of \$3 million over 3 years.



Providing affirming support is a crucial part of caring for veterans' mental health and wellbeing. Our \$6 million investment, over 3 years, will improve access supportive networks for veterans and work to break down the stigma surrounding the mental ill-health and pressures which can follow service.

> IMPROVING CARE FOR FEMALE VETERANS

The Greens recognise that female veterans face a unique set of occupational challenges. We also know that female veterans experience particular pressures on their mental health which are not yet fully understood.

Caring for our veterans means understanding the unique needs of female veterans.

To this end, the Greens propose to make female veterans' wellbeing a discrete research priority area in the Department of Veterans' Affairs Applied Research Program (ARP). To cover this, we would increase funding to the ARP by 25%, at a cost of \$2.7 million over 3 years.

> RECOGNISING ALL VETERANS & THOSE WHO'VE SERVED OUR NATION

The Greens believe that those who serve Australia should be appropriately recognised and receive the benefits they are entitled to. Successive Coalition and Labor Governments have failed to recognise some groups due to the nature of their service.

Around 17,000 Australian troops were deployed to Japan immediately after World War II as part of The British and Commonwealth Occupational Forces (BCOF). They served in difficult conditions, recognised by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) as hazardous. Many surviving BCOF veterans believe the illnesses they suffer today are directly attributable to fallout from the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Currently, because of the way their service is classified by DVA, these veterans do not receive the same benefits as their fellow servicemen who served in WWII. This means that they are limited in the health services they receive from DVA.

The Greens' plan is to award the BCOF veterans Extreme Disablement status (EDA) under the Veterans Entitlements Act 1986, giving them a DVA Gold Card and thus access to the health benefits they desperately need. There are not many BCOF personnel left – only about 450. It's high time to help them before it's too late

Our plan also involves recognising the members of the Women's Land Army, who currently have no access to entitlements

through DVA at all. These women were recruited by the Australian government to assist with the war effort during WWII, enduring extreme labour and harsh living conditions, which in many cases had long term impacts on their health.

Previous Coalition and Labor governments have not granted Women's Land Army veterans any entitlements through DVA, meaning they need to cover their own health costs. The Greens' plan will entitle them to benefits and services under the Veterans Entitlements Act 1986. We've costed this measure, together with extended entitlements for BCOF veterans, at up to \$34 million over 3 years.

The old parties have also failed to care for the nurses who served in Vietnam as part of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO). These Australian nurses volunteered their skills to serve on civilian and surgical teams from 1964 to 1972.

Many suffer the same war-related illnesses as Vietnam veterans, yet have been ignored by successive governments, receiving no support for their health and medical expenses.

The Greens want to address this injustice by extending the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986 to cover the SEATO nurses who served in Vietnam. We would commit \$8.3 million over the forward estimates to achieve this; including granting these nurses access to the Veteran's Gold Card to provide free medical assistance for conditions arising from their service.

We believe that by failing to care for these groups, the old parties have defined their service as less important or valuable than others. They willingly volunteered to serve our country in its hour of need. It is only right to recognise their service and grant them the respect and care they deserve.

> LOOKING AFTER INJURED SERVICE PERSONNEL

The Greens believe that our servicemen and women should not be financially worse off if they are injured during deployment.

Currently, members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) receive a tax exemption when they are on deployment overseas. But through an unfair quirk of the taxation system, if they are injured and return to Australia for treatment during that time, they lose their tax exemption (and the accrual of annual leave) once they leave hospital.

Our plan will address this inequity by ensuring all ADF members are entitled to the allowances and the exemption on pay that applies under section 23AD of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* for the same period for which they were to be deployed, whether they are injured or not.



> EQUITABLE AND EFFECTIVE SERVICES

The Greens are committed to caring properly for those who serve us.

We are making veterans' mental health and wellbeing a priority through programs which will counter stigma and assist veterans and their families get the help they need.

We are recognising the unique needs of female veterans.

We are looking after those who have served Australia, no matter the nature of their service.

We are addressing the financial inequity experienced by injured service men and women.

The Greens acknowledge the sacrifice made by Australian service personnel and their families. We have the greatest respect for the bravery and resilience of these men and women. If we are willing to send people off to serve Australia in conflict zones, we must ensure we care for them properly when they return.

2013 / Relative Current
No Longer Current



CARING FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA DIGNITY, RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING

The Greens' plan for improving dementia care and investing in research

There are more than 300,000 people living with dementia today. Dementia is not yet curable which is why the Greens support better investment in dementia research, as well as creating more control over care, and choices for people diagnosed with dementia and their families.

The Greens plan will ensure people living with dementia are treated with dignity and cared for how they want to be cared for, as well as investing in research that can help us improve people's lives and reduce the burden of dementia on our community in the future.

> CARING FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

The Australian Greens would:

- **Invest in dementia research** with \$40million per year over the forward estimates.
- Support the development of a **National Dementia Action Framework** with measureable goals
- Invest in the creation of dementia specific respite
- Ensure that the recent reforms to aged care deliver **greater choice and control over care** for people diagnosed with dementia; including support to be cared for at home; support to keep young people out of nursing homes; and support to deliver person-centered care that doesn't rely on anti-psychotic medication.

These measures reflect the calls by leading dementia advocates such as Alzheimer's Australia for a clear investment that can help tackle the impact that dementia has on our community.

> A GROWING NEED

There are more than 300,000 Australians living with dementia today. This number is projected to triple to almost 900,000 by mid-century. Dementia is not curable but there are a range of ways in which we can slow the progress of the disease and improve the lives of those suffering from it

> DEMENTIA RESEARCH

Dementia is a broad term used to describe a progressive decline in mental functioning. A person with dementia experiences memory loss, confusion, and personality and behaviour change. There are a variety of causes that lead to dementia, many of which are difficult to diagnose.

In Australia, about 70 per cent of people with dementia have Alzheimer's disease, either in pure form or combined with another kind of degeneration such as cerebro-vascular disease (poor circulation to the brain). Other kinds of dementia include vascular dementia (caused by mini-strokes), Pick's disease and alcohol-related dementia.

Although we have begun to identify the diseases that cause dementia, there is still no known cure and very little is known about the causes of dementia or how to slow its affects. As a result, dementia is the third most common cause of death in Australia.

An investment in dementia research is critical. The Greens would invest \$40million per year over the forward estimates in dementia-specific research to begin to address the gaps in our knowledge.

> NATIONAL DEMENTIA ACTION FRAMEWORK

As well as supporting better research, the Greens recognise that there are a range of ways in which we can improve the well-being of those diagnosed with dementia.



The Greens strongly support implementing a National Dementia Action Framework in order to build on the announcement of dementia as the Ninth National Health Priority Area and ensure that progress is made to improve things like diagnosis waiting times and the ability of hospital staff to recognise and respond to dementia.

> CHOICE IN CARE FOR DEMENTIA

People with dementia make up more than half of those living in residential aged care facilities. However, more than two thirds of those with a diagnosis of dementia are being cared for at home.

The Living Longer, Living Better aged care reform package, which the Greens supported through the Senate, has improved the way in which home care packages can deliver services for people living with dementia. This has increased options for people to choose to stay at home for longer and age in place, yet still receive the specialist services that they need.

However, the Greens know that the aged care reform package has only delivered the first steps towards complete choice and control for older Australians over where and how they receive care. There will still need to be a range of improvements to the aged care system.

More community care packages must be made available in the future and those packages must be affordable.

> GATEWAYS TO CARE & RESPITE

One of the challenges in assisting people with dementia is that they themselves may not identify as needing support, even when their loved ones recognise that there is a problem.

Neither the current assessment framework nor the proposed aged care Gateway yet supports early intervention for people with dementia and their families which can reduce or minimise its impacts.

Respite is also critical. There is not very good respite, particularly for those who are experiencing symptoms such as BPSD.

Any future investment in aged care reform needs to ensure that there are clear pathways to care and support, including respite, available to those caring for people experiencing dementia.

> CARING ALTERNATIVES TO ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATION

Research reported in the Medical Journal of Australia revealed that up to 70% of residents are being given potentially dangerous antipsychotic or sedative medication.

Government needs to do more to protect the legal and human rights of nursing home residents.

However, this also needs to be backed up with support for alternative forms of care, and training and support to deliver care that is respectful and person-centred even when supporting patients with complex behavioural needs.

The Australian Greens supported the identification of dementia as a specific area of need within the recent aged care reform package and Greens in Federal Parliament will continue to monitor the roll out of the legislation and seek to ensure that it delivers on its promise of better care for people living with dementia.

> CARING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

Younger Onset Dementia (YOD) typically refers to the onset of dementia before the age of 65. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2011 Report, Dementia in Australia, there were an estimated 23,900 Australians under the age of 65 who had dementia in 2011, representing 8% of all people with dementia in Australia at this time.

This demonstrates that we cannot simply rely on the aged care system to meet the needs of people living with dementia.

The Australian Greens have campaigned for appropriate services for young people so as to keep them out of nursing homes. We support the call from Alzheimer's Australia to develop further the programs that meet the needs of young people diagnosed with dementia.



CARING FOR REFUGEES IN OUR COMMUNITY

HUMANE, PRACTICAL, SAVING LIVES

Ending the cruel detention of refugees in Australia, PNG and Nauru

Detaining refugees and their children in cruel offshore camps or in harsh centres in Australia is expensive and deeply harmful. Long-term detention causes mental ill-health and wastes the lives of people who are fleeing persecution. There is a better way.

Australia's notorious practice of indefinite mandatory detention is causing serious damage to vulnerable people who have already suffered trauma and persecution. By deporting refugees to inadequate facilities in Manus Island and Nauru, or stranding families in detention and in poverty here in Australia, we are failing the Australian spirit of fairness and compassion.

While the old parties compete to punish people in harsh detention camps, Australian taxpayers are footing a multi-billion dollar bill. Only the Greens are standing up for better, cheaper and more humane policies to save lives and care for refugees.

> CLOSE DOWN CRUEL DETENTION TO SAVE MONEY AND PROTECT HEALTH

Deterrents, including expensive and cruel detention centres in Australia or overseas, have never been effective to stop refugees arriving by boat. In fact, mandatory detention has never actually worked as a 'deterrent' since it was first established by the Labor Party in 1992.ⁱ

The current detention regime supported by both the old parties is founded on the plundering of foreign aid, the punitive incarceration of people who have committed no crime, and the re-traumatising of an already damaged generation of people.

It is also massively expensive, with the combined costs of Gillard's 'no advantage' visa freeze and Rudd's offshore deportation plan already rising above \$8 billion across the forward estimates.ⁱⁱ

The Parliamentary Budget Office has indicated that the average cost of allowing someone to live in the general community is \$35 000; compared to \$225 000 to detain a person on Manus Island or Nauru.

The costs of detention are not just financial; Australia's international reputation, foreign aid goals, legal integrity and,

most importantly, the lives of many vulnerable people are also at stake.

The Greens' plan treats refugees with humanity saves Australia \$3.2 billion over the forward estimates. Our plan will:

- **Close down offshore detention** on Manus Island and Nauru.
- **Close down the worst Australian detention centres** on the mainland and on Christmas Island.
- **Establish 30 day time limits on detention in Australia** so initial health, security and ID checks can be done, and periodic judicial review of any detention thereafter.
- **Refugees to live in the community** as soon as possible.
- **Give full work rights to refugees** and asylum seekers on bridging visas so they can support themselves where possible.
- **Fair rate of assistance for those in the community** who are unable to work.

Under the Greens' fully costed plan, Australia would be treating refugees with compassion and fairness while saving taxpayers \$3.2 billion.

The costing by the Parliamentary Budget Office provides a breakdown of savings as follows:

- **\$827 million saved** by closing down offshore detention camps in PNG.
- **\$970 million saved** from closing down offshore detention camps in Nauru.
- **\$925 million saved** by having people live in the community rather than be locked up in detention.
- **\$81 million saved** by not building the two new detention centres announced by the Rudd government.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **\$366 million saved** by closing down remote onshore detention centres including Curtain, Scherger, Wickham Point, Northern and North West Point on Christmas Island.



> CRUEL MANDATORY INDEFINITE DETENTION MUST END

To our shame, Australia is the only OECD country that imposes indefinite mandatory detention on refugees.^{iv} We know full well how harmful detention is to refugees and especially children. Mental ill-health, self-harm and suicide attempts are sad and constant features of long-term detention, whether it is in Australia, PNG or Nauru.

Amnesty International has noted that a 30 day time-limit on detention is broadly comparable with other countries.^v Many other legal experts and organisations have long made it clear that indefinite detention is not legally justified.^{vi}

The Greens have been resolutely standing up in Parliament and around Australia for reasonable and safe time-limits on detention, including moving amendments to the Government's offshore processing legislation in 2012 which were voted down by both the old parties.

> CLOSE THE WORST AND REMOTE AUSTRALIAN DETENTION CENTRES

Detention centres in remote places around Australia are seen by many to be 'factories for mental illness'. These centres are very expensive to run and extremely isolated. The remote centres are notoriously unattractive to trained staff, impractical for supplying goods, and removed from the reach of compassionate Australians, whose regular visits currently help refugees in metropolitan detention centres keep hopeful and healthy.

It is also hard for refugees in remote centres to access legal advice, excursions and medical care. The Green's plan closes the most expensive and damaging of the remote centres, and leaves open or on standby enough metropolitan centres to deal with the current backlog and cater for the requirements of non-humanitarian short-term immigration detention.

> CHILDREN SHOULD NEVER BE IN DETENTION

Imprisoning children in detention is a violation of their rights. As a starting point, children should never be in detention in Australia or any country, except for the absolute minimum period to complete basic health checks, and even then, it should be accommodation which is child-appropriate and not in mandatory detention centres.

For years, successive Labor and Coalition governments have been locking children up in detention where they are witnessing serious trauma, self-harm and despair, and often experiencing these things themselves. It is impossible to equip detention centres in Australia, and especially detention camps in Manus Island and Nauru, with appropriate education and paediatric

care that children require. Even the Labor Government had to bring back all the children it cast off to Manus Island in late 2012 within a year, because conditions were so appalling and damaging to children despite the billions that were poured into that camp.

The Greens are the only party standing up for the rights of the child and proposing an approach in which no child grows up behind bars or fences.

> WORK RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE ON BRIDGING VISAS

Right now there are thousands of families living in destitution in the Australian community because the 'no advantage' allowance is so meagre and they are banned from working for a living and contributing to the Australian economy.

The Greens' policy to allow people to work would lead to healthier lifestyles as people wait for their claims to be assessed, and take the pressure off thinly-stretched charities and non-government organisations. It would also save the public purse. Most of the refugees who come to Australia by boat come from skilled trades and professions. They are keen to make a contribution to Australia.

Without the right to work, refugees living in the community face very harsh conditions and poor mental health. In utter desperation they could be exposed to exploitation and harm on the illegal job market.

People waiting for their claims to be assessed in the community who are unable to work should receive fair assistance. Keeping people in destitution on 89% of Newstart is punishing people for having sought Australia's protection from persecution.

ⁱ "Immigration detention in Australia", Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, updated 2013, http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2012-2013/Detention

ⁱⁱ See Economic Statement, August 2013, http://www.budget.gov.au/2013-14/content/economic_statement/html/index.htm and Immigration Department Portfolio Budget Statement, 2013.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Economic Statement, August 2013, http://www.budget.gov.au/2013-14/content/economic_statement/html/index.htm. Government announced intention to build detention centres at Blaydin Point and Singleton.

^{iv} "Immigration detention in Australia", Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, updated March 2013 http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2012-2013/Detention

^v Dr Graeme Thom, Amnesty International, evidence to the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network, Hansard 26 September 2012, p 9.

^{vi} Submissions to Joint Select Committee on Immigration Detention from; UNHCR, Law Council of Australia, Gilbert and Tobin Centre for Public Law, Castan Centre for Human Rights, Migration Institute of Australia.



INVESTING IN QUALITY CARE FOR KIDS FIXING CHILDCARE AFFORDABILITY

The Greens' new way to reduce childcare costs and increase availability

Australian families are struggling to find and afford quality childcare that fits with their busy schedules. Sky-rocketing fees around the country have been ignored, with no extra help for parents facing the pressure of costs and unmanageable waiting lists.

The old parties know that Australian parents are facing a crisis in childcare fees and costs of living. Despite the increasing pressure on Australian families, there's been nothing but empty promises on childcare from both old parties.

The childcare sector has made leaps and bounds in improving quality of care, but the Government and Opposition have failed to match those achievements with the major investment needed to keep costs down.

> OVERHAULING CHILDCARE PAYMENTS AND INVESTING IN QUALITY

The Greens are standing up for greater quality and affordability in early education and care, and we know that means ensuring parents are not shouldering the full burden. We are fully committed to the national quality reforms being rolled out across the country, and only the Greens have proposed a fully-costed way to back that commitment up with effective financial investment.

By rolling the rebate and benefit together and boosting funding, the Greens are proposing a new way of childcare assistance that is better targeted, more generous and fairer to all families.

The Australian Greens' New Benefit Scheme:

- **Invests \$2.29 billion into childcare** over the forward estimates from 1 July 2015, helping with the costs of national quality reforms and addressing the crisis of high fees and unavailability.
- **Streamlines the existing Benefit and Rebate into one central payment, and pays it directly to centres**, so parents only have to pay the fee gap and will find it easier to plan and budget.
- **Increases the assistance for childcare** across the board by significantly raising the hourly rate, keeping existing means

testing and income limits in place and adding new loadings for babies (0-2) and children in regional and rural locations.

- Providing additional assistance for 800,000 families covering 1.15 million Australian children.
- Providing an average increase of \$27 per week for families using long day care (approximately \$1300 per year extra on average).
- For a low-income family in a rural or regional place with a baby, effectively doubling their childcare assistance from \$4.15 to \$8 per hour.

- **Targeted funding for children and families** who need it most, including 100% of costs covered for vulnerable and at risk children, and 90% of costs covered for children from low-income families as per the Henry Tax Review recommendation.ⁱ

- **Maintains equivalent childcare assistance for those currently receiving the Rebate**, that is, 50% of annual costs covered to a cap of \$7500, as now.

With greater investment in the early education and childcare sector we'll see enhanced productivity and happier families. The real question to the old parties is; how can we *not* afford to invest in our youngest citizens?

> BOOSTING FUNDING TO HELP KEEP FEES DOWN FOR FAMILIES

Childcare fees are rising around the country, with no meaningful response from the big parties. A Greens survey of national childcare fees in early 2013 involving over 230 childcare centres nationally, found that fees and waiting lists had grown over the last three years, while the number of available places was shrinking.ⁱⁱ



Childcare fees are commonly around \$90-\$110 per day in many places across Australia, with high pressure spots reaching fees as high as \$140 per day.

The Australia Institute has found some families are paying an average of 9.6 per cent of their disposable income on childcare.ⁱⁱⁱ This is simply not good enough – quality childcare and early education should be seen as an essential service, not a luxury commodity.

Under the Greens' New Benefit scheme, we are raising the base hourly rate for child care assistance from \$4.15 to \$6.10, and adding further loadings to address current and continuing pressures, including a special 10% loading for babies aged (0-2), and a further 10% loading for rural and regional areas that have difficulty maintaining affordability for childcare.

Our plan will offset the increased costs associated with higher staff-child ratios for baby rooms, and increase the number of baby places available which is currently a significant problem in many metropolitan and regional areas.

Over a million Australian children are in a form of care, with a massive 40% increase in the use of long day care since 2004.^{iv} The crisis in affordability is not one that can be ignored any longer.

The Greens' New Benefit childcare payment is smart policy, targeted at those who need it most, with 100% of costs covered for families with children who are vulnerable or at risk, and 90% or more of costs covered for lowest income families.

> INVESTING IN CHILDCARE IS ESSENTIAL TO OPENING UP PLACES

The Greens childcare survey released in 2013 showed that long waiting lists were causing difficulties for families across Australia, with some women having to put their child on a list as soon as they became pregnant.

The survey showed that with the new ratios of educators to babies as part of the quality reforms coming into force, baby room availability had dropped by 10% and in some places, such as Sydney, 50% of centres with waiting lists had families waiting for more than two years to find a place in a baby room.

The Greens have proposed policies that will open up new childcare places through:

- **Additional funding for childcare assistance** so that parents and providers aren't shouldering the costs of better quality childcare and expanded services.
- Our **Capital Grants Scheme** of \$200 million over four years, which will allow community and not-for-profit centres to build new rooms and facilities.

- Our **HELP waiver scheme** for teachers, to assist the sector to attract and keep four year tertiary qualified teachers in long day care and fill in the urgent staffing gaps in the early education teaching sector.

> STREAMLINING PAYMENTS TO KEEP OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS DOWN

A critical aspect of this reform is the streamlining of payments so that all payments go direct to centres, through the Child Care Management System, to save parents hassle and out of pocket costs. This means families, and particularly mothers, can focus more on building a health family, career and finding a better work life balance.

The unaffordability of care impacts on household budgets, women's employment, childcare providers' ability to expand their services and fair access to quality local care for children.

Current fee levels are also having the effect of discouraging women from returning to the workforce or forcing them to rely on less suitable and lower quality forms of care.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has noted that "one driver of increasing productivity is ensuring we have a better balance between paid parental leave provisions and childcare".^v

The Greens are the only party standing up for women's productivity and participation with our effective and comprehensive suite of childcare policies, backed up by world-class Paid Parental Leave.^{vi}

ⁱ Recommendation 99, Chapter 12, Henry Tax Review http://taxreview.treasury.gov.au/content/finalreport.aspx?doc=html/publications/papers/final_report_part_1/chapter_12.htm

ⁱⁱ Media Release, Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, 20 January 2013 <http://sarah-hanson-young.greensmps.org.au/content/media-releases/survey-says-childcare-situation-worsening>

ⁱⁱⁱ 'Trouble with Childcare: Affordability, Availability, Quality', The Australia Institute, p 28.

^{iv} Rachel Browne, 4 August 2013, *The Age* <http://www.theage.com.au/national/childcare-use-hits-the-million-mark-20130803-2r6bv.html>

^v Cosima Marriner and Craig Butt, *The Age*, 24 August 2013, <http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/federal-election-2013/many-wait-as-parental-leave-debate-buries-childcare-crisis-20130824-2sir1.html>

^{vi} See the Greens' Paid Parental Leave policy <http://greens.org.au/better-paid-parental-leave>



AVAILABILITY, QUALITY, CARING GRANTS FOR MORE CHILDCARE PLACES

The Greens' Capital Grants Fund to build and expand childcare centres

Australian families are struggling to find the quality and affordable childcare they need. Years-long waiting lists for places are blowing out across the country. Meanwhile, quality local childcare centres have not got the means to keep up and grow.

The old parties know that these problems exist, but they won't commit to the funding that is urgently needed to create more childcare places and keep fees down.

The Greens believe that Australian parents should not be expected to shoulder the burden of finding and affording quality childcare. Helping childcare providers to open and expand is a vital way to help families with the childcare options they are entitled to expect.

> HELPING CHILDCARE CENTRES TO GROW WHERE THEY ARE MOST NEEDED

Parents around the country are facing long waiting lists and childcare centre closures, while the number of available places is shrinking and fees are growing.

We consistently hear about mothers who enrol their child into a centre as soon as they fall pregnant. When it's time to return to work, there isn't a place available and that means either burdening grandparents or missing out on career opportunities.

The Greens' scheme for a **Capital Grants Fund** will allow community and not-for-profit centres to build new childcare centres, or expand and improve existing ones.

By committing a total of \$200 million over four years from 1 July 2014, we will be able to give centres the ability to provide the care and flexible options that parents need. The fund will be administered by the relevant Government department and will be available upon application for:

- improving facilities and expanding existing services;
- planning and building new centres; and
- expanding services that address existing high-needs areas, e.g. inner-urban areas with highest pressure on places, as well as rural and regional services.

> OPENING UP MORE CHILDCARE PLACES FOR MORE FAMILIES

The lack of available childcare places is a growing crisis across Australia. A Greens' poll run in early 2013 showed that 67% of parents responding to the poll had had difficulties getting or keeping a childcare place.

Out of over a thousand parents who responded to the poll, of whom most were mothers, 79% said that difficulties finding childcare always or sometimes impacted their ability to work. We know that 45% of the women now in the workforce who have young children, returned to work before their youngest child has turned one.ⁱ Given the inequalities and financial challenges that already face women in the workforce and in retirement, the Greens believe that the situation must be urgently turned around.

The problem of availability is even more extreme in places like inner city Melbourne and Sydney. A study by the Greens in the federal seat of Melbourne recently found some centres had more than 300 families on their waiting list, and only 3% of centres had vacancies for babies. The Capital Grants Fund will be effective because it is targeted to the type of care with the highest need in the places under the most pressure.

> AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE IS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR COMMUNITY

The fees being paid by parents have increased at three times the general rate of inflation since 2009ⁱⁱ. Increasing childcare availability will keep fees down and open up more places at competitive rates. The Greens are standing up to keep costs down for parents around the country.

ⁱ Stephanie Peatling, Childcare is no child's play, *The Age*, 5 August 2013

ⁱⁱ Megalogenis, G. and Gosper, S. (2012), 'Social Revolution at work' *The Australian*, 31 October 2012 p.1.



