

## 2019 AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTION – CALL TO PARTIES

### QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE CITY OF MELBOURNE

**NAME:** The Australian Greens

#### Climate and environment

**1. Do you understand and accept the scientific consensus on climate change? If so what are your policies to ensure climate mitigation pathways compatible with limiting global temperature rises to no more than 1.5C, including in relation to investment in renewables and industrial carbon emissions regulation?**

Yes, we have always accepted the scientific consensus on climate change, and have a long history of leading climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.

Australia's climate policy should be consistent with our commitment under the Paris Agreement to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this is essential to reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

The Greens have a national pollution reduction target of 63-82% by 2030 on 2005 levels and net-zero emissions by 2040 and a goal of 100% renewables by 2030 in the electricity sector.

Our specific policies include the following:

- Establish a national public authority - Renew Australia - to lead the energy transition and make pollution reduction an objective of the National Electricity Market.
- Maintain and increase the existing Renewable Energy Target; restore \$500 million in funding cut by Labor and Liberal from the Australia Renewable Energy Agency and allocate an additional \$10 billion to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation which the Greens established during the Gillard government.
- Restore a carbon price based on the Greens-Labor emissions trading scheme abolished by Tony Abbott and abolish rebadged Emissions Reduction Fund.
- The phased regulated retirement of coal fired power stations completed by 2030.
- Invest in new renewable generation through a combination of public ownership and reverse auctions such as those conducted by the Victorian and ACT governments.
- Support investment by establishing Renewable Energy Zones, bringing interconnectors into public hands and investing in new transmission with a \$6 Billion Grid Transformation Fund. A \$2.2 Billion National Large Scale Energy Storage Target managed by the Australian Energy Market Operator.
- No new coal mines such as Adani. Phase out thermal coal mining by 2030 with ratcheting down annual quotas and auctioning of permits. A \$1 billion Clean Energy Transition Fund to assist coal workers and communities with the transition.
- Double energy productivity by investing in energy efficiency including a National Energy Efficiency Target placing an obligation on retailers to drive energy efficiency gains. Mandate strong energy efficiency targets for new buildings in the National Construction Code of 22-60% by 2030.
- Support homeowners and SMEs with energy costs: \$2.2 billion Household Solar Storage Scheme with up to \$7000 to subsidise battery storage for home owners and low-interest loans for small business. Restoring price regulation and establishing a publicly owned retailer - Power Australia.
- \$1.2 billion Solar for All program will support landlords and apartment dwellers to install rooftop solar on their property. Power Australia will also offer people the opportunity to buy into solar gardens, installed on a supermarket or community buildings, and get to retain ownership of their solar panel when they move. Renters and apartment dwellers who invest will get an ongoing discount on their energy bill.
- \$100 million in an Indigenous and remote communities power fund, administered

by ARENA, to support the shift to renewable energy, storage and the creation of microgrids in remote indigenous communities.

- A \$25 million investment in a community renewables program to support regional and community renewable hubs across the country.
- Re-establish the \$200 million Clean Technology Innovation Program, scrapped by Tony Abbott, supporting innovation of products, processes and services by business and industry; Clean Energy Solution Centres to support business to implement audits and develop energy efficiency plans; a Clean Energy Small Business Fund with an initial funding injection of \$200 million over the next 4 years. SMEs will be eligible to apply for up to \$10,000 to cover the cost of investment in assets or capital works that will reduce fossil fuel use, improve energy efficiency or switch from gas to clean energy.
- Fuel switching program: a \$50 million community education campaign targeted at households, encouraging them to use reverse cycle air conditioners as heaters instead of their gas heaters, which would cut pollution and save consumers up to thousands of dollars a year; Changing the Building Code of Australia requirements to prohibit the installation of gas in new developments;
- Partnering with state and territory governments to provide a 20% rebate on up to \$10,000 spent upgrading gas appliances to energy-efficient electric appliances, such as split system heating and cooling and efficient hot water systems (solar or heat pump) for households earning less than \$100,000 per year;
- Investing an additional \$100 million in ARENA to support specific research, development and commercialisation into industrial substitution and electrification programs in the chemical and other manufacturing and fabrication industries;
- Implement European fuel emission standards for light vehicles. Phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030; massive investment in public transport including east coast high speed rail and shift freight onto rail. A 17% tax on luxury fossil fuel cars would pay for scrapping registration fees, import tariffs, GST and stamp duty on electric vehicles, reducing the cost of electric vehicles by around 20%.
- No new oil and gas projects such as in the Great Australian Bight or fracking on farmland.
- Investing in the development of a renewable energy export industry either directly or via renewable hydrogen by establishing the \$1.6 Billion Clean Energy Export Development Fund.
- Establishment of a \$250 million Green Steel Innovation Fund administered by ARENA to drive down demand for metallurgical coal.
- Restore the Carbon Farming Initiative to support farmers to increase the drawdown of carbon in the landscape. Research, development and deployment of mechanisms to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and encourage a move away from a reliance on carbon intensive food production.
  
- Strengthen environmental laws, a national EPA with real teeth and a national environment commission that together will tackle land clearing and greenhouse intensive development projects. Stronger controls and wherever possible, a ban on land clearing, logging of native forest and other activities that reduce carbon storage, including threats to kelp forests and sea grass beds.

**2. Will you legislate a regulatory framework for product stewardship, holding retailers and manufacturers accountable for managing their waste, and also provide national coordination and support for all waste reduction and management including through new large scale recycling infrastructure?**

Yes. It is our endorsed policy position that “Manufacturers, distributors and retailers should be required to adopt product stewardship, taking financial and physical responsibility for a product at the end of its life.” We want Commonwealth law to embed a comprehensive national waste strategy, addressing each stage of the production and consumption cycle, with mandatory targets for the recovery of different categories of waste. We also want to eliminate eliminating built-in obsolescence and single-use products wherever possible, and create a national labelling scheme for products that are biodegradable, reusable or recyclable, and for products which are primarily made from recycled materials. You can find our federal plan to reboot recycling [here](#).

- 3. Will you instigate a national funding scheme dedicated to halt the loss of biodiversity and threatened species in urban areas through funding 'nature in cities' programs?**

Yes, in and outside of urban areas. It is our policy to develop, fund and implement recovery plans for threatened and endangered species and ecological communities. We will also be releasing our full Nature Fund policy on the later in the Campaign detailing our plan to halt the loss of biodiversity and threatened species nation-wide

## Transport

- 4. Do you accept that the Victorian share of Commonwealth infrastructure funding has been far too low for too long, and will you fast-track majority share funding for vital infrastructure projects Airport Rail, Metro Rail 2 and Fishermans Bend Light Rail? What is your proposed expenditure by year for each of these three projects?**

Yes. It is our policy to fund Airport Rail and Metro Rail 2 through Commonwealth-Victorian government shared funding. We are also open to the funding of Fishermans Bend Light Rail with Commonwealth contributions, but note that Metro Rail 2 would service Fishermans Bend and should be an urgent funding consideration of the Commonwealth. Completion of the business case, detailed costings and cost benefit analysis for Metro Rail 2 should commence immediately, undertaken by the Victorian Government with Commonwealth Government assistance. We are deeply concerned that the Victorian Labor Government is not adequately prioritising Metro Rail 2.

- 5. Will you review and replace regulations and directives to CASA and Airservices Australia to ensure that non-emergency flight amenity impacts over built up areas can be effectively monitored, managed and – where they have significant amenity and safety impacts such as occurs in the vicinity of the Yarra River in the inner city – minimised?**

Yes. We have attempted to do so in this term of parliament, but the National, Liberal and Labor parties voted not to recommend support of the Greens bill designed to do just this. Regulations should be reviewed and changed urgently.

## Social security and community services

- 6. Will you greatly increase the funding available under a new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, and urgently create a National Homelessness Strategy and allocate sufficient funding to its implementation?**

Yes

- 7. Will you reverse the assessment changes to the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program and provide adequate income and case management support for people seeking asylum while they seek sustainable employment?**

Yes

- 8. Will you reinstate the ongoing operational funding for adventure playground community hubs that support healthy communities with a focus on disadvantaged children, which was stripped in the 2014 budget? (Federal funding was removed from the Venny, City of Melbourne, \$129,000 p.a. indexed; Cubbies in Fitzroy, City of Yarra, \$200,000; and Prahran playground, City of Stonnington, \$125,000.)**

Yes. It is unreasonable that councils had to instantly take on the cost-shifting cuts

initiated by the Abbott government in 2014.

