

# STANDING UP FOR WHAT MATTERS IN THE KIMBERLEY



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# STANDING UP FOR WHAT MATTERS IN THE KIMBERLEY

## HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT • CARING SOCIETY • CLEAN ECONOMY

Australia needs the Australian Greens in Parliament. We are a party with a philosophy we stand by, a party with its eyes fixed firmly on caring for people and the environment as we meet the 21st century challenges. No one should be left behind as we embrace the environmental, social and economic opportunities in everything from high-speed broadband, medical technology, solar power, food production, communication, education and technical innovation.

The Greens have led political efforts to protect the Kimberley and James Price Point from an unsustainable future of pollution and industrialisation, and are the only party continuing this work in the lead up to the Federal election.

The Australian Greens will deliver a caring Australia, a safer climate and a proud global reputation. We are the strong, honest party who will stand up to those who protect their own interests to the detriment of the environment and deny everyone else a fair go. It is the Greens who will stand up for what matters.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Greens understand that the Kimberley's natural environment is the source of its people's well-being and wealth, both economic and spiritual.

In a planet under stress, the Kimberley is unique as a place still largely unspoilt by heavy industry.

However, the region also faces a number of serious, cumulative pressures, including climate change, large wild fires, feral animals and weeds, overgrazing as well as ad hoc and incompatible development.

The Kimberley faces another threat - from policy makers who see it as a new frontier to be exploited with large scale agricultural and industrial projects that will irreversibly alter the landscape and the communities that are sustained by it.

These proposals by other parties treat the Kimberley, and in fact all of Northern Australia as a source of new economic resources to sustain the rest of the nation, without regard for the aspirations of many of the people who are living there right now.

The Greens recognise that the people sharing this astonishing land and seascape are already working for a better future.

Growing industries include aquaculture and horticulture, agriculture, Aboriginal environmental management and the beginnings of the carbon economy, as well as a rich and diverse performance and visual arts community. Over the last two decades there has been an extraordinary growth in tourism and its spinoffs for local businesses. The value of tourism to the region in 2009 was \$276M. Compared to other industries (aquaculture \$67M, Fishing \$9.8M, Pearling \$64M), it is a major economic driver that should be further developed through investment, not overwhelmed by industrialization. Innovative agriculture is making the most of the current resources without disrupting existing waterways. Meanwhile, health and social services remain one of the largest employers overall.

There is also unlimited potential in the new and emerging industries such as renewable energy. The national broadband network provides new opportunities in information technology and education. There is also great scope for basing more scientific research centres in the region.

This is where the future of the Kimberley lies and this is why the Greens support and encourage investment in tomorrow's, not yesterday's industries.



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# PART ONE: WHAT FUTURE FOR THE KIMBERLEY?

The Greens would ensure that any strategy for the Kimberley identifies and develops a broad-based sustainable economy for the Kimberley, capable of supporting the diverse people, cultures and communities across the region.

The future of the Kimberley must be based on the following principles:

- ▼ The economy exists to serve people and the community and enhance their lives.
- ▼ The natural environment and Aboriginal culture are the region's greatest assets.
- ▼ Local communities should be empowered to make decisions about their own futures.
- ▼ Aboriginal people have a right to live on their country and enjoy economic opportunities there.
- ▼ Every citizen has an equal right to education, health care and better access to other community services.
- ▼ Multiple small, locally owned businesses serve a community better than mega-projects.

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## STRONG REGIONAL DECISION MAKING

The Australian Greens recognise that decisions about the future of the region need to be made by the community rather than imposed by external government decision makers who have a limited understanding of the potential and the limitations of the region.

Development processes should bring together Kimberley community and business leaders and people with relevant expertise from outside the region, to identify new economically and environmentally sustainable enterprises. These enterprises can build on existing successful industries such as tourism, generate jobs growth, invest locally and stimulate further business development and apply the resources of the Kimberley Development Commission to pursue this vision for the region over the long term.

The Australian Greens believe that any future industry for the Kimberley must both:

- ▼ Contribute to the diversification of the Kimberley economy
- ▼ Be subject to a thorough assessment of the cumulative effects of that industry or technology on the community and the environment

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## THE KIMBERLEY'S NATURAL ADVANTAGE

The Kimberley's environmental and cultural riches and its people's resourceful spirit are the basis of the region's economic future. But there are huge obstacles to be overcome for the Kimberley to fulfil its potential. Nineteenth-century land management must be modernized. Local people must be empowered to make decisions. The local economy should be stimulated by private and public investment in ecologically and culturally sustainable enterprises. Building on work that has already been done, the Greens want to move to the next stage, planning a future for the Kimberley that works for the people who live here and the natural environment they love.



## CLEAN INNOVATIVE ECONOMY FOR THE KIMBERLEY

Unlike the old parties, we know that regional communities are about more than mining. We want robust regional economies that are built on diverse sectors, not reliant on just one sector for prosperity. Only the Greens are standing up to the big mining companies to care for our land, water and climate for future generations and support developing a diverse regional economy that delivers real benefits to all Kimberley people.

Critical investment in communities and infrastructure in Northern Australia needs to be based on clean, green industries, not a short term rush to exploitative resource development and unsustainable intensive agriculture.

For us this means investment in culture, conservation, renewable energy, research and innovation to underpin the jobs-rich and diverse economy of the future, beyond the mining boom and bust.

## INDUSTRY IN A DIVERSE LANDSCAPE

### Mining

The Greens are not anti-mining but do recognise that the Kimberley is under incredible pressure from mining. Unlike the old parties, we are not wilfully blind to mining's impacts on local communities.

We realise that large scale industrial projects can pose not only grave threats to land and marine environments, but also to agriculture, grazing and tourism, and to community water supplies. In addition, as some Pilbara communities have found to their detriment, mining can cause big increases in the cost of living, affecting local people who are not directly involved in mining and also making it harder for communities to attract providers of essential services, like health and education professionals.

Investments need to be made with the long term interests of the whole community in mind, not just big business otherwise huge industrial developments like the JPP proposal, overwhelm and destroy local business. The industrial port at James Price Point was clearly intended by the West Australian Premier, Colin Barnett, as an industrial gateway to the Western Kimberley. Colin Barnett is on record as wanting to turn the Kimberley into the "Saudi Arabia of gas".

Yet, the WA government's own Strategic Social Impact Assessment found that the proposed JPP Development was likely to:

- ▼ Be a net cost to the taxpayers of WA with the government spending more money supporting it than it will collect in state taxes.
- ▼ Rely on up to 97 per cent fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers and employ very few local workers.
- ▼ Reduce the Kimberley's reputation as a world class tourism destination.
- ▼ Place additional demand on already stretched community services such as health and police.
- ▼ Cause inflation in the Broome region.

Smaller, locally owned and run enterprises bring more prosperity and satisfaction to the region and its people than imposed mega-projects can ever do.

This is why the Greens will work to ensure that all mining activity meets stringent environmental protection standards and delivers long and short term benefits to local communities and the wider Australian community. We will oppose mining activity that is detrimental to the environment or the community. We will oppose these types of mining activities: uranium mining, new coal seam, shale or tight gas developments, new coal mines or expansion of existing coal mines, and mining activity in areas that are residential, of good agricultural quality or landscapes that are high in cultural or conservation value.





## Agriculture

Agriculture that is dependent on damming wild rivers, broad scale land clearing and GM crops has no place in the Kimberley.

