



**THE  
GREENS**

# **ECONOMY AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**



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## **ACT ECONOMY AND TREASURY**

The economy is inherently political: poverty and inequality are political decisions. Economic policy is about weighing the objectives of societal development and social justice against available resources. The Greens' vision is for an economy that cultivates abundance within the constraints of our natural ecosystems. An economic system that cannot meet the basic needs of all in society, including for food, housing, energy, healthcare and education, is not compatible with a just society.

### **PRINCIPLES**

The ACT Greens believe:

1. the economy is a tool for achieving our social and environmental goals, not an end in itself
2. the pursuit of continuous material-based economic growth is incompatible with the planet's finite resources
3. improved social justice, reduced inequality and poverty elimination must be key goals, with democratisation of the economy essential
4. economic management should prioritise improving quality of life, rather than the production and consumption of material goods
5. genuine progress indicators are required that include long-term human, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing
6. expanded and continued participation by communities in economic decisions and budgeting harnesses their expertise and supports good governance
7. the ACT economy exists within the natural environment, and environmental stewardship is therefore central to good economic management
8. economic management must be consistent with environmental requirements, including a transition to a circular economy with net-negative emissions to mitigate the existential threat of climate change
9. a just transition to net-negative emissions must be equitable and ensure that everyone benefits from addressing the challenges we face
10. ACT Government decisions and activities should create a robust, diverse and sustainable economy that harnesses the ACT community's skills, assets and innovation
11. as a democratic institution, the Government has an active and essential role in managing the economy and regulating and intervening in markets to operate in accordance with and deliver on society's goals.

### **GOALS**

The ACT Greens want:

1. ACT Government decision-making, budget-setting, policies, taxation, spending and regulation to deliver improved outcomes, as measured by genuine and diverse progress and wellbeing indicators
2. ACT Government to use a mix of investment, incentives, taxation and regulation to drive a just transition to a sustainable and circular economy
3. a whole-of-government approach to fostering greater intergenerational equity
4. a more sustainable and diverse private sector that is empowered to achieve environmentally and socially responsible outcomes
5. programs to encourage an equitable distribution of meaningful paid work among those who wish to engage in the workforce, including through green jobs creation
6. to ensure every ACT community member can live with a minimum standard of wellbeing, no matter their employment status or income sources
7. a circular and net-negative emissions economy based on closed-loop cycles of production, waste treated as a resource (see also the ACT Greens Waste Policy), repair, share and goods reuse encouraged, and natural systems regenerated

## **BUSINESS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

Business, along with the public sector and the community sector, is important for generating employment while producing and servicing human needs and wants. The business sector therefore has an important role to play in the transition to an environmentally sustainable, socially just, future.

### **PRINCIPLES**

The ACT Greens believe:

1. business, government and community sectors working together can best achieve mutually beneficial outcomes
2. the ACT private sector needs to be robust, diverse and sustainable, to complement strong public and community sectors, and provide meaningful employment where people want to live and work
3. procurement decisions by the ACT Government and other public sector organisations are an important way to support the local and regional economy, innovation, and promote environmental and social responsibility
4. the business sector has an important role in reducing unemployment, underemployment and economic inequality, including through micro and small business, and alternative business models such as member- and worker-owned cooperatives and social enterprises
5. ACT Government needs to collaborate with the regional business sector to respond to social and environmental challenges and improve wellbeing outcomes
6. in competition and fair cooperation between businesses that encourage a diverse business sector, instead of allowing large private businesses to dominate sectors
7. consumers and small businesses should be protected from unethical and unfair business practices
8. consumers should be provided with easily accessible information about their consumer rights. There should be adequate resourcing to enforce these rights and access to affordable remedies.

### **GOALS**

The ACT Greens want:

1. ACT Government to support businesses through the just transition to a clean, green economy, including through regulation, incentives and advice
2. ACT Government to assist and encourage businesses to employ people who have difficulty accessing the labour market
3. business assistance programs to focus on businesses and industries that meet ethical investment guidelines, with unethical industries excluded, such as arms manufacturing

4. government procurement processes to give ACT businesses an incentive to improve their performance in areas such as environmental sustainability and exploitation-free supply chains
5. ACT Government to create the settings for a more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and equitable private sector
6. increased support for and promotion of alternative business structures such as social enterprises, microcredit and cooperatives
7. ACT Government support for research, development and commercialisation to cultivate circular economy industries and processes with net-negative emissions, including through research and incubation hubs
8. where consistent with broader social, economic and environmental goals, simpler government processes, charges and regulations to reduce compliance and administration costs, particularly for small business
9. government to have robust and ongoing consultation with the business sector on developing and implementing ACT Government policy, as part of its broader community engagement processes
10. government procurement processes to support local small and medium businesses to provide goods and services to the ACT, and to support these businesses in dealing with federal government bodies within the ACT
11. strong business regulations to address unfair, unethical and ecologically unsustainable business practices
12. government procurement and regulatory decisions to have a high degree of integrity and transparency, especially when providing financial support to business
13. greater use of regional supply chains to support the local community
14. strong consumer laws and product information to protect consumers from unfair and unethical business practices
15. a well-resourced and accessible regulatory enforcement system to ensure that businesses are compliant with relevant laws
16. ACT Government to support a right to repair, both through work at the territory level and lobbying the Federal Government for change
17. ACT Government legislation and policies, including land use and zoning policies, to ensure a diverse retail and small business sector can operate fairly and competitively.

## COMMUNITY SECTOR

The community sector is a diverse mix of organisations that represent various shared interests across the ACT population, provide vital services, and advocate for those interests to Government, business and other community groups. Those organisations built on principles of an environmentally sustainable, socially just future play an important role in the ACT's social and economic fabric.

### PRINCIPLES

The ACT Greens believe:

1. community sector organisations support social inclusion, provide essential services for people in need and contribute to the wellbeing of the ACT
2. the community sector has expertise and valuable insights to offer, and should be included as active partners in public policy development processes, as per the 2012 ACT Social Compact
3. community sector staff and volunteers bring a wide range of skills and experience, and should have their contributions appropriately paid and compensated, valued and respected
4. the community sector plays an essential role in advocating for community issues and organisations
5. the community sector plays an essential role in public policy development, generating new ideas, conducting and evaluating research, highlighting structural issues and promoting public debate
6. the community sector is an essential partner in building community resilience and disaster preparedness, management and recovery, especially for those people most at risk
7. the community sector needs adequate, stable and secure funding to ensure it can deliver high-quality services to the ACT community and fulfil its important varied goals.

### GOALS

The ACT Greens want:

1. a viable and resilient ACT community sector through stable funding, governance, career pathways, professional development and remuneration, which further develops the diverse range of skills and knowledge in the ACT
2. an independent, well-resourced community sector that is empowered to advocate to government and hold government to account
3. a strong and sustainable peak body group infrastructure to support citizen engagement in agenda-setting and decision-making, aggregate community concerns, develop agreed priorities for action, and lead and facilitate community sector development and renewal

4. robust and reliable resources for the community sector to enable it to respond to community needs in a timely and effective manner; to improve its own organisational resilience; and to better provide help in times of increased need, such as during extreme weather events
5. better recognition of the true costs of running community organisations through adequate funding for community-based programs
6. Service Funding Agreements between the ACT Government and community sector to include a clause requiring non-discrimination of service provision or employment
7. ongoing support for a community sector industry plan to include revenue generation, infrastructure development, reduced administrative burdens and appropriate levels of accountability and transparency for community services
8. the community sector to provide evidence-driven practice, delivered by appropriately skilled and fairly remunerated staff. The community sector should be supported in its role to identify community needs and develop innovative solutions to address these needs
9. a new Social Compact to be developed, implemented and maintained as a relevant living document that translates the core principles of partnership, respect and complementarity with the ACT Government. These principles should be embedded in all contract arrangements between the community sector and government
10. protection of and respect for the essential role played by community organisations in the development of public policy and advocacy, which is often based on frontline experience
11. to ensure the experiences of consumers and community-based service users are heard and responded to in service development and evaluation processes
12. to create more opportunities for meaningful volunteering that complement, but do not replace, professionalised community sector work
13. more mechanisms for volunteers to receive subsidised training and other support, as part of a comprehensive community sector strategy.



## EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND WORKPLACE WELLBEING

We want the economy to serve society, not the other way around. This can only be achieved when the workplaces of our economy provide for the social and economic needs of workers.