GOOD GOVERNMENT HONESTY & INTEGRITY IN POLITICS

The Greens' plan to keep politicians honest

Voters must be able to trust politicians. But we can't trust Labor or Tony Abbott to be honest unless it is in their interests, or in the interests of their big business mates, to do so. We need to restore honesty and integrity in politics.

The Australian Greens believe that integrity, accountability and openness in politics are vital to a healthy democracy. To have an engaged public, voters need to trust what their politicians are saying and have open access to information. The Australian community has made it clear – they trust the Greens to stand by their values through thick and thin.

We want trust to permeate through our political system. We want an end to the 'deals-for-mates' culture, with empowered citizens keeping a close eye on their government instead of the government keeping a secret eye on them. Only the Greens can be trusted to keep politicians honest.

> KEEPING THEM HONEST

To lift the standards of government, the Greens will:

- **Establish an Anti-corruption Commission to crack down on wrong-doing in the Parliament and the public service**
- **Create a legally enforceable Lobbyist Code of Conduct and prohibit Ministers becoming Lobbyists within 5 years**
- **Impose a 2 year ban on Ministers being involved in private enterprise which is related to their Ministerial connections**
- **Extend whistleblower protection laws to cover the offices of Members of Parliament and employees in the private sector**

> ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

Every State now has an anti-corruption commission. The Federal government is now the only jurisdiction without the infrastructure to confront corruption. Every time wrongdoing is exposed, one-off reviews or ad-hoc investigations are launched. We need a permanent commission to prevent corruption occurring and investigate claims as they arise. The Greens

already have a bill before the Parliament to create this office to crack-down on public sector corruption and promote integrity in our public institutions.

The case for MPs and the public service to be investigated by an independent commission is so obvious it hardly has to be made. But when Liberal and Labor parties get together to exclude MPs from the law of the land, it takes a huge public outcry to get them to change the status quo. The Greens are leading that charge.

We will establish the Office for a *National Integrity Commissioner* at a cost of \$90m over 3 years. It would absorb the existing *Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity* that oversees the Australian Federal Police, customs and ACCC.

The Office would not only investigate misconduct and corruption, but prevent it by providing advice and support to government agencies, Ministerial and MP's offices.

> CLAMP DOWN ON LOBBYISTS & MINISTERIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Ordinary citizens should be what influences government decisions, not "big money" from the "big end of town" or the former politicians they employ to use their connections to get what they want.

The Greens want to jam shut the revolving door between business and politics by imposing a 5 year ban on Ministers transforming into lobbyists.

Well financed lobbyists are granted access and influence above and beyond anything that would be extended to the ordinary Australian. Our weak, practically non-existent rules on lobbying distort our democracy in favour of established and powerful interests.



Last year, Senator Mark Arbib quit politics and went straight to work for James Packer's Crown Casino. Arbib's replacement in the Senate, Foreign Minister Bob Carr was then a lobbyist for top-tier bankers and lawyers like the Macquarie Group.

We want a code enshrined in law that requires the disclosure of lobbyists, who they work for, which MP or Minister they met and what they discussed. Following best practice models in Canada, **the Greens have dedicated \$15 million to establish the *Independent Commissioner of Lobbying* with auditing and investigating powers to maintain and enforce the register.**

The Greens will also move to ensure that for a period of at least two years following their term, Ministers are not to be engaged in a private enterprise which raises a conflict or particular benefit from their role and connections developed as a Minister.

> WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Working side-by-side with an anti-corruption commission are strong whistleblower laws so that people who become aware of wrongdoing in the workplace can reveal it and be legally protected from any retribution.

After four years of stalling, the Parliament finally passed comprehensive whistleblowing laws covering the public service. The Greens amended the bill to ensure threats to the environment are legitimate disclosures and to strengthen the bill.

Despite achieving these improvements, both major parties worked together to keep Members of Parliament and their staff outside the law – they don't want the scrutiny they are applying to others.

The Greens want Members of Parliament included in the law so that their wrongdoing can be publicly exposed. We also want whistleblower protections as a work place rights to cover employees in the corporate sector.

> OTHER PARTIES

It is clear that the Labor, Liberal and National parties like as little scrutiny on them as possible. The Greens are the only party that can be trusted to advocate for open governance and the law of the land applying to Members of Parliament.



REFUGEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING INDEPENDENT HEALTH ADVISORY PANEL

An expert panel to monitor the health of refugees in offshore detention

The old parties are risking the health and wellbeing of thousands of refugees, including children, by dumping them in appalling conditions in Nauru and Papua New Guinea. A caring nation looks after people fleeing persecution and their physical and mental health.

In the rush to set up cruel detention camps and slum cities, there is no plan for independent oversight of refugees' health and care. The old parties are committed to dumping all refugees who come by boat out-of-sight, out-of-mind in the poorest nations in our region, with no safeguards for their medical and mental health needs.

Reports from whistle-blowers and the UNHCR already tell us that conditions in the camps are harsh and dangerously inadequate, but there is no transparency about what is happening in Australia's name.

> SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA'S CARE

The Australian Greens want to put a stop to offshore detention altogether. But while it is in place, Australia remains responsible for looking after the health and wellbeing of refugees we send to detention camps. There must be special oversight of the impacts of indefinite detention on these already traumatised people.

The Greens will establish an independent panel of medical and mental health experts to provide transparent public oversight and rigorously monitor the needs and wellbeing of vulnerable people sent by Australia to Nauru and PNG.

The Independent Health Advisory Panel would:

- be selected from a pool of experts nominated by Australia's peak medical, psychiatric and psychological bodies;
- be self-directed in the nature of their investigations;
- have access to all offshore facilities and personnel;
- be independent of the Minister and report directly to the Parliament every 6 months.

The Panel would be tasked with reporting on the health conditions inside detention camps, investigating deficiencies in care, and making recommendations for improving the medical and mental health care that refugees sent offshore can access.

> FAILING REFUGEES' WELLBEING IS FAILING OUR DUTY OF CARE

The boat voyage that brings refugees to our shores seeking sanctuary is the last stage in a long and often dangerous journey. After traumatic experiences and long periods in unsafe conditions, the physical and mental health needs of refugees and asylum seekers can be complex. This means that refugees in detention need access to comprehensive, modern health care facilities and expert help.

We have already seen numerous reports of the damage caused to adults and children by detention in Nauru, Manus Island, Christmas Island and the Australian mainland. Each report is more worrying than the last, highlighting serious problems with the physical and mental health of asylum seekers in detention.ⁱ The history of personal trauma, the hot and steamy conditions, the limited resources including limited fresh water, the risk of disease, the remoteness and the high levels of distress about the future, all add up to a dangerously difficult environment for maintaining the good health and wellbeing of refugees.

Australia is raiding our foreign aid budget to spend over \$8 billion on offshore asylum seeker management, and is outsourcing basic medical care to commercial contractors.ⁱⁱ Given the horror stories emerging from the detention camps, this arrangement is unacceptable and the full transparency and oversight of the Independent Health Advisory Panel is urgently needed. Now that Labor is committed to dumping hundreds of children and unaccompanied minors in Nauru, rigorous health oversight are essential.



Australia recognises that people have a right to health care. We have a duty to look after the basic health needs of people under our protection. In sending vulnerable people offshore, the first step should have been to establish an expert advisory committee to review and oversee the protections conditions as recommended by the Houston Panel.ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite public promises by the Government that a degree of health oversight would be provided, there has been no review and oversight of offshore detention so far.^{iv} The Greens are not willing to leave refugee health and well-being to chance.

> PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE TO CARE FOR REFUGEES

The Independent Health Advisory Panel would be composed of experts nominated by professional bodies for their expertise in relevant medical and psychological fields. This ensures only the most highly-qualified experts will be on the panel.

By restricting the panel to people who are nominated for their expertise by medical bodies concerned only with the health of patients, we ensure true independence. The experts have professional and ethical obligations entirely separate from the political and bureaucratic priorities of the Department and the Minister.

> INDEPENDENT AND TRUSTWORTHY EXPERT OVERSIGHT

The Independent Health Advisory Panel will report to Parliament every 6 months on the conditions in detention facilities and the challenges to delivering sound health care.

The Australian Parliament, and the public, will see the report at the same time as the Immigration Minister, ensuring there is no opportunity for political interference in the contents of the report. The Government's response to these reports would then be made in full public view of the realities of the situation on the ground - not a redacted report from a government contractor.

The Greens have already introduced a bill into the Parliament to implement this policy, so there is no reason why this important oversight measure should be delayed.

The Greens will provide an initial \$2 million over the forward estimates to resource the work of the Panel.

The Independent Health Advisory Panel is supported by the Australian Human Rights Commission,^v the Australian Medical Association and other health experts.^{vi}

> BETTER ALTERNATIVES

The old parties' cruel policies of dumping refugees in indefinite detention and inadequate 'resettlement' in our region's poorest nations will inevitably lead to further trauma and harm. There have already been terrible disclosures of self-harm, mental ill-health and even alleged sexual abuse which shows that the current level of care and oversight is not adequate.

The Greens would offer people safer pathways than boats by increasing our humanitarian intake, particularly from Indonesia, and house all asylum seekers in the Australian community after security and medical checks have been conducted. The evidence is clear that this approach is more humane, billions of dollars cheaper, and leads to better outcomes for all involved.

Until the Greens' humane and effective refugee policy is adopted, the Australian government must put in place health and wellbeing safeguards for all refugees sent offshore through establishing an Independent Health Advisory Panel.

ⁱ Joint Select Committee on Australia's Immigration Detention Network, Final Report 2012; <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/12/united-nations-report-manus-island?guni=Article:in%20body%20link>; Report of the UNHCR Monitoring Visit to Manus Island, Papua New Guinea 11-13 June 2013

ⁱⁱ Economic Statement, released by Treasurer the Hon Chris Bowen MP, August 2013.

ⁱⁱⁱ *The Report of the Expert Panel into Asylum Seekers*, para 3.59.

^{iv} <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jul/15/manus-island-committee-never-met>

^v <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/inquiry-migration-amendment-health-care-asylum-seekers-bill-2012-2012>

^{vi} <http://ama.com.au/ausmed/node/3798>



REPOWERING SOCIAL HOUSING TRANSFORMING A MILLION LIVES

The Greens' plan to bring down the cost of living in social housing

Retrofitting Australia's ageing stock of social housing with solar power will reduce energy, water consumption and carbon pollution, and make properties cheaper to run and more comfortable to live in.

> REPOWERING SOCIAL HOUSING

The Greens believe Australia's lowest income households are under the most pressure from the rising cost of living and also most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and inappropriate housing.

Australian social housing is of poor quality, with 65% built before 1980 and is very expensive to heat and cool. The average 3-star home costs about \$2230 a year to heat whereas a 5-star home costs only \$1270.

At a cost of \$78.3 million per year over 10 years, or \$3,000 per dwelling, with matching funds from the states and territories, the Greens plan will upgrade all public housing, including state owned and managed Aboriginal housing, community housing and Indigenous community housing to:

- Fit 1.5kW solar power systems on 520,000 social housing property at a cost of \$1,500
- install energy efficient appliances and light globes, water efficient appliances and shower heads, ceiling fans, ventilation fans, roof and wall insulation, and draught proofing
- Provide a property energy assessment and education and advice to tenants on how they can make behavioural changes to help save energy in the home, and
- Provide a training, employment and education package for tenants interested in developing skills in the green jobs sectorⁱ.

> WHO WILL THIS HELP?

Half a million Australians live in social housing properties. In 2013, 98% of tenants in public housing, 92% in community

housing, and 94% in state managed indigenous housing are low income households in the bottom 40% of disposable incomeⁱⁱ.

Social housing tenants are disproportionately affected by increases in power and utilities and cost of living pressures. They are also less able to purchase solar panels and other items that improve the comfort, efficiency and sustainability of their homes.

Older single people currently make up the highest proportion of household types, with the median age of tenants in public housing 54 years (compared to the median age of 37 years for the Australian population)ⁱⁱⁱ.

> CHEAPER TO RUN, MORE COMFORTABLE TO LIVE IN

More than one in ten households (13%) report being unable to pay electricity, gas or telephone bills on time, according to ABS figures in 2012^{iv}.

The ABS reports Australia's electricity prices rose by 72%, while the price of gas and other household fuels rose by 45%. Between June 2007 and June 2012, the largest increase in the retail price of electricity was in Melbourne (84%), followed by Sydney (79%), 60% in Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania, and 57% in Western Australia^v.

By contrast people on low incomes such as Newstart and single parent allowances rose slightly linked to CPI and the aged pensioners rose by \$40 in 2009.

Research shows an increasing number of low income households are suffering from energy poverty. In 2009-10 the lowest 20% of Australian households had an average weekly income of \$314 and their average expenditure on energy was



7% of their disposable income – three times more than the wealthiest households^{vi}.

In 2010 the ABS also found nearly 40% of the low income earners were unable to pay power, gas or phone bills on time during 2010. These figures would have only worsened with the more recent electricity price increases.

A recent TasCOSS report about the experiences and concerns of rural and regional energy consumers in Tasmania^{vii} found:

- The greatest concern of research participants is the increasing cost of electricity, and this is causing significant hardship – to not only those on government pensions and allowances, but also to other households, particularly those with children.
- Houses in public housing and in rural areas are generally old and thermally inefficient, and are therefore difficult and costly to heat. For those on low incomes, this can result in financial hardship and health problems being exacerbated by living in cold, draughty and damp houses in the south, and hot, humid houses in the north.
- While Australians have an understanding of energy efficiency measures that can help reduce bills, those most in need do not have the financial means to purchase more efficient appliances, install insulation or retrofit their homes to increase thermal efficiency.

While electricity prices continue to rise, the cost of solar rooftop panels has fallen dramatically. Last year alone the costs of rooftop solar panels came down by 45 per cent^{viii}. This has made solar power an affordable and accessible option for many households as a way of saving money – but low income households in public and private rental are missing out.

Repowering Social Housing

- Social housing includes public housing, community housing, state-owned and managed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) housing, and ATSI community housing organisation housing.
- There are 415,785 social housing dwellings in Australia^{ix} - a very small proportion of overall housing stock (5%) and far less than other developed countries.
- Social housing assists about 403,700 households, with 80% in public housing, 15% in community housing, and 5% in Indigenous community housing and state owned and managed indigenous housing.
- 39 jobs are directly supported in Australia for every 1 megawatt (MW) of solar installed.
- Australia's one millionth rooftop solar panel was installed in March 2013. In 2008 there were only about 20,000 systems installed^x.

> BOOSTING AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIES

More than 8000 Australians are already employed in the solar industry – this initiative would significantly boost the industry locally. It's estimated there are 39 jobs directly supported in Australia for every 1 megawatt (MW) of solar installed. In 2011, 500MW were installed, taking the national total to over 1000MW. This equates to around 14,000 jobs^{xi}.

SOLAR PV

In 2013 Australia passed the milestone of having one million solar PV systems installed on rooftops, with 120,000 in Western Australia from 2010-2012. The potential for growth is even greater, particularly as rising energy costs bite into household budgets. The Greens believe the next million solar systems will be a great opportunity to care for our most disadvantaged and boost our local industry.

The Greens will include a target of 50% locally manufactured solar PV over the ten year lifespan of this program to support the Australian Solar photovoltaic (PV) industry.

According to a report of the Australian Photovoltaic Association (APVA), the solar industry employed 11,000 people in 2012 who installed nearly half the nation's cumulative solar panel capacity (currently about 2.6 gigawatts)^{xii}

To date there has been enormous unrealised potential in Australian research and development, industry investment and government policy support for the Australian photovoltaic industry. The industry is not yet self-sustaining and a 2004 market report suggested that a partnership between government and industry is necessary:

"The PV industry cannot continue to actively invest in strategic industry development unless the Australian government is also committed to the journey. The industry ... requires policy and program support to assist it in bridging the gap to mainstream commercial competitiveness^{xiii}."

This program would bridge that gap. The solar industry is well regulated and safe, and has the capacity to install an extra 40,000 pv panels each year proposed in this initiative.

INSULATION

In an average year, approximately 200,000 new and existing dwellings are fitted with ceiling insulation. 75% are new dwellings (about 160,000) and 25% retrofit of existing dwellings or about 40,000) in Australia.

A recent report by the Insulation Council of Australia (2011) found insulation alone to be one of the most effective measures in reducing energy bills, increasing the comfort of a home, and fighting climate change.



The 1.27 million houses retrofitted with insulation as part of the federal government's Home Insulation Program (HIP) introduced in 2009 saved just under one tonne of greenhouse gas emissions per year and \$300 in annual energy costs each^{xiv}. It's estimated the insulation installed under the program will have saved \$4 billion in household energy costs and taken 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere by 2020^{xv}.

The former \$2.4 billion federal retrofit scheme was scrapped when it became highly politicised for the dangers involved in being implemented too hastily. In the first year of the HIP, 1.2 million existing dwellings were retrofitted – a six-fold increase in the average level of delivery the industry managed prior to the scheme.

> CASE STUDIES

UK

In 2011 a scheme to install free solar panels on 200,000 council and housing association homes was introduced over four years. The program is worth £1.2 billion and is expected to create up to 3000 jobs and reduce tenants' power bills by as much as 50%^{xvi}.

PERU

In July a new National Photovoltaic Household Electrification Program was introduced that will give 2 million of Peru's poorest households free solar power by 2016^{xvii}.

YARRA PUBLIC HOUSING RETROFIT

In 2011 the Yarra Energy Foundation – a non-profit organisation dedicated to making the City of Yarra carbon neutral by 2020 – launched a \$1.2m energy smart retrofit project called *High-Rise Revolution*. The project retrofits the Richmond, Fitzroy and Collingwood public housing high-rise estates with energy efficiency and cogeneration plants, where more than 8000 people live, about 10% of the City of Yarra's residents. The program also includes 40 residents to train, educate and champion the initiative.

Funded by Sustainability Victoria and supported by the City of Yarra, the project brings the right people together to build a roadmap that benefits residents in lowering their utility costs, making living in these estates cheaper and reduce overall carbon emissions. It's hoped the program can be turned into a demonstration project on site, and be expanded and copied by other public and private housing estates anywhere in the world^{xviii}.

WA

In 2012 the WA government announced a solar-panel program for public housing that will install solar PV panels on 500 properties at a cost of \$1 million. Power prices in WA have increased 62% in the last four years^{xix}.

TASMANIA

In 2012 the Tasmanian government introduced a *Cost of Living through Energy Efficiency Strategy* scheme which invested more than \$8 million to improve energy efficiency for up to 3000 public housing properties^{xx}. It included education and energy efficiency strategies such as installing ceiling and floor insulation, draught-proofing, upgrading heaters, water efficient shower heads, and replacing electric hot water units with solar. It also invited tenants from 100 properties to become 'Energy Champions' to share their experiences of changes and energy savings with other tenants.

ⁱ *Cost of Living through Energy Efficiency Strategy* invested more than \$8 million to improve energy efficiency for up to 3 000 public housing properties, as part of the Housing Tasmania (2011) Energy Efficiency Strategy.

ⁱⁱ Source: Report on Government Services 2013 Table 16A.41

ⁱⁱⁱ AIHW (2010) A profile of social housing in Australia.

^{iv} 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, Sep 2012

^v 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, Sep 2012

^{vi} ABS data cited in Morris and Chester (2012) 'Housing stress and energy poverty – a deadly mix?', *The Conversation*. University of NSW and University of Sydney.

^{vii} Vallance, S., 2011 *Living in The Country: Consumer Perspectives on Energy Supply in Rural Tasmania*, TasCOSS, Hobart.

^{viii} <http://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/resourcecentre/RET/renewables-in-australia.html#sthash.ur9xS99Q.dpuf>

^{ix} Productivity Commission (2013) Report on Government Services

^x Clean Energy Council cited in <http://reneweconomy.com.au/2013/solar-milestone-1000000-pv-systems-installed-in-australia-44201>

^{xi} Clean Energy Council (2013) Household solar power fact sheet at

<http://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/resourcecentre/factsheets.html>

^{xii} *PV in Australia 201*, APVA cited

<http://www.solarchoice.net.au/blog/australian-solar-industry-employed-11000-installed-1gw-in-2012/>

^{xiii} Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy (2004). *The Australian Photovoltaic Industry Roadmap*.

^{xiv} Note: In an average year, approximately 200,000 new and existing dwellings are fitted with ceiling insulation (75% new dwellings or about 160,000 and 25% retrofit of existing dwellings or about 40,000) in Australia. In the first year of the HIP, 1.2 million existing dwellings were retrofitted – a six-fold increase in the level of delivery previously managed by the industry. See http://www.icanz.org.au/pdf/2011_ICANZ_Report_-_V04_final_260911.pdf

^{xv} Key saving strategy bounces back after a pink battering SMH, WA Today 24th March At <http://www.smh.com.au/environment/earth-hour/key-saving-strategy-bounces-back-after-a-pink-battering-20120323-1vnvi.html>

^{xvi} www.solarbuzz.com/industry-news/solar-europa-plans-council-and-housing-association-solar-program

^{xvii} <http://inhabitat.com/peru-solar-power-program-aims-to-give-electricity-to-the-countrys-2-million-poorest-citizens/>

^{xviii} <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4zxbEA3HYc>

^{xix} Public homes go solar. Sunday Times 8th September 2012 p40.

^{xx} Housing Tasmania (2011) Energy Efficiency Strategy



LESS CRUEL, LESS WASTEFUL STOPPING ILLEGAL SHARK FINNING

The Greens' plan for protecting sharks from live finning

It is supposed to be illegal in Australia yet sharks are still being captured, having their fins cut off, and then being dumped alive back into the ocean to slowly die. The government's poor record-keeping is hampering efforts to stop live finning.

Cruel and wasteful shark finning, sometimes involving killing of endangered shark species is increasing. Finning is supposed to be illegal, but a patchwork of different laws between the Commonwealth, State and Territories, and lack of any central source of figures for shark fin imports and exports, is undermining efforts to stop it.

> STOPPING SHARK FINNING

Only the Greens can be trusted to help stop illegal shark finning.

The Australian Greens will make it a high priority to achieve as soon as possible:

- **Consistent laws**, so that all sharks caught in Australia must be landed with their fins still attached to their bodies.
- A **central data source** that records Australian sharks caught, species of caught sharks, and full details of shark fin imports and exports.
- A ban on the possession, sale and/or trade of imported shark fin in Australia. Appoint a Working Group to determine how to implement this policy.
- The Working Group will also evaluate the necessity of a moratorium on shark fishing in Commonwealth waters and an export ban, if these other measures prove to be ineffective.

> THE CRUELTY OF SHARK FINNING

Sharks that have had their fins cut off and then been dumped back into the ocean alive die a slow and horrible death. Death is caused by starvation, being eaten alive by other fish, or drowning.

Finning is driven by the high price of shark fins compared with shark meat, with fins fetching up to 700 times the price. The destination of the fins is shark fin soup. The high price of fins is attributed to increasing demand for shark fin soup.

Shark fin soup is regarded as a top-end luxury dish, though it is increasingly being rejected on grounds of cruelty. Shark fins are not relied on as an ordinary food source due to their extreme expense.

Shark finning occurs in a context where sharks are already under enormous pressure. Almost half the world's shark species live in Australian waters. Nine of these are listed as threatened under our Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Internationally, a third of all open ocean sharks are endangered. Slow to reproduce and having few young, shark populations can crash as a result of overfishing, bycatch, finning, hunting, shark nets, habitat degradation and culls. Climate change is a new pressure and yet we have very little understanding about how this is affecting our sharks. Catching sharks mainly for their fins is believed to be the main reason for decline in shark species.

> ALL LANDED SHARKS TO HAVE FINS ATTACHED

One way of reducing finning is to require that all sharks be landed with their fins attached to their bodies.

This was recommended in 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly, supported in 2012 by the European Union, suggested in a conservation plan that arose from the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (to which Australia is a signatory), and adopted in India (the world's second biggest shark catching nation) in August 2013.



In Australia, the Commonwealth, States and Territories have all made live shark finning illegal. But not all of them require sharks to be landed with fins attached. Some allow fins to be cut off at sea subject to a minimum ratio between fins and meat.

This patchwork of laws makes it needlessly difficult to monitor compliance with the ban on finning. The Greens will work collaboratively for a consistent “fins attached” policy across all Australian jurisdictions. This would help with monitoring and make the ban more effective. It would also improve identification of shark species caught, including whether any sharks caught are endangered species.

> A CENTRAL DATA SOURCE OF SHARK LANDINGS AND SHARK FIN IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Australia has no central source of data on sharks caught, shark fin imports and exports. Problems include: lack of distinguishing between shark products, lack of information about the source of imports (which effectively permits and does not distinguish imports from countries that allow live shark finning), and some export data is in hard copy and omitted from the electronic database.

Attempts to compare sharks caught with trade data have revealed gaping holes. Indeed, if the figures are to be believed, thousands of tonnes more of shark is traded than is caught.

If the figures are to be useful, they must be accurate. The Greens will work to achieve a central data base that shows sharks caught, including species (so that catching of endangered shark species can be identified), all shark fin imports and their sources and all shark fin exports. This will help to identify whether anti-finning strategies are working.

