



YOUNG PEOPLE, YOUNG LEADERS

A Plan for Canberra's Young People

The Greens will ensure the voices of Canberra's young people are heard

The ACT Greens believe that young people must be respected and valued for who they are now, as well as who they will become. We have a comprehensive plan for Canberra's young people and their future in our city.

The ACT Greens believe that young people must be respected and valued for who they are now, as well as who they may become in the future. As a young party, and a party that values the contributions and leadership of young people, the ACT Greens believe that young people are entitled to express their opinions and have them heard by decision-makers.

We know that young people in the ACT care deeply about their peers, and the world around them. While young people hold diverse views on political issues, young people have consistently supported stronger action on global warming, compassion towards asylum seekers and for the love between same sex couples to be recognised in law.

The ACT Greens will always fight for clean energy and action on global warming, an end to cruel, offshore detention and for an end to discrimination under our laws.

However, young people also face substantial challenges. They face a society that often fails to value their contributions, politicians who prioritise short term electoral gain ahead of their long term future, a housing market in crisis and a lack of jobs and employment opportunities.

The ACT Greens will consider young people in every policy that we put forward.

> **Having Your Say**

The ACT Greens believe that young people aged 16 and 17 years should have the option to vote in ACT elections.

Decisions made today will affect young people right now, and potentially for the rest of their lives. Lowering the voting age means more people helping to shape our city, our democracy and our future. The ACT Greens believe that this is a good thing.

It does not make sense to prevent young people from voting, while at the same time determining that they are old enough to work, join the army, have sex, pay tax and drive vehicles. These are all activities that require responsibility and involve risk.

> **A Clean Energy Future**

Young people are leading the charge when it comes to tackling global warming. Through organisations like the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, 350.org, Seed Mob, Fossil Free ANU and many more, they are championing the campaign for the government, universities and financial institutions to show leadership and take action on global warming.

We stand with young people, and First Australians, who will bear the brunt of the worst impacts of global warming if we do not take urgent action.

Thanks largely to the ACT Greens in the ACT Legislative Assembly, Canberra has led the nation with its target of 100% clean energy by 2020. But we can go further. The ACT Greens have a plan to make it cheaper and easier to power homes, businesses and transport with clean energy.

But, all of this is under threat from the Liberals. Federally, they have torn down our climate laws, cut funding to clean energy and continue to accept billions of dollars from fossil fuel companies every election. Canberra has too much to lose to let the Liberals gain control here too.

> **Housing for Everyone**

Here in Canberra, and around the country, young people are struggling to find somewhere to live. For most young people the prospect of buying a house like their parents may have is impossible.

The ACT Greens believe all members of our community deserve to have somewhere affordable, safe and secure to live. This generation of home-leavers is the first that will be worse off than their parents, and they are forecast to never be able to enter the housing market.

We want young Canberrans to land on their feet. We want them to be able to afford a house to live in, and to stay in Canberra doing the jobs they want to do. Labor and the Liberals have had decades to address this and they have failed.

It's time to put people at the centre of housing and development, not developers. We will support new models of affordable housing that allow people to be involved in the shaping of their community and their developments. This will include new types of community housing, that allow for young people to take control and shape the type of community they want to see.

And, we will set minimum standards for all rental properties to ensure that lessors aren't allowed to leave students, young families, or anyone in our community, shivering through winter and roasting in summer. Affordable housing should not mean sub-standard housing.

> **Arts and Community**

We know that young people are concerned about finding things to do in Canberra.¹ As our city grows and diversifies, so too has our arts, music and cultural scene. Canberra has started to develop a thriving night-time economy.

Recently, the ACT Greens spoke out against the Labor Party's proposal to introduce so called "last drinks" laws. While we believe that there is more work to be done to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence, we also believe that there are more effective ways of tackling violence that don't involve turning off the lights on Canberra's nightlife.

The ACT Greens are committed to making sure our whole community can participate in arts and cultural activities, and we believe that a thriving live music and events scene is central to Canberra's future.

> **Mental Health**

The pressures of life often start to show while young people are in school. With more awareness of mental health, particularly depression and anxiety, young people are seeking help and finding all too often that services are not in the right place or available at the right time.

The Greens believe that just like physical health, mental health is critical to our overall wellbeing. That's why we will increase funding for mental health services to young people.

We will also support more appropriate interventions for those seeking help while at school or college, at a time when many young people reach out for the first time.

> **Youth Employment**

Youth unemployment in the ACT is nearly three times the general unemployment rate leaving young people struggling to find work, pay bills and set themselves up for the future. All people have the right to meaningful and secure paid employment, but right now young people in Canberra are being left behind.

The ACT Greens believe that the government has a role in supporting young people find, and keep, employment. That's why we will work with the government to ensure that jobs created through government investment in infrastructure employ people in the community most vulnerable to unemployment - particularly young people. We will also look to create better partnerships between CIT, local business and the growing green economy, to support new traineeships and apprenticeships.

All over the world countries are transitioning into a new economic future that is powered with new industries such as clean energy and digital technology. And yet just this year we saw the Liberals slash hundreds of jobs from the CSIRO. The ACT Greens are determined to invest in the skills, and the industries, that will be creating jobs for young people not just now but well into the future.

¹ Rate Canberra, a survey of young people aged 12 – 25 in the ACT, was implemented by the Youth Coalition of the ACT between April and July 2012. A total of 1,376 young people participated in the survey.

> **Supporting LBGTIQ* Young People**

The ACT Greens believe that freedom of sexual orientation and gender identity are fundamental human rights. Everyone has a right to be themselves and express themselves however they choose.

Canberra was the first place in the country to legalise same sex marriage - and while it was quashed by the High Court, the fight is not over. The Greens will always support marriage equality - every vote, every MP, every time.

However, marriage equality is not the only challenge that young LBGTIQ people are facing. Disappointingly, prejudice still exists within our homes, schools, universities and workplaces; and LBGTIQ youth disproportionately suffer from mental illness and are at risk of suicide and self harm.

The ACT Greens do not support the divisive, wasteful and harmful plebiscite on same-sex marriage. But if it goes ahead, the ACT Greens will commit to increasing the funding to LBGTIQ support services so that people who are subjected to discrimination or harassment as the plebiscite is carried out have access to the services they need.

> **Improve Greens Skills for the Future**

The ACT is a learning capital, with students coming from near and far to study at our world class Canberra Institute of Technology, our universities and private training organisations. We are also facing unprecedented development around Canberra, much of it close to sensitive natural environments.

That is why we will hold a summit of educational providers, developers, peak bodies and conservation groups to increase support for vocational education in the sustainable and emerging technology sectors, and improve links with the construction, energy and ICT sector to encourage more traineeships and apprenticeships that focus on sustainability, particularly for older workers seeking new skills.

> **More Opportunities for Young People**

Youth unemployment in the ACT is at 11.6%, nearly 3 times the general unemployment rate (4.1%), and we believe that more can be done to support young people with employment.

We will provide increased career guidance programs for year 10 onwards, and support better transitions planning, in line with the issues raised in the most recent longitudinal data.

The ACT Greens support calls to implement targets and strategies to ensure that jobs created through government investment in infrastructure employ people in the community most vulnerable to unemployment, particularly young people.

