

FREE TAFE AND UNIVERSITY

World class degrees instead of crippling fees

Everyone has a right to education, whether you are leaving school, changing careers, retraining later in life or looking to gain new skills and knowledge. But successive Labor and Liberal governments have treated students as customers and education as a business. As a result, funding has been slashed, student debt has spiralled and the increasing cost of living is a barrier to world-class education and training for the next generation of students. The Greens plan is the biggest investment in higher education Australia will have ever seen and will support students, teachers and staff.



THE GREENS WILL:

- Provide **free undergraduate uni and TAFE** for all students
- Raise Youth Allowance, Austudy and Abstudy by **\$75 a week**
- **Boost university funding by 10%** per student to improve learning and teaching conditions
- Tie the HELP repayment threshold to the **median wage**
- **Support university staff** by linking funding to increases in security of their work

FREE HIGHER EDUCATION

Students leaving university or TAFE now face greater pressures than ever before, including high youth unemployment and record high housing and living costs. Being saddled with tens of thousands of dollars in student debt that takes decades to repay in unsustainable and unfair.

We must also be prepared to embrace new and emerging challenges and technologies. Whether it is training courses or university degrees, the rapidly changing nature of work requires that people of all ages should be able to retrain throughout their lives without accumulating massive debts.

Free higher education whether it's university or TAFE, will give everybody a fair go, break the cycle of disadvantage and guarantee access. For those who want to study, it's our job to make that possible.

That's why the Greens will fund unlimited free undergraduate university and TAFE.

The Greens believe that TAFE should be the first priority for all federal funding for Vocational Education and Training should go to TAFE. There should be no government funding for providers that operate for private profit.

A 10% BOOST IN UNI FUNDING PER STUDENT

For too long governments have cut university funding, forcing them to do more with less and reduce the quality of their education and research.

We will end the Liberal government's funding freeze and increase funding per-Commonwealth Supported Place student by 10 percent. This will deliver more to universities over the next ten years to improve learning and teaching conditions, reduce class sizes and enable researchers to pursue solutions to the big problems of our time.

RAISING THE HELP PAYMENT THRESHOLD

For students who already have a debt, the Greens will deliver immediate savings to them by raising and indexing the repayment threshold for HELP, SSL, ABSTUDY SSL, TSL and SFSS debts to the median wage of \$52,880 from 2019.

The Liberal government's plan to slash the HELP loan repayment threshold to \$45,881 means that for current

students your first job often comes with the nasty surprise of debt repayments well before you have found your feet and sometimes while you are still studying.

Our plan will make sure students with an existing debt are not repaying their study costs until they are able to.

BETTER SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

The high cost of living remains a huge burden on students and can create a substantial barrier to accessing education. It's outrageous that one in seven students regularly goes without food and other necessities while studying and nearly a third of students work more than 20 hours a week. Students should not be forced to live in poverty or work multiple jobs to survive while they study.

The Greens will raise Youth Allowance by \$75 a week and change the earnings threshold so students can earn an extra \$100 a week before their payment is reduced. We will extend Austudy payments to all full-time postgraduate students at a cost of \$5.72bn over ten years to ensure that young researchers, teachers and students seeking advanced education have the income support they need to flourish.

SECURE WORK FOR UNIVERSITY STAFF

Staff working conditions influence student learning conditions. For decades the employment security of university staff has been eroded. In 2016, 65% of the all staff in universities were employed in insecure positions like casual and fixed-term contracts.

We will not begin to address the challenges of the years to come unless our best minds are given the time, resources and support to tackle them.

The Greens will ensure universities are held accountable by working with staff and their unions to link funding under the Commonwealth Grant Scheme to reductions in the rate of insecure work in universities.