> REGULAR EVALUATION OF WHETHER ANTI-FINNING STRATEGIES ARE WORKING

It is all very well to have a ban on finning and a range of anti-finning strategies, but if they are to be more than just lip service, there need to be regular checks on how well they are working. Barriers to their effectiveness include: the very high price of shark fins compared with shark meat, and the ease with which shark fins can be hidden on fishing vessels.

The central data source will help to capture information about the number of sharks caught and trade in fins. The Greens will make sure that the information is not merely recorded, but used to regularly assess the effectiveness of Australia’s anti-finning measures.

If the anti-finning measures are shown to not be protecting sharks, then the Working Group will be asked to provide advice on a moratorium of shark fishing in Commonwealth waters and the effectiveness of a ban on exports.

> BANNING POSSESSION AND TRADE OF SHARK FINS

Some places, including several US States, have already banned possession, sale and trade of shark fins. There have been calls for Australia to do the same. The Greens will appoint a Working Group to identify and assess options for achieving a ban on possession, sale and/or trade of imported shark fin in Australia.



VALUING OUR TEACHERS

ADDRESSING THE PRESSURES OF TEACHING

The Greens' plan for improving conditions for teachers

Teachers and school leaders are facing increasing pressure. A caring society values the teaching profession for the challenge that it is. The Greens' plan to improve conditions for teachers will provide support and care for teachers, both inside and out of the classroom.

We rely on our teachers to do one of the most important jobs in Australia. There is a growing recognition of the need to treat teaching as we treat other professions. At the moment, teachers reach the highest pay level very quickly and the only way they can advance their careers is to move out of the classroom and into administrative roles.

The Australian Greens know that if we want the best and brightest to be teaching our students, we have to offer career opportunities and incentives to stay in teaching positions. We need to attract the best to teaching and keep them there, which means appropriate career structures and support for the challenging work they do.

The Greens will provide schools and teachers with the necessary resources to create supportive school environments and produce better education opportunities for students. The Australian Greens' plan to support our teachers will address the increasing pressures teachers and school leaders are facing.

Our fully costed package, totalling \$548 million over the next three years of the forward estimates from 1 July 2014, includes:

- **Increasing teaching staff** in a third of government schools through an investment of \$162.65 million per year.
- **Providing enhanced mentoring opportunities** for teachers worth \$10 million per year.
- **Investing an additional \$10 million a year** into professional development.

> MORE TEACHING STAFF FOR SCHOOLS

The Greens will invest \$162.65 million per year to place an additional 2235 teachers in government schools where they are needed most.

Current research has shown that Australian teachers and principals experience high levels of stress related to various aspects of their work.ⁱ Having more teachers in schools will help reduce teacher workloads and contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing.

It will also mean more time for professional development, lesson planning, and for working together in what is a highly collaborative profession. It will give schools more time to better engage with parents and the community and allow teachers to work more reasonable hours, instead of the 60-hour weeks many currently endure.ⁱⁱ

Most importantly, our plan will improve the wellbeing of teachers by reducing the high levels of stress in the profession. Reducing teacher workloads is likely to improve overall work performance, meaning more high quality teaching and learning for students.

Our plan will place an extra teacher in one third of government schools. The costing for this proposal also includes a review of the trial program after three years, ensuring appropriate reflection and evaluation.

The Greens know how demanding teaching is. An additional 2235 teachers in government schools is a crucial investment in caring for teachers and improving outcomes for students.

> ENHANCED MENTORING PROGRAMS

The Greens' believe in the need to have dedicated and integrated mentoring programs, to support teachers in the early stages of their career through to later years and mentoring those who aspire to become school leaders. Our initiative would



establish a capped mentoring grants program, by investing \$10 million per year.

There is a real concern among teachers about the prevailing disrespect for the teaching profession. We are proposing enhanced mentoring programs to address the inequality and pressure that teachers face, including that related to increasing demands on their time, long working hours and pressure from parents or school leadership.

Principals, in particular, feel as though they are being pulled away from students and are unable to spend time fostering a love of learning within the school. Studies have shown that the principals who have the highest levels of professional support are also the principals who have the best mental health.ⁱⁱⁱ School leaders need to be mentored throughout all stages of their careers to ensure their workplace wellbeing.

Creating a supportive school environment will have positive flow-on effects for students. Teachers and school leaders will be better supported and empowered to provide greater educational opportunities for students.

> MORE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Greens' believe in the need to give teachers better professional development opportunities, to support teachers who are going to become school leaders and ensure all teachers have positive work experiences. We will establish a capped professional development grants program by investing \$10 million per year.

We need to offer career progression opportunities similar to those available to other professionals, so that we can attract and then retain the best and brightest teachers.

There is a sense of an increasing prescription on what teachers must teach and when. These requirements can inhibit teachers' creativity, and more importantly, take time away from teachers as they work to discover the type of teacher they want to be.

We are proposing more professional development opportunities to support teachers through their careers. These opportunities will not only help teachers to discover their goals but also to see them realised through support provided along the way.

> ADDRESSING THE PRESSURES OF TEACHING

As part of our commitment to caring for teachers, the Australian Greens secured a Senate Inquiry into NAPLAN testing earlier this year after hearing reports that NAPLAN test results were being misused in a way that was detracting from learning.

The inquiry received an overwhelming community response from parents, teachers, students, advocates and academics who voiced their concerns about the pressure and stress caused by NAPLAN testing.

We learned that teachers are under pressure for their students to perform in the tests and feel they need to spend time teaching to the NAPLAN test every week to bring their students up to scratch. This is detrimental to student learning in the long term and is not indicative of a teacher's performance, causing high levels of stress and placing extra demands on teachers' time and attention.

Our initiatives complement our existing work around caring for teachers. By investing in more teaching staff, enhancing mentoring programs and providing more and better professional development opportunities, we can begin to improve conditions for teachers.

> EDUCATION IS OPPORTUNITY

We recognise the need to give teachers the value and respect they deserve. Education is absolutely important for a fair and inclusive society and it's also extremely important for a productive society.

The Greens have already pledged \$2 billion more than the current government is prepared to commit for school funding reforms. We know that education is opportunity and we're committed to improving our public education system by supporting our teachers. This will be one of the best financial investments we make.

Extra support for teachers will benefit students by contributing to more positive learning environments and enabling greater contact with teachers.

The Greens are committed to supporting and valuing our teachers as they undertake one of the most important jobs in Australia.

ⁱAustralian, *Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey (2013)*, <<http://www.principalhealth.org/2011%20Final%20Report.pdf>> (9).



ⁱⁱ Australian, *Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey* (2013), <<http://www.principalhealth.org/2011%20Final%20Report.pdf>> (24).

ⁱⁱⁱ Australian, *Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey* (2013), <<http://www.principalhealth.org/2011%20Final%20Report.pdf>> (13).

2013 Initiative
No Longer Current



WORKING TO LIVE, NOT LIVING TO WORK

Putting people back at the centre of workplace laws

Job insecurity and time pressure are on the rise. Workplace laws should enable people to have a secure job, a good balance between working and personal & family life and protect people's rights at work. The Greens' vision for workplaces puts people firmly at the centre of workplace laws. Good workplace laws can help create a more caring society and relieve the pressure people are under.

At the heart of the Greens' vision for workplaces is the belief that everyone is entitled to meaningful work. Meaningful work is well remunerated, safe and values the employee and is where the employee feels a degree of autonomy and control over the working day.

The Greens' priorities for the next period of Parliament will be to legislate to advance the following three principles:

- **People should have more control over balancing their personal and working lives.**
- **People should have the right to secure, ongoing employment where practicable, especially in sectors reliant on public funding.**
- **Workplaces should reflect the diversity of Australian society.**

> A Better Work Life Balance

In a generous and caring society like ours, supporting every employee to balance their caring and personal responsibilities with paid employment should be at the heart of our workplace laws. Caring for those close to us must be a central concern for our society and is important to the economy.

However, it is not only those with caring responsibilities that should be entitled to a decent balance between their work and personal lives. All employees, regardless of their personal circumstances, should be entitled to flexibility in the workplace.

Australians perform \$72 billion in unpaid overtime each year.ⁱ Just over half (54.6 per cent) of employees aren't working the hours they want, and more than two thirds of these would prefer to work fewer hours, even if it might impact on their income.ⁱⁱ

These long working hours are impacting on our wellbeing, and the wellbeing of our families and communities. Two thirds of women feel consistently time pressured and nearly half of men also feel this way.ⁱⁱⁱ

Good employers are already making it easier for their employees to achieve a balance between work and their personal life. Allowing employees more control over their working hours is good for business and for the economy. Satisfied employees are likely to remain in a workplace longer, be healthier and more productive.

The Greens believe that all employees should have an enforceable right to request flexible working arrangements.

The Greens will introduce legislation that will:

- **Give people who have been in their job 12 months enforceable rights to request flexible working arrangements,** including the number of hours they work, the scheduling of those hours and the location of work. Employers have the right to refuse on operational grounds but must provide reasons for the refusal.
- **Strengthen existing provisions for carers.** If a carer requests flexible working arrangements, employers can only refuse where there are serious countervailing business reasons.

The Greens will also give the Fair Work Commission the ability to hear and determine any disputes if an employer refuses a request



> More Secure Work

Around 40% of all workers in Australia today are in insecure work^{iv} and don't enjoy guarantees such as regular and predictable hours and pay, access to paid leave and other entitlements or ongoing job security. Insecure work can make people feel that they have little control over their working lives and creates insecurity and anxiety around both income and ongoing employment.

Insecure work disproportionately affects women. Over half of all casual employees are women,^v reflecting a need to balance the demands of work and caring responsibilities. However, there is no evidence to suggest that casual work facilitates a better work and life balance.

Insecure work is most common in the retail and hospitality industry^{vi}, however there has been an increase in the use of fixed term and rolling contracts in the education sector. In our public schools, fixed term contracts account for around 20% of all positions.^{vii} In the TAFE sector, the figure is as high as 70%^{viii} and in universities as little as a third of the workforce is in ongoing employment.^{ix} It is unacceptable that public money is being used to drive job insecurity in the education sector.

The Greens believe that everyone has the right to secure, ongoing work if they want it. Secure work creates stability for families and caring communities. Regular work hours mean that families are able to plan ahead and create routines that work for them. Regular pay means that households can manage their finances more effectively. A regular work schedule means that individuals can also commit more easily to recreational activities such as playing in a local sports team or contributing to their community through regular volunteering.

There are many jobs and industries where people are employed casually for long periods of time. Employees in casual positions where the work is likely to continue indefinitely should be able to request their position be made permanent.

The Greens will introduce legislation that will:

- **Provide a pathway for any casual or rolling contract employee who has been in a workplace for more than 12 months to request a move to secure, ongoing work.**
- **Allow unions and employer organisations to make applications to the Fair Work Commission for 'secure employment orders' on a sector or industry-wide basis.**
- **Small business will be exempt from the legislation**

The Greens will also provide a better deal for employees in those sectors which receive substantial Federal funding by initiating a Senate inquiry into how the expenditure of Commonwealth money can be tied to greater job security. This

would help teachers, university staff, those in the medical research and federally funded community, health and employment services sectors. The aim will be to limit the use of rolling contracts and the casualisation of the workforce, recognizing that in limited circumstances such employment methods will be appropriate. (The inquiry would likely report after the current round of agreements for funding state public schools and universities have commenced, meaning current negotiations would not be affected.)

In higher education, the Greens would establish a fund of \$120m over 3 years, available on a competitive basis, to encourage the creation of 4,000 continuing academic career positions to permanently replace about 20,000 casual hourly paid academic jobs, so our best and brightest young minds can make a contribution to our universities. This would also be an important measure to improve the quality of the student experience, with more staff able to provide the support which students need.

> Representative Workplaces

The Greens believe that workplaces should reflect the diversity of Australian society and that everyone should have equal access to meaningful paid employment. Two areas where we are falling behind as a country are the employment of newly arrived migrants and people with a disability.

The workforce participation rate is around 30% lower for people with a disability.^x This is despite the fact that people with a disability report wanting to engage in quality employment. And employing someone with a disability makes good business sense. Studies indicate that the employment of people with disability can lead to increase productivity, reduced absenteeism and a more positive workplace culture.^{xi}

Newly arrived migrants face significant barriers to employment. These include a lack of Australian work experience, visa restrictions and difficulty in getting qualifications recognised and thus having to work in low paid jobs despite having higher qualifications. Unemployment and under-employment is higher amongst people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. In a recent study, over half of newly arrived migrants said that finding employment would help them to participate more in Australian life.^{xii}

The Australia Public Service (APS) should lead the way.

The APS is in a unique position to lead the way on the employment of people with a disability and those from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Almost 20% of Australians identify as having a disability^{xiii} but the number of people with a disability employed by the APS dropped to 2.9% of the entire workforce in 2012.^{xiv} Similarly, 1 in 4 people in Australia identify as being from a non-English



speaking background but account for only 5.1% of the APS workforce.^{xv}

Diverse workplace will enhance economic and social inclusion in marginalised groups as well as creating a more caring and cohesive society.

In this next term of Parliament, the Greens will introduce legislation that will require the Australian Public Service to double the representation of people with a disability and people from non-English speaking backgrounds within the public service by 2018. This will create approximately 4500 employment opportunities for people with disabilities and 7500 for people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

> PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

The Greens will continue to protect people's rights at work. We will pursue and vote in accordance with our comprehensive workplace relations policy. We will oppose attempts of any future government to remove workplace protections.

ⁱ The Australia Institute, *Something for Nothing* November 2009.

ⁱⁱ *Australian Work and Life Index 2012*, Centre for Work + Life, University of South Australia, p33.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid*, p7.

^{iv} *Insecure Work, Anxious Lives: the Growing Crisis of Insecure Work in Australia*, Australian Council of Trade Unions.

^v *Ibid*.

^{vi} *Ibid*.

^{vii} Australian Education Union submission to the Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work in Australia, 2012.

^{viii} *Ibid*.

^{ix} National Tertiary Education Union submission to the Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work in Australia, 2012.

^x *Improving the Employment Participation of People with Disability in Australia*, 2013, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

^{xi} *Ibid*.

^{xii} *Participation and employment: A survey of newly arrived migrants and refugees in Melbourne*, 2011, AMES.

^{xiii} *Issues Paper 1: Employment and Disability – The Statistics – National Inquiry into Employment and Disability*, 2005, Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission.

^{xiv} *State of the Service report 2011-12*, Australian Public Service Commission.

^{xv} *State of the Service report 2011-12*, Australian Public Service Commission.



ENVIRONMENT LAWS THAT WORK PROTECTING AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT

Because our wild places and unique animals are too precious to lose

Australia's unique and priceless environment is under threat like never before, from climate change, habitat destruction, pollution and invasive species. Our laws are failing us - only the Greens are fighting for laws that will genuinely protect Australia's precious wild places and species.

Australia's natural environment is unique and priceless: from the Great Barrier Reef to the Kimberley, to Lake Eyre and the life-giving Murray Darling Basin, to Tasmania's ancient forests and our vast array of plants and animals that call Australia home.

The Greens care for our precious species and wild places. We will stand up for strong laws that offer the protection they need to survive this century.

> OUR LAWS ARE FAILING THE ENVIRONMENT

In 1999, the Howard Government introduced the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. It was meant to protect the places and wildlife which were so important, and so fragile, and that mattered to all Australians.

Since then, thousands of damaging developments have gone ahead, many more of our iconic and important animals and plants are in danger of becoming extinct, and climate change will increase the pressure on our fragile environment. Our current federal laws have failed to protect our precious places and stop our wildlife heading towards extinction.

Our environment is under attack like never before: Tasmania's incredible Tarkine rainforest is being opened up to mining. James Price Point and the Kimberley remain under threat. Our national parks are at risk from logging, shooting and grazing. Our iconic Great Barrier Reef is becoming a highway for coal and gas shipping. Even our beloved koala and Tasmanian devil are facing extinction, and logging has reduced Victoria's state emblem, the Leadbeater's possum, to less than a thousand in the wild.

We need environment laws that work to stop the biodiversity crisis, save our threatened species, and protect our precious places. We can make our environment protection laws stronger, not weaker. We can protect what we love about Australia, now and into the future.

> OUR ENVIRONMENT PLAN

The Greens are proposing a **\$346 million plan**, over the forward estimates, to make our environment protection laws work, including:

- Providing \$130 million to establish an independent statutory **Sustainability Commission** to advise on projects requiring federal approval, conduct inquiries, produce national environmental accounts and sustainability reports;
- Invest \$30 million in a **scheme to ensure the quality and independence of information provided by environmental consultants**;
- Inject an additional \$123 million to:
 - Expand the oversight of the federal government to all aspects of the national environment (including **climate, water, national parks and forests**) which are likely to be significantly impacted upon by proposals,
 - Improve monitoring, compliance and **enforcement** of development approval conditions;
 - Improve the quality of decision making by including **cumulative impacts**, applying the **precautionary principle** and limiting discretion; and
 - Improve **community rights** before and after federal development decisions are made;



- Fund and implement the recommendations of a review into the funding and management of **World Heritage and Ramsar Wetlands**, at cost of \$63 million.

These new measures are in addition to our previously announced plans to:

- Keep **federal environmental protection in federal hands**, stopping the Coalition's plans to put state governments in charge of our national environment;
- Protect **threatened species and their habitats** with a \$120 million plan;
- Restore Labor's \$470 million cuts to the **Biodiversity Fund** and cuts to Caring for our Country;
- Give **national protection to national parks**, to protect them from logging, grazing, shooting and mining being allowed by state governments;
- Protect the heritage and cultural values of our **last free-flowing rivers** under our national environment laws;
- Support our **wildlife carers** with a \$15 million grants program;
- Provide \$176 million to **save the Great Barrier Reef** from coal and gas port dredging, dumping and shipping; increase funds to farmers to improve water quality in Reef catchments; develop a long term plan for the Reef; and increase funding to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority; and
- **Stop new coal and unconventional gas** (coal seam gas, shale gas and tight gas) mines; assess their real climate profile; and give landholders the right to say no to these activities on their land.

> TELLING IT LIKE IT IS: A NEW SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

The community is tired of successive governments down-playing their environmental failures, continuing to wave through hugely destructive developments and opting for greenwash over genuinely tackling our biodiversity crisis.

The community wants to know the truth about the trade-offs being made when governments approve destructive developments. We need independent expert environment and sustainability advice, free from the influence of politicians and the big business lobby, to get us on the sustainability track.

We already have independent expert bodies, like the Productivity Commission, to advise on economic matters. Now is the time to extend this principle to the environment that sustains us.

The Greens plan will establish a Sustainability Commission, with \$160 million in funding over the forward estimates to:

- Establish and manage a **scheme that ensures the work of environmental consultants** preparing environmental impact assessments for proposals which require federal

environmental approval is of the highest quality and free from undue influence of those paying for the work;

- **Independently review** all environmental impact assessments and strategic assessments and advise the Minister under our national environment laws, with the advice to be made public;
- Make sure there is **independent, evidence-based scrutiny of the claims made by proponents about the social and economic benefits** of major projects;
- **Conduct inquiries** and advise government and the wider community on major national environmental policy and regulatory reform. The first such inquiry would be into World Heritage funding and management – see over;
- Oversee timely delivery of **comprehensive national environmental accounts and sustainability reports to Parliament**

The Sustainability Commission will be a statutory body which advises the Environment Minister, will undertake work on its own initiative (not just when directed by the Minister), and will report regularly to Parliament.

The Sustainability Commission will take on the current environmental assessment responsibilities and resourcing of the Environment Department. All its advice will be made public. The Commission will be headed by a Chairperson, supported by between four and eight Commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the Governor-General for five year terms.

> ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION THE COMMUNITY CAN TRUST

Currently too much of the information relied on by Government when deciding whether to approve major projects comes from the project proponent – those with the most to gain from securing a green light for their developments.

There's a lot of community concern that this arrangement risks critical information about the damaging impacts of projects being downplayed and economic benefits exaggerated.

The Greens will task the Sustainability Commission with establishing a scheme that applies to all environment professionals advising on projects being assessed under our national environmental laws. Supported by audit and compliance mechanisms, this scheme will make sure all decisions about environmentally destructive projects are based on independently assessed, quality research and analysis, and unfettered by the influence of vested interests.

This will increase community trust in our environmental decision making, and, importantly, level the playing field for the many environment professionals across Australia who are doing the right thing by our environment, but are being undermined



by dodgy competitors because the system doesn't adequately incentivise high quality, truthful and accurate work.

This scheme will be established and overseen by the Sustainability Commission, as a component of their \$159 million funding over the forward estimates.

> LAWS THAT ACTUALLY PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

The Australian Greens want new national environmental laws that actually protect our natural heritage: laws that will see our biodiversity flourish and halt any further extinction of our unique wildlife, and save our ancient landscapes for generations to come.

The Greens will provide additional funds to:

- Make sure **final approval** for Australia's most **environmentally damaging projects** remain with the federal government and cannot be given away to the states;
- Limit the **Minister's discretion** to approve environmentally destructive developments, and require that decisions under our national environment laws are consistent with the **precautionary principle** and consider **cumulative impacts**;
- Give the national environment minister responsibility for all **aspects of the environment when the impact is significant**, including **water, forests, climate** and **national parks** (\$60 million over the forward estimates);
- Inject \$20 million a year to greatly improve **monitoring and compliance of our environment protection laws**, and evaluation of the impacts of decisions and whether the conditions placed on destructive projects are effective;
- Establish a **community information unit** to actively support community understanding and engagement under our national environment laws (\$500,000 a year);
- Provide greater opportunities for genuine community **consultation** on major projects and reasons published for all major regulatory decisions;
- Change Court costs rules to **prohibit costs orders** in public interest cases to support **increased community access** to justice, and allow the merits of decisions to be challenged in court by the community (\$1.5 million over the forward estimates).

The Greens' plan is for laws that deliver clear environmental protection, not the current process of sanctioned destruction.

For more detail, see [here](#).

> PROTECTING OUR WORLD HERITAGE AREAS AND RAMSAR WETLANDS

The World Heritage Committee's "extreme concern" over Australia's tragic mismanagement of the iconic Great Barrier Reef raises the warning bell for all our internationally important world heritage areas and wetlands. The Australian Greens are committed to seeing our 19 World Heritage properties and 66 Ramsar listed wetlands properly protected and managed. Many of these areas are under increasing pressures from development, invasive species, climate change - yet many have suffered from inadequate funding and management arrangements – putting their globally important ecological values at risk.

The Greens **\$63 million plan to protect our World Heritage Areas and Ramsar Wetlands** will see:

- The new Sustainability Commission tasked with reviewing the funding and management arrangements for each of our World Heritage Areas and Ramsar wetlands and making recommendations to ensure best practice management for these precious places; and
- The Commission's recommendations implemented, including by strengthening our laws as needed, and a grants program for our **World Heritage Areas and Ramsar wetlands of \$20M per year** to support best practice management of these important areas.

The Review will be supported by \$3 million in funding and consider current and future threats to these areas, will consider how to increase local communities engagement in management, and how to increase **indigenous joint management**.

> ONLY THE GREENS CAN BE TRUSTED TO STAND UP FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

The Greens were founded on the vision of a robust and healthy environment, and that vision continues today. We are working hard to promote environmental values in Parliament and protect our unique wildlife and wild places. In this parliament we:

- Secured the Clean Energy Future Package to tackle climate change through a price on pollution, billions of dollars to be invested in clean, renewable energy, energy efficiency and protecting our magnificent forest carbon stores.
- Successfully negotiated the \$946 million Biodiversity Fund as part of the Clean Energy Future Package, funding communities to restore bushland and native habitats and reduce the impacts of weeds and feral animals.



- Helped secure a protection for Australia's water resources from coal and coal seam gas – and moved amendments to extend this protection to shale and tight gas, and underground coal gasification.
- Initiated a Senate Inquiry into koalas which resulted in threatened species listing for this national icon.
- Introduced legislation to allow emergency listing of threatened species, protect the Great Barrier Reef from destructive coal and gas ports, and ensure federal environmental approvals responsibilities cannot be handed to state governments.
- Initiated a senate inquiry into threatened species management across Australia, which highlighted the considerable concern of the community and experts alike for the plight of our native fauna and the need for strong federal leadership to protect the environment

In this election we have already announced a suite of policy initiatives to help protect our environment.

Threatened species - The Greens' have announced our 3 year, \$120 million plan to secure the future of Australia's threatened species. Our plan will involve \$30 million per annum to:

- Fund comprehensive studies to identify and map important habitat nationally
- Protect that habitat through bioregional plans that guide development and establish clear no-go zones for different activities within each region across Australia.

The Greens will also provide \$10 million per annum to:

- Support the rapid listing of all species and ecological communities which belong on the threatened list
- Develop and resource the implementation of recovery plans and threat abatement plans for listed species and ecological communities
- Fund additional research required to help turn around Australia's biodiversity decline.

The Greens have also committed to restoring Labor's **\$470 million cuts to the Biodiversity Fund**, which the Greens helped establish as part of the Clean Energy Package, to promote habitat restoration. We also oppose the Government's cuts to Caring for our Country. See [here](#) for more information about our plan to protect Australia's threatened species.

National parks – Our national parks are under attack like never before from shooting, logging and cattle grazing being allowed by reckless state governments. The Greens' have announced our [plan](#) to give national protection to national parks, protecting our national parks from significant impacts under our national environment laws.

