



HELPING OUR SOILS SURVIVE

Investing in our National Soil Health Strategy

Helping farmers and the environment

Sustainable agriculture depends on healthy soil. The Greens will invest an additional \$100m over four years into our National Soil Health Strategy. This will benefit the environment, and help farmers for a more sustainable agriculture sector.

Australia's topsoil is critical to our agricultural productivity, but our soils are being degraded at an unsustainable rate. The Greens will invest an additional **\$100m over four years** in our national soil health strategy that improves soil conditions, helping our farmers cut back on fertiliser and water use.

> REVERSING TOPSOIL DECLINE

Soil is a pivotal resource for agriculture and food production. How we treat Australia's soil has critical implications for our food security and agricultural capacity now and into the future.

Soil degradation challenges, including erosion and acidification, will continue to grow unless we take action. This matters for the productivity and sustainability of our agricultural sector. This is why the Greens will invest an additional **\$100m over four years** in the National Soil Health Strategy.

> SECURING A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

The Greens are committed to a sustainable agriculture sector. Research and development that improves agricultural sustainability will benefit our environment, and be cost-effective for farmers. The Centre for Policy Development's *Farming Smarter, Not Harder* report estimated that removing soil constraints could boost wheat production by up to \$2.1 billion a year.¹

Investing additional funds in the National Soil Health Strategy will drive innovation in farming techniques, to improve the sustainability and efficiency of Australian farmers over the long term by:

- Reducing input costs such as fertilizer
- Reversing the drop in productivity that results from decreasing soil quality.

¹ Centre for Policy Development, [Farming Smarter, Not Harder](#), 2012, p. 90.

> INVESTING IN A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

The Greens have already announced significant commitments that will benefit the agricultural sector, including:

- **Reversing the 'backpackers' tax'**. Reversing the tax change will provide a boost to Australia's tourism and agriculture sectors.
- **Providing an additional \$722m in Landcare funding**. 40 per cent of Australian producers are undertaking Landcare conservation practices.² Boosting Landcare funding will provide real support for farmers to increase sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.
- **Investing \$75m over four years in additional research and development funding**. Extra funding will boost key research, including through agricultural research and development corporations.
- **Providing \$100m over four years to establish a new Centre for Sustainable Agriculture**. The Centre for Sustainable Agriculture will focus on cross-sector agriculture issues that affect all farms such as climate change, or energy or water challenges.
- **A network of 180 agricultural extension officers, costing \$67m over three years**. From 1 July 2017, a nation-wide network of extension officers will help farmers identify new technology and techniques that can help them farm more efficiently and sustainably.

> A COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The Greens want a sustainable agriculture sector that contributes to food security, environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The old parties have failed to act on the threat that climate change poses to the sector, and failed to reverse the 'backpacker tax'.

² ABC, [More farmers undertaking Landcare conservation projects](#).