



# EQUALITY FOR EVERYONE

## The Greens' plan for inclusive communities

Equal rights. Access to vital services. Law reform

When our community values diversity and celebrates difference, all of us benefit. The Greens always have, and always will, stand with our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities.

The Australian Greens are a strong voice in our parliament for LGBTIQ rights. We have a plan to keep LGBTIQ rights firmly on the agenda; in the community and in our political debate.

### > STRENGTHENING ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS

Our anti-discrimination laws offer good protections to our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities, but they come with a gigantic exemption for religious organisations. Successive Labor and Coalition governments have maintained these exemptions, which mean that a religious hospital can refuse to employ a gay doctor, and a faith-based homelessness shelter can refuse to accept a transgender resident.

The Greens have fought against these exemptions at every opportunity, and we believe they should be eliminated. Anti-discrimination laws should apply to everyone.<sup>1</sup>

### > MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Prime Minister Turnbull proposes a divisive and expensive plebiscite, which his own party room has pledged not to heed. The Greens have been pushing for a free vote on marriage equality for a decade – and we won't stop now. Marriage equality is an issue whose time has come. The Greens will keep pushing the government to ditch the plebiscite, allow a free vote and just get on with achieving marriage equality.

### > STANDING UP FOR THE RIGHTS OF INTERSEX PEOPLE

The Greens recognise and support the rights of intersex people. We believe no one's body should be stigmatised, and that the rights of people with intersex variations must be upheld.

We support the rights of intersex people to bodily integrity, including personal consent to medical or surgical interventions. In the case of children, any medical intervention should, wherever possible, be deferred until the child is able to give full and informed consent. The Greens want to ensure that high quality support services are available to intersex people and their families.

The Greens want to see improvements to reporting and personal data collection on sex, gender and intersex status, recognising that intersex people have many ways in which their bodies, sexes and genders may be understood and self-reported.

We believe that medical, legal, and public policy frameworks affecting people with intersex variations must be made in consultation with intersex communities and representative organisations.

### > DEFENDING SAFE SCHOOLS

The Greens believe that the education of our young people on respect, inclusion and celebrating diversity is incredibly important. The Greens will not only protect the Safe Schools program, we will expand its funding from \$2 million annually, to \$8 million annually. The Greens have long advocated for qualified mental health counsellors in schools as an alternative to the Chaplaincy Program.

### > ACCESS TO PrEP

Since taking over the Sexuality and Marriage Equality portfolio in 2015, Senator Robert Simms has called for better access to HIV-prevention medication, Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).

In May 2016 PrEP was finally approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and we now call on the Government to list it under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. This drug is an effective HIV prevention tool, and the government should be doing all that it can to make PrEP as accessible and affordable as possible.

### > IVF AND PARENTAL RIGHTS

The Greens are working hard to change laws so same-sex couples can access assisted reproduction techniques such as IVF (in-vitro fertilisation). Although some states allow same-sex couples to access IVF, it is still illegal in South Australia and for male couples in Western Australia.

Same-sex couples also face an uphill battle to have their parental rights recognised by law. When a child of a same-sex couple is conceived through IVF, federal law only recognise the birth mother of the child as the legal parent. The Greens know that families are families. Same-sex parents should be equally recognised by Australian law.

<sup>1</sup> <http://greensmps.org.au/content/speeches-parliament/religious-exemptions-sex-discrimination-laws>

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## > ADOPTION RIGHTS

The Greens are committed to law reform allowing same-sex couples across Australia to adopt children. In recent years some states have passed legislation allowing same-sex couples to adopt, however, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory are all lagging behind. Even in states allowing adoption, discrimination still exists, with faith-based adoption agencies able to turn same-sex couples away.

The best interests of children are upheld when discrimination against same-sex couples is removed. The Greens will continue fighting to achieve adoption equality in full.

## > ACCESS TO HORMONE TREATMENTS FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE YOUNG PEOPLE

Transgender and gender diverse young people seeking hormone treatment are currently required to submit a complicated application to the Family Court for approval, even when everyone agrees that it is in their best interest.

The Greens believe that young transgender people shouldn't have to go through expensive and time consuming legal processes. There's no reason that we should continue subjecting young people to this cruel bureaucratic process.

The Greens are leaders in the campaign to amend the Family Law Act and remove court oversight of hormone treatment for people under the age of 18 where they, their parents/ guardians and medical practitioners agree. This should be a matter for young people, their parents and doctors, not judges and lawyers.

## > ASYLUM-SEEKERS FACING HOMOPHOBIC PERSECUTION

Australia continues to send refugees and people seeking asylum to Nauru and Manus Island, including people who have fled their home country because of homophobic persecution. On Nauru, refugees can't openly identify as gay because this is punishable with 14 years' hard labour.

Only the Australian Greens will bring the refugees who are currently on Nauru and Manus Island to Australia. Here they can build their lives free from homophobic harassment.

## > IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH FOR LGBTIQ PEOPLE

A disproportionate number of LGBTIQ Australians experience negative mental health outcomes compared to their non-LGBTIQ peers. Much of this mental ill health is due to the discrimination and exclusion that the people from LGBTIQ communities experience. The Greens are the only party committed to increasing mental health funding, with money for programs ranging from the employment of more mental health

nurses to providing more support accommodation in regional Australia.

## > AGED CARE THAT RESPECTS AND CARES FOR LGBTIQ PEOPLE

The Greens recognise that LGBTIQ people have been marginalised when it comes to accessing aged-care services. We want to ensure the needs of LGBTIQ people are included in all training and planning aspects of aged care. The Greens will keep working closely with GLBT Rights in Ageing (GRAI) towards an end to discrimination on the basis of sexuality, gender and intersex status and improved aged care for LGBTIQ people.

## > BLOOD/MARROW DONATION BANS

The Greens believe that your capacity to donate blood or marrow should not be determined by your sexuality, especially when HIV screening and other medical interventions have advanced so far.

## > BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR – FOREIGN AID

Funding health and education programs through our foreign aid budget is an effective way to promote an inclusive regional community. Successive governments have slashed the aid program which has negatively impacted on the HIV/AIDS Asia Regional Program (HAARP) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Funding for education programs to promote inclusion of LGBTIQ communities has also repeatedly been slashed.

The Greens want to see funding of our foreign aid program lifted to the UN standard of 0.7% of our national income. The Greens continue to speak out against human rights abuse of the LGBTIQ community around the world and call on the Australian government to play a leadership role in combatting this.

## > RETROGRADE STATE LAWS

The Greens are not just tackling LGBTIQ issues from a federal perspective; we are also leading the charge on state laws. Our key priorities are:

- **Ensuring that criminal records match up with current community standards** – in many states, while being gay is no longer a crime, some people still have criminal convictions relating to times when it was.
- **Fairness and consistency in laws relating to the age of sexual consent**, regardless of your sexuality.
- **Striking out the archaic 'gay panic' defence** which persists in South Australia and Queensland.
- **Removing laws that stigmatise HIV status.**

Law reform on these issues and more will be a priority for the Greens in the 45<sup>th</sup> parliament. We will keep LGBTIQ issues on the agenda – an equal society is a harmonious one.