Wild rivers – Our wild rivers are national treasures at risk of being destroyed by large scale irrigation and mining. The Greens have announced our three year \$30 million [plan](#) for national protection for wild rivers across Australia. Ongoing wild rivers management will be supported by indigenous wild river rangers.

Wildlife carers - Across Australia, every year thousands of volunteers help come to the rescue of sick and injured wildlife. The Greens' have announced our plan to support the invaluable work of wildlife carers through a new grants program of \$5 million per annum to:

- help subsidise food and medical expenses for sick and injured wildlife
- assist with purchase of wildlife care equipment
- support training programs for our wildlife carers
- increase our knowledge about successful wildlife care and rehabilitation; and
- supporting other activities such as 24-hour wildlife care advice hotlines and community education.

These grants will be open to wildlife carers and wildlife-carer organisations. See [here](#) for more information on our plan to help wildlife carers.

Great Barrier Reef – Our Reef is threatened by climate change, land-based pollution, invasive species, and recently from rampant industrialisation for coal and gas ports. Tragically, the Reef has already lost 50% of its coral cover in the last 27 years.

The Greens will stand up to save our Great Barrier Reef by:

- Stopping new coal or gas ports and damaging port expansions, and banning dredging and offshore dumping of dredge spoil inside the Great Barrier Reef world heritage area
- Increasing the Reef Rescue program's funding by \$25 million per year to support farmers improving water quality
- Increasing Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's budget by \$20M per annum to improve its capacity to undertake critical research, carry out its regulatory and community outreach responsibilities, and protect the Reef for future generations
- Providing \$16 million to deliver a comprehensive and effective long-term plan to protect the Reef
- Keeping federal approval powers so that the final say on developments that will damage the Reef is not solely with Premier Newman

See [here](#) for more information.

Coal and gas - Coal and unconventional gas (coal seam gas, shale gas and tight gas) mining is making global warming worse, destroying valuable farmland, damaging our precious water resources and putting pressure on regional towns. The Greens are committed to:

- no new coal or unconventional gas mining approvals
- the right for farmers and other landholders to say no to coal and unconventional gas on their land
- protection of our precious water resources including the Murray-Darling and Great Artesian Basins from overuse or contamination by coal and unconventional gas mining
- independent measurement of methane emissions from unconventional gas so we can understand how climate polluting these fossil fuels really are.

See [here](#) for more information.



> THE OLD PARTIES ARE FAILING OUR PRECIOUS PLACES AND SPECIES

In six years of government Labor has failed to deliver for the environment. They have approved every coal and coal seam gas project that has been applied for, they failed to properly protect the ancient Tarkine rainforests, and they failed to press pause on huge industrial port developments in the Reef despite the World Heritage Committee's significant concerns.

Labor signed up to the agenda of big business to have the final say on Australia's most environmentally destructive projects given away by from the national government to state governments, only to be howled down by experts and the community alike. If state governments had sole control of national environment law in the past, the Franklin River would be dammed, there would be oil rigs in the Great Barrier Reef, cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park, and Traveston Dam would have gone ahead.

While the community uproar led Labor to put this proposal on ice, they consistently refused to work with the Greens to Abbott-proof our national environment laws by outlawing any hand off of approval powers to state governments. These Greens amendments, motions and legislation would have ensured that responsibility for protecting our most vulnerable species and wild places from the most damaging developments remained with the federal environment minister. The big parties voted against our moves.

The Coalition is now promising to deliver big business' destructive agenda of having state governments in total control of our nationally important environmental assets. While they claim it is to remove delay and duplication, there is no empirical evidence of any federal excessive regulatory burden or duplication or delay – the Coalition's real intention is to significantly weaken environmental protection.

The Labor Government has also slashed \$470 million in critical funding from the Biodiversity Fund.

Mr Abbott's so called Green Army is bad social policy, and is a smokescreen for Mr Abbott's dangerous and broad reaching anti-environment agenda.

Abbott's commitment to scrap the carbon price will mean more extreme weather like droughts, floods and storms will cost our communities and our environment for literally centuries. Scrapping the carbon price also means scrapping the Biodiversity Fund – the loss of almost a billion dollars to help communities across Australia help regenerate our landscape.

It's clear the old parties will not do what it takes to protect Australia's environment: time and again they prioritise short term business interests over what's needed to stop our biodiversity crisis.

Only the Greens can be trusted to stand up for our environment and to protect the places and the species that are too precious to lose.

> WE CAN AFFORD TO PROTECT OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Greens' election platform, including all our environmental policy initiatives, will be fully costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office, and all spending will be balanced by revenue measures.

Australia can afford to care for our environment – and the Greens will stand up to make sure it happens.



STATE OF THE ARTS ENRICHING AUSTRALIA

The Greens' plan to secure a vibrant future for the arts

Live music, exhibitions, literature, performances – they enrich our lives. With the constant build up of day-to-day pressures, we need them more than ever. The Greens have a plan to reward those artists who reward all of us.

You can't put a price on culture, but creating and promoting culture has a price. The arts both drive and challenge us. But when artists – emerging or established alike – struggle to make ends meet, their ability to make thought-provoking, toe-tapping or visually dazzling work suffers. When this happens, our society is less enriched as a result. The Greens are committed to promoting our artists and their work.

> A CREATIVE ECONOMY

The Australian Greens believe that a vibrant future for Australia's performing arts will involve both the traditional arts, which enrich us and have provided so much to our culture for centuries, and a newer, more open approach to cultural policy, which brings arts into every aspect of our lives. The Greens' arts policies focus on providing support for artists, encouraging innovation in the arts and taking the arts to the community.

The Greens vision for a smart and cutting-edge economy will require artists to guide us through the transition to a clean, prosperous and caring future. To make this happen, we need to do more to support artists and their work.

To support jobs in the arts, the Greens will:

- Establish a \$3 million a year scheme to enable payments to be made to those performing or exhibiting their works.
- Ensure up to \$10 million a year for artists to take their performances or projects on tour around the country and overseas.
- Assist touring companies to raise money through donations by removing the 'in Australia' rule for tax purposes.
- Support the development of cutting-edge but risky and costly ventures like new festivals or social enterprises through a \$5 million a year *Arts Research and Development Fund*.
- Expand on programs that provide business training and financial support to those just starting out in their artistic trade.

> PAYING ARTISTS

Despite the high value of art, rarely does it provide a high income. Many artists would just be happy to break even after spending money on equipment, materials, transport and venue hire. The Greens want to take the pressures off artists by making it easier to earn a living wage from their work.

To promote creativity and employment around the country, the Greens will invest \$3 million a year into a fund to pay artist's fees for their public art works. This could be when an artist lends their work for a non-selling exhibition or when a local shop gets local artists to play music or display art works.

These payments would be made from 1 July 2014 in recognition of the value provided to the broader public, without the artist themselves having to solely bear the costs. Artists' fees should cover payment for the creation or installation of art, for labour as well as material and service costs. Artists should also be remunerated for lectures or talks they provide in connection with their art.

> HELPING ARTISTS TO "HIT THE ROAD"

It is time-consuming and expensive for an artist to take their project on tour and into a community. The Greens take pride in our artists and want to show them off to new audiences right around the country and internationally.

Increased funding for a touring will ensure a criss-crossing network of shows, exhibitions and performances right across the country and in pursuit of global export markets.

The Greens will increase funding for *Playing Australia*, to administer a greater level of touring grants. We will lift the fund by \$2 million per year from 1 July 2014 until it reaches a threshold of \$10 million when it will be indexed annually. *Playing Australia* currently receives \$6.8 million. This funding



model is supported by the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association, the Australian Major Performing Arts Group and Live Music Australia.

Such a fund would particularly assist artists from regional areas to find new audiences, as well as attract artists into their regions. For more details on what the Greens will do for regional artists, see the Greens' *Creative Regions* policy.

Touring arts productions also creates jobs for the longer term – allowing companies to employ cast and crew for many months rather than just a few weeks.

To assist touring companies to grow their businesses and employ more staff through philanthropic sources, the Greens intend to remove touring arts companies from the 'in Australia' rule from 1 July 2014. This would remove the current barrier to organisations becoming an income tax exempt entity and attract greater private donations.

Our policy has been costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office with its cost listed as 'a minimal amount close to zero.' The Greens see no reason why this culture and jobs enhancing package shouldn't be enacted immediately.

> SUPPORTING THE CUTTING EDGE

Every sector of our society needs innovation to survive and thrive and the arts sector is no exception. However, just like in the sciences or technology development, many experiments will fail before the society-changing breakthrough. There is very little acknowledgement of this in arts funding, despite the role the Australia Council has to play in supporting innovation, experimentation and risk being underscored in its recent Review.

Not only are there risks in the type of art that is developed, but there are also risks involved if a smaller arts body wants to team up with another collaborator on a project. The best ideas come when great minds get together, so any barriers preventing this from occurring should be removed.

The Greens propose an *Arts Research and Development Fund*, with an initial \$5 million allocation per year for three years from 1 July 2013, to support new Australian work, risk-taking work and truly innovative social artistic ventures. This is in line with recommendations by the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association, the Australian Major Performing Arts Group and Live Music Australia.

The competitive grants program would support ventures as diverse as:

- performing arts in community development and social enterprise, such as Big hArt which is operating in indigenous communities in the NT and disadvantaged communities in north west Tasmania;

- providing access to space, resources and mentoring within Major Performing Arts Groups to small companies for the partnering of specific innovative projects; and
- major innovative production concepts that need support for creative work before being pitched as festival events and supported by the ongoing and highly successful *Major Festivals Initiative*.

This new fund will incorporate an expanded *Interconnections* program, the successful grants program which brings together major companies with smaller groups to collaborate on new works. *Interconnections* is currently funded at \$120,000 for 2012/13. This will be more than doubled to \$300,000 as part of the *Arts Research and Development Fund*, with a specific focus on innovation and touring successful collaborations.

> TURNING TRAINING INTO A CAREER

If you want to establish a lifetime career in the creative industries, the odds are well and truly stacked against you. Artists need greater access to programs that support them at those crucial times when they are transitioning out of education and finding their feet in the professional community.

To create life-long employment in the arts, the Greens want to see a further \$3 million over three years invested in the ArtStart program to help new arts graduates learn business skills to turn their passion into a career.

The government's recent cultural policy announcement did not do enough to transform arts training into arts careers. The Greens believe that the services and support offered through the ArtStart program should be enhanced. An extra million dollars a year will do so much to help new artists acquire the skills, resources and equipment necessary to forge their own sustainable career. The Greens want to see this happen.

> OTHER PARTIES

In its recently announced cultural policy, the government left out these types of measures that will take the pressure off struggling artists to make a living. The government lacks the courage to properly tax the billionaire mining and banking industry to raise the money necessary to care for those who inspire our communities like artists.

Meanwhile, Tony Abbott and the Coalition want to have greater ministerial control over art funding decisions so that they can gag artworks they don't like. John Howard did this against several projects that sought touring funding and portrayed their refugee treatment negatively.ⁱ

ⁱ David Marr 2005. Theatre Under Howard. Philip Parsons Memorial Lecture on the Performing Arts, October 9, 2005, Sydney.



YOUNG AND EMERGING ARTISTS BETWEEN A ROCK AND AN ART PLACE

The Greens' plan to help creative young Australians forge lifelong careers

The Greens want to ease the pressures on musicians, writers and artists to earn a living wage from their work. After all, creativity enriches everyone's lives. The Greens have a plan to reward those creative Australians who reward all of us.

In our music industry which saw 42 million attendances (outside major ticketed events), where \$1.2 billion was spent, the normal annual wage for a musician is a mere \$8,100.ⁱ Meanwhile the average visual artist will work 42 hours a week for \$35,000 a year.ⁱⁱ

Many artists are forced into poverty and have a hard time juggling their artistic endeavours with the need to supplement their income through other work. Such pressures mean they might give up their artistic aspirations altogether.

The Greens want another option: plentiful, viable careers in music, design, photography, craft, sculpture, paint, illustration, dance, performance and literature.

> ENDURING CAREERS

Having a strong, creative arts sector will spill over into all areas of Australian society. After all, creative thinkers are the ones who challenge the standard way of doing things; they are the ones who discover new ways of doing things better.

In a globalised world where original innovations are what will propel a nation forward, we need to foster Australia's creative talent who are essential for our society and economy to thrive. By supporting them, we are supporting us all.

The Greens want our young and emerging artists to have greater opportunities to forge a lifelong career in their area of passion.

To support young and emerging artists to earn a living wage the Greens will:

- **Allow artistic activities that provide community benefits to be eligible for Centrelink mutual obligation requirements. This policy has been independently costed at \$12m a year.**
- **Establish a \$3 million scheme to enable payments for artists performing, exhibiting or speaking about their works.**

- **Invest an additional \$3 million into the ArtStart program that provides business training and financial support to those just starting out in their artistic trade.**
- **Restore the Parliament's arts procurement policy to require preference for point of sale acquisitions from young and emerging Australian artists.**
- **Encourage creative Australians to start their own small business by additional tax breaks.**



> ARTISTS' INCOME SECURITY

Back in 2002, the *Myer Report on Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft* proposed to the government that artistic endeavours be recognised in the social security system.ⁱⁱⁱ Before it was elected in 2007, Labor promised, but never delivered a policy to change the relationship between social security and the arts.

Given the unpredictability of income from creative work and the lack of job stability, the Greens understand that many artists need income support to survive at various times in their careers. The *"Don't give up your day job"* report found that while around a third of artists face periods of unemployment, of those around 44% do not apply for income support.^{iv} Just like a business, artists invest their own money to cover materials, running a vehicle and acquiring work spaces. This reality isn't acknowledged by our social security system.



At an annual cost of \$12 million, artists actively engaged in recognised art programs or work that will enhance their employment prospects will be recognised as part of the mutual obligation requirements by Centrelink.

This will help supplement artist's incomes at those crucial times when an artist is establishing their trade or in between projects.

> ARTIST FEES

Despite the high value of art, rarely does it provide a high income. Many artists would just be happy to break even after spending their money on equipment, materials, transport and venue hire. The Greens want to take the pressures off artists by making it easier to earn a living wage from their work.

To promote creativity and employment around the country, the Greens have set aside a \$3 million a year fund to pay artist's fees for their public art works. This could be when an artist lends their work for a non-selling exhibition or when a local shop gets local artists to play music or display art works.

These payments would be made in recognition of the value provided to the broader public, without the artist themselves having to solely bear the costs. Payments would be made on the basis of labour, material and services used, helping emerging artists to establish their work in the community.

> TURNING TRAINING INTO A CAREER

If you want to establish a lifetime career in the creative industries, the odds are well and truly stacked against you. Artists need greater access to programs that support them at those crucial times when they are transitioning out of education and finding their feet in the professional community.

To address the business skills gap that can be a barrier to many artists creating life-long employment through freelancing or an entrepreneurial project, the Greens want to see a further \$3 million invested in the ArtStart program over three years to help new arts graduates learn business skills to transform their passion into a career.

The government's recent cultural policy announcement did not do enough to transform arts training into arts careers. The Greens believe that the services and support offered through the ArtStart program should be enhanced. An extra million dollars a year will do so much to help new artists acquire the skills, resources and equipment necessary to forge their own sustainable career. The Greens want our country to share in the benefits that self-sustaining artistic careers provide for us all.

> RECREATING PARLIAMENT

The Parliament of Australia is a significant purchaser of artworks with over \$300,000 spent each year on new acquisitions.^v The Greens see the Parliament in a unique position to be a giver of opportunity for young and emerging Australian artists

The Greens want to reinstate the Australian Parliament's procurement guidelines to acquire artworks from young and emerging visual artists. Before the guidelines were changed in 2004, the policy required preference to be made for point of sale acquisitions from new and emerging Australian artists. We want this procurement policy restored.

The change came about because some - more conservative - Members of Parliament thought the collection was 'modern mish-mash'.^{vi} However, the Greens know that it is those artworks that sit ahead of the curve that will hold the most value in the future. This policy will have no additional cost as it is simply a reprioritising of existing resources.

> SMALL CREATIVE BUSINESSES

Many artists or those immersed in the arts industry use small businesses as the vehicle in which to trade. The Greens policy to cut the tax rate for small companies and increase the instant asset write off will promote the vitality of art businesses and the innovations they provide.

Our policies will free up extra income, promote further investment in clever artistic business and enable them to reach new audiences.^{vii}

The Greens believe innovation is central to the development of the economy and we recognise that small businesses perch themselves on the cutting edge, especially in digital and design sectors. Small businesses account for about a third of research in high-tech industries and are more agile in innovating and improving efficiency.^{viii} Supporting small creative businesses as trailblazers allows the wider economy innovate and develop.

Image provided courtesy of Damian Cazaly

ⁱ The Australia Council *Artfacts – Music*. Note adjusted 2007 income to 2011 music sale statistics.

<http://artfacts.australiacouncil.gov.au/industry#post-548>

ⁱⁱ The Australia Council *Artfacts – Visual Arts*.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rupert Myer *Report of the Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry* 2002 pp. 114-119.

^{iv} David Throsby & Virginia Hollister *Don't give up your day job: an economic study of professional artists in Australia* 2003 p.43

^v Department Parliamentary Services *11-12 Annual Report* p.48

^{vi} Betty Churcher *Review of Parliament House Art Collection* 2013.

Attachment C.

^{vii} <http://www.greens.org.au/small-business>

^{viii} Ellis Connelly, David Norman and Tim West, 'Small business: an economic overview', Reserve Bank of Australia, 2012, pp 3-4.



COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY AN UNTAPPED RESOURCE

The Greens' plan to give communities control over their energy future

People everywhere care about climate change and want to be part of the solution. Community owned renewable energy cuts pollution, creates local jobs, lowers power prices and gives people control over their energy future.

Community-owned renewable energy is already powering many parts of the world. The global wind power industry was born in Denmark out of farming communities coming together to develop and invest in local sources of renewable energy. Similarly in Germany, many rural villages jointly own small run-of-the-river hydro systems or bio-energy. In the United States, apartment dwellers without roof space invest in solar panels installed in parks and on community buildings.

Australia has examples of successful community owned renewable energy projects, and there is a track-record of community-owned infrastructure in other sectors (e.g. dairy farming, irrigation), but the enormous potential for communities to come together and take charge of their own energy production has barely been tapped.

Community-owned renewable energy allows farmers, city residents and local communities to invest in clean energy with benefits such as:

- Sustainable regional development, with local jobs and profits staying in the area.
- Greater community participation in the project – improving agreement about site installations.
- Access for groups (especially renters for example) that are unable to benefit from their own renewable energy.
- Community support for renewable energy through direct involvement, experience and ownership.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and local air pollution.

> UNLEASHING COMMUNITY ENERGY

The Australian Greens will help overcome a range of barriers by creating a \$100 million Australian Community Renewable Energy Program.

Our Community Renewable Energy Program will:

- **Help local groups access specialist expertise** in the early stages of a community energy project, from feasibility studies to project management;
- **Help communities find finance for their project** and negotiate power purchasing agreements to make sure their energy is used.

This seed-funding program will open up the opportunity **for hundreds of thousands of Australians to own and benefit from a wide range of renewable energy opportunities** – from rural areas with good wind resources to community solar parks for inner-city renters.

The program will allocate \$100 million over five years from 1 July 2014 to the existing Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) to run a competitive tender program supporting the development of community-owned renewable energy projects through feasibility grants, project management and specialist expertise to a point where they have a solid business model and are ready for community investment.

This will open up the chance for hundreds of thousands of Australians to own and benefit from a wide range of clean energy opportunities.



Once community groups demonstrate that their project is feasible, ARENA could work cooperatively with the existing Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) to assist them to source concessional finance. Both ARENA and the CEFC would be able to assist individual proposals as well as clusters of community renewable energy projects.

> OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS

A recent 'Expert Review' by the CEFCⁱ noted community and regional generation projects could play an important role in building renewable energy capabilities and in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

However, there are major barriers to community renewable energy projects. For example, it can be very challenging for communities to raise the upfront capital prior to planning approval as they are viewed as high-risk by debt providers and the scale of capital requirements is too small for institutional investors like superannuation funds.

The CEFC expert review noted:

"They require early stage development work and lack a strong balance sheet and a performance history to attract the necessary bank financial support. Community based projects may need a package of assistance where the project initially progresses through local community efforts and seeks to attract grant funding. At the later stage of project development, when the community organisation is ready to apply for bank finance, the CEFC could work with a financial institution to aggregate a number of community projects."

Hepburn Community Wind Park

The Hepburn Community Wind Park is Australia's first community owned wind farm, near Daylesford in Victoria. The 4.1 MW wind farm comprises two turbines and started operating in 2011.

Red Energy, a retailer owned by Snowy Hydro, purchases the output of the wind farm. A proportion of the revenue from the sale of electricity, plus a contribution from Red Energy, goes to community projects through the Hepburn Wind Community Fund. Per turbine, the fund is the most generous community fund of any wind farm in Australia and is projected to provide well over \$1m to local sustainability projects over the next 25 years.

The project's financing comprises:

- capital from its ~2000 members— \$9,640,225
- Sustainability Victoria RESF grant — \$975,000
- Regional Development Victoria RIDF grant — \$750,000
- Bendigo and Adelaide Bank loan (10 years, not fully drawn) — \$3,100,000
- a debt guarantee from Embark Australia — \$1,000,000

> OUR AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM

Like all early-stage technology, seed funding is required to demonstrate and kick-start a community renewable energy sector.

The objective of the \$100 million Australian Community Renewable Energy program is to develop a pipeline of many community renewable energy projects of different scales, technologies and ownership models for the CEFC to aggregate, provide concessional finance and negotiate loans with banks.

The program would work as follows:

- The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) would be allocated \$20 million each year for five years for the Australian Community Renewable Energy Program. Unspent funds could be rolled into future years, noting that ARENA will be in place until 2020.
- Community groups would apply for funding from ARENA through rounds of competitive tenders.
- Staged funding would be provided upon completion of project milestones from pre-feasibility through to planning approval.
- The program would also fund external service providers to support projects with technical expertise and project management support.
- Once project feasibility has been demonstrated ARENA could collaborate with the CEFC to locate finance. In addition the CEFC could, for example, provide power purchase agreements. The CEFC Expert Review noted they could take on some 'electricity price risk'. Community Renewable Energy projects are low-risk as they generate small amounts of power, a fact which also makes it extremely difficult for them to negotiate a power purchase agreement with electricity retailers.

> OTHER PARTIES

Neither of the old parties is prepared to commit to facilitating the development of a thriving community renewable energy sector.

The Coalition in particular has created significant uncertainty for clean energy investors.

Tony Abbott claims to support the Renewable Energy Target but refuses to answer the crucial question: will the Coalition support the current RET for 41,000 gigawatt hours of clean energy by 2020?

Further, the Coalition has stated that they want to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and dishonour the contracts it signs with investors.



> THE GREENS' 100% CLEAN ENERGY ROADMAP

The Greens' are the only party with a plan to get to a 100% renewable Australia. We know that much more must be done to encourage clean energy investment in Australia.

While the old parties chop and change their plans on pollution pricing and clean energy, the Greens' 100% Clean Energy Roadmap sets out a framework to build an Australia powered by the wind, sun and waves.

The Roadmap has three pillars:

- **Power Australia with at least 90% renewable energy by 2030**, by increasing the Renewable Energy Target. This will give investors the certainty and stability they need to plan.
- **Increase Clean Energy Finance to \$30 billion**, \$3 billion per year for ten years, to drive more change and private investment.
- **Frame a national energy grid** to make planning clean energy possible.

The Greens also have detailed plans to:

- **Make sure solar owners are paid a fair price** for their clean power.
- **Put downward pressure on energy bills** by saving energy and reforming our tired grid.
- **Connect clean energy hotspots** in our regions to the national energy grid.
- **Help energy-intensive farmers install clean energy** to power their operations, and save money & energy with efficiency.
- **Invest more in preparing for extreme weather events**, funded with a \$2/tonne levy on thermal coal exports.

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation

ARENA's objectives are to provide financial assistance for:

- *the research, development, demonstration, deployment and commercialisation of renewable energy and related technologies*
- *the storage and sharing of knowledge and information about renewable energy technologies.*

ARENA is an independent statutory authority; no Government should dictate how it should allocate its funds. The Greens' will reverse Labor's budget cuts to ARENA and protect the CEFC from an Abbott Government.

The CEFC's objective is to "accelerate Australia's transformation towards a more competitive economy in a carbon constrained world, by acting as a catalyst to increase investment in the clean energy sector."

It has guaranteed financing of \$10 billion over five years and it will operate like a traditional financier, working collaboratively with co-financiers and project proponents to seek ways to secure financing solutions for the clean energy sector. By working with private sector co-financiers, the CEFC aims to both leverage the total amount of funding available and to enhance the expertise and capacity of the financial sector to fund clean energy.

ⁱ<http://www.cefcexpertreview.gov.au/content/Content.aspx?doc=report/default.htm>



STOPPING SURVEILLANCE OVERREACH WE ARE CITIZENS NOT SUSPECTS

The Greens' plan to defend your privacy and rights online

Our online privacy and rights are compromised by widespread warrantless surveillance. The Greens believe that the benefits of the internet can be available with personal privacy and civil rights intact but only if we balance freedom and security online, otherwise we risk losing both.

