



RACHEL SIEWERT
Australian Greens Whip
Senator for Western Australia

Paul Wright
National Director
Po Box 77
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Dear Paul

Thank you for your letter to Richard di Natale requesting information on the Australian Greens First Nations policy platform for the 2019 federal election. We recognise the important work ANTaR is doing as a national advocacy organisation dedicated to the rights of First Nations peoples.

1. Closing the gap in health outcomes and life-expectancy, and addressing the social determinants of health such as housing and systemic racism.

The Greens are committed to working with First Nations peoples and communities to close the gap in health outcomes and address the social determinants of health. We know that Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services undertake vital work across the country in providing culturally safe and appropriate health services for First Nations peoples. We are committed to ensuring Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are adequately funded and supported. The Greens are restoring \$500 million that was cut from First Nations programs, including more than \$169 million cut from health programs, following the introduction of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

The Greens acknowledge that there is significant work to do to address the systemic racism experienced by First Nations peoples throughout our health system. We support calls for a Parliamentary inquiry into institutional racism experienced by First Nations peoples in the mainstream health system.

The Greens are deeply concerned about the current crisis of First Nations suicide. As part of our mental health package, we are investing in suicide prevention programs that work by providing \$500 million for community-based assertive outreach programs, with dedicated funding for First Nations peoples. Another important initiative in suicide prevention involves investing in peer workers who are people with lived experience providing peer support to others with mental health issues. We are providing \$166 million to fund a two-year national peer workforce trial with 1,000 places, with a dedicated number of places for First Nations peer workers. We also know that supports and services in First Nations communities must be developed, led and provided by First Nations peoples.

We are committed to a national response to protecting First Nations children. We strongly support a system that invests in prevention and early intervention and prioritises reunifying children in care with their families. We are providing \$50 million over four years for First Nations out of home care projects, including funding First Nations family support workers. We also want to see First Nations Child Protection bodies in all states and territories established as being essential parts of the response to the crisis in the number of First Nations children in out of home care. In addition, we are establishing Close the Gap out of home care targets to reduce the rate of First Nations children in out of home care.

The Greens understand that access to safe, secure and affordable housing is fundamental to achieving justice for First Nations peoples. As part of our housing initiative, the Greens are establishing a federal housing trust to fund the building of 500,000 public and community homes. We are also setting aside \$500 million per year to fund transitional housing and crisis services, with some of this funding specifically dedicated to First Nations communities. We will work with First Nations organisations to ensure access to culturally appropriate crisis housing and long-term housing, especially for women and children experiencing family violence.

The Greens are strongly committed to abolishing racist and punitive measures, including the Cashless Debit Card and compulsory income management.

2. Addressing the injustice of shameful, heavily disproportionate incarceration rates.

The Greens want urgent action to reduce the unacceptable incarceration rates of First Nations peoples. We are joining First Nations organisations in calling for the adoption of national justice targets to close the gap in the rates of imprisonment of First Nations peoples by 2031, and close the gap in the rates of violence against First Nations peoples, with priority strategies for women and children. As part of our plan, we are also establishing an interdepartmental taskforce to develop a national strategy to address incarceration rates. There is increasing evidence emerging about the positive impacts of justice reinvestment projects in Australia. The Greens will establish a National Centre for Justice Reinvestment that will reinvest resources from the criminal justice system into primary prevention programs. We will also provide \$50 million over four years for a Justice Reinvestment Grants Program to support local justice reinvestment projects. We are committed to investing in strategies that address the unacceptable rates of family violence experienced by First Nations peoples. The Greens are investing in primary prevention and early intervention programs that address the root causes of family violence. As part of our plan to stop the epidemic of family violence, we are committing \$200 million over four years to a Survivor Grant fund and allocating a proportion of this funding to First Nations community-controlled specialist frontline services working with family violence survivors.

The Greens are committed to restoring and increasing funding to First Nations legal assistance organisations. Over the next four years, we will commit \$97 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and \$118 million for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services. We also want to support peak bodies to continue their vital roles in providing advocacy, support services and policy development for their members. We will provide \$4.8 million for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and \$4.5 million for National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services.

3. Constitutional Reform – including the implementation of the Statement from the Heart.

The Australian Greens are committed to addressing Australia's unfinished business through treaties, truth, justice and healing. We strongly support working with First Nations peoples to implement the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We acknowledge that treaties are a vital pathway to recognising sovereignty and



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achieving meaningful reform for First Nations peoples. We are providing \$50 million to First Nations peoples' organisations to support a path towards establishing treaties. We are also providing \$50 million for the establishment of a body to enable agreement-making, such as the Makarrata Commission, and facilitate a process of justice and truth telling. Following the implementation of these priorities, the Greens are providing funding for the consultation and referendum process to establish a Voice to Parliament.

I have attached copy of our First Nations initiatives and stakeholder statements for your information. Thank you for your interest and I trust I have adequately addressed the information you were seeking.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Siewert', written in a cursive style.

Rachel Siewert
Senator for Western Australia
Australian Greens spokesperson for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues