JUSTICE FOR FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Addressing Australia’s unfinished business: treaties, healing, justice & truth

Both Coalition and Labor governments have failed to listen to First Nations voices and, as a result, they have failed First Nations peoples. Despite living in a wealthy nation, First Nations peoples still experience entrenched disadvantage, including in health, education and life expectancy outcomes more common in the developing world. Any plan for justice for First Nations Peoples must be led by First Nations voices. The Greens will introduce measures that empower First Nations communities and create community-driven solutions. This process must start by addressing Australia’s unfinished business: treaties, healing, justice and truth.

THE GREENS WILL WORK WITH FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES TO:

• Establish a path towards treaties
• Establish a body to enable agreement making
• Establish a voice to Parliament
• Address the unacceptable high rates of incarceration

Costings in this document are current as at November 18, 2018, and subject to change following the release of the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2018–19. Authorised by R. Di Natale, the Australian Greens, Parliament House, Canberra, 2600.
Justice For First Nations Peoples

A PATH TOWARDS TREATIES

Australia has unfinished business: the Greens acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

First Nations peoples have had a strong and unbroken connection to the land and sea. To be a truly reconciled nation, it is crucial that we address the issues of sovereignty and treaties. It is past time for these issues to be resolved.

The Greens will provide $50 million in funding to First Nations peoples’ organisations and national conversations and establish a path towards establishing treaties.

A BODY TO ENABLE AGREEMENT MAKING

The Greens will provide $50 million for the establishment of a body, such as the suggested Makaratta commission, with the function of enabling agreement-making and facilitating a process of local and regional justice and truth telling. Agreement-making is seen as a vehicle for policies such as a truth and reconciliation commission, designated seats in Parliament, self-determination policies, and economic measures. Truth telling means that the true history of colonisation must be told: the genocides, the massacres, the wars and the ongoing injustices and discrimination.

A VOICE IN PARLIAMENT

The Uluru Statement from the Heart calls for a referendum to be held in the Australian Constitution for a representative body that gives First Nations a Voice to the Federal Parliament.

The Greens support the establishment of such a ‘voice to Parliament’ enshrined in the Constitution to ensure that First Nations Peoples have a voice in decisions that affect them. The consultation and referendum process have been costed at $183 million.

ADDRESS INDIGENOUS INCARCERATION RATES

Twenty-seven years after the final report into the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, there are still too many First Nations peoples incarcerated and dying in prison. Australia-wide First Nations Peoples are eleven times more likely to be imprisoned than non-indigenous Australians, in WA this ratio is nearly seventeen times.

The Greens will adopt the Change the Record campaign recommendations at a cost of $66.9 million to see meaningful change in the rate of incarceration of First Nations peoples by:

- Establishing an interdepartmental task force to develop a national, whole-of-government strategy to address incarceration rates modelled on the Child Abuse Royal Commission Implementation Taskforce that was established to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- Providing funding of $10 million over four years to establish a National Centre for Justice Reinvestment.
- Providing funding of $50 million over four years for a Justice Reinvestment Grants Program.

The Greens will also invest in early intervention, prevention and diversion strategies to ensure less First Nations people are being put into custody in the first place.

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1 Referendum Council’s final report.
2 Referendum Council, Final Report of the Referendum Council, 30/6/17
3 ibid.
4 ABS, 4517.0 - Prisoners in Australia, 2016, 18/12/16.
REDUCE THE RATE OF FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN IN OUT OF HOME CARE

There are currently more than 15,000 First Nations children in out-of-home care across Australia.\(^5\) We need a system that focuses on keeping children out of the care system in the first place, one that focuses on early intervention and support for children and their families. We need a system that helps strengthen the family, for happy and healthy kids.

The Greens will provide $250 million to:

- Invest in trauma and healing services for affected families and communities;
- Develop early intervention approaches that support First Nations families at risk of entering the out of home care system, including providing First Nations family support workers;
- Establish peak First Nations Child Protection bodies in all States and Territories and invest in service delivery by community controlled organisations;
- Invest in reunification programs.

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