



BETTER GOVERNMENT

Putting the Community First

The Greens have a plan to clean up politics

Government should serve the best interests of all Canberrans. The ACT Greens have a plan to clean up politics, put people back at the centre of government decisions and crackdown on lobbyists in the ACT.

The ACT Greens believe that a healthy democracy requires frank, transparent and accountable practices in all aspects of government. The ACT Legislative Assembly should serve the best interests of all Canberrans which means that money and wealthy should not be able to buy political power, and the meetings with lobbyists and other vested interest groups should be transparent and clear.

The ACT Greens also believe that where possible the community should be involved in making decisions that affect them. Putting the community first means making sure decisions are made in the best interests of the community, with the community.

> Participatory Budget Setting

Each year the ACT Government prepares the Budget for the Territory. Budgets tell us a lot about a government's vision. The ACT Greens believe that the community should have a say in the government's vision for its city, in what it values and in what is prioritised.

While organisations make representations to the Government about what they want to see prioritised, there is little opportunity for wider community have any input on budget priorities. Participatory budget setting has been undertaken in a number of places around the world to inform government priorities. It has been found to improve community ownership over government decisions and increase understanding about why decisions are made.

Integrating both the Government's strategic priorities and the communities priorities, and ensuring that our Budget is spent in a way that both has the best outcomes but also has community ownership is a complex process but an important one. The ACT Greens believe that it is time we took a look at how we could ensure that the community plays a role in setting the Assembly's priorities, especially in the face of reduced funding from the Commonwealth and competing priorities locally.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Conduct a review of the Budget process in 2017 to be undertaken in consultation with the community, with the express objective of establishing participatory budget setting processes in the ACT.

> Community Voices in the Assembly

Canberrans want, and deserve, to have their voices heard in the Legislative Assembly. The Greens believe in making decisions with the community, for the community, which means knowing what the community thinks and feels strongly about.

The Greens believe that the community should have the opportunity to be heard in the Assembly about Territory issues that are important to them and their community.

Currently the community are able to have petitions tabled in the Assembly, and the Government is required to respond within 3 months. Petitions that have more than 500 signatures are sent to Committee for consideration. In the UK parliament, petitions that receive 10,000 signatures trigger a response from the Government, and petitions that receive 100,000 signatures are debated in the Parliament. In NSW community petitions are debated at a particular time in the sitting week, enabling the community to be able to attend proceedings in the chamber. The ACT Greens want to see community issues debated in this way more in the Legislative Assembly.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Require that the Assembly Committee that deals with electorate municipal affairs (currently the Standing Committee on Planning and Territory and Municipal Affairs) to convene a day of public hearings twice a year to specifically deal with constituent matters; and
- » Introduce changes to the Standing Orders of the Assembly to ensure that any community petition that receives 500 or more signatures from residents in the ACT will also be debated on the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

> Crack Down on Lobbyists

The ACT Legislative Assembly should serve the best interests of all Canberrans which means that money and wealth should not be able to buy political power, and the meetings between lobbyists and other vested interest groups should be transparent. Big corporate interests shouldn't get more of a say than the community. That's why the Greens will expand the ACT Register of Lobbyists and its Code to include people who are lobbying on behalf of their corporate employers, who are clearly in a position to influence policy.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Expand the scope of lobbying to include people who are lobbying on behalf of their corporate employers;
- » Require lobbyists make 6 monthly disclosures of what lobbying occurred, when it occurred, who stood to benefit, who was lobbied and the subject matter of the lobbying; and

» Empower the ACT Greens' proposed Integrity Commission to receive and investigate complaints about lobbyists and the MLAs they meet with.

> A Modern Assembly That Serves the Community

The Legislative Assembly is made up of MLAs elected by the Canberra community, to serve the Canberra community. The ACT Greens believe that it is crucial that the Legislative Assembly is transparent in its operations and is accountable to the people, and that it plans for Canberra's long-term future.

When major legislation is rushed, processes are not fully utilised and the community doesn't feel consulted, then the community can lose confidence in the functioning of their own parliament.

The ACT Legislative Assembly has a proud history of being accessible to the community and working for the people of Canberra, and the ACT Greens want to ensure it continues to do so.

The ACT Greens will change the rules of the Legislative Assembly to:

» Require that the Administration and Procedures Committee assess bills as to whether they are major, and if they are, then refer to the appropriate committee for further investigation;

» Establish a Standing Committee on the Future to specifically examine long term issues, challenges and opportunities facing the Territory.

» Ensure that Assembly meets community expectations on sustainability including by reducing unnecessary paper use in the parliamentary processes (eg. tabling of legislation).