- 9. Will you commit to a comprehensive review of welfare policies and a reform of Centrelink practices, in particular Proof of Identity practices, to ensure homelessness is not exacerbated and that the most vulnerable people in our cities can access social security?**

Yes. The Greens support guaranteed access to essential community services, including social services and social security. We believe our social security system is based on enabling people to live with dignity and respect. We commit to a review of income support payments and a reform of Centrelink practices to ensure there is no discrimination in access to essential supports.

## Education

- 10. Will you review the National Strategy for International Education and how will you reduce unscrupulous recruitment practices by educational institutions?**

The Greens believe in protecting international students from exploitation and ensure they are treated with dignity and are able to access the services they need. International students need additional protection from unethical and unscrupulous providers.

- 11. Will you reduce international student working visa restrictions to enable greater employability?**

The system regulating the use of guest workers should be reviewed and ultimately negotiated between unions, employer organisations and the federal government. Any new system should ensure quality of pay and conditions for local and guest workers, an emphasis on tackling rising youth un- and under-employment in Australia and the maintenance of international collaboration in important areas (such as research). More detail on the Greens' position can be found [here](#).

- 12. Will you provide a policy position and support for the role of international students and their contribution beyond the period they study in a city? A discussion paper covering managing population growth and the potential productivity uplift and connection to the future success of a city and retention of its international student population is recommended.**

The Greens have long pointed to the many contributions international students make to a city, which are over and above their economic contributions. They make our cities more vibrant and culturally rich. The Greens will work with student bodies, unions and universities to enable better policy outcomes for our international student population. Central to the Greens' education principles is regulation of the Australian higher education system to protect international students from exploitation and to ensure they are treated with dignity and are able to access the services they need.

## Employment

- 13. What are your plans to ensure a fair share of Commonwealth agency jobs and headquarter locations in Melbourne?**

In the power-sharing parliament of 2010, the Greens secured the establishment of the Climate Change Authority and its location in Melbourne. We will continue to fight for a fair share of Commonwealth jobs and headquarters for Melbourne.

## Aboriginal Melbourne

**14. Will you redouble the Commonwealths efforts to close the gap and ensure equality of outcomes for Aboriginal people across major indicators of health, education, training, housing, employment and living standards in the next decade?**

Yes. The Greens are strongly committed to closing the gap and ensuring equality of outcomes for First Nations peoples across Australia. A key part of our plan involves negotiating treaties with First Nations peoples, supporting the establishing of an agreement-making body, facilitating a process of justice and truth telling, and establishing a Voice to Parliament. We are also committed to addressing the unacceptable incarceration rates of First Nations peoples, reducing the disproportionate rate of First Nations children in out of home care and reducing the rates of family violence against First Nations women and children.

## Arts

**15. Will you fully restore indexed Australia Council funding (last year's restoration having fallen short by at least \$14m) and commit to avoid Ministerial interference in arts funding programs?**

Yes. Despite 98% of Australians participating annually in the arts, the peak government funding and advisory body for the arts, the Australia Council, has seen its funding dramatically reduced from pre-2013 levels by the Coalition government. This has disproportionately affected small and medium arts organisations.

We will restore and index funding to the Australia Council to support the development and production of the arts at a scale and ambition that reflects Australia's commitment to and participation in the arts.

## Planning

**16. As Melbourne is the fastest growing city in the country, will you work with the City of Melbourne, and the Victorian Government where appropriate, to pursue a City Deal for Melbourne?**

Yes

**17. Given the national significance of the financial implications of cladding rectification for building owners, will you establish a rectification relief fund, providing access to grants and low or interest free loans to expedite unsafe cladding removal?**

Yes

**18. Will you commit to a level of support funding to assist in projects that sustain adequate levels of care for World Heritage sites?**

Yes. Adam Bandt in the Federal division of Melbourne has been a strong advocate for Commonwealth funding for the upkeep, and heritage-respectful maintenance to facilitate greater public visitation, of the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens. This is Victoria's only UNESCO-listed World Heritage site of 'cultural heritage' and must be respected and adequately maintained by the Commonwealth, working with the City of Melbourne and Museums Victoria.

**19. Will you review the national economic, social and financial implications of further**

## **development of the metropolitan fringes in comparison to urban consolidation?**

**Yes. While land use and planning is a State Government jurisdiction, the national social, environmental and economic implications of unfettered urban sprawl are immense. Work needs to be done to measure the impact of urban sprawl, in contrast with urban consolidation, across key environmental, economic and social measures. This work is necessary to better guide population distribution to create healthier and more sustainable communities and urban development.**