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Dear Paul, the ANTaR Team, and supporters,

**Re: Greens (WA) Aboriginal Affairs Initiatives; WA Election**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our First Nations Peoples Initiatives. The Greens (WA) have a longstanding history as proponents of First Nations Peoples' self-determination, land rights, treaty and justice, with renewed determination after the atrocities of Juukan Gorge and elsewhere. The Greens (WA) overwhelmingly support First Nations Peoples' self-determination, ownership and development and it is the hope of the Greens (WA) that this stance is self-evident in our initiatives. For ease and clarity, please find the respective information under the headings provided in your original correspondence.

**Treaty: Can you please detail how the WA Greens' Party will pursue the process of negotiating treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from Western Australia, for a shared future?**

First Nations' sovereignty over Lands and Waters was never ceded. The Greens are committed to treaty/treaties but the plan for development and negotiation of treaty must be led by First Nations Peoples, and the Greens (WA) will work with First Nations Peoples to ensure they are empowered to do this.

The Greens (WA) will passionately support State-wide structures and processes that enable grassroots democratic engagement with other bodies and all levels of government for First Nations Peoples. Treaty must be drafted under recognised and international frameworks, employing recommendations that behove our position as a UN Member. Additionally, the treaty must be delivered in a genuine and forthcoming manner and the Greens (WA) will oppose moves to delay, frustrate, or deviate from the process. The Greens (WA) will ensure that obligations towards First Nations Peoples under international treaties and human rights conventions are honoured by State and Federal practice, and fulfilled at every level of decision-making.

**Closing the Gap: What will the Greens' Party be doing to meet its obligations under the new National Agreement?**

The Greens (WA) have been keen advocates for the Close the Gap initiative since its inception, and support the government's new National Agreement on Closing the Gap, announced on 30 July 2020. The Greens (WA) believe that community and individual health are linked, and therefore aim to support First Nations Peoples by way of supporting physical and mental health at a community level.

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The Greens (WA) support moves to fund and facilitate the effective operation of locally run, community driven, and culturally appropriate programs and health services.

The Greens (WA) strongly support and advocate for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs). The Greens (WA) also support greater maternity, post-natal, and paediatric services in regional WA, recognising the importance of committed and regular services to the community.

In regard to rates of Indigenous suicides, the Greens (WA) support moves to decolonise mental health issues by supporting Indigenous practitioners and indigenous concepts of mental health. Generally, the Greens (WA) support funding evidence-based suicide prevention programs (including community-level programs and targeted programs for at-risk groups), and seek to provide specialist, ongoing, State-wide support services and postvention services, to those bereaved by suicide. The Greens (WA) will scrutinise all mental health programmes intended for First Nations Peoples, ensuring they display best practice, and are developed and implemented through culturally secure ways of working. The Greens (WA) will support movement towards improving the quality of mental health services and coordinating these services across the State.

The Close the Gap initiatives are varied across personal health, social issues, and community resilience. The issues that have not been addressed here, such as housing and justice, may be found below under their respective sections.

**Justice: Can you inform us of your party's policies to address the persistent and ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander incarceration rates within WA?**

The rates of incarceration of First Nations Peoples in WA is shameful. Outcomes for First Nations' Justice in Australia are shameful. We are failing to provide social and legal equity for First Nations Peoples. The Greens will continue to strive to raise the age of criminal responsibility and remove mandatory sentencing.

At home in WA, the Greens (WA) seek to conduct performance and productivity reviews with the aim of adjusting funding models and allocation for the WA Police, Aboriginal Legal Service Inc WA, the Aboriginal Family Law Service Inc WA, Night Patrols and Outreach, Legal Aid WA, and other similar services. These services are the interface between individuals and our justice system, and the Greens (WA) support the reallocation of resources based on the needs of our communities. The Greens (WA) oppose any laws and policies that disproportionately impact on First Nations Peoples, such as mandatory sentencing.

The Greens (WA) understand the role of a strong community in tackling antisocial and problematic youth behaviour, and the necessity of providing access to larger legal frameworks and support. The Greens (WA) will seek to develop and implement justice/social reinvestment programs across Western Australia - particularly for youth. These initiatives seek to build rapport – both individually and community-wide – with local enforcement, and wider legal services. The provision of these services, alongside essential intervention and wellbeing services, are vital to rebuilding community involvement in our justice system and trust in its outcomes.