Parts of this region are represented as a potential food bowl for both Australia and a fast growing Asia. The reality is that large scale intensive agriculture across the north of Australia has been a pipe dream for decades.

It's been tried before and the results have ended up as expensive white elephants. The Ord River scheme has failed to deliver on its promise to create a food bowl in the Kimberley. Indian sandalwood is estimated to account for about 60 per cent of the total farming area around the Ord, about 3500 hectares, and has replaced food crops such as melons, pumpkins, legumes, chick peas and bananas. Now Chinese investors have bought out stage two of the Ord for sugar production, rather than food crops, in an arrangement struck by the Government that excludes other farmers.

Continuing to pursue the notion of intensive agriculture across the north of Australia brings with it the prospect of unsustainable land use, changes to water flow, pollution and invasive species, all of which have the capacity to radically change this part of our country.

The water for large scale intensive agriculture isn't available, as has been demonstrated by CSIRO which described the Kimberley as a water-limited environment. Agriculture is also susceptible to changing weather patterns and more extreme weather events.

The complex system of seasonal groundwater and underground aquifers means small-scale, or mosaic irrigation, is more suitable for the region than broad scale irrigation.

The Greens believe that any support for food bowl development would be better spent on encouraging innovative, small scale farmers who can apply modern adaptive techniques to work within the landscape rather than investing in big new infrastructure projects like irrigation dams.



# PART TWO: PARTICIPATING IN A NORTH AUSTRALIA ECONOMIC STRATEGY

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Australian Greens believe that the Kimberley's aspirations should be captured in any white papers that scope out the future of Northern Australia.

We believe that the local community needs to be supported to participate in any wider scoping process, and would make \$2million of grant funding available to the community to facilitate its participation in broader planning processes.

## PRINCIPLES TO UNDERPIN A KIMBERLEY ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Building on the economic plan proposed by the Kimberley Greens during the 2013 state election, the Australian Greens are committed to ensuring that the efforts to plan for the future are based on these principles, rather than the approach that the Kimberley is a vast landscape just waiting to be exploited.

Any strategy that includes the Kimberley should:

### 1. Enhance Existing Valued Industries:

E.g. tourism, ecotourism, cultural tourism, education, health, horticulture, pearling, pastoralism, arts (performing, visual etc.), land management, boutique retail, local building and trades, appropriate resource extraction and development (this would exclude uranium and coal mining).

### 2. Identify and Overcome Structural Barriers, such as:

- ▼ Lack of investment in a sustainable economy.
- ▼ Government preference for extractive industries.
- ▼ Land tenure and planning regimes that were established for the nineteenth century.
- ▼ Restricted access to finance because of limited capital assets, low income or land title that can't be used to raise capital.
- ▼ Poor infrastructure and services such as housing, and education and training.
- ▼ Unskilled and dispersed workforce.
- ▼ Poor regional governance at all levels.

### 3. Identify and act on Opportunities such as:

- ▼ Existing economic strengths of the region, e.g. tourism, pearling, small businesses.
- ▼ More effective use of government funding and royalties in the Kimberley.
- ▼ Emergence of the carbon economy.
- ▼ Reform of land tenure; management of pastoral rangelands, conservation estate and townships for more flexible and inclusive use.
- ▼ Global interest in the region's Aboriginal culture and physical environment.
- ▼ Proximity to Asia and national policy objectives for engagement in the region.
- ▼ Economic advantages of investment in Aboriginal community reconstruction.
- ▼ Aspiring entrepreneurs with practical projects in need of investment.





#### **4. Include implementation Strategies such as:**

- ▼ Build skills and expertise within existing businesses/industries to enable them to be more competitive within the emerging eCommerce environment.
- ▼ Seek government and private investment in viable business development.
- ▼ Identify and assist entrepreneurs with market-ready projects.
- ▼ Establish a globally-recognised Kimberley logo, as in the Northern Territory.
- ▼ Expand capacity of Kimberley Training Institute.
- ▼ Engage in the carbon economy; support existing carbon abatement activities.
- ▼ Capture opportunities for further development of Aboriginal cultural tourism.
- ▼ Enhance role of KDC or set up new body with sustainable economic objectives.

#### **5. Build on Past Work such as:**

- ▼ The Kimberley, Our Place Our Future: Conference Report, KLC, 1998.
- ▼ Kimberley Appropriate Economies Roundtable, Forum Proceedings, 2005.
- ▼ The Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy.
- ▼ The emerging Carbon Economy for Northern Australia: challenges and opportunities.
- ▼ National Tourism Alliance — Submission to the 'Australia in the Asian Century White Paper.

#### **6. Include all relevant stakeholders such as:**

Native Title PBCs, Kimberley Land Council, Kimberley Development Commission (KDC), Kimberley Tourism Association, Shire and Community Councils, Chambers of Commerce, industry representatives, conservation groups, small business owners, other community members and relevant government agencies.





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## PART THREE: PRACTICAL POLICIES THAT WILL BENEFIT THE REGION IMMEDIATELY

Our fully costed policy platform delivers a caring, resilient community and a clean, innovative economy for the Kimberley. These policies will support the people of the Kimberley to live, work and care for their families.

All of the Greens policy initiatives have been costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office.

Revenue to resource a caring society comes from a range of measures, such as implementing a proper mining tax and ending the fossil fuel subsidies for big mining companies. See our full policy initiative website for further details: [greens.org.au](https://greens.org.au)

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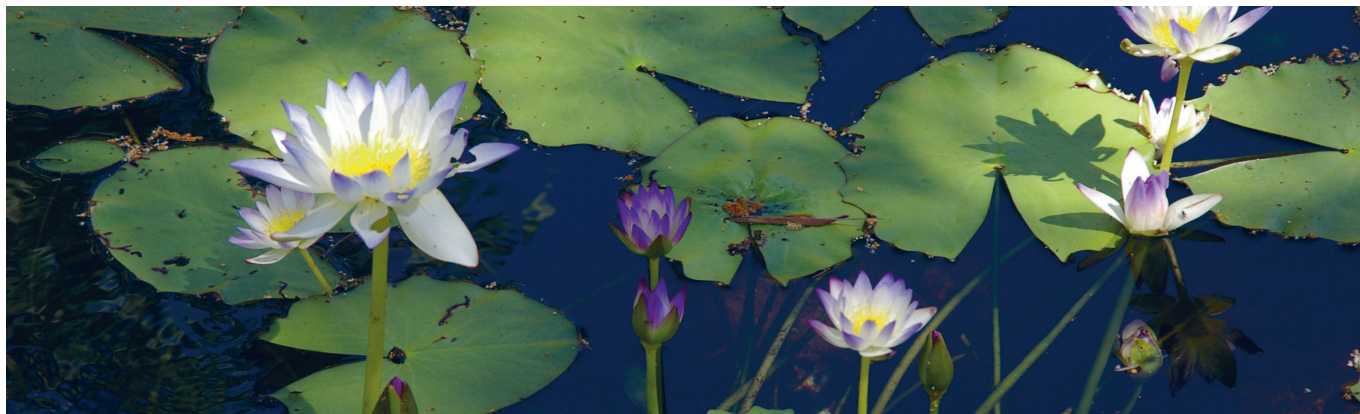
### INVESTING IN AGRICULTURE

Changing patterns of weather and a renewed interest in Northern Australia has seen a focus on the Kimberley as an agricultural zone. There may be some new opportunities developing in the Kimberley, but innovation is directed towards large scale monocropping and GMO crops.

