

Australian Greens

members handbook





Dear Australian Greens Member,

Welcome to the fast-moving, optimistic world of Green politics. As a member of the Australian Greens you have become part of the Global Green movement of over 80 parties, linked by common ideals across lands, languages and cultures.

Together we are a strong voice for the community, the environment, for democracy and for peace. We think about the long-term in all we do, asking: "Will people 100 years from now thank us for this?"

We are looking forward to making the Senate a house of innovation. Now there are five Greens in the Senate we have achieved parliamentary party status and share the balance of power. We will be working with you, and our state and local government colleagues, to help Australia take a lead in world politics for human values, not just dollars.

This handy guide to the Greens is your invitation to be informed, be involved and be active.

To find out more about what we are doing, please visit: www.GreensMPs.org.au

Our best wishes,

**Bob Brown, Christine Milne, Rachel Siewert,
Sarah Hanson-Young and Scott Ludlam**

Australian Greens Senators





welcome to the greens

This handbook is for new and existing members of the Australian Greens. It outlines how we work and what we believe in and gives information about our history and processes. We hope it will give you a sense of what is special and exciting about the Greens and motivate you to become more actively involved.

The Australian Greens is a confederation of State and Territory parties that operate autonomously at a regional level, with coordination through a national office in Canberra.

The Australian Greens is a rapidly growing political party. We have now around 10,000 members, and over 1 million people give their number one vote to the Greens.

Thank you for joining us - we trust that you enjoy being part of the Greens!

Note: Greens policies are not dealt with in this document, but are available on our website, or contact your State office for more information.



the greens are different

The Greens are very different from other political parties in the way that we work to bring about social and environmental change.

This handbook discusses a number of things that are special or unique to the Greens:

- We have a strong commitment to 'participatory democracy' - we seek to find just and sustainable solutions to social and environmental problems by working 'from the bottom up'. This gives our members a genuine opportunity to participate in political processes.
- We don't focus on 'leaders' - our parliamentarians and convenors are directed by and accountable to the grassroots.
- We make principled decisions and publicly stand by them - we don't 'do deals', make trade-offs or accept donations from big business.

the four pillars

The Greens have four key principles:

Peace and nonviolence

We strive to achieve a culture of peace and cooperation between nation states, inside societies and between individuals, as the basis of global security. We believe that security should not depend on military strength but on cooperation, sound economics and social development, environmental safety and respect for human rights.

Social justice

The key to social justice is the equitable distribution of social and natural resources to ensure that all people have full opportunities for personal and social development. There can be no social justice without environmental justice, and vice versa.

- We are committed to consensus decision making - we don't play numbers games and only vote as a last resort.
- We are part of a global movement - Greens around the world share a commitment to a common set of values and actively collaborate beyond nationalistic interests to achieve just and sustainable outcomes for the greater good of the whole planet.

greens values

Green groups and parties around the globe share a commitment to a common set of principles, which are summarised by the Global Greens Charter:

www.globalgreens.org/globalcharter

The Greens have their origins in political activism. Feminism, social justice, peace and environment movements were the foundations of our party and

Grassroots participatory democracy

We work towards a democracy in which all people are able to directly participate in the decisions that affect their lives, so that power and responsibility are concentrated in local and regional communities.

Ecological sustainability

We acknowledge that human beings are interdependent with the natural world and we respect all forms of life. We must preserve biodiversity and the integrity and resilience of life supporting ecosystems. We can learn a great deal from the way indigenous peoples of the world respect and nurture the land.



continue to inform and inspire our activities. Our policies and processes, particularly our commitment to nonviolence, to gender equity and to the environment, reflect these founding influences.

code of ethics

Greens aspire to a code of ethics that guides our behaviours. We hope that new members will embrace these principles and enjoy the Green 'spirit'.

We endeavour to be tolerant and respectful, avoiding demeaning behaviour towards any person or group. We value trustworthiness, sincerity and truth. We seek to provide a conciliatory and supportive work environment, and have group processes in place to encourage active participation, foster diversity and resolve conflict.

greens processes

The journey is as important as the final destination: the processes we use to achieve social change must be consistent with our principles.

Consensus decision making

Greens aim to find consensus in all our decision making. This results in better relationships within the group and decisions that all (or nearly all) of the group support.

