

EDUCATION

A strong public education system is key to investing in the next generation and building a fair, successful and cohesive society.



Principles

The Australian Greens believe that:

1. Education is principally a public good.
2. Differences in educational outcomes should not be the result of difference in wealth, income, power, possessions or location.
3. Universal access to high quality education is fundamental to Australia's economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, well-being and social fulfilment.
4. All people are entitled to free, well-funded and high quality, life-long public education and training.
5. The government has a primary responsibility to fund all levels of the public education system – early childhood education, schools, vocational education and training and universities – to provide high quality education to all students.
6. Federal funding to the school education system, including both the public and private sectors, should be on the basis of need and equity to ensure that all Australian children have the opportunity to fulfil their best educational outcomes.
7. Federal schools funding policy should prioritise the public education system to ensure that public schools are able to provide the highest quality educational experiences and set the educational standards for the nation.
8. Decision making in education should be open to input from teachers and academics and their unions, and parents and students.
9. Decisions about curriculum, testing, reporting and teaching should be based on evidence and be made in consultation with appropriate educational experts, teachers, and their unions and other stakeholders.
10. The salaries and conditions of teachers, early childhood educators and other educators should be set at a level that recognises their professionalism, training and the importance of their work, provides secure career structures, and encourages committed and capable people into the teaching profession at all levels of the education system.
11. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's educational outcomes should match the rest of the Australian population.
12. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should be able to exercise meaningful control over the design and delivery of educational services for their children and other community members.
13. The Australian education system should encompass the history, culture and contemporary experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including in the training and professional development of all teachers.

14. Early childhood education is a critical component of lifelong learning and should be provided by government and accredited community organizations and not-for profit providers.
15. A publicly owned and properly funded TAFE system plays an essential role in providing economic prosperity and a socially just society by offering lifelong educational opportunities and skills development to a broad range of our community.
16. Vocational education and training (VET) should be primarily provided through the public TAFE system.
17. The community not-for-profit adult education and VET sectors should also be supported, but not be at the expense of, or in competition with, public TAFE.
18. Universities are places of learning and research where the needs of the whole community and the values of service to the public, scholarship and academic freedom should take priority over sectional and commercial interests.
19. Full-time university and VET students are entitled to a living allowance that enables them to focus primarily on their studies.
20. All students should have the opportunity to study at university and TAFE regardless of their private capacity to pay for their education.
21. The Australian higher education system should be regulated to protect international students from exploitation and ensure they are treated with dignity and are able to access the services they need.
22. Education unions are the appropriate representatives of educators in all educational matters.
23. Quality green space, including nature-play spaces, should be available to all children and young people within educational settings.

Aims

The Australian Greens want:

1. A public school system that is recognised as among the best in the world.
2. Schools funding provided on the basis of equity and need.
3. Funding levels based on a transparent standard that recognises the real cost of educating students to a high level. Public schools must be fully funded at this level, including the full cost of addressing disadvantage.
4. Recognising that the substantial growth in federal funding to non-government schools has had an adverse impact on public education, any funding to non-government schools:
 - a. to be set so that total public subsidy to the non-government sector does not advantage private education at the expense of public education; and
 - b. to take into account the resources of each individual school, a direct measure of parental socio-economic status, and the school's capacity to generate income from all sources, including fees and other contributions.
5. Monies saved from any reforms to the funding model of very wealthy non-government schools to be

- reinvested into public schools with the highest proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
6. Increased funding to public education through funding models for all sectors of the education system that prioritise public education.
 7. To ensure that the viability and diversity of existing public schools is not endangered by the development of new private schools.
 8. The same accountability and transparency frameworks for public funding to be required of non-government schools as are required of government schools, including:
 - a. non-discrimination in the hiring of staff;
 - b. non-discrimination in the selection of students, and an admissions and expulsions policies similar to government schools, including an obligation to enrol;
 - c. provision of all information necessary to calculate the income the school has the capacity to generate from fees and all other sources; and
 - d. accounting for their use of public funds.
 9. Public education infrastructure to be adequately funded for capital works and maintenance to create an optimal learning environment whilst meeting the highest environmental sustainability standards.
 10. Where public education infrastructure and land is sold because of changing demand, the proceeds to be redirected into a fund for the construction of new public schools and buildings.
 11. Public education infrastructure and land to remain in public ownership and control.
 12. Smaller class sizes throughout the public education system to achieve manageable workloads for all educators and the best educational outcomes for all students.
 13. More teachers to educate children with special needs, in schools that suffer socioeconomic disadvantage and schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
 14. An increase in specialist teachers and support services for students and pre-school children with special needs, including those with a disability or a learning difficulty.
 15. Rejection of performance based pay for school teachers and other educators, as it undermines the cooperative environment that is essential to achieving the best educational outcomes, cannot be fairly implemented, discriminates against disadvantaged schools and students, and places downward pressure on overall pay and conditions.
 16. Increased pay, professional recognition, improved pre- and in-service training and increased release time for the development of, and participation in professional learning communities.
 17. Increased support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
 18. Increased support for students from non-English speaking backgrounds.
 19. Increased resource allocation for the teaching of community languages in public primary and secondary schools, and well-resourced centres for the study of community languages and trade-specific English language courses.
 20. Support for schools in the provision of high quality information to parents and the community and an end to the public ranking of schools in league tables.
 21. The use of results of standardised testing, such as NAPLAN, to be focussed on identifying the learning

