

PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT MEET EVERYONE'S NEEDS

Our plan for free, world class public education

Liberal and Labor Governments have given billions to private schools.

At the same time, public schools are underfunded, and desperate for resources.

The Greens will ensure public schools are funded to meet every student's needs.

The funding will support students and teachers, and upgrade and maintain infrastructure that's sustainable and accessible.

Our plan will help our schools deliver free, world-class public education that meets everyone's needs.

THE GREENS WILL:

- ▲ **Invest \$49 billion to fully fund public schools and make them genuinely free for all students**
- ▲ **Provide \$400m a year to build safe and modern teaching and learning facilities for students and teachers**
- ▲ **Make schools sustainable and accessible** through the \$5 billion Green Education Infrastructure Fund
- ▲ **End segregated education by 2030 with an initial \$10 million over four years to co-design a National Inclusive Education Transition Plan**
- ▲ **Provide \$224.1 m for the installation of HEPA filters and CO2 monitors to improve air quality in schools**

PAYING FOR OUR PLAN

By making billionaires and big corporations pay their fair share of tax and winding back handouts to big polluters, we can build a better life for all of us.

1 in 3 big corporations pays no tax and many big corporations and billionaires send their profits offshore tax free.

The Greens will tax billionaires with a new 'billionaires tax', require big corporations making excessive profits to pay a 'corporate super-profits tax' and axe billions of dollars in handouts to the coal, oil and gas giants that are driving the climate crisis.

These measures have all been costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office.

When big corporations and billionaires pay their fair share, everyone can have the services they need for a better life.

FULLY FUNDED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

With public money, public schools should come first. But under the Coalition Government, private schools have enjoyed special deals while billions have been cut from public school funding.

If we don't make a big investment in public education, 99% of public schools won't have the minimum Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding they need by 2023¹, while non-government schools are overfunded.

To make an unfair system worse, the Coalition has handed over billions in extra funding and support to private schools, but denied public schools desperately needed extra funding. At

¹ The Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) is an estimate of how much total public funding a school needs to meet its students' educational needs, and is based on Gonski recommendations.

the same time, 83% of public school teachers dip into their own pocket to buy essential school supplies to make up for the lack of government funding.² Disappointingly, Labor has refused to support ending special deals and slush funds for private schools.

The Greens will make an unprecedented investment of \$32 billion in our public schools over the next decade. Under our plan, the Commonwealth contribution to the Schooling Resource Standard will increase to 25%, ensuring all public schools receive 100% of the funding needed to provide a quality education to their students by 2023.

We will remove the 4% capital depreciation tax in school funding bilateral agreements and work with states and territories to ensure they maintain their commitment to funding at least

² AEU
<<https://www.aeufederal.org.au/news-media/media-releases/2020/september/four-out-five-public-school-teachers-spend-own-money-classroom-resources>>

75% of the Schooling Resource Standard. This makes the Greens the only party with a plan to guarantee all public schools are fully funded to meet the needs of their students and teachers.

To make federal school funding truly equitable, we will abolish the Liberals' \$1.2 billion "Choice and Affordability" slush fund for private schools and end the special deals that are keeping private schools overfunded for most of this decade.

The Greens will also make Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) free and universal as part of our Early Childhood Education and Care plan.

ABOLISHING OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS

With too little funding, public schools have hiked out-of-pocket costs for parents, with parents and guardians feeling pressured to pay hundreds—thousands, in some cases—of dollars in 'voluntary' fees.³ In some cases, parents are asked to fund classroom basics like paper and technology.⁴

Public schools should be genuinely free. That's why the Greens will add \$16.9 billion to abolish out-of-pocket costs for public schools, which will increase recurrent funding above 100% of the School Resource Standard and cover the amount currently raised from families. Our plan recognises that activities like art, sport and

³ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-06-24/school-fees-at-australian-public-schools-concern-parents/11201804>

⁴ <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/nsw-public-school-funding-rules-changed-to-ensure-money-is-spent-on-students/news-story/488a20b124683f9670fe8e7a6d7b8b65>

music are essential parts of going to school and should be funded as such.

