



Building a sustainable university sector

Inspiring learning and innovation

Advancing knowledge | Furthering opportunities

The Greens have the vision to support a well-funded, high-quality and sustainable university sector. We plan to reverse the Coalition's cuts and lift the base level of funding by 10%. We will also increase university funding for world-class research by \$1.3 billion to stimulate and support Australia's transition to a 21st century economy.

The Greens believe that education is a crucial public good. Differences in educational outcomes should not depend on wealth, income, power, possessions or location. The Greens recognise that all levels of education are critical components to lifelong learning with universities playing a pivotal role in providing the opportunity for people to further their education. The Greens are the only party with the courage to substantially boost investment in universities to help establish a sustainable sector that provides free, high-quality education.

Both the major parties have left the university sector in limbo as they fail to provide a long-term and sustainable vision for the sector. The Coalition continues to push for their harsh 20% cuts that will increase course fees to a level that leaves graduates with HELP debts greater than a housing deposit. Universities have been used as a political football by both major parties leading to a failure in providing a vision for the sector.

Whether it's allowing the continual rise in course fees, or turning Student Start-Up Scholarships into a HELP loan, it's clear that neither party is committed to providing high-quality and accessible university education to all Australians.

> A SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY SECTOR

The Greens are committed to boosting funding to the university sector by \$8.3 billion over four years so it can provide high-quality and affordable higher education and training. To help provide world-class teaching and research opportunities in universities, the Greens will:

- Invest \$7 billion to reverse the Coalition's harsh cuts and fund a 10% increase in base funding per student at public universities; and
- Invest \$1.306 billion into research to reverse Government cuts to our most successful university research.

> BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This package has been fully costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office. Reversing the Coalition's cuts will cost \$4.8 billion and increasing base funding by 10% will cost \$2.2 billion. Together the measures will cost \$6.999 billion over the forward estimates.

> A BOOST TO PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

With the Liberals' continued commitment to their harsh cuts, studying at university would become out of reach for many students from lower-income or disadvantaged backgrounds. HELP debts could grow to the size of a housing deposit – or more. Instead of increasing the debt burden on students, we must better support them, so they have minimal debt as they enter the workforce.

Prior to the last election, Labor committed to ripping billions in funding from the university sector. While they have now committed to reversing the Liberals' harsh cuts, Labor has failed to substantially increase funding to provide certainty and stability for universities.

The Greens are the only party that has the courage to take action and have committed to lifting the base level of funding by 10% by 2020. Increasing the base level of funding is critical to help universities deliver high quality courses without student fees skyrocketing to record highs.

> SUPPORTING WORLD CLASS RESEARCH

The Greens will commit \$1.306 billion to reverse government cuts to our most successful university research.

Australian governments have a long history of supporting research in this country. The previous government put in place a National Research Investment Plan that argued for ongoing and

predictable funding for core research and innovation programs. The plan stated that Australia's research investment needs to provide a strong, sustainable capability in basic and applied research that can increase productivity and address Australia's key challenges. We supported the plan and the establishment of the Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE) program - which the then Labor Government, despite their own advice, promptly slashed by \$499 million. These cuts were described by Australia's elite research institutes as ill-conceived, short-sighted and would lead to research jobs and programs being lost, often to other countries with far-sighted research investment plans.

The Turnbull-Abbott government then made further cuts to SRE funding and have subsequently abolished the program rolling a number of research programs together.

The Greens will reverse these funding cuts to university research as soon as possible, injecting \$1.306 billion over the forward estimates to restabilise this important funding stream.

The Greens understand that funding needs to be holistic, supporting all capital, maintenance and operating costs. Our commitment to the university research will help to cover the indirect costs of research, such as administration, equipment and staff, and enable our top-tier researchers to concentrate on the important work at hand. However the Greens also understand that more systemic changes need to be made to the way that indirect research costs are funded.

> LIFE TIME OF LEARNING

The Greens believe that investment in public education is essential to ensure a fair Australia and to support the transition to a sustainable new economy. Fighting the fees and reducing students' debt burden forms a part of our Lifetime of Learning policy that includes support for schools, students with a disability and the tertiary sector.