



CARING FOR OUR STUDENTS

Keeping our students happy and healthy

The Greens will fight for better support for our students

The Greens will make sure that every student, no matter which school they go to, can get the help they need.

The ACT Greens are committed to increasing funding to youth mental services, so that every student, no matter which school they go to, can get the help they need.

We are committed to a two prong approach to providing the mental health support that young people need, and educational and learning support for young people with learning difficulties.

> Investing in student mental health

To support children and young people with mental health issues the ACT Greens will commit to:

- » fund a comprehensive evaluation of the existing services available across government and non-government support service;
- » provide \$4m over the next four years to fund counselling services in the community specifically for children and young people;
- » implement a streamlined referral process that can be utilized by all Canberra schools;
- » ensure resource materials are made easily available in all schools to ensure that students, teachers and principals are fully aware of services available;

» work with experts in the field such as ACT Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health services and Headspace ACT to develop a school system-wide referral process (including for non-government schools).

With more awareness of mental health, particularly depression and anxiety, young people are seeking help and finding all too often that services are not in the right place or available at the right time. The Greens believe that just like physical health, mental health is critical to our overall wellbeing.

That is why we will dramatically increase mental health funding available to young people, and support more appropriate interventions for schools and colleges students many of whom will reach out for help for the first time.

> Meeting students' learning needs in the classroom

Evidence shows that a large percentage of our students will struggle with some aspects of learning, and we know that each and every student has different needs in the classroom.

Right now, too many students are finding themselves accessing out of school assessments and tutoring, to “catch up” or overcome their learning difficulties.

ACT’s public school teachers and principals have been working in 2016 to implement the recently released Great Teaching By Design in their day to day practice.

The ACT Greens will increase support to implement the Great Teaching by Design Strategy by funding dedicated senior educators with expertise in pedagogy, learning difficulties, and literacy and numeracy programming, who will:

- » use a coaching and mentoring model to provide hands-on training and support across the school,
- » assist with programming and review the teaching strategies that are in place across schools;
- » help schools implement evidence-based teaching practices in classrooms; and
- » ensure the ‘Response to Intervention’ model is used consistently, specifically for children with learning difficulties, across classrooms and schools, including targeted individual support where required.

The ACT Greens will also fund additional school psychologists in 2017 to build the assessment capacity for children with learning difficulties to ensure that families don’t need to spend thousands of dollars undertaking tests privately.



BETTER EARLY EDUCATION

For a great start in life

The ACT Greens understand that quality early childhood education is essential to give our children a great start in life.

Quality early childhood education is essential in giving our children a great start in life. Not only does it importantly allow parents to re-enter the workforce, but it also ensures children are developmentally ready for school and it provides opportunities to socialise with children of their own age.

A recent review showed that for people in the lowest income bands, child care is simply not affordable even with the highest level of commonwealth rebate. We also know from a survey of all Australian children in their first year of full-time school found that the ACT is falling behind in key areas of development, in particular language and physical coordination, as compared to the rest of the nation. We know that for many young children, these skills are developed through engagement with playgroups, Early Childhood Education and Care (formerly childcare) and preschool.

> Investing in early education

The ACT Greens value early education. That is why we will:

» **Trial an enhanced prior-to-school transitional program** designed to support children and parents prior to school enrolment.

This community-based, parent-led playgroup in school program would be initially trialled in five sites across Canberra. Initial trial site selection could be based on interest from schools as well as targeting areas of social disadvantage and identified AEDC vulnerability criteria.

» **Develop a strategic plan for Early Childhood Education and Care Services** to better plan for skills shortages, capacity issues, and the level of support required to ensure we have the highest quality child care for all ACT Children.

» **Undertake an investigation** into improving access to childcare by working with the ECEC sector in what can be done to increase access to childcare for low income families.



ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE And Equity in Canberra Schools

The ACT Greens believe that high quality, free education is keystone of our democracy and a basic human right. We will invest in the best possible teachers, support leadership from our principals, and ensure every student, no matter which school they go to, can get the help they need

The ACT Greens believe that high quality, free education is keystone of our democracy and a basic human right. We support a needs-based funding model for education where we can be sure that children across all schools are funded in an equitable way. The ACT Greens remain committed to the Gonski funding model and its implementation in the ACT to ensure that we support teachers and principals, and that we create schools where all our students can achieve their best.

The Greens understand that supporting our students and young people is an investment in Canberra's future. We believe in supporting our students' mental and emotional wellbeing. That means ensuring that every student, no matter which school they go to, can get the help they need. It also means investing in the best possible teachers and supporting leadership from our principals.

> Investing in our schools' infrastructure

The ACT Greens understand that the nature of education is changing - both in substance and style. Providing the best possible safe and supportive learning environments is critical to being a truly inclusive school community.

