

Greens – 2016 Election policies

July 2016

The Greens are a minority political party with a presence at both a federal and state level. Dr Richard Di Natale is the Greens leader at a federal level, and Senators Scott Ludlam and Larissa Waters support him as joint Deputy Leaders.

The Greens had 10 Senators in the 44th Parliament (2013-2016). At the time of publication the Greens were expected to win between six and nine positions in the Australian Senate, following the 2 July 2016 federal election.”

The Greens also won a seat in the House of Representatives with the re-election of Adam Bandt to the seat of Melbourne. At the time of publication the Greens were also in contention in the lower House seats of Melbourne Ports and Batman. Both of these seats have incumbent Labor Party members.

The Greens' Wish list	1
Electoral history	1
Key policy principles	2
Dr Richard Di Natale	7

The Greens' Wishlist

The following is a wishlist of the party's highest priorities that Dr Di Natale published before the federal election:

- Strong climate laws; science-based renewable energy and emissions reduction targets
- Ending offshore detention for asylum seekers
- National anti-corruption watchdog; political donations reform
- Medicare-funded dental care
- Strong national environmental laws; national environmental protection agency
- Ending unfair tax breaks for very wealthy
- Legislate for marriage equality without a plebiscite

Electoral history

Bob Brown was the party's first (federal) leader following his election to the Australian Senate in 1996.



Federally, the Greens have played a key role as members of the crossbench in a minority House of Representatives and minority Senate in the previous two Parliaments respectively.

Key policy principles

The Greens have released a suite of key policy principles including:

The economy and jobs

- The Greens have an *After Coal* plan, which outlines their position on securing and creating jobs in the mine rehabilitation sector. Key elements of the plan include:
 - An immediate audit of all coal mines to determine the gap between secured rehabilitation bonds and the actual cost of rehabilitation;
 - Development of a tailored plan for each company to pay into a newly established mining trust fund to secure rehabilitation jobs;
 - Creation of a Mining Rehabilitation Commissioner position to oversee job creation in the mining rehabilitation sector and ensure that companies finalise and engage in mine clean up; and
 - A \$1 billion Clean Energy Transition Fund to assist workers and communities create jobs and retrain unemployed workers.

- The Greens' position on building and supporting the video games industry in Australia includes:
 - Re- introducing the Australian Interactive Games Fund (AIGF) at a cost of \$ 20 million over the forward estimates;
 - Extending the Producer Tax Offset (of 40%) to videogame developers;
 - Development of creative co-working spaces across the country for videogame developers;
 - Continued rollout of the NBN; and
 - Commonwealth support and promotion of the industry.

- The Greens' position on a fairer trade and existing treaties include:
 - Reform of the treaty making process;
 - A ban on investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) clauses contained in recent trade treaties;
 - Voting against the implementation of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement that was finalised in 2015;
 - Upholding Australian labour laws in future and existing trade agreements including the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA)
 - Phasing out live animal exports; and
 - Compensation for people affected by trade liberalisation.

- The Greens have outlined their commitment to the following reforms to the taxation system:
 - A new high-level tax recovery unit within the ATO;
 - Increased protection and incentives for whistleblowers;



- Taxing trusts at the same level as companies;
- Requiring companies who tender for government contracts to submit information about where they and related subsidiaries are located for tax purposes;
- A public register naming the company for each settlement that has been made with the ATO, listing the amounts that the ATO originally assessed a company's tax liability and the amount the matter was finally settled for;
- A public register requiring Australian mining and infrastructure companies disclose the quantum and purpose of funds paid to foreign governments;
- Lowering the threshold from \$200 million to \$50 million (in turnover) at which companies are required to disclose their taxation affairs;
- A 20 per cent tax on sugar sweetened drinks; and
- Limiting the amount of deductions that individuals with an income of over \$300,000 can make.

Finance sector

- Key elements of the Greens' policy platform on the finance sector include:
 - A Royal Commission into the finance sector;
 - Increased penalties for white collar crime rewards for whistleblowers;
 - Implementing the recommendation from the Murray Review prohibiting superannuation funds from directly borrowing to invest in the housing market; and
 - Introducing a system of full account portability whereby Banks would be required to adopt a common numbering format that enables consumers to easily move accounts from one bank to another.