With agriculture right across Australia under increasing pressure, particularly in the face of climate change, now is the time to invest in the knowledge and innovation we need to boost and sustain agricultural productivity, and ensure that our rural and regional communities are connected to the knowledge they need for resilience and sustainability.

The old parties have under-funded Australia's public agricultural research and development (R&D) causing a persistent decline in real investment. Long-term public investment in agricultural R&D is more essential than ever to ensure we can address the complex and cross-disciplinary challenges facing us.





## RESEARCH INVESTMENT

The Greens \$376.5m package for Investing in Agriculture will:

- ▼ Increase Commonwealth funding for agricultural research and development by 7% per year, an extra \$300 million over the forward estimates.
- ▼ Create a new Centre for Sustainable Agriculture as part of the new funding, tasked with investigating solutions to the complex pressures facing our food system.
- ▼ Fund a national network of 180 agricultural extension officers at a cost of \$76.5 million over the forward estimates. These officers provide a direct link between innovative research and farmers on the ground.
- ▼ Re-prioritise Commonwealth funding so it benefits all agricultural sectors and rural communities.
- ▼ Providing funding for regional food hubs, farmer's markets, farmer's cooperatives and other innovative solutions that help farmers sell direct to the public and reconnect local communities and farmers.

## SKILLING UP THE NEXT GENERATION

Our vision for sustainable agriculture means good food, thriving agricultural communities, a skilled and supported workforce, and healthy ecosystems that underpin our food and fibre production.

In addition to our \$376.5 million Investing in Agriculture package, the Greens will work to support farming communities by:

- ▼ Improving the uptake of tertiary and vocational agricultural courses to increase Australia's agricultural skill base and workforce retention.

- ▼ Providing programs that support young people wishing to become farmers or work in agricultural industries.

## TACKLING FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Foreign investment is important for Australia, but in an age of global warming and food insecurity Australians need to track purchases of our food-producing land and water, and make sure that those purchases are in the national interest. Other countries like the USA, New Zealand and Brazil have greater scrutiny on foreign land ownership, but Australia's current laws are lax. The Australian Greens will:

- ▼ Create a register of foreign ownership of agricultural land and water assets to continuously track overseas purchases.
- ▼ Lower the threshold from \$248 million to \$5 million for consideration of the national interest by the Foreign Investment Review Board for purchases of agricultural land and water by a foreign private entity. This will include cumulative purchases by the same entity under the \$5 million threshold.
- ▼ Legislate a stronger national interest test, to be applied by the Foreign Investment Review board, for purchases of agricultural land and water resources.
- ▼ Prohibit the purchase of agricultural land and water by wholly owned subsidiaries of foreign governments.



## MAINTAINING OUR BIOSECURITY

Australia's natural biosecurity advantage has helped protect our community from many diseases and pests that cause illness and death overseas. It also means our farmers can access export markets with their clean produce, and use less chemicals to control pests and diseases, benefiting us all. **The Australian Greens will invest** up to an extra \$10m a year to protect us from pests and diseases in a world facing climate change, by:

- ▼ **Creating a National Biosecurity Commission**, a decision-making panel of eminent biosecurity experts charged with making the key decisions to best protect Australia from new pests and diseases.
- ▼ **Creating a National Biosecurity Authority**, a statutory, independent and expertise-based organisation tasked with the day to day management of Australia's national biosecurity system and advising the Biosecurity Commission on import permit decisions, certifying of Australian exports, management of quarantine facilities, coordination of monitoring and surveillance of national priority exotic pests and diseases, national emergency response coordination to pests and diseases.
- ▼ **Providing the resources necessary** to ensure that the new Biosecurity Authority has the technical capability it will require to perform its functions and support the Biosecurity Commission.

## TRANSITIONING FROM LIVE EXPORTS TO PROCESSED MEAT

Instead of costing Australian jobs, the Greens advocate a move away from live export to processed meat, managed by a comprehensive industry transition plan. Long-distance transportation is stressful to animals and at their destination, exported animals are likely to face handling and slaughtering conditions which are unacceptable in Australia. In an age of ubiquitous social media and heightened awareness of the conditions in foreign abattoirs, producers need new strategies to rebuild confidence in their industry. Live exports not only outsource animal cruelty offshore, they also export jobs. Since the 1980s, when a number of Australian abattoirs were closed due to the rise of the live export trade, around 40,000 meat industry jobs have been lost. The argument that Middle East countries will not accept chilled or frozen carcasses is incorrect. In 2010, Australian sheep meat prepared by local abattoirs and exported to the Middle East were worth \$110 million more than live sheep exports.

The Greens believe that WA's live export trade can be successfully replaced with an already established, Halal-accredited chilled and frozen carcass industry. The increased business has the potential to reinstate those abattoirs previously forced to close and could double the number of people employed in abattoirs in Western Australia from the present 2,000 to 4,000. This would be a boost to abattoirs in the south west which are currently underutilised, and could process at least 1.5 million more sheep annually. It would also mean a boost to the domestic market, as meat processing will become more competitive and will give local consumers more choice.

Supporting the construction of an abattoir in Northern Australia, so that Northern Australian cattle producers have an alternative to the volatile live cattle trade, which would create about 160 to 170 jobs directly and 1,300 jobs indirectly in the region.





## GENETICALLY MODIFIED (GM) CROPS

Genetically modified crops have not delivered on their promise to feed the world. Nor have they been proven safe to human health. The main people benefiting from GM are the big companies that sell the seeds.

As well as supporting agricultural research that can improve Australian agriculture without resorting to GM crops, the Greens support the right of non-GM growers to protect their crops from contamination by GM crops, and are the only ones prepared to stand up to big GM companies to give farmers and consumers genuine choice and control over what they grown and eat

The Greens will:

- ▼ **Create a GM Contamination Cleanup Fund.**

The Greens would direct up to \$2 million towards the creation of an independent Research and Development Group tasked with establishing a GM contamination cleanup fund underwritten by a levy on GM seed.

The Greens will also:

- ▼ **Establish an inquiry into the assessment procedures for GM crops and products**

particularly given new evidence that current processes do not test for mutations like dsRNA.

- ▼ **Introduce comprehensive, mandatory labeling**

so that all foods containing any ingredient, additives, processing aid or other constituent produced using GM would be clearly labelled with this information.