### PRINCIPLES

The ACT Greens believe:

1. everyone has a right to meaningful and secure paid employment
2. workplaces must be inclusive, safe, and free from discrimination and harassment
3. job insecurity, unemployment and underemployment systemically entrench inequality in our society
4. all workers should receive fair and equitable pay, conditions and protections at work, irrespective of how their employment agreements are structured, and in a manner which respects their human rights
5. the growing gap between the lowest-paid and highest-paid workers is detrimental to the long-term wellbeing of the workforce and economic outcomes
6. free, independent, well-resourced and democratic unions are an essential pillar of a civil society
7. the right to be a union member, collectively bargain, collectively withhold labour and collectively organise in the workplace is essential to achieving a sustainable and democratic future
8. unions should be strong, vibrant and unencumbered by unreasonable regulation and outside interference in their right to organise working people and campaign for a better future
9. unions are their membership, and it is up to members to decide how their union functions
10. workers and their representatives are entitled to democratic participation in decisions about the future direction and development of the organisations for which they work
11. there must be a fair and equitable industrial relations system for all workers to protect the interests of working people from the disproportionate power of employers
12. there must be accessible, independent systems for workplace dispute resolution, including conciliation and arbitration before an independent tribunal
13. workplace laws should provide better work-life balance, with people having more control over their working arrangements and rights to flexible working practices
14. as technology and more efficient work practices reduce the need for specific types of labour, it is necessary for our society to examine ways of sharing paid work on a more equitable basis and to explore new opportunities for work and community ventures
15. physical and mental workplace health and safety should underlie all other aspects of work, and workers' compensation schemes should be accessible and fairly applied to all workers, regardless of their industry

16. the objectives of profitability and efficiency should not override economic, social and ecological objectives
17. unpaid domestic work, caring work, volunteer and community work should be recognised and valued the same as forms of paid work
18. climate change is already threatening the occupational health and safety of workers, and government and other employers must manage and mitigate the risk to workers from climate change
19. wage theft is a crime and its victims most frequently come from the marginalised and disadvantaged communities who should be supported by government to secure justice..

## GOALS

The ACT Greens want:

1. ACT Government to set an example of good industrial relations policies and practices that respect staff and offer conditions that attract and retain quality staff
2. ACT Government to lead Australia in best practices in the legislation, implementation and enforcement of workplace laws
3. an end to wage theft and modern slavery in the ACT, including through regulatory enforcement and empowerment of unions to enforce workplace rights
4. ACT Government contracts to follow best practice contractual industrial relations standards
5. to end all forms of unlawful discrimination in the workplace, including in recruitment, promotion and pay, through adequate resourcing of anti-discrimination education, compliance and enforcement
6. to eliminate discriminatory pay gaps and institute mechanisms to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of attributes informed by the ACT Discrimination Act 1991
7. ACT Government to support processes for people who wish to pursue collective bargaining and other forms of consultation and negotiation in the workplace
8. fully resourced strategies to reduce bullying and harassment in all ACT workplaces
9. a balance between paid work and personal time, with fair pay for overtime and unsociable working hours
10. to reduce time dedicated to paid work and increase personal time without loss of pay, including through reduced working hours and increased public holidays
11. innovative and flexible working arrangements to be offered to employees, subject to no-disadvantage tests
12. to introduce healthy workplace and lifestyle programs, such as facilitating active travel to work, end-of-trip facilities in workplaces, and breaks for exercise and wellbeing at work.
13. to introduce employee representation on boards of large companies, and a requirement for corporations to create schemes for their workers to have an active role in financial and organisational decisions

14. ACT Government to provide businesses with support to increase employee participation in decision-making
15. increased protection for whistleblowers, including workers reporting unsafe work practices and/or environments
16. Strong right of entry powers for union officials to assist workers to protect workplace safety and workplace rights
17. requirements for all employers to inform new and existing employees that they are entitled to join a union and other workplace associations, as well as which unions are responsible for the sector
18. workers to have access to clear and comprehensive information about workplace rights
19. measures to protect contracted staff, outworkers, casual workers and those employed through labour hire, including an end to sham contracting arrangements which deprive people of fair pay and conditions
20. appropriate compensation in Workplace Health and Safety cases
21. adequate resourcing for WorkSafe ACT
22. incentives for workplace childcare facilities and mandatory implementation of family-friendly workplace policies for all large employers
23. to reverse the increasing disparity in pay between executives and lowest-waged workers in the ACT Public Service, including in ACT Government corporations and statutory authorities
24. recognition of apprentices, interns and practical (prac) students as workers to prevent exploitation and to ensure compulsory internships are paid and mutually beneficial for interns and employers, including internships undertaken as part of a prac or tertiary study

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY**

The digital economy is playing an increasingly key role in the wider economic landscape. It is important to ensure equitable access, environmental sustainability, and human rights, including privacy, are at the forefront of how we adapt to emerging technologies.