The Greens overall increase of \$49 billion in recurrent funding for fully funded and genuinely free public schools will give students the education they deserve, teachers the resources they need, and parents and guardians the peace of mind that surprise fees and charges are a thing of the past.

WORLD-CLASS SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Public schools around the country are suffering from ageing and unsafe infrastructure all while enrolments are booming. In New South Wales, playground space is being consumed by temporary demountables, and students and staff in Queensland are still sweltering through summers without air conditioning.⁵

The Liberals have deepened the school infrastructure by entirely excluding public schools from the Capital Grants Program offering which gives Commonwealth funding to private schools.

The Greens will increase Capital Grants Program funding to \$400 million a year and make sure 80% of the Program's funds—\$320 million a year—are spent on projects in public schools.

The Greens will also do more than any other party to make sure students learn in a

⁵ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/there-s-barely-space-for-kids-to-play-one-year-after-it-opened-this-sydney-school-has-13-demountables-20210211-p571nv.html>; <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-30/air-conditioners-in-queensland-schools-installed-but-unusable/12934176>

sustainable and accessible environment, by including schools in the Green Education Infrastructure Fund, that will give \$5 billion in grants over four years to support sustainable capital works, retrofitting and refurbishments in schools, TAFEs and universities.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Disabled Australians have the right to a good education.

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities makes clear that disabled people have a right to inclusive education. It is time we make a serious plan to ensure disabled students in Australia can realise this right, by committing to a goal of eliminating segregated education by 2030.⁶

The Greens will transition to a fully inclusive education system by:

- Investing an initial \$10 million over four years to co-design a National Inclusive Education Transition Plan with disabled people, families, disability representative organisations, teachers and their unions, and education experts;
- Building inclusive education into tertiary qualifications and giving all pre-service and in-service teachers and principals the opportunity to train, retrain and regularly upskill in inclusive education practices by investing \$400 million over four years.

⁶ This timeline is in line with the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education's Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia <https://acie.org.au/2020/09/30/driving-change-a-roadmap-for-achieving-inclusive-education-in-australia/>

KEEPING OUR STUDENTS HEALTHY

As we transition away from lockdowns, we need to ensure that our classrooms are safe for students. Poorly ventilated schools increase the risk of students contracting airborne infections like COVID-19, and can contribute to clusters forming at schools.⁷

In line with expert advice, the Greens will provide \$224m for schools to install HEPA filtration systems in all classrooms and communal indoor spaces. Our policy will also provide schools with funding to install CO2 monitors.

PROTECTING AGAINST BUSHFIRE SMOKE

Climate change is resulting in more frequent and more severe bushfires in Australia.⁸ With the bushfires comes smoke. During the 2019-20 summer, we saw air quality rise to hazardous levels around the country as smoke settled in our cities.⁹

Bushfire smoke can make it harder to breathe (particularly for those with pre-existing respiratory conditions) and irritate the throat

7

https://ozsage.org/media_releases/beware-the-air-you-share-ozsage-advice-on-safe-indoor-air-ventilation-for-australia-september-6th/

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<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/not-normal-climate-change-bushfire-web/>

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<https://theconversation.com/how-does-bushfire-smoke-affect-our-health-6-things-you-need-to-know-130126>

and eyes.¹⁰ Longer-term exposure (several weeks to months) can increase the risk of lung cancer. This is in addition to the mental impacts of exposure to bushfire smoke, like anxiety and stress.¹¹

Installing air purifiers can help protect students from the increasing risk of smoke exposure.¹² This is part of the Greens' plan for preparing for natural disasters.

FIND ALL OUR POLICIES:

greens.org.au/platform

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<https://theconversation.com/how-does-bushfire-smoke-affect-our-health-6-things-you-need-to-know-130126>

¹¹

https://rsph.anu.edu.au/files/2020_Bushfire_Smoke_Fact.pdf

¹²

https://ozsage.org/media_releases/ozsage-response-to-nsw-department-of-education-position-on-air-purifiers-in-schools/