That is why we will:

- » **Increase annual base funding for capital upgrades** at public schools by an additional \$10 million per annum to address the obvious needs in ageing schools, remedy heating and cooling issues, and support longer term population pressures;
- » **Provide an additional \$10 million dollars** towards immediate capacity needs and work collaboratively with each school community to identify what infrastructure is needed by students and teachers to modernise ageing buildings; and

» **Enhance the existing “School Modernisation Program”**, by working closely and cooperatively with the school community to face the challenges of ageing infrastructure and population pressures.

> Balancing school based decision-making and a cohesive schools network

The ACT Greens believe that we must balance the ability of schools to make decisions about the needs and aspirations of their students and school community, with the best practice and efficiency that a cohesive schools system can bring. That is why we support reviewing school based decision making to ensure that it's working for the whole community.

The ACT Greens will:

» **Devote the next Ministerial Advisory Committee** to exploring how effectively the current practice of school based decision is supporting school communities achieving the best possible outcomes for student engagement and academic achievement.

The Committee will also consider whether enhancements to existing school governance arrangements (incorporating parent and citizens associations, school boards, student bodies principal administration tasks, centralized policy and procedure development and task/resource allocation) would assist in this regard.

> Supporting teachers and principals

The ACT Greens recognise that to get the best possible education our children need the best possible teachers and great leadership from our principals. However, modern schools are increasingly complex environments. Teachers should feel supported and professionally valued throughout their entire career, not just when they start out.

A key recommendation from a recent Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey was that the wellbeing of principals can be improved by "providing opportunities for principals and deputy/assistant principals to engage in professional support networks on a regular basis." To provide better practical assistance to principals and to support teachers who have been in the profession for some time, the ACT Greens will invest \$10,000 per year to:

» **Fund the development of a practical professional mentoring strategy** and financially support an ongoing peer network to support principals, in order to see the realisation of the 2015 Enterprise Agreements recognition of the need for real action on Principals Wellbeing;

» Ensure that starting in 2018, at every 10 years of service, teachers can develop a **Professional Learning Pathways Package**, and are supported to access advanced skills professional development opportunities; and

» Work collaboratively with teachers and principals through the Australian Education Union to ensure that the focus is on teaching, not administration, through the 2018 EBA negotiations.

The ACT Greens have already announced their commitment to:

> **Supporting students' in the classroom**

Evidence shows that a large percentage of our students will struggle with some aspects of learning, and we know that each and every student has different needs in the classroom. Right now, too many students are finding themselves accessing out of school assessments and tutoring, to "catch up" or overcome their learning difficulties.

ACT's public school teachers and principals have been working in 2016 to implement the recently released Great Teaching By Design in their day to day practice. The ACT Greens will provide an additional \$4.4m to help implement the strategy and provide further support teachers and students in the classroom.

The ACT Greens will increase support to students and teachers in the classroom by **funding four senior teachers** with expertise in pedagogy, learning difficulties, and literacy and numeracy programming, who will:

- » use a coaching and mentoring model to provide hands-on training and support across the school,
- » assist with programming and review the teaching strategies that are in place across schools;
- » help schools implement evidence-based teaching practices in classrooms; and

» ensure the 'Response to Intervention' model is used consistently, specifically for children with learning difficulties, across classrooms and schools, including targeted individual support where required.

The ACT Greens will also fund **four additional school psychologists** in 2017 to build the assessment capacity for children with learning difficulties to ensure that families don't need to spend thousands of dollars undertaking tests privately.

> **Investing in student mental health**

To support children and young people with mental health issues the ACT Greens will commit to:

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- » \$4m over the next four years to fund counselling services in the community specifically for children and young people;
- » implement a streamlined referral process that can be utilized by all Canberra schools;
- » ensure resource materials are made easily available in all schools to ensure that students, teachers and principals are fully aware of services available;
- » work with experts in the field such and ACT Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health services and Headspace ACT to develop a school system-wide (including non government schools) referral process.

With more awareness of mental health, particularly depression and anxiety, young people are seeking help and finding all too often that services are not in the right place or available at the right time. The Greens believe that just like physical health, mental health is critical to our overall wellbeing.

That is why we will dramatically increase mental health funding available to young people, and support more appropriate interventions for schools and colleges students many of whom will reach out for help for the first time.

> New Official Visitor for Education

The ACT Greens believe that more can be done to provide support to carers and parents of school students. In 2012, we greatly strengthened and expanded the ACT Government's Official Visitor scheme which aims to detect and prevent systemic issues in government institutions. Official Visitors do this by visiting institutions, talking to officials and people in their care, inspecting records, reporting on the standard of facilities, resolving grievances and reporting to the Minister.