The Greens care about your privacy and rights online, campaigning with a broad coalition of organisations and the business community to successfully defeat the government's technically unfeasible and politically questionable mandatory internet filter.

As much as it is the Government's role to promote collective protection against identity theft, online crime and acts of political violence, Australian citizens have a legitimate expectation that the government will defend their democratic right to privacy, freedom of expression and freedom from arbitrary acts of state coercion.

This is especially the case when the blurring of terrorism with journalism, civil disobedience and healthy dissent has seen our security agencies and police forces deployed against climate change demonstrators, journalists, the occupy movement, anti-whaling campaigners and whistleblowers.

> GET A WARRANT

Law enforcement and intelligence agencies need a warrant to enter our homes. They should also need one to access our telecommunications data. Because Australian law enforcement agencies were granted access to personal information about Australians 293,501 times throughout the 2011-12 year, without obtaining a warrant or having any judicial oversight, the Greens introduced the "Get a Warrant" bill into the parliament.

> NO TO DATA RETENTION

The government proposed to retain data on all Australians for up to two years. Retaining all 'metadata' for all Australians, for years means that detailed locational data collected by phones, as well as information about every single social or business interaction online would be captured. This proposal was recently rejected by a parliamentary committee that received over 5,500 submissions, 98.9 per cent of which were opposed to the data retention proposal.

> LIFE IN THE PRISM

While the old parties pretend nothing is happening, the world is in uproar about the US National Security Agency using the PRISM backdoor program to conduct warrantless surveillance through the servers of companies including Apple, Microsoft, Google and Facebook.

The Greens have demanded transparency about our government's complicity in the collection of private emails, audio and video chats, photographs, documents, connection logs and location data. The old parties wouldn't even support the Attorney General making a statement on the vulnerability of government information and Australians' legislated privacy protections.

In light of the PRISM scandal and the ongoing surveillance overreach, we need an overhaul of the information governments collect and share about us.

> THE GREENS' PLAN

- **Include security agencies under the Telecommunications Interception and Access Act reporting requirements**
- **Require Mandatory Data Breach notifications by industry and government**
- **Require IT providers to inform customers of agreements to provide information to governments**
- **A Five Eyes agreement protecting privacy of citizens**
- **Bring security agencies within the ambit of the FOI Act**

Administrative costs for government to implement these policies will be absorbed by the relevant agencies, with a one off allocation of \$0.2 million for educational advertising.



> INCLUDING SECURITY AGENCIES UNDER THE TIA ACT

Every year requests for telecommunications information and intercepts are increasing. The 2011-12 Telecommunications and Interception Access Act Annual Report showed that telecommunications data had been requested 240,000 times and the following year, 293,501 times.

ASIO and other intelligence and security agencies currently are not accountable through regular reporting under the Telecommunications Interception and Access Act. The Greens believe it is appropriate to include security agencies under the Telecommunications Interception and Access Act reporting requirements, similar to the reporting required from law enforcement agencies. Including them would improve accountability.

> MANDATORY DATA BREACH NOTIFICATION

The Australian Greens believe that if a data breach occurs, the victim of that breach must be notified in order to minimise the harm caused and to restore the individual's control over their personal information.

The Greens support mandatory data breach legislation and propose to strengthen the *Privacy Amendments (Privacy Alerts) Bill 2013*, stating that mandatory data breach notifications would benefit both Australian consumers and industry stakeholders.

> REQUIRE IT PROVIDERS TO INFORM CUSTOMERS OF THEIR AGREEMENTS WITH GOVERNMENTS

IT providers and carriage or carriage service providers including offshore companies operating in Australia should be required to advise customers of any agreements with foreign or domestic governments that may lead to or have led to the provision of either content or telecommunications data to government agencies.

These companies should be required to identify the agency, the date of the agreement, the relevant documentation and any follow-up documentation such as compliance reports, plus an annual report of how often information has been provided.

> FIVE EYES AGREEMENT TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF CITIZENS

The governments USA, Canada, Australia, UK and NZ have an agreement to share information AUSCANNZUKUS, also known as Five Eyes.

The Greens believe that an agreement is needed among the five eyes cluster of countries sharing intelligence that any information held by the all partners on nationals of the other countries be stored only within the borders of that country and unless directly related to a national security operation or criminal trial, accessible only with the approval of the host government, with an annual report of how many requests for access have been made.

> BRING SECURITY AGENCIES UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

The 2011 reform of the FOI laws improved some aspects of the FOI framework in Australia but also opened major loopholes.

The Greens believe that ASIO, ASIS and others should be returned to the ambit of the FOI Act and the interpretation of national security as a ground for refusal FOI requests should be reviewed and narrowed.

The internet is the greatest information sharing tool and library in history. The democratisation of communications is leading to information sharing, scientific and technical innovation and the formation of a global civil society and that is extraordinarily valuable. The Greens believe that its potentials should be realised and will continue to resist it being transformed into an electronic panopticon surveillance tool.



ACCURATE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING FOR FOOD

Polling consistently shows that overwhelmingly¹ Australians want clear and accurate labelling to help them identify and buy Australian-grown food.

However current food labelling laws are confusing and give a false impression. They have been adapted to packaged food from standards and regulations designed for products other than food. As a result a packaged food can legally declare it is 'Made in Australia' when in fact very little of the food it contains is Australian grown.

Given the strong preference from consumers to purchase Australian grown food and support Australian farmers, the current labelling laws confer a competitive advantage to imported processed foods as they can be presented as 'Made in Australia' as a result of manufacturing processes.

Australian growers, farmers and consumer advocates have long called for reform of our food labelling laws to ensure that Australians can make an informed choice in a fair and transparent marketplace. Despite the Blewett Review into Food Labelling (2011)² supporting this position, neither the Labor Government nor the Coalition have moved to provide transparent and accurate country of origin food labelling standards.

The Greens Proposal

The Australian Greens have introduced a bill into the Parliament to respond to the needs of Australian consumers.

Our *Competition and Consumer Act Amendment (Australian Food Labelling) Bill 2012* amends the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* to create a new stand-alone, food-specific country of origin labelling framework. Food labels are to be based on ingoing weight of ingredients as recommended by the Blewett Review.

The bill specifies the following standards for country of origin food labelling:

- 'Made of Australian Ingredients': at least 90% by weight (excluding water) of all ingredients of Australian origin.
- 'Grown in Australia'; for foods grown in Australia.
- Removes the use of 'Made in' as a stand-alone claim in reference to Australian foods.
- Prohibits the use of 'Product of Australia' for foods to avoid confusion as this standard is also applied to non-food items.
- Retains existing mandatory labelling requirements for fresh meat and vegetables

What is the problem?

Most Australians expect that terms like 'Made in Australia' on food products mean that the food is from Australian growers. However under current laws 'Made in Australia' and 'Australian Made' can legally be used where the food in question has been transformed, and 50% or more of the transformation costs were incurred here.

¹ See for example the 2009 Roy Morgan Community Attitudes survey – 89% of responders believed it was important or very important that the fresh food they buy is Australian grown, and 82% believed the same regarding packaged food - <http://www.australianmade.com.au/assets/Uploads/2009-CONSUMER-SURVEY-LOGO-AND-BUYING-AUSSIE.pdf>

² <http://www.foodlabellingreview.gov.au/internet/foodlabelling/publishing.nsf/content/home>

In other words, the terms 'Made in Australia' and 'Australian Made' aren't about the origin of the food content, they are largely about the process it underwent to get produced and packaged.

An example given by CHOICE: a package of glacé cherries that says "Australian Made and Owned" on the front. On the back it says "Made in Australia from imported and local products." The cherries are imported, but are glacé in Australia. Therefore the claims are legal – the company is Australian owned; and by law the glacé process meets the 'transformation' definition 50% or more of the costs of that process were incurred in Australia. But the bottom line for the shopper is they probably think they are buying cherries grown in Australia, and they aren't.

To make things more confusing, companies can also use qualified claims regarding country of origin that specifically refer to ingredients. These are:

Made in Australia from local and imported ingredients- which means the product was processed in Australia and there is more locally sourced ingredients than imported ones; or

Made in Australia from imported and local ingredients – which usually means the product was processed in Australia – although the majority of the ingredients are imported.

Little wonder then that when CHOICE surveyed its members, only half actually understood what the current terms 'Australian Made' and 'Made in Australia' mean, and 90% said that country of origin labelling needs to be clearer.

The Greens' Response

The Greens had a bill before the previous parliament which called for only those products 100% made in Australia to use the made in Australia claim. We have taken on board feedback from the Senate inquiry that the 100% threshold was too onerous.

We have considered the recent Blewett Review and accept its key recommendation of basing country of origin labelling standards on the dry weight of ingredients.

However the Report's recommendation for a graduated scale of labelling based on percentage of Australian content simply replaces one complicated system that confounds consumers with another.

The Australian Greens are proposing a simple and clear premium claim which allows consumers to quickly and easily identify truly Australian grown food.



FAIRER, CHEAPER, CLEANER FIXING AUSTRALIA'S ENERGY SYSTEM

The Greens' plan for an independent Energy Savings Agency

Our electricity system is in bad shape. Power bills have skyrocketed in recent years, mainly because of unnecessary investment in new poles and wires. Meanwhile, huge opportunities to save energy and reduce 'peak' electricity demand have been ignored.

The old parties know that these problems exist, but they lack the courage to stand up to the big energy companies and State Governments to take cost pressure off Australians and cut pollution.

MAKING OUR ENERGY SYSTEM FAIRER, CHEAPER & CLEANER

These problems are complex but we need a cut-through solution. That's why we're announcing our plan for an independent Energy Savings Agency, which would work to fix Australia's energy network.

The Energy Savings Agency will have three priorities:

- **Help Australians generate their own power with a fair price for clean energy they produce**, for example from rooftop solar systems.
- **Bring down power bills by achieving \$1 billion in energy savings every year**, comprising of avoided network investment and customer energy savings.
- **Design a National Energy Efficiency Scheme**, expanding three existing state-based schemes to save energy and money at home and work.

The Energy Savings Agency will make Australia's energy system fairer, cheaper and cleaner, and cut the pollution that drives global warming. It will bypass major barriers to a better system, and provide independent information, analysis, advocacy and financial support for solutions, such as:

Around a quarter of a power bill pays for infrastructure that caters to peak demand for just 40 hours a year.

CUTTING POWER BILLS BY CUTTING PEAK DEMAND

Demand for electricity in peak periods has led to unnecessary spending on 'poles and wires', driving up power bills. Big energy companies and several State Governments want to maximise profit from their generators and distribution systems. Selling less electricity is not in their interest. That is why reform of the electricity market is too slow and why intervention is essential.

The Energy Savings Agency will urgently reduce the growth in peak electricity demand by negotiating ambitious Peak Demand Management targets with electricity network businesses, to achieve the target of \$1 billion per annum in energy savings.

To help achieve this, the Energy Savings Agency will manage a \$400 million per annum Demand Management Fund. The Fund will quickly but cost-effectively moderate peak demand by purchasing activities from third parties that reduce peak demand, either by using less energy during peak hours, or by shifting energy use to off-peak periods.

PAYING AUSTRALIANS FAIRLY FOR THEIR CLEAN ENERGY

More than one million Australians have already installed solar panels on their homes and businesses. Still more are taking control of their energy with community renewables, wind microturbines and more. In the current system, the big energy companies are lobbying furiously against attempts to pay them fairly and are often refusing to grant access to the grid, because they have a strong incentive to discourage independent generation.

The Energy Savings Agency will recommend the genuinely fair prices that electricity retailers should offer for distributed power generation. The Government will then be required to either compel all electricity retailers to offer at least the rate recommended by the Agency, or publish a comprehensive statement of reasons why they have failed to do so.



Senator Christine Milne
Leader of the Australian Greens

Energy Savings Agency: The Greens' plan to fix Australia's energy system

Our electricity system is in bad shape. Power bills have skyrocketed in recent years, mainly because of unnecessary investment in new poles and wires. Meanwhile, huge opportunities to save energy and reduce 'peak' electricity demand have been ignored.

The old parties know these problems exist, but they lack the courage to stand up to the big energy companies and State Governments to take cost pressure off Australians and cut pollution. Make no mistake, several State Governments want to maximise profit from their generators and distribution systems. Selling less electricity is not in their interest. That is why reform of the electricity market is too slow and why intervention is essential.

In order to reduce electricity bills and greenhouse gas emissions Australia must:

- a) Help energy consumers generate their own power with 'distributed' generators, such as from rooftop solar systems.
- b) Reduce electricity demand 'peaks', to avoid further unnecessary investment in 'poles and wires'.
- c) Improve energy efficiency, a huge opportunity for consumers and business to reduce costs.

To drive progress aggressively in each of these areas the Greens will create a new independent Energy Savings Agency. Its objectives will be to lower electricity bills, cut greenhouse gas emissions and improve the efficiency of energy supply and use. It will pursue these objectives by the provision of information, analysis, advocacy and financial support. By removing barriers to cheaper and cleaner energy options it will create a more balanced and efficient energy market that prioritises the long term economic, social and environmental interests of Australians.

Key problems to be addressed by the Energy Savings Agency

a) Electricity wholesalers, retailers and networks are hindering the growth of 'distributed' generators

Distributed generators, including the one million roof mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, can reduce peak energy demand events and reduce the need for investment in new 'poles and wires'. They can also constrain wholesale prices by changing the 'merit order', since solar and wind have low marginal costs of production compared even to coal. This in turn is reducing the emissions profile of Australia's electricity industry.

Distributed generation is a 'disruptive technology'; it is typically modular, rapidly deployed, increasingly cost-effective and cuts across the established business models of electricity networks and retailers like mobile phones did to telecommunications. A multi-billion dollar market in distributed generation is rapidly emerging.

Electricity network operators and retailers often have a vested interest in hindering the growth of distributed generation. Owners of distributed generators frequently do not receive a fair price or conditions for electricity they export to the grid and face barriers to connecting to the electricity grid.



Senator Christine Milne Leader of the Australian Greens

While the peak period for PV generation is not the same as the period of peak grid demand (3-5 pm in summer, slightly later in winter), there is some overlap; in addition PV systems can be mounted to face the north-west to west to ensure that generation more closely matches consumption; and advances in small-scale storage technologies are likely to make it easier for households and businesses to meet their own energy needs on-site. Retailers are reacting to this trend by increasing fixed charges and by advocating for lower or no feed-in tariffs.

All the PV industry is asking for is a level playing field. If PV owners received a fair price for the energy they produce and are not unreasonably prevented from accessing the electricity grid, the industry will thrive.

b) Peak demand in driving increasing electricity costs

The growth in electricity demand during peak periods — which has grown almost twice as fast as average demand over the past decade — is a particularly strong driver behind the record growth in electricity prices. 25 per cent of the average electricity bill reflects the cost of building poles and wires used just 40 hours of the year — akin to building a 40-lane Sydney Harbour Bridge for a couple of annual traffic snarls.

Electricity demand management (i.e. either using less energy during peak hours, or by shifting the time of energy use to off-peak periods) is often a cheaper alternative to addressing peak demand than building more poles and wires and power stations. However, the incentives for this form of peak demand management are weak. *The Australian Decentralised Energy Roadmap*¹ found that the order of just 7 to 18% of the available peak load management potential has been exploited.

The Roadmap also reported that as much as one-third of the capital expected to be invested in our networks could be avoided by managing peak demand through distributed energy solutions. In the current regulatory period alone (2011-2015), that is equivalent to around \$15 billion of network investment.

It is important to target energy efficiency and peak demand simultaneously: if energy efficiency programs reduce energy consumption without addressing the peak demand problem capital investment in our networks will remain unchanged. Consumers' efforts to curb rising electricity costs will be to no avail.

In conjunction electricity tariffs need to be appropriately framed to ensure that consumers who invest in making energy or peak demand savings are not unduly penalised for their actions, as would occur should the fixed component of network charges be allowed to dominate.

Time is of the essence. The longer we wait to promote demand management, the more money will be wasted on unnecessary infrastructure. However, reform of the national electricity market to support demand management has been painfully slow because the market is dominated by energy utilities that for decades have made billions of dollars by building infrastructure and passing the cost on to consumers. Changes to national electricity policy requires agreement by state, territory and federal governments, and even when successful, changes to national electricity market rules can take two years to develop and come into effect.

As network investment regulation occurs on a five year cycle, it could take many years for consumers to experience the benefit of reform through the existing structures. Urgent, stop-gap measures are therefore required to deliver benefits from peak demand management, while longer-term regulatory reforms are developed and implemented.

c) Efforts to improve energy efficiency are uncoordinated, ad hoc and ineffective

Improving energy efficiency (or 'energy productivity') is not only the fastest way to reduce both our electricity bills, which have rocketed in recent years, but it also reduces greenhouse gas emissions while we do it. McKinsey & Company estimate that by exploiting all cost saving energy efficiency opportunities Australia could to reduce emissions in 2020 by 20 per cent below 1990 levels at no net cost to the economy.²

Australia is one of the least-efficient users of energy in the OECD, and is lagging behind the rest of the world in energy efficiency policy. We have a plethora of weak energy efficiency measures across the country, rather than few strong measures. The National Strategy on Energy Efficiency is underfunded and has failed to properly coordinate energy efficiency policy. A national energy efficiency strategy and reforms to the National Electricity Market could re-direct billions of dollars of unnecessary investment in poles and wires towards cheaper, cleaner alternatives — demand

¹ Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney, 2011.

² This is because the contribution to the economy of the negative cost opportunities is enough to pay for other abatement measures up to a marginal cost of A\$62 per tonne CO₂e, representing 270Mt of abatement. From: McKinsey & Company 2008, An Australian Cost Curve for Greenhouse Gas Reduction, McKinsey Australia Climate Change Initiative.



Senator Christine Milne Leader of the Australian Greens

management, energy efficiency, and renewable energy — with savings for the consumer and environment.

The Government, as part of the Clean Energy Package, committed to expediting the establishment of a National Energy Savings Initiative to replace the state-based energy efficiency trading schemes, but three years on is yet even to complete a Regulatory Impact Statement, let alone to legislate for its introduction.

To address these three challenges the Greens will:

Establish a new independent, expert and well-resourced Energy Savings Agency (ESA) to promote distributed generation, peak demand management and energy efficiency. It will have both policy and program responsibilities as follows:

Policy responsibilities:

1) Formulating recommendations about **fair prices electricity retailers should offer for distributed generation** from a range of sources, including battery storage. Calculating the economic value of electricity exported to the grid is complex and contested. To date this task, at least as far as solar PV is concerned, has been undertaken by entities such as IPART in NSW, Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission and the Queensland Competition Authority. Their approach, however, has been widely criticised as being limited and so unduly conservative as to be unfair to the owners of distributed generators (see box 1).

The recommendation of the ESA should be transparent, specific to particular technology types and could vary by region and/or time of day, noting the value of distributed generation is higher at peak times and in areas of requiring network upgrades. The Government will be required to either implement the recommendations and compel all electricity retailers to offer at least the rate recommended by the ESA or publish comprehensive statement of reasons as to why they were failing to do so.

2) Making recommendations for ambitious **Peak Demand Management targets for electricity network businesses**. Network businesses should be the focus of peak demand targets as they are required to provide infrastructure to meet forecast peak demand, peak demand is a major driver of their costs and investment and network investment has been the largest contributor to rising electricity bills in recent years. Networks businesses are also best placed to identify places and times of current and future constrained capacity of,

and demand on, their networks and the potential for Demand Management. The ESA should develop its recommended targets in consultation with the network businesses, demand management service providers, consumer representatives and other key stakeholders.

This objective is based on a recommendation of the Australian Decentralised Energy Roadmap. The Roadmap proposed the following conservative targets to be delivered within five years:

- \$1 billion p.a. in energy savings (comprising avoided network investment and customer energy savings)
- 3000 MW of peak demand reduction, below business as usual
- 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions avoided.

These targets should be adopted as a clear “collaborative targets”. If networks do not respond adequately to the targets in this form within 18 months, then the ESA would recommend a rule change to ensure the targets become mandatory

3) Developing independent recommendations for **regulatory reform of the National Electricity Market**, including for example, revision of the National Electricity Market Objective (NEO) to include an environmental objective. The NEO is the fundamental driver behind regulatory process in the electricity market. At present, it does not include environmental or greenhouse considerations. As noted by the Total Environment Centre during the recent Senate Inquiry into Electricity Prices:

The current NEO does not support climate and renewable energy policies, and struggles when their implementation appears to conflict with the overarching objectives of the NEM ... This disconnect is apparent, inter alia, in relation to the costs and connection times associated with renewable energy projects at all scales, from humble rooftop PVs to the largest wind farms.

4) Making recommendations for a **national energy efficiency target** and the design of a national energy efficiency trading scheme to achieve it. The scheme will, like the national Renewable Energy Target, create an energy savings obligation on electricity retailers to surrender tradable energy efficiency certificates. The recommendations will be based in part upon the abundance of policy research which has accumulated over more than a decade. The Commonwealth Government will



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be required to either implement the recommendations or publish comprehensive statement of reasons as to why they were failing to do so. The National Energy Efficiency Target could absorb the existing state based schemes in NSW, Victorian and South Australia and be administered by the Clean Energy Regulator.

Program responsibilities:

5) Administering a **Demand Management Fund**. The aim of the Fund will be to cost-effectively moderate peak demand by purchasing activities from third parties that seek to reduce peak demand. The Agency will be able to:

- stand in the market offering to purchase peak energy reductions from network businesses and other Demand Management providers at a predetermined price (linked to the estimated benefits of peak demand reduction); and/or
- conduct periodic requests for bids to achieve peak demand outcomes for each year over a forward time horizon, say every six or twelve months; and/or
- work closely with network businesses and/or demand management operators to fund identified peak demand activities and achieve voluntary targets; and/or
- activate/control purchased demand management actions during wholesale or network peak periods to directly achieve peak demand reductions.

The Demand Management Fund will run for an initial five years, guaranteeing funding of \$400m each year and aiming to achieve at least the collaborative targets described above. This objective is also based on a recommendation of *The Australian Decentralised Energy Roadmap*.

6) Publishing a comprehensive **annual national Energy Savings Review** of the market for energy efficiency, peak demand management and distributed generation. The Review will quantify energy and peak demand savings and costs across all policy and programs in Australia, the value of savings to residential and business consumers, the impact on energy bills and prices, the value of avoided network and generation infrastructure and number of persons employed.

7) **Identifying opportunities and barriers** to energy efficiency, demand management and distributed energy, developing policies and programs to promote uptake and monitoring and reporting on the performance of existing measures. This should include estimating the potential value of both customer savings and avoided infrastructure costs.

8) **Providing Ombudsman services to resolve disputes** between demand management or distributed energy providers on the one hand and energy retailers and network operators on the other. Currently there are some existing State based Energy Ombudsmen but their role is restricted to resolving disputes between energy customers and their providers. The ESPA should also investigate claims that many network operators hinder the process of connecting distributed generators to the grid.

The Energy Savings Agency will be similar to the existing Climate Change Authority in that it will be a highly credible, permanent, independent statutory Agency designed to depoliticise and progress a complex area of reform. It will have a Chair and eight other board members of significant stature, most of whom should have demonstrated expertise in energy efficiency, demand management and distributed generation. It will have independent staff led by a Chief Executive Officer. Administration costs have been estimated by the Parliamentary Budget Office to be \$5 million per year.

Box 1. What is a fair value for electricity generated by PV systems?

Many State Governments, until recently, offered relatively generous feed-in tariffs for electricity 'fed into' the electricity grid. These subsidies have now been replaced by what are supposed to be subsidy free 'fair and reasonable' tariffs.

Fair value rates has been estimated by entities such as IPART in NSW, Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission's and the Queensland Competition Authority to be generally less than 10c per kilowatt hour, but the PV industry argues that these calculations ignore some important benefits of distributed PV and that a true fair value tariff is much closer, if not equal to the retail cost of electricity.

These entities underestimated fair value because the benefits of avoided electricity distribution costs were undervalued because they used an average distribution loss factor which failed to take into account the fact that PV generates at times when distribution losses are much higher than average.

In addition they calculated the value of electricity produced by PV systems based on electricity spot prices which are likely to be lower (on average) than the wholesale prices, therefore underestimating its true value.



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The Position of the other Parties

The Labor Party

The Labor Government, as part of the Clean Energy Package, did commit to expediting the establishment of a National Energy Savings Initiative to replace the state-based energy efficiency trading schemes, but three years on is still yet to complete a Regulatory Impact Statement. It does not have a firm position on additional measures to promote the uptake of peak demand management or distributed generation.

The Coalition

The Coalition does not have a firm position on additional measures to promote the uptake of energy efficiency, peak demand management or distributed generation.

2013 Initiative
No Longer Current

greensmps.org.au

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ACCESS ALL AREAS TOWARDS MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

The Greens' initiative for improving access for people with disability

People with disability often face significant barriers to their full participation in everyday life. The accessibility of many of our buildings, public events, services and information is poor. Let's start doing more to make our communities more inclusive.

> ACCESS ALL AREAS

Most of us take going to the shops, having coffee with friends, attending concerts, participating in a staff meeting and watching a movie for granted. However, for Australians with a disability, such simple, everyday tasks can sometimes be extremely challenging.

The Greens want to raise public awareness about the issue of access for people with a disability. We believe this is an important step in working together to become a more inclusive community.