Roads and infrastructure

- The Greens in June 2016 announced \$2 billion in funding for the Cross River Rail project. Further, they announced a plan for a high-frequency Subway system in Brisbane that would operate similarly to the London Underground or New York Subway.

The Greens encourage significant investment in public transport infrastructure, particularly high speed rail, and shifting freight transport onto rail. The Greens' transport plan outlines a priority project list. Their plan would also see investment in electric vehicles.

Innovation, Technology, R&D

- The Greens have a plan to increase spending on research and development (R&D) to 4 per cent of GDP by 2030. Key elements of their plan to make this happen include:
 - A 'Protecting Science' package, consisting of a combined \$847.9 million boost to the Australia Research Council, National Health & Medical Research Council, operative Research Centres;
 - Restoring funding to the CSIRO and reversal of job cuts;
 - Reversal of cuts to the Sustainable Research Excellence program;
 - Investment in critical infrastructure via Innovation and Science Australia;
 - Protection of key research institutions;



- Investment in strategic opportunities for international collaboration;
 - Funding for indirect costs associated with R&D; and
 - Supporting collaborative health research centres to translate the research discoveries into clinical practice.
- The Greens would also establish an \$847.9 million Projecting Science and Research program to provide certainty in R&D grants.
 - The Greens advocate for the expansion of the electric cars sector, which would see 31,000 more electric vehicles on the road by 2021 and 3,500 more charging stations around the country. Key elements of the Greens' plan to achieve this includes:
 - Funding free registration for the first five years after purchase of a fully electric vehicle;
 - \$151 million in grants to support local governments, state governments and car park operators to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
 - \$50 million in grants to support government and non-government organisations to meet the gap between the cost on electric vehicle and a conventional vehicle;
 - Increasing the luxury car tax to 50% for conventional fossil fuel vehicles over \$100,000 to drive consumer choices towards electric vehicles; and
 - Including firms involved in electric vehicle manufacturing in the government's Automotive Transformation Scheme.

Climate Change and Energy

- The Greens' support the expansion of battery storage technology includes the following key elements:
 - Introduction of a 50 per cent refundable tax credit to assist with the cost of household solar energy storage systems, and shortening the length of time in which business owned battery storage assets can be depreciated for tax purposes.
- The Green' policy on nuclear waste includes the following key elements:
 - Containerising and isolating domestic intermediate-level radioactive waste at ANSTO's Lucas Heights facility; and
 - Holding an independent Inquiry into national radioactive waste production and management.
- The Greens' position to transition to an energy economy reliant on coal or gas includes the following key elements:
 - No new coal or unconventional gas approvals or expansions;
 - A ban on hydraulic fracturing ("fracking");
 - The right for landholders including traditional owners to veto coal and unconventional gas;
 - Extending the 'water trigger' to all forms of unconventional gas, including shale and tight gas;
 - A 90% clean energy economy by 2030;



- A \$1 billion Clean Energy Transition Fund;
 - An export levy on thermal coal, an end to fossil fuel subsidies, and a price on pollution; and
 - No new coal or gas ports along the Great Barrier Reef, and no new fossil fuel infrastructure like gas pipelines.
- The Greens' position to foster the development of 'green' buildings includes the following key elements:
 - A national target of 100% zero carbon buildings by 2040;
 - A new \$100 million loan facility through the Clean Energy Finance Corporation for large scale retrofits of commercial buildings with a focus on mid-tier commercial buildings (small and medium size businesses);
 - A \$10m Green roofs and walls fund and a requirement for any buildings receiving government funding to include green walls or roofs; and
 - Incentives for local governments to enrol commercial building owners in Environmental Upgrade Agreements.
 - The Greens' would also establish *RenewAustralia* – a statutory body that would drive investment in the renewable energies sector.
 - The Greens would push to power South Australia with 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030. This is expected to drive job creation and innovation.
 - The Greens would remove the barriers and drive solar panels on every Australian house and business.
 - The Greens support the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Small Business

