



## Constitutional Reform and Democracy

Policy Category: E. Human Rights and Democracy

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### Principles

*The Australian Greens believe that:*

1. citizens have the right and the responsibility to participate in the processes of government.
2. Australia's Constitution and democratic structures should help to build an ecologically sustainable and equitable society, with a global consciousness and an intergenerational perspective.
3. Australia's Constitution should express our aspirations as a community and define our rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of the community.
4. Parliament is the central authority of representative and responsible government.
5. the composition of Parliament should reflect the diversity of opinion within society.
6. government decisions should, where possible and appropriate, be made by the level of government that is closest to the people affected.
7. Australia should become a republic with an Australian head of state.

### Goals

*The Australian Greens want:*

8. our rights and responsibilities to be set out in, and protected by, law.
9. constitutional recognition of Australia's cultural diversity, and the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original and ongoing residents of Australia.
10. Parliament to be more democratic and representative of the Australian population.
11. a strong Senate that can always act as a house of review.
12. increased independence of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate.
13. a stronger role for local government.
14. Australia to become a republic with an Australian head of state, who shall not have the power to dismiss the Prime Minister.

### Measures

*The Australian Greens will:*

15. enact a Bill of Rights.
16. initiate a three-stage process to establish a republic with an Australian head of state, consisting of:
  - a non-binding plebiscite to determine whether Australians support a republic;
  - a consultative process to determine a model for the selection of a head of state; and
  - a referendum to endorse such a model.
17. support the following electoral reforms:

## AUSTRALIAN GREENS POLICY: Constitutional Reform and Democracy (cont'd)

[www.greens.org.au/about/policies](http://www.greens.org.au/about/policies)

- all Australian citizens over the age of 16 to be eligible to vote;
  - proportional representation in the House of Representatives and local government;
  - fixed terms of Parliament;
  - constitutional recognition of the powers and responsibilities of local government;
  - reduced numbers of by-elections by allowing casual vacancies to be filled by a member of the retiring representative's party;
  - amendment of section 44 of the Constitution to allow any public servant who has no conflict of interest to stand for election to Federal Parliament;
  - amendment of section 44 of the Constitution to allow Australian citizens with dual nationality to stand for election to Federal Parliament; and
  - public funding of elections to eliminate private funding.
18. support an amendment to the preamble of the Constitution to recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original and ongoing residents of Australia and their rights as such.
19. amend the preamble to the Australian constitution to recognise the prior occupation and sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the traditional owners of the land.