Our goal is to ensure that where ever possible, universal design is a key feature of public planning, and that public places do not exclude anyone from participating in our communities.

Using the information collected from people through a new, innovative app, the Greens will raise the profile of this issue and bolster the campaign for more inclusive communities.

Our plan is to:

- **Develop a free, easy to use, app** for people to report significant barriers to access
- **Collect and collate** information from people using the app. A summary of this information will be made publicly available on a website.
- **Report to government**, using information from the app, about the major barriers people have identified. The report will be tabled in Parliament and made available to all stakeholders.

But the app isn't just about the barriers. We also want people to share positive experiences. Where businesses, events and facilities are inclusive and easily accessible for all people, we want to be able to share the good news.

> BUILDING ON THE NDIS

The welcome introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (DisabilityCare) will improve the ability of some people to participate more fully in the community but a poor track record on accessibility will continue to act as a barrier to greater participation if nothing is done about this issue.

The old parties know that these problems exist but have not demonstrated a sustained commitment to ensuring universal access to public transport, public places and community events.

> THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA – USING THE ACCESS ALL AREAS APP

The Greens are the political party that care for people and are prepared to put access on the political agenda this election, but first we want to find out where people with disability are facing the greatest challenges accessing public premises, workplaces, transport, events, services and information.

We have developed the *Access All Areas* app to enable people to quickly and easily report an access issue. This could be anything, from an accessible toilet which is being used as a storage space, public transport that doesn't live up to expectations, a parking bay which is used illegally by people who do not need it to cafes, workplaces and community buildings that haven't given any consideration to being inclusive, to public events that don't make use of an audio loop or captioning.

Using the app people can record the barriers they, or friends and loved ones, face. Users will even be able to upload a photo where appropriate so we can all see examples of these problems.



The app allows users to select from and report issues within the following categories:

- Mobility Access
- Hearing Access
- Vision Access
- Toilet and change room Access
- Parking Access
- Service Access

Users will also be able to enter other issues, not already covered by the apps list of access issues, into the notes section and provide feedback about the app itself.

> REPORTING TO GOVERNMENT

The Greens will collate the information collected through the app and prepare a report which we will have tabled in Parliament. A copy will also be presented to the Minister for Disability Reform and Ministers responsible for disability issues in each state and territory. The information will be made available to advocates and can also be used to feed into other government processes including the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission and local government.

We know there are lots of issues out there, and we are not expecting to develop a comprehensive list of them solely from the information we gain through use of the app. What we are expecting is that the information people provide when they use the app to report an issue will highlight some of the significant barriers and these can be prioritised for action.

> IMPROVING DISABILITY ACCESS AND WORKING TOWARDS MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

We have all worked hard to see the NDIS (DisabilityCare) come to fruition. The scheme holds great promise for providing people with the individual supports and services they need. However, the introduction of DisabilityCare does not mean that the government can drop the ball in relation to universal access.

As our population ages the importance of accessibility will only increase with increasing rates of disability. The inability of people with disability to access the facilities that everyone else in the community takes for granted including cafes, sporting facilities, public buildings, swimming pools, libraries, and movie theatres, limits their independence and compromises their quality of life. We know that change will not happen overnight but it is vital that we start to prioritise a shift to more inclusive communities.

The development of the 2010-2020 National Disability Strategy was an important step in the improvement of the lives of people with disability. Under the Strategy all Australian governments have committed to a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers, across the whole community. Unfortunately some of the momentum behind the creation of the strategy seems to have been lost as political will and attention is directed toward the NDIS. Both the Strategy and the NDIS are important. The Greens will continue to work towards improvements in the lives of people with disability through progress across these areas.



CARING FOR OUR FOOD SECURITY

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF LAND

The Greens' plan for securing the national interest in agriculture

Australia does not accurately track foreign ownership of agricultural land and water and the threshold for considering the national interest for such purchases is far too high. It's time to restore balance and look after our national interest.

For Australia to be able to make informed and strategic decisions about our agricultural land and water resources, we must accurately track and consider each bid by foreign investors, particularly sovereign nations, to own it.

The Australian Greens will:

- **Create a register** of foreign ownership of agricultural land and water assets to continuously track overseas purchases.
- **Lower the threshold from \$248 million to \$5 million for consideration of the national interest** by the Foreign Investment Review Board for purchases of agricultural land and water by a foreign private entity. This will include cumulative purchases by the same entity under the \$5 million threshold.
- **Legislate a stronger national interest test** to be applied by the Foreign Investment Review board for purchases of agricultural land and water resources.
- **Prohibit the purchase of agricultural land and water** by wholly owned subsidiaries of foreign governments.

> THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Increasingly countries that rely on imports to feed their people are buying land and water in other nations to grow food, as they are concerned about the impacts of climate change on food availability and price.

Multinational corporations have also realised the value of agricultural land and water and have begun investing heavily in these assets across the world as they can see there will be large profits to be made if they control the means of producing food.

As a country with a strong agricultural sector, Australia is one of the countries attracting the interest of foreign buyers. Yet laws on foreign investment in agricultural land and water are lax and we don't keep accurate records to track levels of foreign ownership.

Only purchases of more than a staggering \$248 million are subject to a national interest test by the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB). On top of that, the FIRB is not required to take into account cumulative purchases by the same foreign entity that combined comprise \$248 million or more.

While foreign investment is important for Australia, it is critical that we have much clearer information, and a stronger national interest is applied to the purchase of such vital assets as our agricultural land and water, particularly in a time of global food insecurity.

Other countries with significant agricultural assets including the USA, New Zealand, Argentina, China and Brazil have all placed restrictions and greater levels of scrutiny on foreign purchase of land.

The Greens will restore balance to the consideration of foreign investment in our land and water.

> OTHER PARTIES

The ALP has said it will introduce a register of foreign ownership of land and water, but failed to support Greens legislation to lower the threshold for consideration by the FIRB to \$5 million and the introduction of a legislated national interest test for foreign purchase of agricultural land.

The Coalition also failed to support the Greens bill and instead released a discussion paper. They have yet to release their policy.

The Katter Party has an extreme position of prohibiting any foreign entity from owning more than 4 hectares of agricultural land.

The Australian Greens are also standing up for stronger competition policy - <http://www.greens.org.au/tackling-supermarket-duopoly> - and have released a comprehensive plan for our Food Future - <http://greens.org.au/food>



TOO PRECIOUS TO LOSE

CARING FOR OUR NORTHERN MAMMALS

The Greens' plan for reversing the mammal extinction crisis

In Northern Australia, even in protected places like Kakadu National Park, small and medium-sized native animals are rapidly vanishing. Only the Greens can be trusted to take action to reverse our mammal extinction crisis.

Many small to medium-sized native animal species have already vanished from vast areas in the north, and are now clinging for survival to the most northern and western parts of their former habitat.

> REVERSING EXTINCTION

Reports indicate a 70% decline in species across Northern Australia.

In order to reverse this decline, the Greens' Northern Australia Mammal Protection Program will deliver \$26million per year over the forward estimates to:

- **Urgently expand scientific research into best-practice threat mitigation programs and implement habitat improvement strategies**
- **Secure the long-term protection of important refugial areas**, via acquisition (public and private), covenanting, and incentive schemes.
- Restore the ecological integrity of landscapes by **reintroducing mammal species into areas from which they have disappeared**, and in which threats are being adequately controlled.
- Undertake an **audit of the ecological health (especially in relation to mammals) of protected areas**, including National Parks, private conservation land, and Indigenous Protected Areas, and implement a program of ongoing reporting on ecological health.
- **Ensure everyone is working towards the same goal.** To cover the huge area that is Northern Australia, a coordinated national approach is needed, one that involves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working with the Australian Government, State/Territory Governments, landholders including pastoralists and environmental organizations.

> BUILDING ON OUR PLAN TO STOP THE BIODIVERSITY CRISIS

This program to care for our northern mammals builds on a broader plan to strengthen protection for our threatened species across Australia's landscapes. Our *Biodiversity Crisis* Initiative has also set out that the Australian Greens will:

- Provide an additional \$10 million per year, nationally, to support the rapid listing of all species and ecological communities which belong on the threatened list and develop and resource the implementation of recovery plans and threat abatement plans for listed species and ecological communities
- Provide \$30 million per annum to fund comprehensive studies to identify and map important habitat nationally.
- Restore Labor's \$470 million cut to the Biodiversity Fund, which the Greens helped establish as part of the Clean Energy Package, to promote habitat restoration; and
- Make sure federal veto powers over Australia's most environmentally damaging projects remain with the federal government and are not given away to the states

> OUR NORTHERN EXTINCTION CRISIS

Over the last 10-20 years, the diversity and abundance of North Australia's small mammals has decreased dramatically from Cape York to the Kimberley. The government response has been too slow to prevent this decline.

Australia, which arguably has the worst record in the world on mammal extinctions, is now experiencing unprecedented levels of species decline right across our northern regions - despite these areas being relatively untouched by industrial development so far.



Even in World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park, a 2010 scientific report found that in the past 15 years, the abundance of small mammals had declined by 75 per cent and the number of species recorded had declined by 66 per cent.

The mostly likely cause of the extinction crisis includes:

- Altered fire regimes (especially an increase in extensive and intense late-dry season fires)
- Grazing by feral herbivores (especially feral cattle, buffalo, donkeys and horses)
- Predation by feral cats

It is not clear how these primary causes interact or what role secondary factors such as weeds, disease or cane toads may also play. It is also anticipated that climate change is likely to bring hotter and larger wildfires, as well as new pests and diseases, which will only increase the pressure that these species are under.

New research is urgently needed to better understand the threats, and to develop and implement conservation management practices that can reverse the decline.

> LESSONS FROM KAKADU

The degree of uncertainty about the cause of this extinction crisis is best demonstrated by the results from a long-term monitoring program in the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park.

Although it is the largest and most famous protected area in northern Australia, Kakadu's iconic status – and its relatively substantial conservation management budget - has failed to protect its native mammals. In the past 15 years, the abundance of small mammals in Kakadu has declined by 75 per cent, and the number of species recorded has declined by 66 per cent.

The lesson from the Kakadu National Park situation is that there is a critical need for an urgent and comprehensive re-evaluation of the approach to conservation in northern Australia. Despite an on-going annual investment of more than \$18 million, by the Commonwealth government, the natural capital of Kakadu is being severely diminished.

The example of Kakadu demonstrates that a different approach to diversity protection is required.

The largest knowledge gaps relate to the role of feral cats in causing the northern mammal declines and the interaction of the key threats of mismanaged fire, introduced herbivores, and feral cats.

This is why the Green will establish a research program that can improve our understanding of the best approach to threat mitigation.

> HABITAT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

There are a range of strategies that could be implemented in Northern Australia, including:

- Appropriate management of fire, and the control of invasive species (both animals and plants).
- Development of regional fire management plans along with the delivery of prescribed burning by Indigenous rangers and landholders within the region.
- Regional feral animal control programs such as the successful donkey control program in the Kimberley.

The Australian Greens initiative will ensure that these strategies are developed further and evaluated, so that we are building an evidence base that can inform best practice and direct public investment in to the future.

> SECURING LONG TERM PROTECTION

The Greens recognise that in order to reverse the extinction trend, we need to secure the long-term protection of important refugial areas, via acquisition (public and private), covenanting, and incentive schemes.

Refugial areas include mainland sites that retain high mammal richness and abundance, as well as islands that have been isolated from some of the threatening processes that affect the northern Australian mainland. Although some refugial areas are known, a **systematic survey program** is needed to identify other important areas.

The Australian Greens have also committed \$30mil per annum nationally towards developing comprehensive studies to identify and map important habitat, including protected ecological communities, areas of critical habitat for threatened species and important wildlife corridors. The Australian Greens would **protect that habitat through bioregional plans** developed in partnership with state and local governments where possible, and rolled out progressively with priority on high risk biodiversity areas.

Where refugia are publicly acquired, **traditional owners would also be consulted** in the establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas, as appropriate.

> INDIGENIOUS RANGERS



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' land management, including enhanced Indigenous Ranger programs, will play a key role in delivering an effective solution.

Only the Greens can be trusted to stand up for our environment and to protect the places and the species that are too precious to lose.

There are also significant economic development opportunities for remote communities in conservation – opportunities that build on the knowledge, strength and cultural commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Australians to provide a future for outstations and homelands.

This is why the Australian Greens also have a plan to **double the number of rangers working on country within a decade**, starting with an investment of \$100mil over the forward estimates.

> EXTRA BENEFITS

There are a range of other positive outcomes that will occur as a result of implementing this initiative to reverse the mammal extinction crisis, including: conservation of other plant and animal species; employment opportunities for Indigenous communities; reduction in late dry season wildfires; and support of the tourism industry.

> LABOR AND THE COALITION ARE FAILING OUR WILDLIFE

In six years of government Labor has failed to deliver for our threatened species. As well as cutting the biodiversity funding, and redirecting a portion of Caring for our Country funding to programs like the Tasmanian Forestry Agreement, Labor signed up to the agenda of big business. Labor was prepared to hand over environmental powers so that the final say on Australia's most environmentally destructive projects would rest with the state governments. In the face of community resistance, they then put the proposal on ice but refused to work with the Greens to Abbott-proof our national environment laws by outlawing any hand off of approval powers to state governments. The Greens amendments, motions and legislation would have ensured that responsibility for protecting our most vulnerable species and wild places from the most damaging developments remained with the federal environment minister but the big parties voted against our moves.

The Coalition is now promising to deliver big business' destructive agenda of having state governments in total control of our nationally important environmental assets. While they claim it is to remove delay and duplication, there is no empirical evidence of any federal excessive regulatory burden or duplication or delay – the Coalition's real intention is just to significantly weaken environmental protection.



COMMUNITY SPORTS FUNDING ACCESS TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

The Greens plan for combating childhood obesity through sport

We know that healthy kids are happier kids. Sport has huge benefits for our communities and our health, but the increasing costs can be a big barrier for some families. The Greens will help boost access to community sport and help tackle obesity.

Investment in grassroots sport is an investment in communities. It's an investment in healthy, happy kids and in the future of Australia's healthcare system. With rates of childhood obesity sky rocketing in Australia, we need to encourage kids away from the TV and on to the sporting field.

> MAKING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE EASIER TO ACCESS

The Community Sports initiative will inject \$20 million dollars into improved access to sport through:

- **\$10 million in direct financial support to families** for costs associated with kids' participation in sport such as membership fees.
- **\$9.5 million in grants to help set up local sports libraries** where kids and local sports programs can borrow equipment.
- **\$500,000 in assistance to help volunteers and sports clubs** navigate the legal and organizational barriers to volunteering, including a hotline and assistance with the cost of qualifications such as first aid certificates.

> DIRECT ASSISTANCE

Cost is consistently identified as a barrier to kids' participation in organised sport. Low income families and those with several children involved in sport face significant financial hurdles as membership fees, equipment and transport costs are added up.

A recent study published by the Smith Family found that close to half (46.9%) of all children living in the most disadvantaged communities did not participate in sport or cultural activities such as drama or music outside of school hours.

Providing relief to families through a subsidy that helps cover the cost of membership fees to eligible local sporting clubs for

low and middle income families will be piloted as a means of increasing children's participation in sport.

> SPORTS LIBRARIES

The expense of obtaining equipment can be a real barrier to participating in sport. Obesity rates are highest in underprivileged communities and ensuring that kids from lower socio-economic backgrounds stay active and healthy is a particular priority.

The Greens will commit \$9.5 million in grants to local governments to help community libraries purchase sporting equipment for use in their communities. The sporting equipment would be available for kids to borrow in the same way books are borrowed from community libraries.

Sports libraries will encourage participation at community facilities and encourage kids to stay healthy and active playing their favourite sport, without having to buy expensive equipment.

> HELP FOR VOLUNTEERS

Australia's vibrant local sports culture relies heavily on volunteers from the community. It is volunteers who are umpiring games, making fixtures, updating the scoreboard and cutting the half time oranges. Much of the unseen administration that any sporting club requires is done by hardworking volunteers.

The Greens believe there is a role for government in lowering the barriers to participation for volunteers. Our Community Sports initiative will fund the Australian Sports Commission to evaluate several measures such as information services to provide assistance to volunteers and sporting clubs to navigate the legal and organisational complexities of volunteering, such as incorporating and liability insurance.



AUSTRALIA'S STORIES ON OUR SCREENS CREATING JOBS: TELEVISION AND FILM

The Greens' plan for a thriving screen production industry

Australians love their home-grown movies and TV shows. It is easy to take for granted, but the screen industry is being squeezed from all sides, leaving our storytelling industry in crisis. The Greens have a costed plan to take these pressures off the industry.

Australia is built on stories. From the weaving of *The Dreaming* into our landscape re-told over tens of thousands of years to the creation of frontier tales necessary for those young colonies to mark their unique place in the world - stories have always been essential to defining our country.

Nowadays the biggest audience for our stories are in front of a film or television screen. Our stories are told both to ourselves and to the world. However the teams of highly skilled professionals that make it all happen are being squeezed from all sides: from the government, television stations and a volatile Australian dollar. The Greens have a costed plan to boost jobs and grow the industry.

> SUPPORTING THE SCREEN INDUSTRY

To fulfil the Greens vision of a smart, creative and resilient economy of the future, the Greens will ensure the technological advancements and skills from the industry thrive by:

- **Doubling the minimum level of Australian produced content on commercial television, including their multichannels.**
- **Attracting films to be produced in Australia by raising the Film Tax-Offset from 16.5% to an internationally competitive rate of 30%. This proposal will cost \$27 million over the forward estimates.**
- **Encouraging an increase in premium Australian-made television by doubling the producer tax offset rate from 20% to 40%; costing \$70 million per year.**

> LOCAL TELEVISION CONTENT

TV broadcasting is not a private gift, it is a public good; but late last year, the Labor government announced a massive 50% discount on commercial station's licence fees.

Commercial free-to-air channels are so protected from external competition that it is up to the government to set the standards of local production that Australian audiences expect. The Greens believe the granting of public spectrum comes in return for a strong Australian content standard.

It has long been a condition of a broadcaster's licence that they must put to air a minimum amount of Australian content. But those conditions have slowly been weakened. These stations are now able to endlessly re-run shows across different channels without having to make new content – they can just gouge the Australian shows that have already been made.

The Labor government also gave the stations a free kick by allowing low-cost programming like sport and news to fill the transmission quota, but these are programs that would have been made anyway. The government did nothing to promote new content in higher cost but important areas such as children's shows, documentaries, comedies and drama.

To create and sustain local jobs, promote our national interests and tell our stories – especially local regional content – the Greens want to double the requirement on how much Australian content the TV channels must to put to air.

This would lift Australian content from around 11% of the total broadcast hours to almost a quarter of all television.ⁱ This policy will provide a cultural safety net from cheap shows bought from places like the UK or the US which cost the broadcasting corporations a mere quarter of the price.ⁱⁱ

The Greens want to see our free-to-air commercial broadcasters invest their money in the local workforce instead. Seeing as they have now pocketed half their licence fees – we think it is their duty to invest in home-grown creative storytelling. The Greens secured a review of the relaxed local content quotas. Along with the industry, we will watch this review closely with a view to increase the hours of original Australian content on our TV.



> FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIAN FILM INDUSTRY

The Greens are committed to attracting foreign finance and blockbuster films to be made in Australia. These films not only provide huge amounts of foreign investment that support hundreds of small businesses, but they ensure that we keep and expand the skilled workers and technologies necessary for a flourishing Australian film industry. Box-office Australian films exhibited internationally also market Australia, helping our important tourism industry, also struggling against the dollar.

For our film industry to flourish the Greens are proposing that for every dollar spent on Australian cast and crew, or acquiring Australian goods and services, the film makers will receive 30 cents back as a Location Tax Offset.

Currently, film companies get 16.5 cents back in the dollar, but this rate puts Australia out of reach from our international competitors. Raising the offset to 30% will make us an attractive location and temper the volatility of the Australian dollar that has recently scared off investors.

This policy has industry support from the Screen Producers Association of Australia, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance and AusFilm.

What the government and Tony Abbott fail to grasp is that this money flows through the economy from the crews employed to small businesses such as caterers and vehicle hire to rents paid for land. For instance *The Wolverine* generated \$100 million in local investment, with over 1700 jobs and 850 small businesses contracted as a result of the production.ⁱⁱⁱ

The *location tax offset* missed out in the government's recent cultural policy. Instead of ensuring Australia's ongoing competitiveness and providing certainty to the industry, the government just offered a stop-gap response by offering Disney a single \$21 million payment. The government seems content to negotiate one-off deals rather than lifting the offset for all potential international investors.

Without increasing the Location Tax Offset, we are risking those investors and film makers looking elsewhere. This is part of our suite of policies designed to help Australia transition from a resource-based economy to a diversified, smart and creative one.

> CREATING AUSTRALIAN PROGRAMMES

The success of recent Australian television has both entertained Australian viewers and provoked interest from overseas producers. Shows like *The Check-out* and *Rake* have been scouted for conversion for US audiences. Despite these

successes, the problems faced by the industry are that these high quality shows are currently very risky to make, relative to imports. This means a lot of home-grown stories with great potential often miss out on ever reaching an audience.

To drive down the cost of making Australian premium television shows and get more home-grown shows on TV, the Greens have a costed policy to spend \$70 million a year to double the *Producer Tax Offset* from 20% to 40%.

This offset works the same way as the location tax offset, where every dollar spent on Australian cast and crew or acquiring Australian goods and services will entitle them to get 40 cents back once the production is complete.

Again this is a policy that the screen industry views as essential to its long-term survival. An increase in production incentives enables producers to be more entrepreneurial in attracting market support and less bureaucratic in seeking direct government funding support for a project.

> THE OTHER PARTIES

Both major parties voted against the Greens amendments in the Parliament to double local content requirements for commercial free-to-air channels. They are happy to let original Australian content squander and let the quota be filled with re-runs and sports and news that were going to be made anyway.

Both parties are also happy to keep the two tax offsets at their currently inadequate rate. They would rather keep giving the billionaire mining and banking corporations an easy tax ride than provide small tax incentives for film and TV that would usher in a cultural renaissance of Australian stories.

Without the Greens policies Australia runs the risk of a future articulated by award-winning Australian Director Gillian Armstrong: "A career in Australia's creative industries would once again be a hopeless dream. Without a healthy productive industry we will return to a time when our voices weren't heard, when our best creative talent, actors, directors, designers and writers, left for Britain and the US.... It is important. Otherwise our stories won't be told. Our talent won't be heard. And our country won't be seen."^{iv}

ⁱ Karl Quinn "TV producers, actors slam licence fee cuts for commercial free-to-air networks" *Sydney Morning Herald* 3 December 2012.

ⁱⁱ Screen Producers Association of Australia *Submission to the Convergence Review* page 10. 1 November 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mat Dunckley "Gillard mulls tax help to revive film-making" *The Australian Financial Review* 25 July 2012.

^{iv} Gillian Armstrong "TV fails the screen test for this culture" *Sydney Morning Herald* 1 October 2012



DYING WITH DIGNITY

A PERSON'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

The Greens plan for Voluntary Euthanasia Legislation

Most Australians believe terminally ill people should have the right to end their lives on their own terms. As people we love face ongoing suffering and pain in the grip of terminal illness, we owe it to them to provide the choice of a dignified, pain free death.

Voluntary euthanasia has been an emotive debate in Australia for many years, and it is one where many policy makers are lagging behind the community. When asked the Australian community consistently express high levels of support for reform. A 2011 survey found that 75% of Australians believed that a terminally ill person should be allowed to access physician assisted suicideⁱ and a Newspoll survey from 2012 found support at 82.5%ⁱⁱ.

Conservative MPs have stymied voluntary euthanasia legislation in most parliaments across Australia. In 1997 the Federal Liberal Government went so far as to strip the ACT and Northern Territory of their rights to legislate on this important issue. It is time the federal parliament heard the community's voice on Dying with Dignity legislation.

> DYING WITH DIGNITY

The Greens will move a Senate inquiry into voluntary euthanasia in the next parliament with a view to introducing federal legislation to grant terminally ill people the right to request assistance from a medical practitioner to help end their life.

The legislation will be based in Section 51(xxiiiA) of the Constitution, which allows the Commonwealth to legislate for the provision of medical services.

Dying with Dignity will:

- **Provide terminally ill people with access to medical assistance to end their lives**
- **Establish safeguards to protect the vulnerable**
- **Protect physicians who provide medical assistance**

Subject to strict conditions, this medical assistance would take the form of the provision of a lethal substance that the patient

would administer themselves or, in the case of severe physical disability, be assisted to take.

> ACCESS TO PHYSICIAN ASSISTED EUTHANASIA

This framework will provide a person with a terminal illness the choice to request assistance from a medical practitioner to end their life. It allows patients, their families and their doctors to talk more openly about end-of-life choices when suffering becomes too great. Dying with Dignity is about giving the ultimate choice to dying people, who deserve whatever control they can exercise over their suffering when they are nearing the end of their lives.

Terminally ill people experiencing intolerable pain, suffering or distress will be able to choose to die a peaceful and dignified death at the time of their choosing. Their last weeks or months with their loved ones will be free from the burden of worrying about how bad things might get, about how late they can leave action, and about who will help them in the end.

