



Health

Policy Category: D. Care for People

Issued: June 2008

Principles

The Australian Greens believe that:

1. access to quality health care is a basic human right.
2. individual health outcomes are influenced by the inter-relationship of biological, social, economic and environmental factors.
3. governments are responsible for ensuring that all people have access to the resources and opportunities essential for good health.
4. preventative approaches, measures to alleviate social disadvantage, and universal access to an effective health care system are necessary to address inequities in health outcomes.
5. an effective health system must be based on primary health care and preventive health care, such as health promotion, disease prevention and early intervention, in order to reduce avoidable admissions and pressure on hospitals.
6. the public health system is the best way to deliver health services.
7. the interests of patients must be placed ahead of disputes over federal, state and local government responsibilities.
8. the health system must be focussed on individual and social wellbeing.
9. people have the right to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care.
10. an effective health care system is dependent upon a skilled, well-resourced workforce.
11. it is essential to plan now for changing disease patterns arising from climate change.

Goals

The Australian Greens want:

12. a universal public health care system for all Australians.
13. universal access to publicly funded primary dental care.
14. increased primary health care funding to ensure greater access to general practitioner services.
15. a health system which has strong, well-funded primary treatment and prevention options as well as acute, hospital based care.
16. primary treatment and prevention services that provide first contact, community-based care.
17. health funding that supports preventive care and health promotion, multidisciplinary teams and networks, and co-located services.
18. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have health outcomes and life expectancy equal to other Australians.
19. increased funding for services and education for the prevention and early detection of mental illness.
20. health funding that meets the increasing demands resulting from climate change.

Measures

The Australian Greens will:

21. develop a National Health Care Strategy, with a focus on primary health care, which ensures national coordination and shared responsibility in health care, research and evaluation.
22. support Medicare as a universal health insurance scheme funded from progressive taxation.
23. abolish the private health insurance rebate and redirect funds to the public health system, including public hospitals.
24. increase incentives for GPs and medical specialists to bulk bill.
25. increase the number of salaried GPs in order to increase access to GP services.
26. increase the number of well funded multipurpose community health care centres and services in regional, rural, and remote areas.
27. enact measures, including legislation, to protect and extend the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
28. ensure that the membership of regulatory bodies, such as the Pharmaceutical Advisory Committee, is made up of independent scientific experts, clinically based health care advisors and consumer representatives, in order to provide independence from undue influence.
29. fund preventive health programs which include appropriate screening activities and healthy lifestyle education.
30. introduce legislation to promote healthy choices, including a ban on junk food advertising on children's television.
31. continue restrictions on pharmaceutical advertising, and restrict pharmaceutical promotions to health professionals, including undergraduates.
32. ensure funding for health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that will raise their health status to a level comparable to other Australians.
33. work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and relevant agencies to deliver accessible, culturally-appropriate and community-controlled health services.
34. support and add to current innovations that facilitate the training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and migrant health professionals.
35. introduce and fully fund a Commonwealth Dental Scheme for low income earners and their families, which provides essential dental care and a full dental examination every two years.
36. adopt mechanisms to increase access to primary dental services through Medicare.
37. increase funding to mental health services in collaboration with states and territories, particularly to prevention models, and hospital and community-based support, assessment and suicide prevention services.
38. establish properly resourced, strategically located 24 hour community mental health services, staffed by the full range of mental health professionals.
39. expand community-based support services and agencies to enable people with chronic mental and/or physical illnesses, and their carers, to live in and participate more fully in their communities.

AUSTRALIAN GREENS POLICY: Health (cont'd)

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40. increase student places in medical, dental and nursing schools, and allied health courses, to address the shortage of health professionals with commensurate funding for staffing and facilities to ensure high quality training and mentorship programs.
41. review and implement effective measures to attract health professionals to rural and remote areas.
42. legislate to enable people with long-term chronic illnesses to continue to access Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines at the concession rate when moving to low paid work and ceasing the Disability Support Pension.
43. ensure all women have access to legal, free and safe pregnancy termination services, including unbiased counselling.
44. ensure access to a full range of birthing services.
45. support improved labelling, and contents and nutritional disclosure, on all food sold in Australia, including country of origin.
46. work for more comprehensive enforcement of standards for food labelling and health and nutritional benefit claims.
47. support improved preparation for emergency responses to pandemics.
48. establish an ongoing assessment of, and management plan for, the health risks posed by climate change to Australians.