Consensus is more than just a process for making decisions without voting - it is a process of gathering information and views, and often results in a synthesis of proposals.

Although it sometimes requires patience and perseverance,

consensus decision making has several advantages:

- It increases the likelihood of new and better ideas being raised.
- It produces more intelligent decisions, incorporating everyone's best thinking.
- It minimises adversarial attitudes and avoids 'win-lose' situations.
- It increases participants' enthusiasm to work for the agreed outcomes.
- It significantly reduces the risk of creating a disgruntled minority.

How we work in Parliament

Our MPs are accountable to the party for the decisions they make in office and report on their activities in party publications and at Council meetings.

As well as advancing Greens policies, we are committed to reducing the adversarial nature of





parliament. We endeavour to find constructive solutions that do not compromise our principles.

Greens MPs try to avoid the disrespectful behaviours that are common in our parliaments, in keeping with our code of ethics.

We do not trade across issues. We make principled decisions and vote on each issue according to its own merits. We will not support a particular piece of legislation in return for support for another issue.

How we communicate

From Party to Members

Many local groups and State parties have regular newsletters giving information about events and progress of Greens campaigns.

National news and views are covered in our magazine, 'Green' which is published three times per year and mailed to most financial members. Non-members can receive 'Green' magazine for a subscription of \$11 per year.

Added to this, we have our websites and e-mail correspondence lists, so it is very easy to keep up with happenings within the Greens at all levels.

From Members to Party

Active membership is highly valued in the Greens and our members provide invaluable knowledge and experience to the party.

Your views and contributions are welcomed: take part, write a piece for the newsletters, speak up at the meetings and follow what is going on at the Conferences, Councils and other meetings.

We look forward to hearing from you!

greens structure

The Australian Greens is a confederation of State and Territory parties that operate autonomously at a regional level. Grass roots participation is cherished as the foundation and true strength of our party.

Four spheres

There are four spheres of Greens activities: Local, State, National and Global. In each arena,

members are afforded many opportunities for input into the policies and operations of the party.

Participatory democracy within our own organisation empowers our members and minimises executive decision making.

Local

The fundamental unit of the Greens party is the local group.

The activity level of local groups varies depending on the involvement of its local members. The party functions best when it has dynamic local groups involved in local issues, feeding their on-the-ground knowledge and concerns to the State and national bodies. This direct input into our discussions and decision making is invaluable.



Greens are committed to grassroots democracy and encourage local Greens groups to run their own campaigns for their local electorates and local councils.

States and Territories

The independent evolution of the Greens parties around the country is reflected in the different ways each State and Territory organises itself today. For details of the structure within your own State, please contact your local party office (see directory).

However, the basic pattern is consistent, with local groups combining to make up the State and Territory parties.

Each State and Territory Greens has its own administrative arm and forms working groups to assist local groups with election campaigns, coordinate policy development, focus on particular topics or campaigns and provide input to the Australian Greens.



National

The Australian Greens has an office in Canberra, which is responsible for national coordination of the Greens and coordinating Federal election campaigns.

The tasks of the national body also include managing policy development, national level advertising and media relations, and liaison with other national and global organisations. It also maintains a website and publishes 'Green' magazine.

Global

The Australian Greens is part of the Global Greens network in the Asia Pacific region. International Greens news is disseminated through an e-mail network. The Australian Greens web site has links to Greens organisations around the world.

Conferences & Councils

The Annual Conference of the Australian Greens brings together delegates from all the States and Territories.

The Conference, which is held in October or November, also functions as the Greens Annual General Meeting.

In addition to ratifying policies and making decisions according to a formal agenda it is also an excellent opportunity to attend a range of interesting workshops and to network with fellow Greens.

The Australian Greens also hold Council meetings between Conferences, usually in March and July. Delegates from all the States and Territories make decisions on current issues. In situations of urgency, the Council can also ratify policies on an interim basis.

National Councils and Conferences are held in the different States and Territories on a rotational basis.

Greens Constitution

The Australian Greens works according to its constitution and its by-laws. Both can be found on the members page of the web site:

www.greens.org.au/members

Greens parties in each State and Territory also have their own constitutions. The Australian Greens Constitution can be amended at the Annual Conference, while a Council meeting may alter the by-laws.