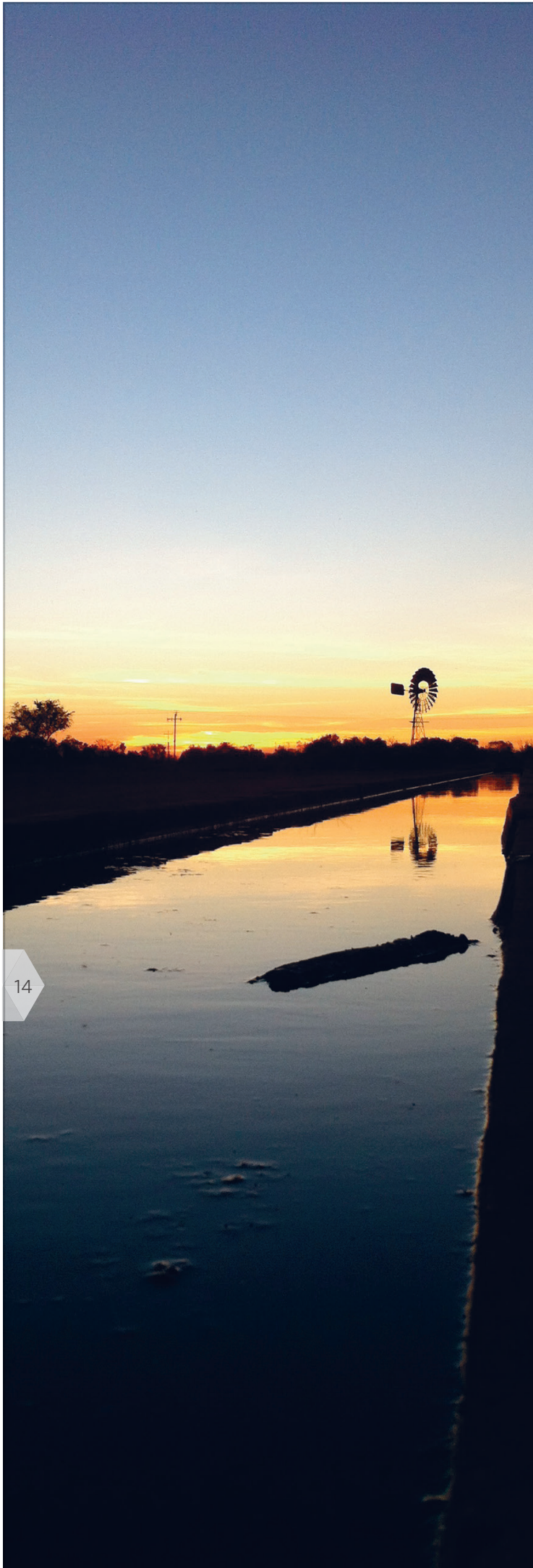
## CARBON FARMING

Carbon farming enables farmers and traditional owners to increase their income by earning carbon credits from storing carbon or reducing greenhouse gas emissions on the land, and then selling those credits to people and businesses wishing to offset their emissions.

The Greens were proud to secure the Carbon Farming Initiative which rewards farmers for their environmental stewardship. We are committed to assisting farmers to implement sustainable agricultural systems that repair, maintain and improve soil health including carbon storage. And we were equally proud to get the regime of savannah burning recognised as a carbon farming methodology so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can benefit financially from their traditional knowledge. In contrast, Labor in another stunning example of saying one thing and then doing another, had previously supported carbon farming but has now back-flipped and is gutting the policy. Labor has reduced funding to the Carbon Farming Futures program, and if re-elected, will soon decrease the carbon price to such an extent that the Australian Farm Institute says farmers will be unlikely to be able to make profits from the Carbon Farming Initiative.

We are the only party to stand up for farmers wanting to earn an income from carbon farming, for Aboriginal traditional owners wanting to earn an income from fire management, and we are the only party that can be trusted to fight for the environment.





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## STRONG, CLEAN LOCAL ECONOMY

Small businesses play a vital role in the economy, providing jobs to almost half the workforce and they are part of the community in a way big business can never be.

### STANDING UP FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

The Greens know the burden and risk that many people take on when they establish a business. Yet people in small business are often disadvantaged compared with big business.

The Greens plan for small business will ease the pressure on small business by:

- ▼ Lowering taxes by cutting company tax for small businesses from 30 per cent to 28 per cent, a tax relief for around 600,000 Australian small businesses.
- ▼ We will raise the instant asset write off from \$6,500 to \$10,000 to encourage small businesses to purchase productive assets to help them grow.
- ▼ Competition policy will be strengthened to prevent big business using their market power to gain unfair advantages over small business.

The Small Business Commissioner will have legislative backing and double the funding to \$10m to act as an effective advocate for small business. This will make it more difficult for an incoming government to abolish the position as happened in Queensland when the Newman Liberal National Party Government came to power.

## CLEAN ENERGY

The Greens helped build the foundations of the clean energy economy in Australia with the Clean Energy Act. Charging big companies to pollute, investing the money in clean energy and helping Australians save energy at home is working: energy pollution is down more than 7% already. But we're in a climate emergency, and need to do more to encourage clean energy investment in Australia.

Landmark research by the Australian Energy Market Operator, as well as independent academics, has clearly shown that a clean energy Australia is possible. We can power Australia with the wind, sun, and water for a cost similar to replacing the ageing coal and gas plants that are nearing the end of their lives now.

While the old parties wax and wane on tackling global warming and on pollution pricing and clean energy, the Greens support 100% renewable energy as quickly as we can achieve it. Our Clean Energy Roadmap will:

- ▼ Increase the Renewable Energy Target to 90% by 2030. This will give investors and electricity network regulators the long-term policy certainty they need.
- ▼ Increase Clean Energy Finance to \$30 billion over ten years, providing an injection of \$3 billion per year, to drive commercialisation of emerging technology and help Australia catch-up with leading renewable energy nations.
- ▼ Improve national electricity transmission planning to cost effectively exploit our huge renewable energy resources.

## UNLEASHING COMMUNITY ENERGY

Community owned renewable energy cuts pollution, creates local jobs, lowers power prices and gives people control over their energy future. Community-owned renewable energy is already powering many parts of the world and the Kimberley should be supported to build its own community owned renewable energy projects.

The Australian Greens have released an initiative that will help communities in Australia overcome a range of barriers by creating a \$100 million Australian Community Renewable Energy Program.

Our Community Renewable Energy Program will:

- ▼ Help local groups access specialist expertise in the early stages of a community energy project, from feasibility studies to project management.
- ▼ Help communities find finance for their project and negotiate power purchasing agreements to make sure their energy is used.

This seed-funding program will open up the opportunity for hundreds of thousands of Australians to own and benefit from a wide range of renewable energy opportunities – from rural areas with good wind resources to community solar parks for inner-city renters.

The program will allocate \$100 million over five years from 1 July 2014 to the existing Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) to run a competitive tender program supporting the development of community-owned renewable energy projects through feasibility grants, project management and specialist expertise to a point where they have a solid business model and are ready for community investment.





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## RESILIENT REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The economy should serve the people and look after the environment, not the other way around. Labor and Tony Abbott don't have the backbone to stand up to the mining corporations and big business. Only the Greens have the economic plans that grow a clean economy and care for people without compromising the environment.

### REGIONAL CONTROL OVER REGIONAL FUTURES

The Greens resist all efforts to undermine democracy; we believe that local people should make local decisions. We will continue to support strong, democratic regional decision making within the Kimberley.

Unlike the old parties, who imposed upon Aboriginal people the Northern Territory Intervention and then Stronger Futures, trampling on people's human rights in the process, the Greens respect the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to autonomy and self-determination. We opposed the Intervention and Stronger Futures from the start and will work to rescind the Stronger Futures legislation. We support the right of Aboriginal people to earn an income from their land.

### ROYALTIES TO REGIONS: A FUTURE FOR THE REGIONS BEYOND THE MINING BOOM

The Greens support the reinvestment of mining royalties to regional WA. Since 2008, Royalties for Regions (**R4R**) has served as the Government's vehicle for regional reinvestment. The scheme has attracted significant criticism. It has been subject to

three parliamentary inquiries, three Auditor General Reports and various independent audits. Each report has highlighted weaknesses in the operation of the R4R program.