### **PRINCIPLES**

The ACT Greens believe:

1. everyone should have equitable access to digital communications to enable full participation in community life
2. digital rights, including internet access, are an extension of existing rights, should be viewed from a human rights perspective, and must be protected and enforced
3. technological developments disrupt how activities traditionally occur and government has a role to ensure everyone has access to and benefits from this progress
4. the digital economy can be an enabler of significant reductions in overall environmental impacts
5. government data and information should be freely available to the community, while ensuring that people's privacy is protected
6. digital data and information should remain within control of the person who created it, even when it is stored in systems owned by third parties.
7. Everyone has the right to privacy online, and freedom from unnecessary surveillance.
8. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment has considerable and often unnoticed environmental impacts, including the energy and materials required for equipment, networks, storage and disposal of equipment.
9. All businesses should be subject to the Australian Privacy Act.

### **GOALS**

The ACT Greens want:

1. the ACT to have world-leading internet connections, including public access connections
2. ACT Government to be an innovator and leader in adopting digital technologies to reduce its environmental impact (such as by installing energy management systems in all government buildings), and to provide better ACT Government services to consumers, businesses and employees
3. community education to provide information about data sovereignty, personal security and privacy

4. ACT school students to be taught open-source data literacy and educated on issues around data sovereignty, personal security and privacy
5. people to have reasonable access to digital information produced and held about them by the ACT Government and its agencies
6. ACT Government to provide the ACT community, in all its diversity, with access to local ICT employment and training opportunities
7. all ACT Government publications to be published using Creative Commons (CC) licensing; where possible, government should make underlying data sets available
8. ACT Government to support small businesses in the ICT sector as a way of increasing innovation, local employment opportunities and partnerships with tertiary education providers in the ACT
9. ACT Government to minimise the environmental impacts of its own ICT equipment by undertaking life-cycle analyses of ICT infrastructure
10. ACT Government to ensure that ICT infrastructure is resilient so that it is available in times of disaster, such as bushfires
11. ACT Government to facilitate access to digital resources and public education programs on how digital resources can be used at libraries and through partnerships with the community sector.

## **PUBLIC SECTOR AND TAXATION**

Revenue generation for the public sector, including via taxation, is critical to enabling key services and infrastructure to be delivered to all ACT residents. Approaches to revenue should be designed to improve social equity, reduce poverty and meet environmental goals.

### **PRINCIPLES**

The ACT Greens believe:

1. government has a central role in providing services and infrastructure for the community, and in reducing economic inequality
2. economic wellbeing is meaningful only in the context of social and environmental wellbeing, and should be informed by the broadest possible measures of progress
3. government budget decisions should focus economic activity in a way that improves social equity, reduces poverty and meets environmental goals
4. a strong and secure revenue base is needed to provide the government services and infrastructure required by the ACT community
5. the economic position of the ACT Government must be sustainable over the long term
6. the ACT economy and the wellbeing of ACT community members require ongoing public investment in public infrastructure that delivers long-term economic, social and environmental benefits
7. natural monopolies and essential public services should be in public or community ownership
8. decisions on whether infrastructure and government services should be delivered and operated by government, the community sector and/or the private sector should be assessed through a triple-bottom-line lens
9. ACT community members and community organisations should be enabled and encouraged to provide input to government decisions on budget, taxation, infrastructure and service delivery
10. government procurement policies and ethical investment of all public funds are an important tool for achieving society's social, environmental and economic goals
11. the public service must provide apolitical and reliable advice to government, and Members of the ACT Legislative Assembly should respect the advice of this important institution.