The ACT Greens will:

- » create a new Official Visitor for Education, accessible to parents/carers of students at both government and non-government schools, to provide a genuinely neutral and objective perspective on issues, such as enrolments, suspensions, or complaints.

> Enhanced languages program

The ACT has only 3 dedicated Language Immersion Programs. In an age of increasing internationalism and mobility, the ACT Greens believe that we should be actively pursuing enhanced language studies for our public school system. That is why we will increase bilingual education opportunities in ACT Public Schools by:

- » developing a new bilingual Mandarin school for the North of Canberra; and
- » supporting more high schools to enhance their language programs.



SAFEGUARDING OUR CIT

Protecting public education

The Greens will safeguard CIT from privatisation

The Greens believe that high-quality and accessible vocational education and training, including the Canberra Institute of Technology, are crucial to Canberra's future. We will safeguard CIT against any threat of privatisation.

The ACT Greens believe that high-quality and equitable education is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy, and is fundamental to Australia's continued prosperity. Everyone should have equitable access to education that meets their needs and aspirations, and gives them the skills and capacity to make a meaningful contribution to our community, our city, and our country.

The Greens believe that high-quality and accessible vocational education and training, including the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), are crucial to Canberra's future.

> Our Promise

The ACT Greens will:

- » Safeguard CIT against any threat of privatisation. We commit to maintain CIT as a majority public ownership and to be funded at levels that allow it to meet the VET needs of the ACT community, including for low income courses.
- » Prioritise government VET funding to CIT and ensure it receives the majority of government support.

- » Continue the joint ACT-federal funding agreement for VET that prioritises CIT and identified skills shortages.

> Safeguarding CIT

Earlier this year a 'leaked' COAG paper showed a conservative government plan to deregulate TAFEs in a bid to increase competition in the sector. As the Australian Education Union said at the time, it would basically transform TAFEs into private providers which compete for federal funding. After community outcry, the conservative attempt to privatise our TAFEs was taken off the table, however the response from some state and territory Ministers was unsettling.

The Greens are committed to a publicly funded vocational education and training (VET) sector. We understand that a high-quality and accessible VET sector is crucial to Canberra's future and will continue to build a VET sector that offers new skills and re-skilling for future occupations - including the jobs and industries of our clean energy powered future.



YOUNG PEOPLE, YOUNG LEADERS

A Plan for Canberra's Young People

The Greens will ensure the voices of Canberra's young people are heard

The ACT Greens believe that young people must be respected and valued for who they are now, as well as who they will become. We have a comprehensive plan for Canberra's young people and their future in our city.

The ACT Greens believe that young people must be respected and valued for who they are now, as well as who they may become in the future. As a young party, and a party that values the contributions and leadership of young people, the ACT Greens believe that young people are entitled to express their opinions and have them heard by decision-makers.

We know that young people in the ACT care deeply about their peers, and the world around them. While young people hold diverse views on political issues, young people have consistently supported stronger action on global warming, compassion towards asylum seekers and for the love between same sex couples to be recognised in law.

The ACT Greens will always fight for clean energy and action on global warming, an end to cruel, offshore detention and for an end to discrimination under our laws.

However, young people also face substantial challenges. They face a society that often fails to value their contributions, politicians who prioritise short term electoral gain ahead of their long term future, a housing market in crisis and a lack of jobs and employment opportunities.

The ACT Greens will consider young people in every policy that we put forward.

> Having Your Say

The ACT Greens believe that young people aged 16 and 17 years should have the option to vote in ACT elections.

Decisions made today will affect young people right now, and potentially for the rest of their lives. Lowering the voting age means more people helping to shape our city, our democracy and our future. The ACT Greens believe that this is a good thing.

It does not make sense to prevent young people from voting, while at the same time determining that they are old enough to work, join the army, have sex, pay tax and drive vehicles. These are all activities that require responsibility and involve risk.

> **A Clean Energy Future**

Young people are leading the charge when it comes to tackling global warming. Through organisations like the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, 350.org, Seed Mob, Fossil Free ANU and many more, they are championing the campaign for the government, universities and financial institutions to show leadership and take action on global warming.

We stand with young people, and First Australians, who will bear the brunt of the worst impacts of global warming if we do not take urgent action.

Thanks largely to the ACT Greens in the ACT Legislative Assembly, Canberra has lead the nation with its target of 100% clean energy by 2020. But we can go further. The ACT Greens have a plan to make it cheaper and easier to power homes, businesses and transport with clean energy.

But, all of this is under threat from the Liberals. Federally, they have torn down our climate laws, cut funding to clean energy and continue to accept billions of dollars from fossil fuel companies every election. Canberra has too much to lose to let the Liberals gain control here too.

> **Housing for Everyone**

Here in Canberra, and around the country, young people are struggling to find somewhere to live. For most young people the prospect of buying a house like their parents may have is impossible.