**The Greens are committed to the development of the regions.** Regional development cannot progress sustainably unless the basic development underpinnings of water, power, transportation, communications, housing, health, education and other social resources are provided. We need to ensure that the regions are more than community centres based around and dependent upon mining development; otherwise when the resource dries up, so does the community.

The State Government refused to support amendments to the 2009 Royalties for Regions Bill in relation to environmental sustainability on the grounds that it would make the object of the Bill 'too specific'. Consequently, the R4R scheme does not require that any funds be directed to environmental protection or investment in renewable energy generation. Instead, in some cases the interpretation of the Act has led to projects more suited to political needs or those of specific sectional interests rather than actual community needs.

The Greens are committed to a R4R regime that invests in regional WA with a focus on sustainability and social outcomes and that acknowledges the need for incentives to attract permanent residents into regional areas and service these needs, including affordable housing, social infrastructure and cultural engagement.

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## HEALTH

Everyone has the right to timely, quality health care, wherever they live. An important part of the Greens' policy commitments on health is improved access to health professionals in rural and remote areas and accessible, culturally-appropriate and community-controlled health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that will raise their health status to a level comparable to other Australians. We are working for a universal public health, mental health and dental care system, with special emphasis on prevention and early detection of illness.

### INVESTING IN REGIONAL HEALTH

Australia has good healthcare, but rural Australians are missing out due to a shortage of medical workforce, a lack of access to services and a lack of infrastructure. The Greens care about the health of all Australians and want a higher priority given to the health of Australians living outside our major cities.

To help bolster health services in regional and rural Australia, the Greens will invest over \$1 billion in rural health including:

- ▼ \$450m earmarked for rural hospitals by boosting federal hospital funding to the states for rural and regional hospitals.
- ▼ \$200m in flexible rural infrastructure grants to keep more clinics open longer.
- ▼ \$20m in grants for doctors to provide training in rural areas.
- ▼ Fixing the classification system so rural health professionals are properly remunerated according to level of remoteness.
- ▼ Funding after hours care through Medicare Locals in rural areas to decrease the inequity in access to services.
- ▼ Streamlining the accreditation of overseas doctors until Australia is self-sufficient with the rural health workforce.
- ▼ Delivering on rural mental health by investing heavily in prevention and properly funding more mental health services in rural areas.

### DENTICARE

Less than half of Australians have good oral health and dental visiting patterns, largely due to the high cost of dental treatment. 60% of dental care is paid for out-of-pocket by consumers, with the result that a third of people say they can't afford to go to the dentist or delay going to the dentist because of the expense. In 2012, the Greens negotiated a new national dental health scheme worth nearly \$5 billion over the next 6 years, bringing Medicare-funded dentistry to 3.4 million children. The Greens also secured \$1.3 billion for extra public services and hundreds of millions more for new dental infrastructure.

The Greens want to extend the benefits to all Australians, and our plan for Denticare will:

- ▼ Provide dental treatment covered by Medicare. Phased in over five years, Medicare will cover preventative and restorative dental treatment so that everybody can afford to go to the dentist.
- ▼ Start with the most disadvantaged. Low income earners, kids and teens, pensioners and concession card holders will be among the first to access dental treatment under Medicare, before rolling out the scheme to everybody.
- ▼ Ease pressure on the public system.





## REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH

One in five Australians experience mental ill-health in any year. The consequences of mental ill-health in regional and remote areas are far greater than in urban areas because they have limited access to essential health services compared to their urban counterparts. The Greens believe that this inequity must be addressed.

That's why we would invest \$552.6 million, in order to reform rural mental health by building on the success of the headspace model, by offering grants and tenders to design and test new models of community-based care to cover key life stages.

We would also:

- ▼ Increase funding for community-based mental health programs, neighbourhood houses and wellbeing centres.
- ▼ Develop a rural mental health workforce plan.
- ▼ Support the creation of prevention and recovery residential care.
- ▼ Increasing support for existing mental health services to expand outreach and telephone psychiatry services.
- ▼ Increasing training for frontline staff and community members.
- ▼ A national social inclusion campaign to tackle the stigma surrounding mental health.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Australian Greens supported the fast-tracking of suicide prevention funding in the Kimberley in 2010, and are campaigning for a continuation of suicide prevention funding as well as culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal peoples, including the continuation of programs like the Healing Foundation grants that support existing community organisations to develop programs that focus on emotional well-being and resilience.



## CLOSING THE GAP

As well as supporting suicide prevention funding, the Australian Greens have been working hard to address many of the health problems that are being particularly felt within Kimberley Aboriginal communities:

- ▼ **Kidney dialysis:** Kidney failure is one of the big three preventable causes of chronic disease and reduced life expectancy in Aboriginal communities. The Greens support a two pronged approach of service delivery and prevention. We have fought to ensure that there are enough services, to enable patients to spend more time in their own communities instead of having to travel long distances to receive care. We also support investment in preventative health that can prevent or delay the onset of kidney disease.
- ▼ **Otitis media (middle ear infection that can lead to deafness):** The Greens chaired a 2010 Senate Committee inquiry into hearing health that identified otitis media as a substantial problem in Aboriginal communities. The unanimous report of that Committee has led to considerable work on otitis media, though more needs to be done because of the number of people who suffer from it (in some communities, up to 90% of babies and up to 40% of the whole community). Hearing problems can mean life-long difficulties, like problems with learning (especially basic literacy and numeracy), alienation or disengagement from other people, and poor employment prospects. Hearing loss is also associated with a number of people in juvenile detention and adult prisons. The Greens have campaigned for more investment in services like the Kimberley Ear Bus which helps identify hearing problems and link families up to treatments. We also want to see the Government prioritise making fresh food available in remote communities through community stores in all communities that have a school.
- ▼ **Alcohol Management:** We support co-operative community driven approaches to alcohol management, plus treatment and rehabilitation programs and a holistic approach that addresses underlying issues of poverty and social disengagement. We recognise that only an approach that the community commits to as its own will achieve long term change and wouldn't support mandatory restrictions imposed on people without adequate consultation.
- ▼ **Petrol sniffing:** The Greens introduced a Bill to help roll out low aromatic fuel in places affected by petrol sniffing. We also advocated for ongoing financial support for community support services and youth programs, and Opal Fuel subsidies.
- ▼ We will also work to find a just resolution to the requests for compensation for ill-health suffered by Kimberley herbicide workers.





## HOUSING

The housing affordability crisis in Australia has come to define this generation. Successive governments have failed to keep up with the housing needs of a diverse, growing and ageing population or the unprecedented housing stress in boom towns.

The Greens' goal is for all Australians to have access to safe, secure, sustainable and affordable housing. We are advocating for new and long term solutions that increase choice and security of tenure, and provide diverse types of housing in the places we want to live.

### RENTING

The Kimberley has seen the price of rent spiral out of control. Our package for renters would fund 85,000 new affordable, sustainable rental properties over the next ten years – which would see at least 9000 new rentals built in WA and highly stressed areas like the Kimberley would be prioritised.

The Greens will also provide an additional \$3 million per year to existing tenants advocacy services to help them provide a stronger voice for tenants and a new national model of 'consumer protection' for renters. This would include better funding for legal advice, dispute resolution, and advocacy for tenants and importantly, would provide more funding for specialist Indigenous tenants advice services or Indigenous advocates.

