



Education

Policy Category: D. Care for People

Issued: June 2008

Principles

The Australian Greens believe that:

1. education is the key to Australia's future health, wealth and happiness. Australia's prosperity, environmental sustainability, well being and social fulfilment depend on universal access to high quality education.
2. all people are entitled to free, well-funded and high quality, life-long public education and training.
3. the principal responsibility of government is to fund and support a high quality public education system available to all.
4. flexibility within the public education system is essential for the provision of a wide and diverse range of education options.
5. financial and resource needs of public education must receive the highest priority within the education budget.
6. Australian society is best served in the long term through educating our children in a system which brings them together to learn side-by-side; high levels of enrolments in the public school system are healthy for our community and Commonwealth funding policies should reflect this.
7. parents and citizens' organisations, staff, and teacher, academic and student unions have a right to play a significant role in setting directions, priorities, curricula and the running of the public education system.
8. early childhood education is a critical component of lifelong learning and should be provided by government and accredited community organisations, not by corporate or for-profit providers.
9. the maintenance and development of a separate, public technical and further education (TAFE) system as the dominant provider of vocational education and training (VET) is essential.
10. the community and the not-for-profit VET sector plays an important role and must be supported.
11. universities are places of learning and research, where the needs of the whole community and the values of service to the public and scholarship take priority over sectional and commercial interests.
12. fulltime university and TAFE students are entitled to a living allowance which enables them to study instead of having to work during term time.
13. academic freedom, which allows for critical comment and innovation without fear of reprisals, must be protected.
14. education unions are the appropriate industrial representatives in all educational matters.
15. all public education infrastructure must be publicly owned.
16. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities should determine their own education opportunities consistent with their unique circumstances, needs and voices.

AUSTRALIAN GREENS POLICY: Education (cont'd)

www.greens.org.au/about/policies

17. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should be centrally involved in the determination of their own educational priorities and in the design and delivery of education opportunities at all levels.
18. it is neither desirable nor practical to pay differential amounts to teachers, other than by an accountable system of promotions or to encourage teachers into positions that are difficult to staff.

Early Childhood Education

Goals

The Australian Greens want:

19. every child in Australia to have access at least two years of public preschool education.
20. significantly improved remuneration for early childhood educators, in recognition of their role within the community as educational practitioners.

Measures

The Australian Greens will:

21. fund the construction of new public preschool facilities.
22. increase pre-service and professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.
23. provide additional teachers and resources for preschool children with special needs.

Schools Education

Goals

The Australian Greens want:

24. a public school system that is internationally recognised as among the best in the world.
25. teachers' and other educators' salaries restored to a level that recognises the importance of the work that they do and encourages committed and capable people into the teaching profession.
26. smaller class sizes.
27. specialist teachers available for all children with special needs and/or learning difficulties.
28. timely re-training and professional development for teachers.
29. schools, in both the public and private sectors, that are free from discrimination.
30. an increased share of the Commonwealth's schools budget for public schools.
31. funding mechanisms that do not attempt to impose narrow ideologically based outcomes on schools by the threat of withholding federal monies.
32. no corporate influence on education policy and curriculum material, no use of sponsors' material in classrooms and no display of corporate logos on school property or school publications.

AUSTRALIAN GREENS POLICY: Education (cont'd)

www.greens.org.au/about/policies

33. an option for parents to educate their children at home and/or other settings provided they demonstrate a commitment and ability to provide a balanced education, core educational outcomes and social interaction with peers.
34. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's educational outcomes to at least match those of the rest of the Australian population.

Measures

The Australian Greens will:

35. support funding mechanisms that prioritise public schools.
36. abolish the Commonwealth Government's inequitable schemes for funding private schools which link private school funding to the cost of educating students in the public system, including the socioeconomic status (SES) and 'funding maintained' formulae.
37. invest the money saved from ending public subsidies to the very wealthiest private schools into a national equity funding programme for public schools.
38. support the maintenance of the total level of Commonwealth funding for private schools at 2003–04 levels (excluding that re-allocated under previous clauses), indexed for inflation, with a review at the end of the 2005–08 quadrennium.
39. reintroduce the New Schools Policy which will prevent the development of new private schools that would threaten the viability and diversity of existing public schools in the same area.
40. institute a broad-ranging investigation into the funding of school education.
41. end government funding for schools that operate for private profit.
42. extend to private schools the anti-discrimination measures that apply in public schools.
43. fund reduced class sizes in all public schools that suffer socioeconomic disadvantage, starting with those that recruit students from communities that have a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and those that cater for children with special needs.
44. substantially increase specialist support services for students with special needs, including those with a disability, and students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
45. work for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in the school curriculum, and the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in the training and development of all teachers.
46. improve funding for teacher training and professional development.
47. introduce accountability frameworks for government funding to non-government schools to create the same minimum level of public accountability and transparency that applies to public schools.
48. end the public ranking of schools in 'league tables'.
49. oppose any national tertiary entrance qualification system which reduces standards as compared to current state tertiary qualification systems.
50. reject the use of education funding vouchers.
51. support decisions about curriculum, testing, reporting and teaching methods being made by experts in consultation with teachers, parents, students and the community.