The constitution will tell you all about the operations of the party, including:

- How the States are represented.
- How quick decisions can be made.

Duties of office bearers.

In the by-laws you will find a host of practical details, including:

- How office bearers are elected.
- Duties of various working groups.
- Rules for meeting processes.

Funding

- **Donations:** The Australian Greens are committed to taking donations only from organisations and individuals operating within Greens principles.
- **Membership dues:** These are collected by each State organisation which pays a certain amount per member to the Australian Greens.





- **Tithing:** Senators and other federally elected Greens pay a percentage of their income to both their own State parties and the Australian Greens. Tithing by State MPs benefits their home State.
- **Election refund:** Federal elections attract funding based on the number of votes gained. This funding is initially collected by the State organisations, which forward part of it to the Australian Greens.
- **Bequests:** Some members and supporters of the Greens have remembered the Australian Greens or State parties in their wills. This is an invaluable gift to future generations. Fundraising events are organised by individual States and local groups.
- **Greenschemes:** Several States have direct debit arrangements whereby regular donations can be made to the Greens.



getting involved

As a member, there is a lot that you can do for the Greens in addition to paying your membership fee.

You can get active in the party by getting involved in your local or regional group, or by joining a working group in your area of interest or expertise.

Election times are particularly busy and calls go out to members for help with activities such as letterboxing leaflets, door knocking and polling booth duties.

State offices often rely heavily on volunteers to answer phones, process correspondence and perform other administrative tasks.

Policy development involves some research and analysis of issues from a Greens perspective. If you have an interest or expertise in a particular area, you may wish to contribute to a Greens policy-making group.



Perhaps one day you may consider standing for an elected office.

Spread the word about Green issues by talking to neighbours and friends about our aims and activities.

Speaking to groups, holding stalls and using radio talk back can also raise community awareness as well as writing letters and articles for newspapers.

Some people are able to give donations.

Fundraising is always important for campaigns and for providing resources for essential items such as printing material and office rental. Contact your State office if you have ideas and enthusiasm for fundraising.

We invite you to contribute however, wherever and whenever you can!





greens history

Global Movement

The Green movement evolved spontaneously in many parts of the world, largely as a reaction to a world in which scant regard was being paid to social justice or ecological sustainability.

It became clear that to be most effective, the Green movement needed to have voices within parliamentary spheres and seek elected representatives. Green political parties were formed - arguably the first, in 1972, being the United Tasmania Group followed a few months later by the New Zealand Values Party.

During the 1970s other Green parties were formed in several European countries.

The first party to call itself 'Green' was the (then) West German Greens, Die Grünen, which was formed in 1980.

In Europe, collaboration between the different Greens parties dates back to the 1980s and globally Greens have continued to gain strength and inspiration from each others achievements.

Global Greens

Australia was proud to host the first Conference of Global Greens, held in Canberra in April 2001, with 800 delegates from 70 different countries meeting to discuss global issues.

This exciting initiative established a Global Greens network. The second Global Greens Conference was held in São Paulo in May 2008, with 700-800 participants from 88 different countries. Several declarations and resolutions were made on Green issues, for which global cooperation is extremely important. A decision was made to create a Global Greens Secretariat to facilitate cooperation.

The Global Greens' main communication is by e-mail and our Global Greens coordinator circulates international news through email lists.

To subscribe to this list contact:

global@greens.org.au





Global Greens Charter

The Canberra Conference also led to the adoption of the Global Greens Charter. This Charter expresses Greens ideology, the ideals that bind us together and point to the kind of future we are working towards.

The sections of the Charter detail the Greens approach to ecology, democracy, an ecologically sustainable economy, meaningful work, culture, information, global responsibility and a focus on the long-term future. The Charter illustrates the wide scope of our commitment in these areas.

See: www.global.greens.org.au/charter

the greens in australia

The Australian Greens, along with the global movement, has its roots in and continues to draw from a variety of influences, particularly the peace,



social justice and environment movements. Possibly the world's first 'Green' party formed in Tasmania on 23 March 1972, when the United Tasmania Group set up a campaign to stop the drowning of Lake Pedder.