The ACT Greens believe all members of our community deserve to have somewhere affordable, safe and secure to live. This generation of home-leavers is the first that will be worse off than their parents, and they are forecast to never be able to enter the housing market.

We want young Canberrans to land on their feet. We want them to be able to afford a house to live in, and to stay in Canberra doing the jobs they want to do. Labor and the Liberals have had decades to address this and they have failed.

It's time to put people at the centre of housing and development, not developers. We will support new models of affordable housing that allow people to be involved in the shaping of their community and their developments. This will include new types of community housing, that allow for young people to take control and shape the type of community they want to see.

And, we will set minimum standards for all rental properties to ensure that lessors aren't allowed to leave students, young families, or anyone in our community, shivering through winter and roasting in summer. Affordable housing should not mean sub-standard housing.

> Arts and Community

We know that young people are concerned about finding things to do in Canberra.¹ As our city grows and diversifies, so too has our arts, music and cultural scene. Canberra has started to develop a thriving night-time economy.

Recently, the ACT Greens spoke out against the Labor Party's proposal to introduce so called "last drinks" laws. While we believe that there is more work to be done to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence, we also believe that there are more effective ways of tackling violence that don't involve turning off the lights on Canberra's nightlife.

The ACT Greens are committed to making sure our whole community can participate in arts and cultural activities, and we believe that a thriving live music and events scene is central to Canberra's future.

> Mental Health

The pressures of life often start to show while young people are in school. With more awareness of mental health, particularly depression and anxiety, young people are seeking help and finding all too often that services are not in the right place or available at the right time.

The Greens believe that just like physical health, mental health is critical to our overall wellbeing. That's why we will increase funding for mental health services to young people.

We will also support more appropriate interventions for those seeking help while at school or college, at a time when many young people reach out for the first time.

> Youth Employment

Youth unemployment in the ACT is nearly three times the general unemployment rate leaving young people struggling to find work, pay bills and set themselves up for the future. All people have the right to meaningful and secure paid employment, but right now young people in Canberra are being left behind.

The ACT Greens believe that the government has a role in supporting young people find, and keep, employment. That's why we will work with the government to ensure that jobs created through government investment in infrastructure employ people in the community most vulnerable to unemployment - particularly young people. We will also look to create better partnerships between CIT, local business and the growing green economy, to support new traineeships and apprenticeships.

All over the world countries are transitioning into a new economic future that is powered with new industries such as clean energy and digital technology. And yet just this year we saw the Liberals slash hundreds of jobs from the CSIRO. The ACT Greens are determined to invest in the skills, and the industries, that will be creating jobs for young people not just now but well into the future.

¹ Rate Canberra, a survey of young people aged 12 – 25 in the ACT, was implemented by the Youth Coalition of the ACT between April and July 2012. A total of 1,376 young people participated in the survey.

> Supporting LBGTIQ* Young People

The ACT Greens believe that freedom of sexual orientation and gender identity are fundamental human rights. Everyone has a right to be themselves and express themselves however they choose.

Canberra was the first place in the country to legalise same sex marriage - and while it was quashed by the High Court, the fight is not over. The Greens will always support marriage equality - every vote, every MP, every time.

However, marriage equality is not the only challenge that young LBGTIQ people are facing. Disappointingly, prejudice still exists within our homes, schools, universities and workplaces; and LBGTIQ youth disproportionately suffer from mental illness and are at risk of suicide and self harm.

The ACT Greens do not support the divisive, wasteful and harmful plebiscite on same-sex marriage. But if it goes ahead, the ACT Greens will commit to increasing the funding to LBGTIQ support services so that people who are subjected to discrimination or harassment as the plebiscite is carried out have access to the services they need.

> Improve Greens Skills for the Future

The ACT is a learning capital, with students coming from near and far to study at our world class Canberra Institute of Technology, our universities and private training organisations. We are also facing unprecedented development around Canberra, much of it close to sensitive natural environments.

That is why we will hold a summit of educational providers, developers, peak bodies and conservation groups to increase support for vocational education in the sustainable and emerging technology sectors, and improve links with the construction, energy and ICT sector to encourage more traineeships and apprenticeships that focus on sustainability, particularly for older workers seeking new skills.

> More Opportunities for Young People

Youth unemployment in the ACT is at 11.6%, nearly 3 times the general unemployment rate (4.1%), and we believe that more can be done to support young people with employment.

We will provide increased career guidance programs for year 10 onwards, and support better transitions planning, in line with the issues raised in the most recent longitudinal data.

The ACT Greens support calls to implement targets and strategies to ensure that jobs created through government investment in infrastructure employ people in the community most vulnerable to unemployment, particularly young people.

