



OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Diversity and equality for everyone

Investing in our multicultural community and a more equal, accepting Canberra

Our plan to invest in Canberra's multicultural communities and ensure that all Canberrans have equal rights & opportunities

All people, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, language or place of birth, have equal rights in our society. Our diversity is a source of our strength and a key part of what makes the ACT such a vibrant place to live.

The ACT Greens want support our multicultural communities to connect with their language and culture, and to build relationships with each other and the broader Canberra community. Recent public attacks on religious and ethnic groups highlights have shown that need to continue to educate our community about diversity and the rights of all people to live without being discriminated or vilified on the basis of their faith, race or ethnicity.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Increase funding for advocacy and representation, and establishing a multicultural advisory body
- » Improve community facilities for multicultural communities
- » Conduct a feasibility study for a new Multicultural Centre in Gungahlin
- » Instruct the ACT Human Rights Commission to combat racial and religious vilification
- » Provide increased funding for community language schools

> Multicultural Advisory Body

Multicultural communities are supported by small voluntary groups and organisations who work tirelessly to advocate for the needs of their diverse communities. Unfortunately these communities are locked out of decision making through lack of resource and opportunities to make their voices heard.

The ACT Greens will put the multicultural community first by:

- » Establishing an Multicultural Advisory Board
- » Empowering the Multicultural Advisory Board to give an ongoing voice to multicultural communities in government decision making; and
- » Convening a Multicultural summit
- » Assisting with the implementation of an ACT Multicultural Policy; and
- » Providing increased funding for community sector advocacy and representation

> More community facilities

The ACT Greens understand the need for communities to have places where they can come together, meet, celebrate and support each other.

While some of our more established multicultural communities have their own premises, many of our new and emerging communities are left waiting for access to existing facilities, or for land to build their own community centres.

We understand that there are many government facilities that are under utilised, and that parts of Canberra with growing multicultural communities lack the facilities of other parts of Canberra.

The ACT Greens will put the multicultural community first by:

- » Implementing a program to increase community access to government facilities such as school halls, building on the success of a similar program for local sporting groups; and
- » Conducting a feasibility study to examine the establishment of a multicultural community centre in Gungahlin, including needs analysis and community consultation.

> Combatting racial and religious vilification

The vilification of certain religious minority groups, in particular Muslim Australians, is increasingly becoming a problem – both nationally and in the ACT. The ACT Greens recently introduced legislation to ensure that individuals could not be vilified, based on their religion. Vilification is not the same thing as engaging in genuine discussion and debate on issues of culture and religion.

The ACT Greens will instruct the ACT Human Rights Commission to:

- » Help educate our community about what religious vilification is (and isn't);
- » Respond to and address complaints of religious vilification; and
- » Support delivery of the national anti-racism campaign.

> Funding community language schools

The ACT Greens understand the value of our community language schools in helping people to connect to their cultural background, and that bilingualism and multilingualism are important ways to strengthen inter-cultural understanding in our community.

Currently funding for ACT community language schools is not being increased to meet increasing numbers of students and rising costs.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Boost annual funding by 20% for the Community Language Schools Association, and to tie future funding increases to both CPI and student numbers.