> SAFEGUARDS AROUND DYING WITH DIGNITY

A number of private members bills addressing dying with dignity have been introduced into state parliaments across Australia. Several countries currently have voluntary euthanasia legislation in place and Australia can learn a lot about the safe and successful operation of Dying with Dignity legislation from these experiences.

The Greens will move a Senate Inquiry early in the next parliament that examines domestic and international legislation with a view to developing national dying with dignity laws.

We anticipate as a minimum, the following features in any successful legislation. A terminally ill person would have to be



examined by two independent medical practitioners as well as a psychiatrist before being given assistance. The patient would be of sound mind, making an informed decision to proceed, and they would be doing so free from duress. The patient would be able to change their mind at any time, and all physician assisted deaths would be subject to review.

The Dying with Dignity framework would not result in any health professionals being forced to participate in assisting people to die. No health care provider—whether it be a doctor, nurse, palliative care centre or hospital—would be under any obligation to participate.

> PROTECTION FOR PHYSICIANS AND FAMILIES

A Dying with Dignity system will provide a considered and compassionate legal framework for a practice that is already happening in Australia behind closed doors. Physicians and families are already taking actions to ease the suffering of their patients and loved ones. Many are acting beyond the law and most support reformⁱⁱⁱ. A safe and structured Dying with Dignity system will remove these pressures from all parties during such a difficult time.

Having a framework for voluntary assisted dying for the terminally ill is a safer and fairer option. It is far better to regulate what is already happening than to allow it to continue unchecked. Dying with Dignity would put a framework around what is happening anyway, and it would provide greater peace of mind for all involved.

The Greens believe that caring for people means respecting their wishes - at all stages of life.

ⁱ The Australia Institute – Attitudes to voluntary euthanasia January 2011

ⁱⁱ http://saves.asn.au/issues/newspoll_2012_graphs.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Survey results at <http://www.drs4vechoice.org/info>



FUEL EFFICIENT CARS

IT'S TIME

The Greens' plan to reduce fuel costs

Australia has been left behind. All major nations now have mandatory fuel efficiency standards but despite promises, Labor has failed to deliver. The community is bearing the cost of yesterdays, inefficient technology.

> MANDATORY FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS ARE OVERDUE

The Australian Greens have been calling for stringent, mandatory carbon dioxide emission standards for cars for many years and we welcomed the Government's announcement prior to the last election that:

"A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will cut emissions on our roads by introducing new mandatory carbon dioxide emission standards for all new cars from 2015."

Unfortunately the Government has failed to deliver on this promise.

Meanwhile Europe, the United States and many other nations have adopted stringent laws designed to transform their car manufacturing sectors. Australia has been left behind.

The Australian Greens care about:

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- reducing our vulnerability to oil prices; and,
- increasing the competitiveness of our car manufacturing sector.

To achieve these objectives the Greens believe Australia must align with the EU 2020 standards, including the target of 95g CO₂/Km by 2023 for passenger vehicles.

> THE BENEFITS

Improving the fuel efficiency of light vehicles is essential for tackling the climate crisis, particularly because the carbon pricing mechanism does not apply to transport fuel. 'Light vehicles', (including light commercial vehicles such as vans and utes), contribute about 10% of Australia total greenhouse gas emissions.ⁱ

More efficient cars would also reduce Australia's vulnerability to high oil prices. Australia has become dependent on importing foreign oil and fuel and rising import costs negatively impact our terms of trade.

In addition, shielding consumers from oil price volatility is important for low income earners who are particularly vulnerable to petrol prices because they often live on city outskirts poorly serviced by public transport, and generally purchase cars from the second hand market, where there are fewer opportunities to invest in efficient vehicles.

Some 50,000 Australian's work in motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts manufacturing and if their jobs are to be sustained in the long-term Australia needs to start building cars people actually want to buy.

Australia needs to build cars people actually want to buy

Improving the fuel efficiency of cars manufactured in Australia would make the industry more competitive. Sales of domestically manufactured cars have decreased steadily over the last decade as Australians have started to move away from large passenger vehicles.

The export market is also demanding more efficient cars. For example, Holden is exporting its V8 Commodore to the US, but with emissions of 274g CO₂/Km, Holden's parent company has said that the fuel economy laws in the US will limit the sales of the vehicle.ⁱⁱ

The Australian car industry is also overly reliant on exports to the Gulf States where petrol is currently relatively very cheap. The Gulf States buy over 50% of Australian exported cars – 32% to go to Saudi Arabia, 12% to the United Arab Emirates and 7% to Kuwait. It is a high risk strategy to have such a large part of the Australian manufacturing sector effectively dependent on fuel pricing policies in these three nations.



> BROKEN PROMISES

Long ago our automotive industry accepted a voluntary target of 222g/CO₂ per kilometre by 2010 for light vehicles; an inadequate target that was met ahead of schedule due to business-as-usual technology improvements and the fact that the domestic market is increasingly favouring more fuel efficient cars.ⁱⁱⁱ The Federation Chamber of Automotive Industries has not adopted updated voluntary targets from 2010, but in 2012 the average emission of light vehicles in Australia was 199g/CO₂.

In 2009 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) requested that the Department of Transport produce a Regulatory Impact Statement into a mandatory scheme for vehicle fuel efficiency. This report was originally to be made public for consultation before the end of March 2010, but was never released.

In 2010, prior to the last election the Government said “A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will cut emissions on our roads by introducing new mandatory carbon dioxide emission standards for all new cars from 2015” and the following year the Department of Infrastructure and Transport issued a discussion paper called *Light vehicle CO₂ emissions standards for Australia - Key Issues*. When it was released Minister Albanese said “Mandatory vehicle emissions standards are internationally recognised as one of the most cost effective ways for industry and consumers to reduce transport emissions”.

The Greens understand that the Department of Infrastructure and Transport completed a Regulatory Impact Statement which examines the costs and benefits of a range of possible

mandatory CO₂ emission standards. The Minister however, has failed to publish this analysis and failed to implement its findings.

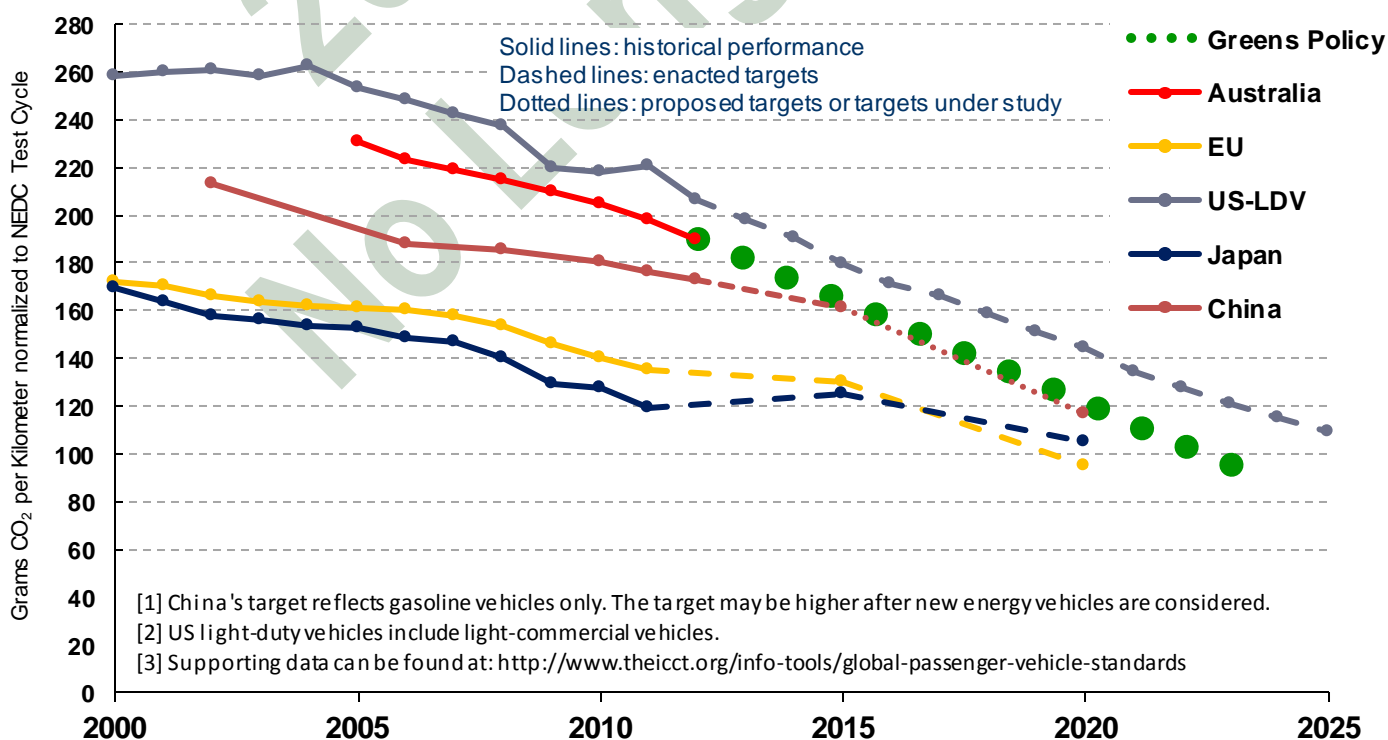
> STANDARDS COMPARED

Comparing fuel efficiency or greenhouse gas emission standards of different nations is not straightforward because they are expressed and measured in a range of ways.

The figure below standardises the various approaches and shows the expected greenhouse gas emission rates from new cars in the main vehicle markets that have either adopted or are planning to adopt fuel efficiency and/or greenhouse gas emission standards.^{iv} Note these figures are for passenger cars (including SUVs) and do not include light commercial vehicles except in the case of the US.

Most striking is that Australia is currently performing badly compared to the EU, Japan and China, but is similar to the US. Further, of this group of nations, only Australia does not have proposed or enacted future targets. In Europe car manufacturers are obliged to ensure that their new car fleet does not emit more than an average of 130 grams of CO₂ per kilometre (g CO₂/Km) by 2015 and 95g CO₂/Km by 2020. In terms of fuel consumption, the 2020 target equates approximately to 4.1 litres of petrol per 100 km or 3.6 litres of diesel per 100 km.

For light commercial vehicles (including utes and vans) the EU target is 175 g CO₂/Km by 2017 and 147g CO₂/Km by 2020.





> THE GREENS POSITION

The global trends are clear. The world's major vehicle markets are moving towards more fuel efficient vehicles.

It is in Australia's national interest to reduce greenhouse gas emission from light vehicles and to reduce reliance on imported fuel. Further, if we are to retain a globally competitive vehicle manufacturing industry, it has to move with the times.

The Greens believe Australia should aim to match the EU target of 95g CO₂/km for cars and 147g CO₂/km for light commercial vehicles. However, because it takes several years to design future vehicles and then re-tool for production, it is now too late to adopt these targets for the year 2020.

The Greens recognise that the EU target is challenging and that Australia as a relatively small player is not well placed to match the global leaders. It is also true, however, that all car manufacturers will be now developing cars suitable for sale in the EU after 2020.

Australia can remain as a 'fast follower' if we adopt a target equivalent to the EU, but with a short lag.

On this basis the Australian Greens believe we should align with the EU 2020 standards by 2023.

Potential Savings for Motorists

In 2011 the EU average for new cars was 135 g CO₂/km (the petrol equivalent of 5.8 litres/100km).

The Australian average was 47 percent higher at 198 g CO₂/km (8.5 litres/100km).

A vehicle driven 16,000km per year at 8.5 L/100km will use 1,360 litres of petrol. At \$1.45 per litre the annual fuel bill would be around \$1,972.

The average European car using 5.8 L/100km would save \$626 in annual fuel costs compared to the average Australian car.

> ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Car companies comply with mandatory CO₂ emission standards by ensuring that the average of the all the cars they sell achieves the target. Sales of efficient vehicles, including hybrid and fully electric cars, effectively offset sales of less efficient vehicles. Mandatory standards therefore create a strong incentive to develop and market cutting edge technology such as electric vehicles. The US and EU schemes also provide car manufacturers with bonus credits for "advanced technology" vehicles.

> SUPPLEMENTARY POLICIES

Mandatory fuel efficiency standards should be introduced in conjunction with other policies in order to maximise the effectiveness of the scheme. The Greens would:

- a) **Strengthen government procurement policies**
Corporate and government car fleets form a large proportion of new car sales so they should take the lead in setting higher fuel-efficiency standards. Government fleets currently have a far higher proportion of large, inefficient cars than the private fleet. Rather than following, Governments should lead in promoting fuel efficiency by adopting procurement policies that exceed the national targets.
- b) **Tie manufacturing subsidies to efficiency standards, to provide a social dividend.** Taxpayers have long subsidised Australian car manufacturers, yet perversely these manufacturers have focused on large vehicles, inappropriate to a society concerned about climate change and oil depletion. Since the Australian vehicle manufacturing industry relies on Government assistance, that assistance should be conditional on substantial improvements in fuel efficient design and performance in compliance with mandatory fuel efficiency standards. Not just incremental improvements but bold step changes – like a switch to plug-in hybrid and fully electric technology.
- c) **Immediately place on the COAG agenda a policy framework for electric vehicles** including:
 - implementation of consumer incentives for electric vehicle ownership including, registration rebates or cash-backs, tax credits as well as significant targets for government fleets;
 - industry policy that develops servicing, engineering and manufacturing of electric vehicles or parts in Australia.

> THE OTHER PARTIES

Neither Labor nor the Coalition have made any commitment to introduce mandatory CO₂ emission standards for vehicles since the last election.

ⁱ Department of Infrastructure and Transport (2011). *Light vehicle CO₂ emissions standards for Australia. Key Issues Discussion Paper.*

ⁱⁱ <http://news.drive.com.au/drive/motor-news/fuel-to-curb-vf-commodore-exports-20130328-2gype.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Australian Transport Council and the Environment Protection and Heritage Council. (2009). *Fuel Efficiency Working Group: Final Report.* Canberra: Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics, 13.

^{iv} This figure has been produced by TransportPolicy.net - a collaboration between the International Council on Clean Transportation and DieselNet. http://www.transportpolicy.net/index.php?title=File:Ldv_co2_june2012.png



LOCAL, FRESH AND FAIR HELPING FARMERS SELL DIRECT

The Greens' plan for helping farmers and communities connect

More and more Australians want to “know their farmer” and buy food direct from local growers. Building local food supply chains will help our farmers get a fair price, create local jobs and connect communities to affordable healthy food.

With one of the most concentrated food retail sectors in the world dominated by the supermarket duopoly, the barriers to making it easy to buy local food in Australia are significant. It is time for Australia to rebuild local food systems.

The Greens will provide \$85 million in grants over four years from 1 July 2014 for infrastructure and initiatives that connect farmers and local communities, such as:

- Starting farmers markets, mobile markets and community food box schemes.
- Creating and supporting producer cooperatives.
- Fitting out local food hubs for packaging and value-adding local food, including for larger bulk supply.
- Creating and marketing a regional food brand.

Our grants scheme cares for farmers and for local communities, making fresh local food more available and providing a more diverse market for producers.

> BENEFITS FOR FARMERS AND LOCAL FOOD BUSINESSES

The ability to sell direct to the public through farmers markets and fresh food box schemes has a number of benefits for farmers. Short supply chains often mean greater financial returns as producers receive a larger share of the food dollar.

These types of local food systems give farmers viable alternatives to low margin, high volume supply contracts. They provide an entry point for sales for growers just starting out, and the opportunity to diversify crops and value-add for greater returns.

Supporting local food systems creates opportunities for farmers in a district to collaborate and create an authentic local brand that can attract premium prices. The King Island and Margaret River local brands are good existing examples.

Providing infrastructure such as regional food hubs gives farmers and other local businesses access to facilities where they can store, pack and process foods, for example via bottling, juicing or pickling. Small to medium farmers and new enterprises typically can't afford to install such infrastructure on their own properties without a guaranteed market.

Food hubs also give farmers the opportunity to collaborate and meet regional commercial demand for produce, typically from institutions such as aged care centres, education providers, hotels and restaurants.

> COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Being able to buy direct from local growers gives communities access to fresh produce at competitive prices and helps expand access to affordable healthy food.

Providing grants will allow groups such as local councils to identify “food deserts” – places where there is limited or no access for the community to fresh and healthy food. Funding could then be provided for infrastructure, such as creating mobile farmer's markets that can travel into neighbourhoods.

Local food systems empower people to make informed choices and have full confidence in where their food has come from. The rise in the number of farmers markets and community food box systems has demonstrated that Australians are actively seeking ways to buy and support local produce and their farmers.

Regional food systems also increase local spending and money circulating in the local economy and support local jobs.



> THE USA EXPERIENCE

In 2009 the Obama administration created the 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' program, a targeted investment in rebuilding local and regional food systems.

The program responded to the demand from American communities and farmers for alternative paths to market and access to local food.

The 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' program has been hailed as a success. It has funded food hubs, local markets and branding and innovative ways of connecting communities to local food. Funding local infrastructure to provide access to fresh local food has helped low income American communities gain better access to healthy food.

Evaluations of key initiatives funded through the program such as regional food hubs¹ has demonstrated the economic and social benefits of governments investing in local food systems.

> OTHER PARTIES

Labor and the Coalition governments have long neglected regional food systems. Under their watch Australia has developed the most concentrated supermarket retail sector in the world, and our food system as a result is highly centralised and increasingly reliant on importing cheap processed food.

There are significant barriers and little assistance for farmers wanting to sell direct to the public.

The old parties have failed to understand the economic and social opportunities that regional food systems deliver for local communities.

The Katter Party rails against cheap food imports and promotes protectionism, but has no practical policies for providing the necessary infrastructure and support to rebuild local and regional food systems.

¹ <http://blogs.usda.gov/2011/04/19/food-hubs-creating-opportunities-for-producers-across-the-nation/>



PROTECT FARMLAND AND WATER

NO NEW COAL OR COAL SEAM GAS

The Greens' plan to protect land, water, climate and communities

Coal and coal seam gas mining is making global warming worse, destroying valuable farmland, damaging our precious water resources and putting pressure on regional towns.

The rapid and destructive expansion of mega coal mines and the coal seam gas (CSG) industry across much of Australia demonstrates what happens when governments put big mining companies ahead of caring for local communities, the environment and our long term future.

> THE GREENS PLAN TO STOP NEW COAL AND CSG MINING

Only the Australian Greens are prepared to stand up to the big coal and CSG mining companies and act to protect our climate, precious farmland and regional communities.

The Greens are fighting for:

- no new coal or CSG approvals;
- the right for farmers and other landholders to say NO to coal and CSG on their land;
- no new coal or gas ports along the Great Barrier Reef;
- protection of our precious water resources including the Murray-Darling and Great Artesian Basins from overuse or contamination by coal and coal seam gas mining;
- independent measurement of methane emissions from CSG so we can understand how polluting CSG really is; and
- stronger environmental laws to better protect our natural environment.

> PROTECTING VALUABLE FARMLAND AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Australian Greens stand firmly on the side of Australian farmers. We want farmers to have a right to refuse access to mining companies on their land. Currently, under state, territory and federal laws, most landholders have no right to refuse mining companies access to explore and then later, mine their land.

The Greens are the only party to realise that supporting our farmers and protecting our prime agricultural land and water is vital for our future food security.

> COAL AND CSG THREATENS OUR LAND AND WATER

There are many risks to our underground and surface water resources from coal mines, and CSG mining risks doing long term damage to our precious water resources on which much of our farmland relies.

The National Water Commission has stated that CSG development represents a substantial risk to sustainable water management given the combination of material uncertainty about water impacts, the significance of potential impacts, and the long time period over which they may emerge and continue to have effect.¹ Drilling CSG wells through aquifers to access coal seams risks creating connections between the two, potentially lowering, as well as contaminating, the water table. Extracting CSG often also requires hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") - the high-pressure injection of millions of litres of chemically treated water, then sucked out again along with hyper-salty water from the coal seam, creating huge problems for storage and risking further water contamination.

A recent poll showed that 75% of New South Wales voters oppose CSG exploration on agricultural land. This follows a 2011 poll showing 68% of Australians want a stop to coal seam gas until it has been proven to be safe for our environment and rural communities.

Every coal mine and CSG well reduces rural communities' access to land and threatens water resources. Coal and CSG mining simply cannot co-exist with farming.

> CLIMATE CATASTROPHE

It is environmentally and economically disastrous to expand fossil fuel industries as the fossil-fuel age comes to a close.



Rather than expanding our dirty industries, Australia should be rapidly transitioning to renewable energy.

The burning of coal for electricity generation is a significant driver of climate change. We cannot sustainably continue burning coal at current rates, let alone continue to expand the coal industry.

Industry claims that the greenhouse emissions from CSG use are around half that of coal. However, this does not count the fugitive emissions — methane that leaks into the atmosphere from wells and pipes. After questioning and pressure from the Greens, the CSIRO is finally undertaking a study on the fugitive emissions from CSG, including on-ground measurement. CSG could in fact be just as bad for the climate as burning coal.

> GREENS' TRACK RECORD ON COAL & COAL SEAM GAS

The Greens have been a strong critical voice against the coal and CSG industries and we intend to continue our campaign alongside community campaigns like Lock the Gate to bring a halt to the destruction across rural and regional Australia.

In 2013, the Greens, Country Independents and the community forced the Government to introduce legislation giving the federal government the power to approve or refuse coal and coal seam gas projects that are likely to have a significant impact on water resources. Under Greens pressure, the Government also provided that these new federal water powers ('water trigger') could not be handed off to the States. Without the community-backed campaign of the Greens and Country Independents, these changes to protect our water would never have occurred.

In 2011 the Greens introduced legislation to allow farmers to lock the gate against coal seam gas. The Landholders' Right to Refuse (Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2011, required farmers' written consent before any exploration and drilling can occur — and a farmer could refuse that consent. The bill was debated on 22 September 2011 and was not supported by Labor, National or Liberal parties.

The Greens have also been campaigning for strong environmental laws that protect farmland, national parks and water resources from mining. Business interest groups have been using false claims about duplication to lobby for watering down of environmental protection.



> WHERE DO THE OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES STAND?

The Labor government has never rejected a coal mine or coal seam gas project, and most recently approved the NSW Maules Creek and Boggabri coal mines.

Tony Abbott also stands side-by-side with the coal and gas companies. For brief 24 hours in 2011, Tony Abbott backed the rights of landholders to say no to mining companies on their land. When asked further about this the next day, he retracted his previous support for farmers.

The National Party — once the party that represented the interests of farmers — has staked its claim on the side of the mining companies like Origin, Chevron, Santos and AGL.

Coalition state governments along the eastern seaboard are also supporting the expansion of the CSG and coal industries, but with occasional gestures that in no way hinder the rapid roll-out of new wells.

Federal and state governments, both Labor and Coalition, have been facilitating the mining industry with minimal regulation in the interests of quick profits ahead of the health and wellbeing of regional communities. To the extent state and federal governments are prepared to act on CSG, it is limited to outer suburban areas (often marginal seats) like Western Sydney, leaving regional communities in the lurch.

Labor and the Coalition have truly misjudged the community's views on the rapid expansion of the coal and coal seam gas industries. Only the Australian Greens are prepared to stand up to massive resource corporations and act to protect our precious farmlands and regional communities.

> WE HAVE VIABLE CLEAN ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

Unconventional gas like CSG is a resource Australia does not need for domestic use. Australia's energy use is declining thanks to improving energy efficiency and rapid uptake of rooftop solar. The real driver of CSG expansion is the attraction of lucrative overseas markets. Profit, not necessity, is driving the proliferation of the industry that threatens the long-term viability of Australia's farmlands.

Numerous government and independent reports show large scale renewable energy could replace our reliance on coal fired power — and create more jobs.

ⁱ National Water Commission CSG Position Statement (updated 2012) <http://nwc.gov.au/nwi/position-statements/coal-seam-gas>



INVESTING IN HEALTH PRESERVING UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

The Greens health plan for now and the future

Australia's health system was designed to be universal: Everyone has the right to quality health care. But with out-of-pocket costs soaring we are now heading towards a two-tiered, American-style health system. The Greens care about health and are willing to stand up and defend universal health care.

The cost of health care is being increasingly borne by the health consumer. This is raising a barrier to care for those on limited incomes and undermining the universality of our health system – the principle that all Australians should have a right to health care no matter what their income or situation.

The Greens will reverse this trend and stand up for an efficient and equitable health system. Rather than see Australia go down the road of an American-style, two tiered health system we would invest in Medicare and hospitals. The Greens will put **greater emphasis on primary care and preventative health** so that healthcare is sustainable for the long term.

> THE GREENS HEALTH PLAN

The Greens plan for health will reinvest billions in public health and ensure our health system remains sustainable for the future. Our initiatives include:

- **Denticare** – bringing dental care into Medicare, so that going to the dentist will be just like going to the doctor.
- **Investing in primary care** to keep costs to health consumers down.
- **Properly funding hospitals** so they are there when people need them most.
- **Investing in rural health** so that country people can access the services the rest of us take for granted.
- **Properly funding mental health** services including in country Australia.
- **Shifting the focus to preventative health** so that more of us can stay out of hospital longer and ensure the health system is sustainable in the long term.