- Key elements of the Greens' small business plan include:
 - Continued advocacy for the Effects Test;
 - Allocation of \$815.9 million over the forward estimates to restore loss-carry-back provisions that enable small businesses to better manage lumpy expenses;
 - Increasing the small business entity turnover from \$2 million to \$10 million;
 - Supporting the \$20 000 instant asset write- off;
 - Increasing the GST registration threshold to \$150,000 (or more) for businesses, and to \$300,000 or more for not-for-profits;
 - Having employee super collected with tax as a pay as you go contribution, to be distributed by the Australian Tax Office;
 - Protection of hire equipment from receivership acquisitions; and
 - Allocation of \$20 million to implement mental health programs for small business owners and staff.

Superannuation

- The Greens' advocate for a more progressive superannuation system that is expected to raise \$11 billion over the forward estimates. Key elements of the Green's superannuation proposals include:
 - A government co-contribution of 15 cents for each dollar of concessional contributions for individuals below the tax-free threshold (\$18,200); and
 - Someone earning \$18,000 whose employer is contributing the legal minimum in super contributions would no longer pay any tax on concessional superannuation contributions and would receive a government co-contribution of about \$257.

Aged care and an ageing workforce

- The Greens' position on aged care and the ageing Australian workforce includes the following key elements:
 - Development of a national strategy for mature age workers, which would include increased *jobactive* support for people aged 45 and older looking for work and removal of legal barriers to mature age employment;
 - Development of a plan for full consumer directed care through engagement with industry, consumer groups and other stakeholders;
 - \$132.8 million in additional funding and support for dementia; and
 - \$76m in additional funding for palliative care.

Infrastructure

- The Greens propose increasing investment in infrastructure by \$75 billion through the establishment of an Infrastructure Bank. The following areas have been identified as key for the Infrastructure Bank:
 - Clean energy infrastructure;
 - Public housing to address liveability and affordability in urban areas;
 - Rail upgrades to help shift cars and heavy freight off our roads;
 - Telecommunications infrastructure, including the NBN; and
 - Maintenance of existing assets, particularly local government roads and storm water.

The Infrastructure Bank would issue government bonds to raise money to support this funding.

Agriculture

- The Greens propose increasing investment in agriculture research to increase sustainability.

Education

- The Greens propose increasing investment in the university sector and boosting research funding.



- The Greens support the final years funding (years five and six) of the National Education Reform Agreement (also known as the Gonski reforms).

- Key elements of the Greens' Vocational Educational Training (VET)/TAFE sector plan includes:
 - Ceasing to provide federal funding to for-profit VET providers;
 - Establishing a VET Ombudsman; and
 - Injecting additional funding into the sector to “rescue TAFE”.

Social policies

Some of the Greens' social policies include:

- Reform of pokies including a maximum of \$1 bet per spin, \$20 load limit and maximum \$500 jackpots. These reforms would be implemented by 2020;
- Ending advertising of sports betting odds, 'cash for comment' arrangements between sports betting companies and sponsorship of sporting teams by gambling companies;
- Legalisation of voluntary euthanasia;
- Measures to reduce domestic and family violence;
- Increased community housing and protection of renters;
- Support for a republic;
- Working to close the gap on social and economic indicators between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;
- Support for marriage equality;
- Investing in the mental health system;
- Investing in primary and palliative care;
- *A Harm Reduction Fund* to develop innovative responses to the effects of illicit drugs;
- A national redress scheme for survivors of child sexual abuse in institutional settings;
- Doubling funding for homelessness services;
- Commitment to process for treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and
- Closing offshore detention camps for asylum seekers;

The full list of Greens policies is available [here](#).

Dr Richard Di Natale

Dr Di Natale was elected to the Senate in 2010 as the Greens' first Victorian Senator.

Prior to his entry into Parliament, Dr Di Natale served as a general practitioner and public health specialist. This included work in Aboriginal health in the Northern Territory, HIV prevention in India and in the drug and alcohol health sector.

Dr Di Natale currently lives with his family on a farm in South West Victoria.



Further information

The Greens' election costings are available [here](#).

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