52. increase capital works and maintenance budgets for public education infrastructure, while ensuring public ownership and control and the minimisation of environmental impacts.

Vocational Education Training

Goals

The Australian Greens want:

53. a free, well-funded TAFE system.
54. the protection of TAFE from competition policy in order to increase the proportion of VET funding that goes to public and community VET providers.
55. VET funding priorities to seek a balance between the objectives of meeting student desires, employment demand, and providing skills in high satisfaction and sustainable jobs.
56. well-paid TAFE teachers who have secure career structures and manageable workloads.
57. educators to play a key role in developing and reviewing training packages.
58. improved living allowance for a greater number of TAFE students.
59. a role for TAFE in research and innovation, especially research in education and training.
60. a vibrant community VET sector.

Measures

The Australian Greens will:

61. fund enough places to meet demand for VET from every suitably qualified applicant.
62. reduce class sizes.
63. provide appropriate remuneration and professional development for teachers.
64. increase per-student funding to at least 1996 levels appropriately indexed.
65. provide one-off payments to address the adverse impacts of funding cuts since 1996.
66. ensure that public funding of private providers of VET and businesses supplying training opportunities does not diminish the viability of public TAFE services, expertise or facilities.
67. phase out the public funding of privately provided VET where TAFE could provide the same educational and training outcomes.
68. abolish all fees and charges for educational services.
69. provide a means-tested living allowance to all fulltime students.
70. amend the Australian Quality Training Framework to redress the over-casualisation of TAFE teaching by introducing a benchmark of 80 percent of teaching by permanent staff throughout public and private VET providers.
71. incorporate the Australian Technical Colleges into state-funded TAFE.
72. remove the link between Federal funding and industrial relations issues in TAFE.
73. increase the availability of a wide range of apprenticeships, especially in rural and regional Australia.

Higher Education

Goals

The Australian Greens want:

74. free university education for Australian citizens, permanent residents and refugees.
75. improved access to comprehensive tertiary education for rural and remote communities.
76. reduced class sizes.
77. improved completion rates through increased student/staff time.
78. internationally competitive conditions for academic staff.
79. increased government funded places to satisfy unmet demand.
80. increased enrolments and completions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
81. upgraded buildings and amenities on campus.
82. a cooperative approach to student and funding distribution between universities.
83. enrolment for high-demand courses with limited places to be based on merit and not on ability to pay.
84. improved and protected collective bargaining rights for university staff.
85. elected staff and student representatives on university governing bodies.

Measures

The Australian Greens will:

86. legislate to increase democratic participation by academics, staff, students and community representatives in the decision-making processes within universities.
87. abolish fees for educational services at public universities for Australian students and forgive HECS debts and FEE-HELP debt incurred at public universities.
88. provide a means tested living allowance for all full-time students.
89. repeal voluntary student unionism.
90. support the role of student unions and allow the universal collection of fees from students for amenities and services, provided any fees collected are under the democratic control of the student body.
91. support affirmative action entrance, residential programs and ongoing assistance to improve opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students entering university.
92. ensure adequate funding to all rural, regional and outer-suburban universities to enable them to serve their communities and meet local and regional demand.
93. protect the right of academics to develop and maintain a research career.
94. significantly increase the per-student funding of universities and implement index-based funding.

AUSTRALIAN GREENS POLICY: Education (cont'd)

www.greens.org.au/about/policies

95. increase the number of publicly funded places so that every qualified Australian can have access to a university education.
96. increase funding to expand the research capacity of Australian universities.
97. increase the proportion of research funding allocated to pure research and to research for the public good.
98. oppose Australian Workplace Agreements in universities.