> PREVENTATIVE HEALTH

The Greens are committed to preventative health. A strong investment in preventative health can keep people healthier longer and bring big savings to the healthcare system. With a looming crisis caused by the obesity epidemic and the rise in chronic disease, the time to make those investments is now. The Greens are strong supporters of plain packaging and of Australia's right to make laws like this that protect the public health. The Greens succeeded in getting the Future Fund to divest \$250m in tobacco shares – and in the next Parliament will force Commonwealth Superannuation schemes to do the same.

The Greens are committed to **protecting the Australian National Preventative Health Agency (ANPHA)** and expanding their work beyond alcohol, tobacco and obesity. Australia needs **urban environments that promote better health** including better and more frequent public transport, bike and footpaths that encourage active transport and active lifestyles.

Healthy people need a healthy environment. To protect the air and water that are fundamental to our own health, the Greens will impose a moratorium on coal seam gas, prevent the logging of water catchments **and introduce a comprehensive Clean Air Act** to cut down on sources of fine particulate pollution that are proven to have serious effects on the health of Australians. The Greens will push for comprehensive health impact assessments for all mining developments that could have an adverse impact on the health of the community.

A focus on **targeted prevention for those at risk of chronic diseases** such as diabetes and heart disease will be a major Greens priority in the next Parliament. By changing the lifestyle factors of at-risk groups we can lower the burden of disease and save money while improving health outcomes. By putting



preventative health back on the agenda with initiatives such as a National Diabetes Prevention Plan, we can reshape our approach to chronic disease and save hospital resources for less preventable emergencies.

Other preventative health initiatives include:

- Mandatory **front-of-pack food labeling** to enable consumers to more easily make healthy food choices;
- **Banning junk food ads** to children and **closing loopholes that allow alcohol ads** in children's viewing times;
- Introducing **warning labels on alcoholic beverages**, particularly around pregnancy;
- Tackling the dangers of **alcoholic beverages with added stimulants**.
- A **national ban on sunbeds** and extra funding for a **SunSmart campaign** to reduce the incidence of skin cancer;
- A **focus on hearing health** to help low income earners access hearing services and care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hearing health.

> FILLING THE GAP IN DENTAL HEALTH

Australia's oral health is poor and getting worse. Less than half of Australians have good oral health and dental visiting patterns. This is largely due to the high cost of dental treatment. 60% of dental care is paid for out-of-pocket by consumers, with the result that a third of people say they can't afford to go to the dentist or delay going to the dentist because of the expense.ⁱ

Good oral health is important for overall health and wellbeing. Complications from dental disease can make other medical issues worse and lead to life-threatening situations.

The Greens plan, Denticare, adds dental treatment to the Medicare Benefits Schedule, meaning dentists can bulk-bill dental services like doctors do. **Our plan for Denticare will:**

- **Provide dental treatment covered by Medicare.** Phased in over five years, Medicare will cover preventative and restorative dental treatment so that everybody can afford to go to the dentist.
- **Start with the most disadvantaged.** Low income earners, kids and teens, pensioners and concession card holders will be among the first to access dental treatment under Medicare, before rolling out the scheme to everybody.
- **Ease pressure on the public system.** Because of the Greens, billions of extra dollars are being injected into public dental services. By maintaining this investment, public dental services will be able to treat complex cases and hard-to-reach sectors of the community without sending waiting lists skyrocketing.

Through our work in Parliament, the Greens have already secured the biggest reform to dental health in a generation. It's time to extend the benefits to all Australians.

> PRIMARY CARE

Health care costs are already rising in Australia and we have an obligation to keep our public health system accessible. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 19.3% of healthcare costs are now coming straight from the hip pocket of consumers.ⁱⁱ This is an average of \$1075 per person.ⁱⁱⁱ

We know that cost deters people from seeking medical treatment.^{iv} We need to invest in Medicare before this problem gets any worse.

Our allied health workforce is a crucial but often overlooked part of the health system. Allied health practitioners, such as nurses, podiatrists, physiotherapists and optometrists, are highly skilled professionals who can make a greater contribution to preventative and primary care. The Greens believe that we should review the cost-effectiveness of interventions by allied health practitioners and where good evidence can be found **provide more public funding for allied health treatments through Medicare.**

The Greens will invest **\$664m in extra funding for Medicare** over the forward estimates. This money is a sorely-needed top-up to the health system that reverses cuts to Medicare made by Labor in the last budget and supported by the Coalition.

Our position is supported by the medical community including the Australian Medical Association. AMA President Steve Hambleton warned that "Families will have to pay more each time they visit their family doctor. The value of the Medicare rebate is dropping, making it harder for doctors to provide care and essentially hitting the hip pocket of patients."^v

The Greens are also committed to properly funding Medicare Locals so that primary health care services can be better coordinated on a regional level and local authorities can work together to plug local service gaps.

> HOSPITALS THAT WORK

An obsession with budget surplus and an unwillingness to take on vested interests and raise revenue have led both levels of government to look for cuts in the hospital system. This has resulted in service cuts by already overloaded hospitals. The Greens will invest and bring funding back to more realistic levels.

- **The Greens would invest an extra \$1.5 billion in Commonwealth funds** into the public hospital system over three years.



- **30% would be allocated to rural and regional hospitals** many of whom who are already struggling.
- The Greens commit to **transparent and fair Commonwealth funding of hospitals** – no tricks or cuts.

State governments, particularly Liberal governments in Victoria and Queensland, have slashed hospital budgets, leaving hospital administrators no choice but to ration care, shed jobs and cut services. The Labor government, in turn, chopped \$1.5 billion out of its own contribution to the National Health Funding Pool. The Greens will put this money back into the state Hospital systems as follows:

NSW	\$345m
Vic	\$475m
Qld	\$300m
WA	\$150m
SA	\$115m
Tas	\$45m
ACT	\$25m
NT	\$20m

There is more to the health system than just hospitals, but a properly functioning hospital system is crucial for good health. The Greens will invest in making sure our hospitals are there for people when they need them most.

> ACCESS TO MEDICINES

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is a central pillar of our health system, giving Australians timely access to safe and effective medicines. However, in recent years the PBS has become less predictable, with the listing of new medicines delayed by a government in search of a budget surplus.

The Greens will preserve the independence of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee and commit to listing all medicines found to be cost effective in a timely manner. The Greens would ensure that post-market reviews are conducted at arm's length from government rather than being exploited as a means of achieving short term savings.

The Greens oppose any provisions within the Trans-Pacific Partnership that could undermine the Australian Government's ability to provide medicines at the lowest possible price.

A Greens-led parliamentary inquiry into out-of-pocket costs will examine the cost of medicines and make recommendations on ways to make drugs more affordable where expense is a barrier to consumers.

The Greens would also pursue industry reforms, ensuring that there is **greater transparency** regarding the interactions between drug companies and the medical community. Under Greens reforms, all payments to doctors by drug companies would be disclosed.

The Greens would also **give the Therapeutic Goods Administration more teeth** to pursue manufacturers selling shonky health products and making misleading claims about their health benefits.

> REDUCING THE RURAL HEALTH IMBALANCE

Australia has good healthcare, but rural Australians are missing out due to a shortage of medical workforce, a lack of access to services and a lack of infrastructure. The Greens care about the health of all Australians and want a higher priority given to the health of Australians living outside our major cities.

To help bolster health services in regional and rural Australia, the Greens will invest over \$1 billion in rural health including:

- **\$450m earmarked for rural hospitals** by boosting federal hospital funding to the states for rural and regional hospitals.
- **Maintaining investing in Closing the Gap** in indigenous health including our \$368 million Hearing health initiative
- **\$200m in flexible rural infrastructure** grants to keep more clinics open longer.
- **\$20m in grants for doctors to provide training** in rural areas.
- **Fixing the classification system** so rural health professionals are properly remunerated according to level of remoteness
- **Funding after hours care** through Medicare Locals in rural areas to decrease the inequity in access to services.
- **Streamlining the accreditation of overseas doctors** until Australia is self-sufficient with the rural health workforce.
- **Delivering on rural mental health** by investing heavily in prevention and properly funding more mental health services in rural areas.

> PROPERLY FUNDING MENTAL HEALTH

Almost 50% of people will experience mental health problems at some stage in their lives, but our mental health system is suffering from decades of under-investment.

After extensive consultation, the Greens have committed to a huge investment in mental health services including \$550m for more mental health nurses, suicide prevention and a program to grow the mental health community sector in addition to \$550m specifically for rural mental health services.

By supporting community mental health programs, we can look after everyone and keep them leading full, healthy lives. For more information, see our [Mental Health policies](#).



> A SUSTAINABLE HEALTH SYSTEM

As the population ages, as the burden of chronic disease grows, as we face the health challenges of climate change and as new and ever-more-expensive therapies become available, our health system will come under enormous pressure. It is important to start acting now to reform our health system so it can meet the challenges of the future.

Some of our initiatives in sustainability include:

- An **inquiry into rising out-of-pocket costs** and expanding the role of Medicare
- Exploring new ways to realise **savings on the PBS**, while providing more certainty about listing to consumers and industry
- A **national Centre for Disease Control** to prepare for and manage outbreaks of infectious disease and the health effects of climate change, and to lead the way on managing the threat of antibiotic resistance
- A **Health Sustainability Unit** tasked with finding system-wide savings and efficiencies and reducing the environmental footprint of health infrastructure

Over the course of the next Parliament, the Greens will focus on well-resourced national strategies for preventing and treating chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease and chronic kidney disease.

By continuing to support Medicare Locals, we will properly resource measures that will help people get more targeted care from their GP and other primary care providers. This will help avoid unnecessary hospitalisation and let more people stay in their homes with assistance to manage their health problems.

> CLOSING THE GAP

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are among the most disadvantaged Australians, with the worst health outcomes. The gap in life expectancy is still over 10 years.

The Greens have supported the Close the Gap campaign since its inception – which calls for equality of access to essential services within a decade, and equality of outcomes on all major indicators of health, education and opportunities within 25 years. As part of this support, the Greens have advocated for great community control and ownership over the health programs. The Greens also have worked for years to stop **petrol sniffing** and in 2013 the Greens' Low Aromatic Fuel Bill became law. Other Greens achievements include: greater availability of **dialysis services**, and more resources for **mental health** and **suicide prevention**. We have also been strong advocates for **more effective alcohol policies**.

As well as supporting the Close the Gap campaign and advocating for all levels of Government to adequately fund

aboriginal health initiatives through the National Health Partnership Agreement, the Greens initiatives have focused on **hearing health** as a key area with a \$47 million package that includes an integrated approach to tackling otitis media (glue ear).

The Greens will have also introduced an initiative to tackle the **preventable vision loss** because blindness in aboriginal communities is six times higher than the average Australian rate.

> SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Health is about more than just access to healthcare. Where you live, your access to education and your employment opportunities all play an enormous role in determining your present and future health.

The Greens policies on Newstart, education reform, payments to single parents and tackling rising income inequality aren't just important social justice measures – they will improve the health outcomes of millions of people.

The Greens are committed to improving people's health not just by improving access to the health system, but by addressing inequalities in society that are important determinants of people's health.

> MAKING HEALTH A PRIORITY

The Greens believe health is a top priority of government. We are the only party willing to stand up and raise the revenue needed to pay for services that will keep Australians healthy and ensure the health system can cope into the future.

The Greens Health Plan has been fully costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office. We would invest an **extra \$9 billion in the nation's health** over a three year period. This includes:

- \$4.87b for Denticare
- \$1.5b in new hospital funding including \$450m for rural and regional hospitals
- \$1.1b for mental health, including \$550m for rural mental health services
- \$664m in extra funding for Medicare
- \$554m for Mental Health services
- \$368m to improve hearing health
- \$200m for rural health infrastructure grants

In addition, our **\$2.5 billion plan for research** in Australia will bolster our place as a leading centre of medical research and help Australians get access to the cutting-edge therapies of the future.



Our expenditures are fully offset by new savings and revenue measures which will be released in keeping with the Charter of Budget Honesty.

> MORE INFORMATION

Detailed information about our costed health initiatives and other Greens policies can be found at the [Greens web site](#), including:

- Denticare
- Funding for Hospitals
- Investing in Medicare
- Rural Health
- Mental Health and Rural Mental Health
- Focus on Hearing Health
- Clean Air Act

ⁱ AIHW, Dental attendance patterns and oral health status (2011)

ⁱⁱ AIHW Health Expenditure 2010-2011

ⁱⁱⁱ AIHW

^{iv} ABS figures, cited by COAG Reform Council, 2012

^v <https://ama.com.au/media/ama-calls-proper-indexation-medicare-patient-rebates>

2013 Initiative
No Longer Current



TOO PRECIOUS TO LOSE PROTECT OUR NATIONAL PARKS

The Greens' plan to safeguard our national parks

Our national parks are under attack like never before from shooting, logging and cattle grazing. Will state governments let national parks be mined next? We need national protection for national parks.

> WE NEED NATIONAL PROTECTION

The Australian Greens want to see our national parks protected under our national environment laws.

We are proposing that:

National Parks be added as a new matter of environmental significance under our national environment law – the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

This would mean that all activities that will significantly impact upon national parks would require federal approval. This would allow our federal Environment Minister to say no to logging, mining, damaging tourism developments, land clearing, grazing and, in certain circumstances, also shooting in our national parks.

> OTHER PARTIES FAILING

These attacks are why we need national protection for national parks. The Labor Government has been all talk, no action. They promised almost two years ago to protect national parks from particular damaging activities, but have not done so. Instead they have stood by as Tony Abbott's state government cronies stripped back state national park protections with their extreme agendas.

Only the Greens will stand up to big business and factional interests and give our national parks the national protection they need and deserve.

> VALUE OF NATIONAL PARKS

Australia's national parks are home to many of our continent's unique wildlife and their precious habitats. As our cities grow and industrial and agricultural activities have expanded, our national parks, where properly managed, have increasingly become critical refuges for survival of regionally and nationally threatened species.

The beauty of our national parks attracts millions of domestic and international tourists each year¹, bringing in over \$4 billion in revenue in 2012².

National parks are also important places where Australians enjoy time in the great outdoors with our families and friends, or quiet time away from it all. More than half of Australia's adults visited a national park or botanic garden in 2011-2012³, showing how much we value these iconic areas.

Our national parks, from our tropical rainforests to our snow-capped mountains, are too precious to lose. Yet our national parks are under attack like never before. Despite covering less than four percent of Australia, state governments are allowing shooting, logging, cattle grazing and tourism developments within these wildlife sanctuaries.



> NATIONAL PARKS UNDER THREAT

While many Australians reasonably assume our national parks are set up and protected under national laws, they are in fact only a creature of state laws. Yet they are a critical part of the protecting our biodiversity across Australia's landscapes. The Greens believe they are of national significance and deserve national protection⁴.

On 24 August 2011 Environment Minister Burke announced his intention to protect national parks from grazing, mining, logging or large scale land clearing. Nothing happened. On 28 March 2013, Senator Waters moved a motion in the Senate calling on the Government to act on that promise to protect national parks under our federal environment laws – the Senate voted in favour of the motion, but still nothing happened.

Meanwhile, the Newman Government in Queensland has opened up national parks to cattle grazing, and commenced a review to identify parks to open to loggers, the New South Wales Government has allowed shooting in national parks and are under pressure to allow logging and grazing, and the Victorian Government continues to push for cattle to graze in the Alpine National Park.

2013 Initiative
No Longer Current

¹ In 2011, 2.4 million international visitors and 10.4 million domestic travellers visited a national or state park in Australia: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2011 and International Visitor Survey, 2011

² Almost two thirds (61%) of all inbound visitors to Australia selected nature-based activities as the key purpose of their visit, bringing in over \$4 billion in revenue in 2012: Tourism and Transport Forum, 2012.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 26 March 2013, Community Engagement with Nature Conservation, Australia , 2011-12, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/ProductsbyReleaseDate/B58ED9EDEB6CF1BECA257B39000F3870?OpenDocument>

⁴ Currently, some national parks will have *some* national protection – if they are World Heritage listed, national heritage listed, contain Ramsar wetlands, contain nationally threatened species or ecological communities **and** the activity proposed is likely to have a significant impact on that protected matter. It's piecemeal protection at best, and rarely results in protection. Our proposal is for *all* of the environment within national parks to be able to be protected from activities likely to have a significant impact upon them.



BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY BETTER PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

The Greens' paid parental leave scheme respects working parents' rights.

The current paid parental leave scheme underpays and undervalues parents by treating paid parental leave as one-size-fits-all welfare payment, not a workplace right. As working women face increasing pressure, a more caring paid parental leave scheme will give families a better start.

The Government's existing paid parental leave scheme scrapes together a bare minimum for working parents, while the Coalition's promised scheme is overly generous and unrealistic.

The Greens are standing up for Australian families by proposing a responsible and achievable 6 month scheme, which links paid parental leave to earnings and reflects parents' fair entitlements when they take time off work to care for a growing family.

> CARING PARENTAL LEAVE

The Greens know how important it is to get paid parental leave right. It is the critical foundation for a child's earliest development while respecting and encouraging women's participation in the workforce. We are proposing a more generous paid parental leave scheme that cares for Australian families and promotes productivity and work-life balance.

The Australian Greens' paid parental leave (PPL) scheme:

- **Provides 6 months of paid leave at 100% of the primary carer's regular wage, capped at \$100,000 per annum (\$50K for the 6 months)** which recognises paid parental leave should be a workplace entitlement, not a welfare payment.
- **Includes superannuation contributions** to ensure women are not disadvantaged later in life for taking parenting leave.
- **Provides 2 additional weeks of leave to the secondary carer at 100% of their regular wage, capped at \$100,000 per annum** which means the second parent, often dads, will have secure and fairly remunerated time to bond with their new child.
- **Funded by a 1.5% business levy on companies' taxable incomes above \$5 million**, plus an achievable additional government contribution, of \$1.9 billion over the forward estimates.

> PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IS AN ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL

It's time for a major overhaul of paid parental leave so that Australia's paid parental leave scheme genuinely reflects the value and entitlements of working parents, as well as the importance of work-life balance in our society and economy.

Under the government's existing scheme, paid parental leave is universally set at the National Minimum Wage of \$622 per week.ⁱ For the primary carer, that's a payment of approximately \$11,000 over 18 weeks. Around 70% of employed women already earn more than this, particularly full-time workers, so the majority of women still take a significant pay cut to spend the valuable first few months with their new children.ⁱⁱ

The Greens' scheme pegs paid parental leave to the salary of each parent to a cap of \$100,000 per annum, and with a safety net floor of the National Minimum Wage, to be paid for 6 months (or 26 weeks). That means over the 6 months the paid parental leave for the primary carer will be between \$16,170 and \$50,000 based on their salary, plus any additional support provided by their employers.

As noted by the Productivity Commission, a well-crafted paid parental leave scheme delivers long run productivity benefits, increases women's lifetime workforce participation and better reflects the fair entitlements of employees.ⁱⁱⁱ Families with new babies will have a chance to bond and support each other from the earliest moment, with the additional dad and partner leave able to be used simultaneously or separately with the maternal leave.

Australia should be moving towards a paid parental leave scheme that matches the best in the world. The Greens' proposal is an important step on that path.



> SUPERANNUATION IS AN IMPERATIVE, NOT A BONUS

As Australia's population ages we are facing a worrying trend of women retiring into poverty. Recent figures show average superannuation balances for women are \$39 000 less than men while payout at retirement is \$85 400 less for women than men.^{iv} The significant gap is partially a result of many women being out of the workforce on parental leave at one or more times in their working lives. Only by directly tackling this gap head on by providing superannuation as part of paid parental leave, can we ensure that another generation of women will not fall behind, and the Greens are willing to do that while Labor is not.

By including superannuation at the guarantee rate in our paid parental leave scheme, the Greens are ensuring that women who take time off work will not be even worse off when they reach retirement age.

> CATCHING UP ON EQUALITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Many equivalent OECD countries have well-established and generous schemes linked to salaries, including Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.^v

In **Norway**, parents may choose to take a total of 46 weeks of leave at 100 per cent pay or 56 weeks at 80 per cent pay, and with 10 weeks quarantined for the partner or dad only.

In **Belgium**, new parents' leave is linked to their salary, ranging over the period of paid leave from 100% to 75% depending on the timeframe of leave, the sector and which parent.

In **Sweden**, qualifying parents receive 80% of their usual net salary for the first 390 days of their 480 days of paid leave.

In **Finland**, parents can access 47.5 weeks of leave to be divided between parents and paid at a rate between 30-70% of the parent's most recent salary.

The **United Kingdom** has already partly moved to a wage replacement model with a full 39 weeks paid leave (6 weeks at 90% of full pay and remainder at a flat rate).

> HELPING PARTNERS AFFORD MORE TIME TO PROVIDE CARE

The Greens understand that shared parenting requires both partners to be involved with caring for children from the earliest possible time. But because the existing paid parental leave scheme only pays the partner at the National Minimum Wage for 2 weeks, many secondary carers currently cannot afford to take up the Dad and Partner Pay entitlement.

The Greens' plan for paid parental leave is fully committed to delivering Dad and Partner Pay that genuinely supports parents to make full use of those two weeks, by setting the rate of paid leave as 100% of the partner's salary capped at \$100,000.

We believe this is important because partner leave has emotional benefits, facilitates bonding, positively affects children's emotional and educational achievements and provides support for the mother or partner.^{vi} Children with involved, caring parents have been shown to have better educational outcomes in later childhood.^{vii}

Enhancing the take up of Dad and Partner Pay is a crucial step along the road to acknowledging and confirming in practice that men and women should be able to play equal roles in the home and workplace.

> THE ONLY SCHEME THAT IS AFFORDABLE AND FAIR

The Greens' scheme will be funded jointly by government and business. The Parliamentary Budget Office has costed the 1.5% levy as raising \$5.2 billion over the forward estimates, reaching \$2.6 billion in 2016-17. The additional cost the government from our scheme is \$1.9 billion over the forward estimates.

The levy will be applied to approximately 3145 companies with taxable incomes above \$5 million.^{viii} By the 2016-17 financial year the additional cost to government is less than \$200 million making this scheme fairer, more caring and affordable over the long term.

> OTHER PARTIES

Our scheme is an affordable scheme with much better outcomes than the existing scheme. The Labor government has failed to have the courage to fund a proper scheme. The existing scheme is a bare minimum payment based on a welfare model, rather than putting Australia firmly on the route to paid parental leave as full workplace entitlement as the Greens' scheme does.

Our scheme also avoids the pitfalls of the Coalition's overly generous and unachievable scheme, which is less equitable and will not be accompanied by other critical elements protecting women's rights at work.

The Coalition have yet to release costings on their proposal and it remains unclear how they will pay for it, given the levy will not cover the whole cost. Their scheme also overreaches with a cap on replacement income of \$150,000 when we know that 50% of paid parental leave applicants earn less than \$43,000.^{ix} A person with an income of \$105,461 is earning more than 90% of taxpayers, demonstrating that the Greens scheme captures the broad majority of incomes without going to the rolled-gold extent of the Coalition's scheme.^x



> FIXING EMPLOYMENT LAWS TO GET THE MOST FROM PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

The Greens are also proposing key changes to workplace laws to make sure that a better paid parental leave scheme is supported by fairer rights at work. We will be backing legislative amendments that link the leave payment to the entitlement for parental leave so there's absolutely no room for misapplication. We'll also be backing legislative amendments for strengthening the right for mothers to return to work with genuine flexibility so they can continue to provide appropriate care for their children.

For new mothers who have recently changed jobs or low income earners in new jobs, the Greens will look to make sure that they do not miss out on paid parental leave eligibility.

The establishment of a better paid parental leave scheme that sets up further improvements in the future will not stop employers from offering better arrangements as part of industrial agreements, and this is encouraged by the Greens.

Unions NSW believes there is certainly room for improvement, particularly to make paid parental leave more available for low to middle income earners who can then afford to take the entire six months off: "Many families are currently finding it extremely difficult to afford taking parental leave paid at the minimum wage. We believe we can relieve that pressure without taking the sort of unbalanced measures proposed by Tony Abbott".^{xi}

ⁱ <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/centrelink/parental-leave-payABS>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/6306.0Main%20Features1May%202012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6306.0&issue=May%202012&num=&view=>

ⁱⁱⁱ Productivity Commission inquiry report, *Paid Parental Leave: Support for Parents with Newborn Children*, No 47, 28 February 2009, paras XXIII and 4.6

^{iv} Ross Clare, "Developments in the level and distribution of retirement savings", Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia, September 2011.

^v http://www.oecd.org/els/family/PF2.1_Parental_leave_systems%20-%20updated%20%2018_July_2012.pdf or the International Network on Leave Policies and Research: http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/

^{vi} Productivity Commission inquiry report, *Paid Parental Leave: Support for Parents with Newborn Children*, No 47, 28 February 2009, para 4.52.

^{vii} http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-Parental_Involvement.pdf

^{viii} Australian Taxation Statistics 2010–11, Detailed Tables, Company Tax and Petroleum Resources Rent Tax, Income Items, Table 3A.

^{ix} Baird M and Whitehouse G, (2012) 'Paid Parental Leave First Birthday Policy Review', *Australian Bulletin of Labor*, 38(3) pp 184-199.

^x Australian Taxation Statistics 2010–11

^{xi} Mark Lennon, UnionsNSW, Press release 16 June 2013 <http://www.unionsnsw.org.au/press-release/1911/>