



Education

Policy Category: Social Justice

Principles

The Australian Greens believe

1. Education is principally a public good.
2. Differences in educational outcomes should not be the result of differences 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 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. 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.
10. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's educational outcomes should match the rest of the Australian population.
11. 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.

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Vocational education and training (VET) to be primarily provided through the public TAFE system while the community and not-for-profit VET sector should also be supported.
15. 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 take priority over sectional and commercial interests.
16. Full-time university and VET students are entitled to a living allowance that enables them to focus primarily on their studies.
17. Education unions are the appropriate representatives of educators in all educational matters.
18. Competition between schools based on narrow measures of performance is not an effective way to improve Australia's education outcomes.

Aims

The Australian Greens want

19. A public school system that is recognised as among the best in the world.
20. Schools funding must be provided on the basis of equity and need.
21. Funding levels should be 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.
22. 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 should
 - a) 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) 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.
- 23. The money saved from ending the public funding of those non-government schools that are very wealthy, which would not receive government funding under such a model, would be reinvested into public schools with the highest proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 24. Increased funding to public education through funding models for all sectors of the education system to prioritise public education.
- 25. Ensure the viability and diversity of existing public schools is not endangered by the development of new private schools.
- 26. 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 have an admissions and expulsions policies similar to government, schools including an obligation to enrol; and
 - c) provision of all information necessary to calculate the income the school has capacity generate from fees and all other sources; and
 - d) accounting for their use of public funds.
- 27. 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.
- 28. Where public education infrastructure and land is sold because of changing demand, the proceeds should be redirected into a fund for the construction of new public schools and buildings.
- 29. Public education infrastructure and land should remain in public ownership and control.
- 30. Smaller class sizes throughout the public education system to achieve manageable workloads for all educators and the best educational outcomes for all students.
- 31. More teachers in schools that suffer socioeconomic disadvantage to educate children with special needs and schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

32. Increased specialist teachers and support services for students and pre-school children with special needs, including those with a disability or a learning difficulty.
33. To reject 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.
34. Increased pay, professional recognition, improved pre-and-in service training and increased release time for the development of, and participation in professional learning communities.
35. Increased support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
36. Increased support for students from non-English speaking backgrounds
37. Include the history, culture and contemporary experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the school curriculum, and in the training and professional development of all teachers.
38. Decisions about curriculum, testing, reporting and teaching to be made in consultation with appropriate educational experts, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders.
39. Increased resource allocation to 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.
40. Support schools in the provision of high quality information to parents and the community and end the public ranking of schools in league tables.
41. Schools and curriculum material free from corporate sponsorship and influence including the use of sponsors' material or logos.
42. Education funding across all sectors that does not include or promote competition, privatisation, outsourcing, and other market based mechanisms; and reject:
 - a) the use of funding vouchers for schools;
 - b) competitive tendering 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.

43. 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 with 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 results in the entrenchment of school disadvantage in some geographic locations;
 - d) Open up the way for privatisation of key aspects of our public schools.
44. To redirect funding for the National School Chaplaincy and School Welfare Program, or equivalent program, to increase funding and support for qualified school welfare and family support professionals in public schools.
45. 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.
46. No government funding for schools that operate for private profit.
47. VET funding priorities to balance between student needs, employment demand, and providing skills in satisfying and sustainable employment.
48. Phase out the public funding of privately provided VET where TAFE can provide the same educational and training outcomes.
49. 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.
50. A substantial increase in the availability of apprenticeships, in rural and regional Australia and other locations where there is a shortage.
51. Educators have a key role in developing and reviewing training packages.
52. 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.
53. Improved access to comprehensive publicly provided tertiary education for rural, regional and remote communities.

54. Increase funding to the tertiary sector and maintain sufficient student places to meet the demand of suitably qualified applicants.* passed by consensus
55. Increase the cost-index per-student funding of all public universities, and ensure adequate funding to all rural, regional and outer-suburban universities.* passed by consensus
56. Make university education free for Australian students by immediately reducing and progressively phasing out fees for educational services and significantly reforming the existing regime for, and the phasing out of, the repayment of HECS debts and FEE-HELP debts at public universities.
57. Internationally competitive conditions for academic staff.
58. Elected staff and student representatives on university governing bodies.
59. 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.
60. Affirmative action entrance provisions, residential programs and ongoing assistance to improve university entrance opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
61. Recognise the rights of academics to be supported in developing and maintaining their pursuit of research.
62. Increase funding to pure and public-outcomes research to ensure that adequate resources are being directed towards this sector of the research community.
63. Ensure the student amenities fee is collected and spent by democratically elected, student-controlled organisations in order to ensure the best and fairest provision of student services on university campuses.