



Ecological Sustainability - Social Justice - Peace and Non-violence - Grassroots Democracy

## **AUSTRALIAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION 2013 FEDERAL ELECTION SURVEY**

The Australian Greens believe that public libraries are an institution that embody one of the great triumphs of society – a quiet refuge of free learning, with open access to entertainment and information. They are a place where librarians, as servants to their schools and communities cultivate the interests, aspirations and creativity of all Australians, regardless of their age, heritage and the level of opportunity they have had in life.

The Greens Arts policy expressly recognises that 'national libraries and collecting institutions are essential to our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world, and must be maintained and developed as the repositories of cultural heritage'.

The Greens strongly stand alongside public libraries as they adjust to the challenges of providing information to the public in the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital age.

### **Q1. Will you pursue the reform of the Copyright Act as a priority for the first term of government?**

After consulting for over a year with stakeholders, the Greens introduced the Copyright Legislation Amendment (Fair Go for Fair Use) Bill in June 2013 to bring common sense and fairness to Australian copyright law.

Central to our reforms is the introduction of a 'fair use' provision. It will make the Copyright Act properly reflect the legitimate expectations of consumers by promoting innovation and fair access to archives and other information stores of public interest.

The Bill also seeks to reform the sanctions that schools, universities and ISPs face if end users infringe copyright law while using their services. This sledgehammer approach drags innocent organisations into strife, fostering onerous micromanagement of users that is detrimental to institutions and individuals alike.

The Bill also removes obstacles for blind and visually impaired Australians accessing published works in formats such as Braille, large print text and audio books - harmonising Australian law with the Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities treaty agreed in Marrakesh.

The Bill also seeks to remove geocodes that force Australians to pay up to 70% more than overseas consumers for music, films, software and hardware

The Bill has been referred to the Environment and Communications Committee reporting 3 October 2013.

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**Q2. Will you consider introducing legislation in favour of open access for government-funded research?**

Yes. Over \$7 billion worth of research in Australia each year is paid for by taxpayers through government-funded grants. The results of this research are published in peer-reviewed papers in scientific journals that are often hidden behind pay-walls. The Greens believe the results of publicly funded research should be widely available so that the maximum benefit can be gained from the knowledge created. The Parliamentary Budget Office has costed our proposal for open access to research to cost \$138.5 million over the forward estimates. The Greens will commit the necessary funding to drive the development of a national program of open access publishing.

The Greens will work with major academic and research institutions to set up and maintain a central national repository of publically funded research that is freely available to be accessed by researchers, business and the wider community. By pursuing a broad policy of open access to publicly funded research, we can better capture the true benefits of Australia's significant investment, and build a solid foundation for an innovation economy into the future.

**Q3. Will you include responsibility for managing the Commonwealth Government's relationship with public libraries in a Minister's portfolio**

The Greens support the Office of the Minister for Local Government being responsible for managing the Federal Government's relationship with public libraries.

**Q4. Will you renew government engagement in book industry discussions and, if negotiations with international publishers falter, will you consider government intervention to assist libraries to lend e-books?**

The Greens are committed for public libraries to be able to lend e-books to their members. The digital age has ushered in new modes of communication and the businesses that depend on them can't just strive to adjust to changing consumer needs. They also have to adjust for changing social needs and that means assisting libraries to provide their valuable services to their communities. Government has a duty to intervene where a market is failing to provide for the public interest, so the Greens would support government intervention to ensure that public libraries are not disadvantaged in assisting their members learn and be entertained in the digital era.

**Q5. Will you develop a national policy for the digitisation of priority Australian content?**

In this Parliament, the Greens ensured that our cultural centres of learning such as the National Library and the Film and Sound Archives were protected from the public sector 'efficiency dividend' (more commonly known as budget cuts). The National Library was forced to find alternative sources to fund the digitisation of its collection until the Greens secured more funding for our national cultural institutions that protected them from budget cuts. The Greens see the digitisation of priority Australian content as an important transition into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to preserve our important cultural histories. We are open to discussions on how this can best be achieved.

**Q6. Will you endorse the aspirational goal of a qualified library professional in every school?**

The Australian Greens believe that decisions about education should value input from experts and professionals. We recognise the seriousness of the concerns expressed in the parliamentary inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools, regarding investment in qualified professionals.

The Greens have committed to an additional \$2 billion worth of funding for education reform, over the forward estimates, on top of what the government has offered. This level of funding means State and Territory education authorities can ensure that students are receiving the support that they need to adjust to the new educational landscape in an increasingly digital age.

**Q7. Will you introduce a nationwide early literacy initiative?**

The Australian Greens are committed to supporting initiatives that improve early childhood education. We believe that early literacy in particular has a pivotal role to play in a child's ongoing educational development. Not only that, but it plays a crucial part in the development of informed and engaged citizens able to fully contribute to our nation's future.

We recognise that early childhood education begins before formal schooling . That's why we support increased funding to improve the quality of childcare nationwide, and a pay rate for childcare workers that matches the importance of the work of these skilled professionals.

The Greens believe that the sooner early childhood schooling standards are raised, the better. We believe in investing in the nation's future through funding education - and we've committed to bringing our underfunded educational system back in line with world leaders.

**Q8. Will your Ministers insist on well-resourced library and information services run by qualified library professionals for their departments?**

Productivity increases can occur when departmental staff have access to a comprehensive library and the assistance of a qualified library professional to assist in research work. The Greens support qualified library professionals being employed right across the public sector where there are opportunities to improve the knowledge and productivity of the public service.

**Q9. Will you endorse Library and information science as a valued profession, akin to accountancy, engineering, health and other professions requiring practitioner registration?**

The Greens are happy to develop a proposal in consultation with the Australian Library and Information Association that would best achieve lifting the standing of library and information science as a valued profession right across our communities.

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