- needs of individual students and the resource needs of schools, rather than being used to make comparisons between schools.
22. Schools and curriculum material free from corporate sponsorship and influence, including the use of sponsors' material or logos.
 23. Education funding across all sectors that does not include or promote competition, privatisation, outsourcing, and other market based mechanisms; and that rejects:
 - a. the use of funding vouchers for schools;
 - b. competitive tendering, contestable funding and entitlement-based funding for TAFE; and
 - c. demand-driven and entitlement-based funding for universities, noting that such mechanisms undermine standards and integrity and do not further the complex policy objectives of our education system.
 24. Governments to have overall responsibility for public school finances and staffing, because inappropriate devolution of decision making can:
 - a. shift blame for funding constraints more easily to individual school principals rather than government;
 - b. undermine a system-wide transfer system that rewards teachers who are prepared to teach in more challenging environments;
 - c. increase negative competition between schools and result in the entrenchment of school disadvantage in some geographic locations;
 - d. open up the way for privatisation of key aspects of our public schools.
 25. A secular public education system free from religious proselytising and materials that discriminate on the basis of race, sexuality or gender.
 26. To redirect funding for the National School Chaplaincy Program, or equivalent program, to increase funding and support for qualified, secular school welfare and family support professionals in schools.
 27. Home schooling options for parents to educate their children if they meet requirements to provide a balanced education, core educational outcomes and social interaction with peers.
 28. No government funding for schools, VET or tertiary education providers that operate for private profit
 29. To oppose the introduction of corporate, for-profit models of school education.
 30. Strong and well-resourced VET and tertiary education regulators to maintain quality and standards and protect the interests of students and staff.
 31. VET funding priorities which balance student needs, employment demand, and providing skills in satisfying and sustainable employment.
 32. To phase out public funding of privately provided VET where TAFE can provide the same educational and training outcomes.
 33. To address the over-casualisation of TAFE teaching by introducing a benchmark of 80 percent of teaching by permanent staff throughout public and private VET providers.
 34. A substantial increase in the availability of apprenticeships, in rural and regional Australia and other locations where there is a shortage.

35. Direct government support for apprentices, including to help pay for apprentice training, tools and equipment, and a living allowance.
36. Educators to have a key role in developing and reviewing training packages.
37. A fee and charges free TAFE system, where income contingent loans are unnecessary and the Commonwealth government increases its contribution to the costs of a high quality accessible system.
38. Improved access to comprehensive publicly provided tertiary education for rural, regional and remote communities.
39. Increased funding to the tertiary sector and maintenance of sufficient student places to meet the demand of suitably qualified applicants.
40. To ensure that universities are adequately resourced by the government to ensure planned growth in the sector can occur in order to improve accessibility whilst retaining high quality public education and standards.
41. An increase in the cost-index per-student funding of all public universities, and adequate funding to all rural, regional and outer-suburban universities.
42. Free university education for Australian students.
43. Internationally competitive conditions for academic staff, including clear pathways to permanent work and winding back the casualisation of the sector.
44. Legislation for elected staff and student representatives on university governing bodies and increased democratic participation by academics, staff, students and community representatives in the decision-making processes within universities.
45. Affirmative action entrance provisions, residential programs and ongoing assistance to improve university entrance opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
46. Recognition of the rights of academics to be supported in developing and maintaining their pursuit of research.
47. Increased funding for pure and public-outcomes research to ensure that adequate resources are being directed towards this sector of the research community.
48. The Student Services and Amenities Fee, or any similar levy on students, to be collected and spent by democratically elected, student-controlled organisations in order to ensure the best and fairest provision of student services on university campuses.
49. Adequately funded university pathway programs, such as enabling courses and sub-degrees.

IN BRIEF

- More to public schools
- No league tables
- Free university

SPOKESPERSON



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