### OVERCROWDING

The Greens also know that many Aboriginal people in the Kimberley are living in severely overcrowded housing, and that lack of funding for housing and refurbishments on homelands is forcing people into hub towns and losing tenure of their lands. We will build new houses and refurbishing existing houses in ways that add to the house's capacity, allowing more people to live comfortably in the same house, where that is what the occupants wish.

### STRONGER SOCIAL HOUSING

The Greens have a plan to fund the building of 12,200 new social dwellings every year for 10 years, which will help 225,000 Australian singles and families currently in temporary accommodation or homeless, as they wait years for public housing.

Funding will come from two streams:

- ▼ Direct finance through a competitive grants stream with an ongoing commitment of \$710 million a year over the next ten years.
- ▼ Affordable Housing Supply Bonds which, for a relatively modest government investment of \$25 million could raise \$2 billion in bonds - enough to finance the construction of 7,200 new homes in a year.

WA's social housing system includes State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH) and Indigenous community housing. These housing agencies play a vital role but since 2009 there has been no identified funding for adding to Indigenous housing in urban and regional areas. The Greens believe in the vital and empowering role the indigenous housing sector plays, and would ensure sufficient funding under this initiative goes to this sector.

### HOMELESSNESS

The Greens are committed to a \$1 billion package to homelessness in Australia, which would double funding to specialist homelessness services as well as building 7000 new homes for homeless people sleeping rough right now – 1000 of them in WA.

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## EDUCATION

### SCHOOLS

When it comes to education, money does matter. The Gonski Review recommended that we spend at least \$6.5 billion more on education each year. Currently, Australia is lagging far behind nations like Finland, Canada and Korea whose students receive a world class education. The Greens are committed to a fairer school funding model that makes high quality education a reality for all Australian kids – regardless of where they live, their family's income or the school they attend.

We know that two thirds of Australia's students attend government schools – including a high proportion of students who require extra support, like students with disabilities and special needs, Aboriginal students and those from low income families. More money for schools means more teachers and support staff, better technology, equipment and facilities.



We will:

- ▼ Properly fund schools, over and above what the current government is prepared to commit. In each of the 2013-14 and 2014-15 financial years the government is committing less than \$500 million to implement its funding reforms.
- ▼ Australian students and public schools need more, faster. Commit an extra \$2 billion over the forward estimates on top of the government's \$3 billion to help bring public schools up to the Schooling Resource Standard sooner. This would double the funding from the government in the next two years.
- ▼ Direct the additional funding to where it is needed most, including better assistance for kids with a disability and Aboriginal students.

### TERTIARY EDUCATION

Differences in educational outcomes should not be the result of differences in location. The Greens' education policy includes:

- ▼ A substantial increase in the availability of apprenticeships, in rural and regional Australia and other locations where there is a shortage.
- ▼ Improved access to comprehensive publicly provided tertiary education for rural, regional and remote communities.
- ▼ An increase in the cost-index per-student funding of all public universities, and adequate funding to all rural, regional and outer-suburban universities.

In addition, in our Investing in Agriculture policy we have made these commitments to skills training:

- ▼ Improving the uptake of tertiary and vocational agricultural courses to increase Australia's agricultural skill base and workforce retention.
- ▼ Providing programs that support young people wishing to become farmers or work in agricultural industries .





### MAKE TAFE A PRIORITY

Critical skills shortages are a looming threat to Australia's society and economy. Yet TAFE funding is being slashed and TAFE is forced to compete with private providers for public funding. TAFE campuses are closing, courses cut, students are in debt to pay rising fees, and teachers are losing their jobs

Vocational education and training (VET) is the key vehicle for governments to meet future skills demand, to guarantee pathways for school leavers into further education and to allow adults to increase their skills in the workforce.

To provide the high-level skills and workforce development so vital to our economic future, the Australian Greens will:

- ▼ Prioritise increased federal budget spending on TAFE. By delivering an extra \$400 million per year for TAFE, at an overall cost of \$1.2 billion over the forward estimates from 1 July 2014.
- ▼ Overhaul the current funding arrangements to ensure TAFE is the preferred funded provider of courses where it can supply those courses



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## OTHER INVESTMENTS IN COMMUNITY CAPACITY

### JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Crime has been increasing in some Kimberley communities for several years now, and there are also some communities in the Kimberley that have lived for too long with high levels of disadvantage.

In addition, the Greens deplore Australia's imprisonment rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially children.

We believe that the Federal government has a role to play in reducing crime and imprisonment rates. That role should be to support Justice Reinvestment. Justice Reinvestment provides resources for initiatives focussed on reducing imprisonment. It directs resources and attention to communities who are disproportionately represented in our prison system.

The Greens' Justice Reinvestment policy, for which the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia has expressed their support, commits to \$60 million over 4 years for Justice Reinvestment. This comprises:

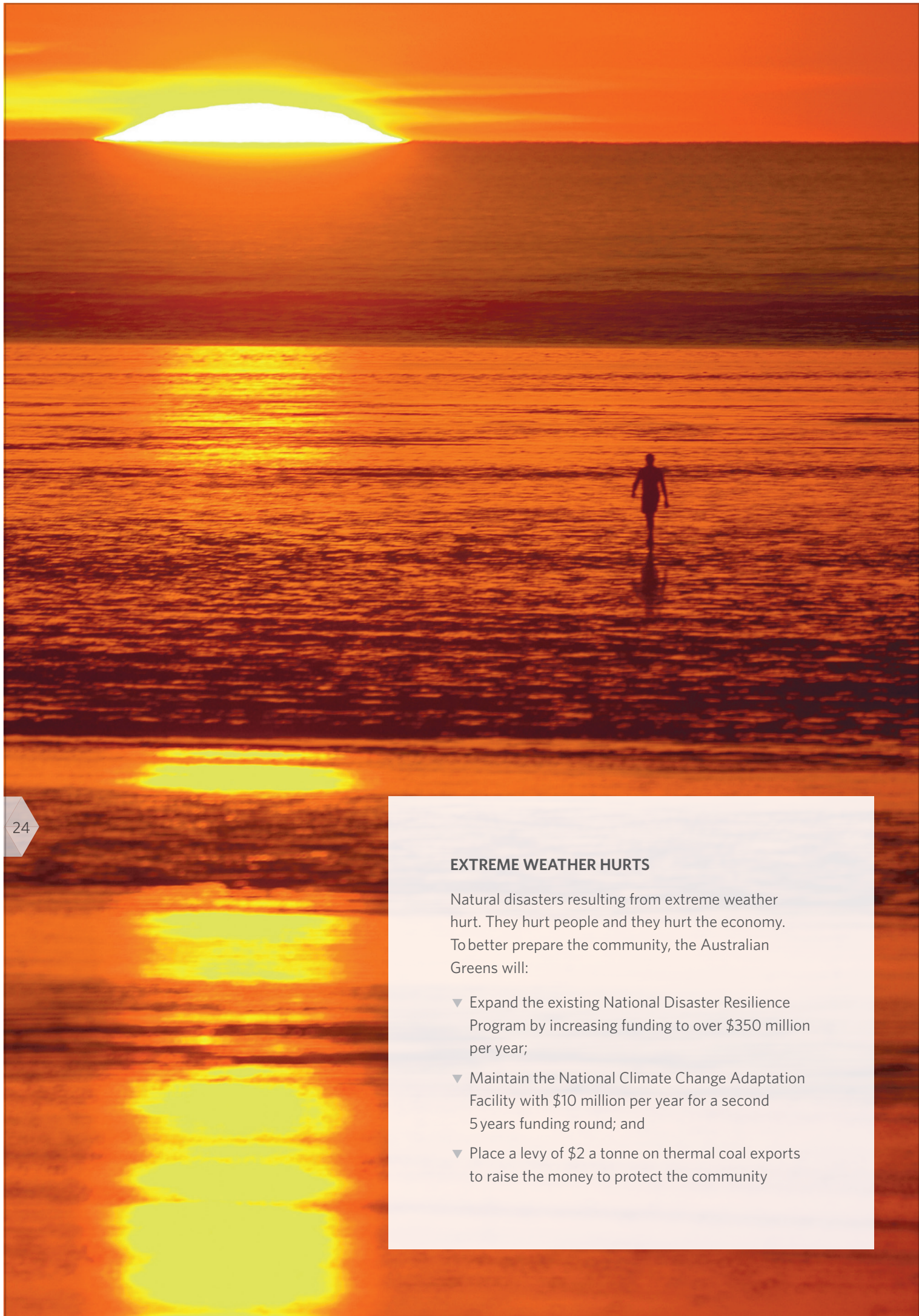
- ▼ \$10 million over four years to establish a National Centre for Justice Reinvestment. As recommended by a recent Senate inquiry, the Centre will provide high-quality information and research, including help to identify 'high stakes' communities in the Kimberley and elsewhere and advice to States and Territories willing to try a Justice Reinvestment approach.
- ▼ Funding a Justice Reinvestment Grants Program worth \$50 million over four years. This will support State, Territory and local governments and community organisations to initiate local justice reinvestment pilot programs across Australia. Funded programs will be highly targeted to the needs of a particular local community. They will be strongly community-driven, they will respond to and strengthen connections with culture, they will empower people to take greater control over their own lives, and they will build resilience. This approach will strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors in the community.

### ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Access to the legal system is becoming less and less attainable for many Australians, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, the unemployed and single parents. Our plan is to make justice a reality for all Australians – not just those who can afford expensive legal representation. The Australian Greens' plan for access to justice will include an investment of \$842.6 million over the forward estimates by:

- ▼ Increasing legal aid funding by 50%.
- ▼ Doubling funding to community legal centres.
- ▼ Doubling funding for Indigenous family violence prevention legal services.
- ▼ Increasing funding to Indigenous legal assistance services including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) by 50%.
- ▼ Addressing the impact of rising court fees by returning court fees to 2010-11 levels, amending the application form for exemptions from court fees to remove ambiguity and introducing a fee exemption category for clients who are being represented on a pro bono basis.





**EXTREME WEATHER HURTS**

Natural disasters resulting from extreme weather hurt. They hurt people and they hurt the economy. To better prepare the community, the Australian Greens will:

- ▼ Expand the existing National Disaster Resilience Program by increasing funding to over \$350 million per year;
- ▼ Maintain the National Climate Change Adaptation Facility with \$10 million per year for a second 5 years funding round; and
- ▼ Place a levy of \$2 a tonne on thermal coal exports to raise the money to protect the community

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## CONNECTING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

### THROUGH DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Greens support the provision of essential infrastructure to all Australian communities on an open-access, universal service basis. Fast, ubiquitous telecommunications holds out the promise of greater connectivity to family and colleagues, a drawcard for younger people to remain on the land, the provision of distance education and healthcare services in ways never possible before, and direct contact with marketing and extension services.

For larger cities and towns, direct optic fibre connections to the premises promises greatly increased speeds, but it also makes possible vastly improved telecommunications services in regional areas.

The Greens support the business model that sees the cities subsidise the bush. It is going to be more expensive to roll out the NBN in regional and rural areas – Australia is a big country but we should be treated equally and be able to access services no matter where we live. Wholesale NBN operations in the cities return a small profit to the taxpayer, enabling regional centres to be served by fast satellite and wireless services, finally bringing these centres into the digital economy.

The Greens passed amendments to the NBN legislation improving transparency and making it harder for a future government to privatise the network. We support the continued rollout of the NBN and are highly sceptical of the Coalition's cheap and nasty alternative, which would see up to eight million premises stranded on existing obsolete copper services.

### THROUGH COMMUNITY RADIO

The Australian Greens helped secure \$6 million for metropolitan community broadcasters to transition from analogue to digital services. More than 70% of community stations are located in rural, regional and remote areas: this is the next challenge for the digital transition. The Greens support the 22,000 volunteers who work in community media, reaching an audience of 3.7 million people via television and 4.4 million via radio.

### THROUGH REGIONAL ARTS

The Greens (WA) believe that the arts are an essential aspect of the good life. They feed the imagination and the spirit. Besides enlivening and entertaining us, they can provide fulfilment and income for artists and contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of a community.

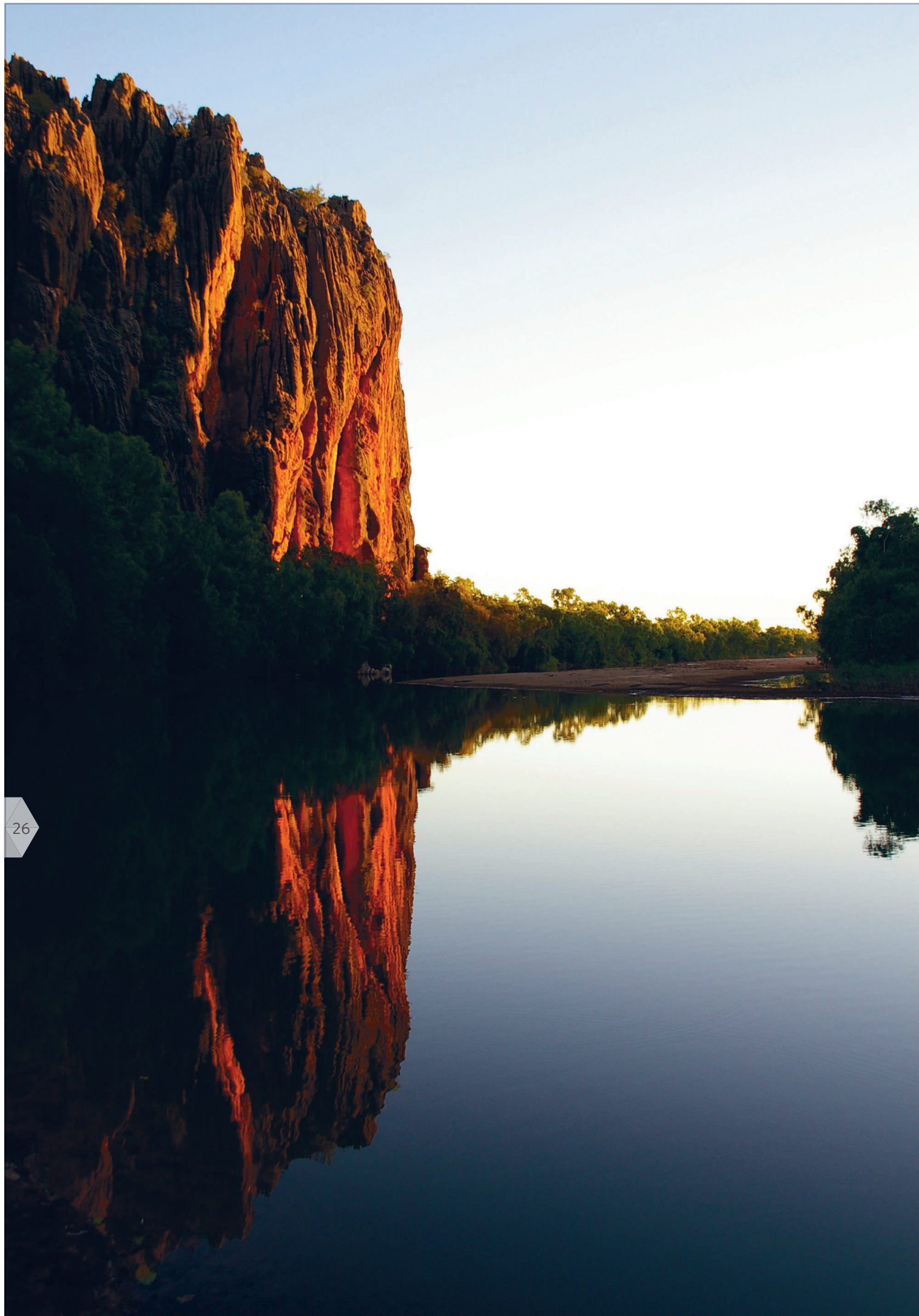
Just when it is most needed, regional arts missed out in the national funding package. The Greens will restore regional arts funding to its peak, create jobs and build community participation in the arts.