Additionally, and as mentioned elsewhere, the Greens (WA) support the implementation of all recommendations within:

- The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, “the Muirhead Commission” (1987-91)
- ‘Putting the Picture Together’, “the Gordon report” (2002)
- The Inquest into the 13 Deaths of Children and Young Persons in the Kimberley Region, and
- The Aboriginal Customary Laws Final Report of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia (2006).

Justice and Peace are community concerns and the Greens (WA) are committed to tackling justice-based issues from the bottom-up. Criminal behaviour and criminal records affect our communities and their individuals, and it is essential that these communities are positioned to respond, and are supported in this aim by the resources of the State.

**Housing: can you notify us of your party’s policies to secure adequate and sustainable housing for First Nations Western Australians, in particular the work you will undertake to achieve: - Increased home ownership amongst Indigenous people; - Increased housing assistance services available; - A high quality of housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and - Less Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Western Australians being homelessness?**

The Greens (WA) are advocates for full self determination of First Nations Peoples. We believe that no one should be forced to move due to lack of service or government closures. The Greens (WA) believe the Western Australian Auditor General should conduct annual audits and performance/productivity measures of government and non-government agencies responsible for service delivery to First Nations Peoples' communities. This would ensure the existing housing system meets requirements and Quality-of-Life indices.

In terms of additional housing, the Greens (WA) support the development of cosmopolitan regional centres, relieving housing burden in the Perth metropolitan area, and supporting the First Peoples’ identities of regional settlements on country. The Greens (WA) also plan to directly fund job creating opportunities in WA through residential construction at a State-wide level, cognisant of the housing deficit and its attendant logistics.

Social services and access are cornerstones to most policy initiatives. The Greens (WA) will continue to work with First Nations’ community leaders and service providers to ensure that our First Nations Peoples can easily access social housing and other initiatives. The Greens (WA) are vehemently opposed to discrimination and will not accept racial or cultural biases by the providers of housing, health, and education.

**Heritage Protection: As heritage protection is a State government responsibility, what is WA Greens’ plans to protect and preserve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and sacred sites across Western Australia, in particular will these policies embody the 11 recommendations within the ‘Inquiry into the destruction of 46,00 year old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia’ by the Law Council?**

The Greens (WA) support the recommendations of the recent Parliamentary inquiry into the destruction of the Juukan Gorge and the intent of the recommendations from the Law Council. From a legislative perspective, the Greens (WA) support genuine amendments to the Mining Act (1978) so that potential proponents must enter into partnership and agreements with all relevant First Nations Peoples during the project development stage, and heed the decisions of these parties.

Additionally the Greens (WA) support an overhaul of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 to ensure that First Nations Peoples have the right of veto over mining and destruction of sites. The powers of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs must be diminished, removing the Minister's ability to override heritage concerns and First Nations' decisions. Furthermore, the Greens (WA) vehemently oppose "gag" orders in agreements – some in State Agreement Acts - that diminish the lawful right of objection for First Nations Peoples.

From a national perspective, the Greens (WA) are committed to the identification, recognition and protection of all sites on land or waters that have cultural significance, including aiding the Federal Government in progressing World Heritage Listing for Murujuga (the Burrup Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago). This recognition must extend to those sites of massacre and early conflict, recognising the true history of this country.

The Greens (WA) support State laws to provide a framework for the repatriation of First Nations' artefacts and remains. More than 100,000 First Nations Australian artefacts are held in 220 institutions across the world, of which at least 32,000 are in British institutions. These artefacts came into the possession of museums by military, social and economic force. It is essential that these cultural pieces - including human remains - are returned to country. The Greens (WA) support harsh penalties for the illicit ownership, sale, or transport of cultural artefacts and art.

Again, please accept the Greens' (WA) appreciation for the opportunity to provide responses to your First Nations initiatives for the upcoming State election.

For your convenience, here is a link to our election policy platform 'First Nations: Justice, Heritage & Health' <https://greens.org.au/wa/platform/firstnations> and to our policy <https://greens.org.au/wa/policies/first-nations-peoples> which you may wish to read for further information.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Pringle and Gareth Doogue  
**Co-Convenors of The Greens (WA)**  
**11 February 2021**