### **GOALS**

The ACT Greens want:

1. governments to provide universally accessible public and community services, such as health and education

2. the ACT's system of taxes, charges and concessions as a whole to be progressive, with wealthier and higher income people paying proportionally more in taxes and charges
3. an effective and accessible system of concessions and assistance, targeted to those most in need
4. essential services to be delivered by the public and community sectors and to bring outsourced essential services back into public or community administration wherever possible
5. broad measures of social and environmental wellbeing to guide public expenditure and taxation decisions
6. the taxation system to discourage social and environmental harms and provide incentives for socially and environmentally sustainable behaviours
7. ACT Government to promote nationally coordinated processes that retain a fair distribution of taxation revenue and avoid interstate competition that weakens the overall taxation system
8. legislated standards for the ethical investment of public money to include both positive and negative investment screening
9. full divestment of the ACT Government from harmful industries, such as fossil fuels, weapons manufacturers, gambling industries, tobacco/nicotine and alcohol industries, as well as industries that breach international law or cause harm to the environment or animals
10. ACT community to have greater participation in budget, public expenditure and taxation decisions
11. introduction of employee representation on boards of ACT Government corporations, and a requirement for government-owned corporations to create schemes for their workers to have an active role in financial and organisational decisions
12. procurement processes to include submission criteria that require tenderers to meet high environmental, employment and consultation standards
13. procurement processes to be conducted fairly and with transparency
14. infrastructure projects to be generally funded through responsible government borrowing, and public-private partnership arrangements for infrastructure projects to be used only when it is of clear long-term community benefit
15. infrastructure projects to be accountable, transparent and subject to quality public engagement for their duration including through the publication of documents such as environmental impact statements, business cases, triple-bottom-line analyses and cost-benefit analyses.

## GLOSSARY

**Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS):** A BEMS is an electronic network used to monitor and control a building's electrical and mechanical services, including heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and lighting. A BEMS gives owners and operators automated precision to optimise the performance and energy efficiency of their buildings from a single, intuitive digital interface (Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, 2020).

**Circular economy:** A circular economy is centred on keeping our products, components and materials circulating in use for as long as possible at their highest intrinsic value (ACT Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability 2019b, p. 12).

**Community:** A community is a network of people and organisations linked together by a web of personal relationships, cultural connections and identities, networks of support, traditions, shared socioeconomic conditions, and common interests. Usually communities are composed of diverse groups, competing interests and rights; but sometimes they may be reasonably homogenous (Wighton and Smith 2017, p. 30).

**Creative Commons (CC):** The CC licences provide a simple standardised way for individual creators, companies and institutions to share their work with others on flexible terms without infringing copyright. The licences allow users to reuse, remix and share the content legally (Creative Commons Australia, n.d.).

**Ethical investment:** Investment that accords with Greens principles and policies, such as ecological sustainability and human rights; businesses that directly contravene these principles are unethical businesses.

**First Nations peoples:** The ACT Greens use the term 'First Nations peoples' to refer to all nations and clan groups that occupied the land that would become Australia prior to colonisation. First Nations peoples never ceded their sovereignty and continue their connections with land, water, sky, culture and community. The ACT Greens acknowledge the limitations of any term in accounting for the complexity and diversity of First Nations identities and experiences.

**Gender identity:** Gender identity is the gender with which a person identifies internally. Gender identity can refer to appearance, mannerisms or other gender related characteristics of a person, with or without regard to the person's designated sex at birth (ACT Human Rights Commission, 2020).

**Intersex:** Intersex people are born with physical or biological sex characteristics (such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns) that are more diverse than stereotypical definitions for male or female bodies. For some people, these traits are apparent prenatally or at birth, while for others they emerge later in life, often at puberty (Black et al. 2017, p. 2). Intersex bodies are healthy bodies that rarely require immediate surgical intervention.



**No disadvantage tests (industrial relations):** The no disadvantage test has been part of the enterprise bargaining system since its inception. The test requires the regulatory authorities to examine the conditions set down in the enterprise agreement in order to ensure that those conditions do not 'disadvantage' the employee when compared with the employee's conditions under previously applying regulatory arrangements (Mitchell et al., n.d., p. 3).

**Sham contracting:** A sham contracting arrangement is when an employer attempts to disguise an employment relationship as a contractor relationship. They may do this to avoid certain taxes and their responsibility for employee entitlements, such as minimum wages, superannuation and leave (Australian Government Department of Business, 2020).

**Sharing economy:** A sharing economy is an economy in which consumers have shared access to goods and services, rather than having individual ownership.

**Social Compact:** The 2012 ACT Social Compact is a statement of understanding about the relationship between the ACT Government and the community sector. It outlines principles of good communication and partnership for the benefit of all people and communities in the ACT (ACT Government 2012, p. 3).

**Underemployment:** Underemployed workers are employed persons who want, and are available for, more hours of work than they currently have (ABS, 2007).

**Wage theft:** Wage theft is the denial of wages or other entitlements which are rightfully owed to an employee.

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