The Regional Arts Fund initiative is the central pool of money used to cultivate community projects and support regional artists. This money was cut in 2008 and has never regained its previous funding levels. The Greens are committed to restoring the fund, in real dollars to its 2004 peak and further expand its scope and funding. We will invest an additional \$10m in regional arts.

The Greens' plan would allow Australia's 408 regional and remote local governments to apply for funding to establish cultural policy officers and drive local, tailored community art projects. Regional artists will also have greater ability to develop artistic projects that directly involve their communities and use art as a vehicle to build social enterprises.

The Greens Arts and Health initiative will cement the important role that art has to play in health care. It will increase opportunities for social connection and support further research into the benefits of the arts for individual and community health and wellbeing. It will also promote art organisations and environments that foster good health and community cohesion and support community based organisations to develop and implement arts-based activities to increase participation in physical activity and develop skills training through the arts.





## CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

As one of Australia's fifteen National Diversity Hotspots, the Kimberley is characterized by a wide variety of unique vegetation communities and home to many rare and vulnerable animal species, such as the snubfin dolphin, found only in northern Australian waters, the bilby, golden bandicoot, masked owl, golden-backed tree rat, painted snipe and Gouldian finch. It is a centre of world significance for migratory birds. The coastline is also a humpback whale migration route, and the largest humpback nursery on earth lies between Broome and Camden Sound. This is a precious place.

The Australian Greens are the only party that are prepared to protect these natural features and ensure that economic development enhances rather than destroys those parts of the landscape that make it so unique and sustains the people who live there.

### MAINTAINING FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT POWERS

Responsibility for assessing and approving Australia's most environmentally damaging projects cannot be handed to reckless state governments.

Tony Abbott's Coalition have pursued plans to water down John Howard's environment laws and give up Commonwealth responsibility for protecting the environment, by handing back powers to the states.

The Western Australian Government has already proven that it can't be trusted to look after precious places like James Price Point. They reap the profits of mining and development and were prepared to turn a blind eye to important environment, cultural and heritage features of James Price Point, such as the dinosaur footprints, whale calving and monsoon vine thickets.

The Greens offered to work with Labor to stop this from happening, through a Greens bill, motions, and amendments to Abbott-proof our national environmental laws. But Labor refused every time, leaving Labor complicit in Tony Abbott's plan to remove key federal veto powers over destructive development.

Only the Greens will stand up against Tony Abbott's plan to hand off national environment law to the states, which Labor has done nothing to stop. Only the Greens can be trusted to stand up for the environment.

### ASSESSING UNCONVENTIONAL GAS AND COAL MINING

The Greens are also working for stronger federal environmental laws to regulate unconventional gas and coal mining, including a water trigger. The Greens are the only party that are standing up to protect our precious water resources and agricultural land from fracking.

### CARING FOR OUR NATIONAL PARKS

Despite their name, national parks are not protected by national laws. That means they are vulnerable to moves by state governments to allow shooting, logging, grazing and development inside national park boundaries. The Greens want national parks protected by national laws so that the federal Environment Minister could step in and protect our national parks from environmentally damaging activities.





## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Greens want our environment managed in a way that takes into account intergenerational equity, biodiversity conservation and respect for traditional ownership. Under the old parties, much of Australia's remote areas have been largely unmanaged or under-managed, despite the threats of fire, weeds, feral animals and climate change to our fragile ecosystems. This breaks promises to meet national goals of preventing biodiversity loss and protecting important ecosystems in the face of climate change.

### FARMERS, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES, AND OTHER LAND MANAGERS AS STEWARDS OF THE LAND

The Greens understand that farmers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and other land managers are stewards of their land. They should be rewarded for protecting Australia's environment.

Together with the National Farmers Federation, the Greens strongly criticised Labor's decision in 2010 to cut funding for environmental stewardship programs and believe it is selling Australian farmers short and undermining their global competitiveness to under-resource good environmental stewardship, especially in the face of climate change which brings increases threats from invasive weeds, pests and disease, not to mention changes in temperature, humidity and rainfall.

We will work for stewardship payments to land owners/managers who conserve ecosystems through practices such as fire, weed and feral animal management.

### ABORIGINAL RANGER PROGRAMS

The Greens will double the number of Aboriginal rangers in Australia within a decade in order to provide both active year-round natural resource management of our remote lands and sea area as well as jobs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In May 2013 Australia had 693 Indigenous Rangers - 44 in NSW, 144 in Queensland, 282 in the NT, 121 in WA, 70 in SA, 17 in Victoria and 14 in Tasmania. The Government promised 730 Indigenous Ranger numbers by 2015. This is good, but no match for the scale of work needed to care for our fragile remote areas. The Greens will:

- ▼ Double the number of Indigenous Rangers within a decade, starting with an extra \$100 million over 4 years. This \$100 million will be in addition to the current Government commitment.
- ▼ Allow funding to be used for administrative and operational support
- ▼ Lengthen Indigenous Ranger contracts to 10 years, provided outcomes continue to be met.
- ▼ Support more women Indigenous Rangers. This will ensure smooth continuity of conservation work at women's sacred sites where men are not permitted to enter. Currently, most Indigenous Rangers are men.





### STOPPING THE EXTINCTION CRISIS

Northern Australia is facing an extinction crisis from the combined threats of climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, invasive species and disease. An expanding resources sector in the Kimberley will only put more of our precious plants and animals at risk. We need to urgently make big changes if they are to survive.

The Greens will reverse the most recent \$470 million cut to the Biodiversity Fund, which the Greens helped establish as part of the Clean Energy Package, to promote habitat restoration;

and invest \$40 million a year to:

- ▼ Identify and map all protected ecological communities, areas of critical habitat for threatened species and important wildlife corridors
- ▼ Protect that habitat through bioregional plans
- ▼ Support the rapid listing of all species and ecological communities which belong on the threatened list and develop and resource the implementation of recovery plans and threat abatement plans





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