Taking inspiration from the German Greens, state-based Greens parties sprang up independently around Australia in the 1980s. The NSW Greens formed in 1984, the same year that West Australian Jo Vallentine was elected to the Senate representing the Nuclear Disarmament Party. Following the formation of The Greens (WA) in 1990, Jo Vallentine was elected as the first Greens Senator in Australia. Senator Christabel Chamarette followed her in 1992 and was joined by Senator Dee Margetts in 1993.

Tasmania was also emerging as a Greens stronghold - the campaign to save the Franklin saw Bob Brown elected to the Tasmanian parliament in 1983, and joined





by four fellow activists in 1989, forming the Tasmanian Green Independents. Meanwhile, the Queensland Greens were established in 1991, the Victorian Greens in 1992, the ACT Greens in 1992, the NT Greens in 1994 and the South Australian Greens in 1995.

In the 1980s, several preliminary moves were made towards the establishment of a national Greens party. In 1990, the discussions began in earnest, finally leading to the formation of the Australian Greens in 1992, comprised of the Queensland, NSW and Tasmanian Greens. The ACT Greens joined soon after, followed by the Victorian Greens, SA and the Northern Territory. On 11 October 2003, The Greens (WA) officially came on board, making the Australian Greens a truly national party.

Bob Brown became the first Australian Greens Senator in 1996, followed in 2001 by Kerry Nettle from NSW. In 2002, Michael Organ won the seat of Cunningham in NSW, becoming the first Australian Green in the House of Representatives. In 2004 Christine Milne from Tasmania and Rachel Siewert from WA were elected and at the 2007 election Sarah Hanson-Young from SA and Scott Ludlam from WA joined the senate team.

Greens membership, votes and representation continue to climb. We have elected representatives at local, State and Federal levels. By 2008, the Greens had five Federal Senators, fifteen State and Territory parliamentarians, over one hundred local councillors and around 10,000 members. The Greens have emerged as the third force in Australian politics.

A major part of this success can be attributed to the commitment of Greens members and supporters, who can be found working for peace and social and environmental justice in groups and organisations around the country.

This gives Greens the expertise and authenticity to pursue our goals.

“Think globally, act locally”



greens contacts

Australian Greens

greens.org.au

Ground floor, Unit 4, Jacobs House,
8-10 Hobart Place, Canberra
GPO Box 1108, Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6140 3217 or 1800 017 011 (toll free)
Fax: 02 6247 6455
greens@greens.org.au

ACT Greens

act.greens.org.au

Ground floor, Unit 4, Jacobs House,
8-10 Hobart Place, Canberra
GPO Box 2019, Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6140 3220 Fax: 02 6247 6455
office@act.greens.org.au

The Greens NSW

nsw.greens.org.au

19 Eve St Erskineville
GPO Box 1220, Sydney NSW 2001
Ph: 02 9519 0877 Fax: 02 9519 2177
office@nsw.greens.org.au

Northern Territory Greens

nt.greens.org.au

PO Box 421, Nightcliff NT 0814,
Ph: 0416 267 366
office@nt.greens.org.au

Queensland Greens

qld.greens.org.au

PO Box 661 Albion BC 4010
Ph: 07 3844 4667 Fax: 07 3112 4337
office@qld.greens.org.au



Australian Greens (SA)

sa.greens.org.au

239 Wright St, Adelaide SA 5000

Ph: 08 8212 4888 Fax: 08 8212 4822

enquiries@sa.greens.org.au

Tasmanian Greens

tas.greens.org.au

83 Harrington St, Hobart

GPO Box 1132, Hobart TAS 7001

Ph: 03 6236 9334 Fax: 03 6236 9331

party@tas.greens.org.au

Australian Greens Victoria

vic.greens.org.au

First floor, 377 Little Bourke St, Melbourne

GPO Box 4589, Melbourne VIC 3001

Ph: 03 9602 1141 Fax: 03 9602 1655

office@vic.greens.org.au

The Greens (WA)

wa.greens.org.au

Ground floor 445 Hay St. Perth

PO Box 3022 Perth WA 6832

Ph: 08 9221 8333 Fax: 08 9221 8433

office@wa.greens.org.au



www.greens.org.au