

## The Greens NSW

This is a response to an email sent by Dr, Sonia Laverty, seeking the views of the Greens NSW on the rights and opportunities for older women.

The Greens are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination against older women and to improving quality public services for the entire community that would be of particular benefit to older women. We are working for a society that enhances the rights of all of its members and celebrates the diverse and valuable contributions made by older people and women. Some of the issues you raise are not currently directly addressed by specific policies of the Greens NSW or the Australian Greens. The party's grass roots approach to policy making which involved opportunities for all of the members to be involved and culminates in a democratic decision of the representative council means that we cannot at this state of the electoral cycle make specific changes to policies. There is however no doubt that there would be strong support within the party for a policy on Older Women that addresses in detail many of the issues you raise.

The Greens NSW will be running candidates in all 93 lower house seats, all of whom will be advocating platforms consistent with Greens policies. For your information, there are policies for the Greens NSW as well as national policies for the Australian Greens. Both the state and national party have policies on 'Older People' as well as 'Women'. All four of these can be found at

<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/older-people>

<http://nsw.greens.org.au/policies/women>

<http://greens.org.au/policies/care-for-people/older-people>

<http://greens.org.au/policies/care-for-people/women>

To focus more on the points you have raised, there are some questions which can be answered that comply with the principles and spirit of our existing policies, while there are other answers which would require further consultation with the membership of Greens NSW.

**AGEISM** The Greens NSW supports an investigation into measures to redress any government role in feminisation of poverty in Australia (Ageism 3). The more detailed points you raise are supported by the principles stated of the policies on Older People. Greens MPs have requested EEO statistics from all government departments and agencies during

Budget Estimate hearings. For example, in 2009 Greens MP Ian Cohen asked all departments to provide data on the percentage of the workforce who had a disability. The Greens commit to requesting the same data on older women if OWN thought that useful.

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Greens NSW Housing Policy commits the party to advancing affordable housing. Our more than 70 local government councillors are advocating for affordable housing at the local level. Clause 11 of the [NSW policy on Older People](#) states:

*11. In particular, The Greens NSW believe that expenditure on public housing and on social infrastructure are vital for older people. Not only does more public housing need to be built, but also increased expenditure is required on social infrastructure and has to be in place along with the housing, to avoid isolation and lack of services, problems especially apparent in areas such as Sydney's south-western suburbs.*

Further references to residential care can be found in this policy<sup>1</sup>.

The Greens NSW agrees with the three examples provided from the McFerran 2010 report on affordable housing. Housing for older women is a high priority and the measurement of the outcomes would depend on several factors such as the exact objectives, the funding given to the evaluation, and the views gained from consultation with stakeholders such as representatives of the target group and allied service deliverers.

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST OLDER WOMEN**

The Greens NSW gives the utmost priority to addressing violence in our society. Cate Faehrmann MLC and the Greens NSW spokesperson on Women, has already delivered a speech to the parliament addressing the issue of domestic violence. We agree that violence against older women is a largely neglected area. We would be interested to work with groups such OWN to highlight how important it is that this area receives more attention from decision-makers and to develop strategies to address the problem. See clauses 9 and 35 of the [NSW Older People](#) policy.

## **HEALTH**

The Greens support OWN's proposal on health. It is important to undertake an analysis first to identify well-funded services to ensure older women have access to appropriate and high quality health care.

## **VOLUNTEERS AND CARERS**

The Greens NSW supports the Articles of the Convention of Elimination of All Discrimination against Women. In relation to the specific recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women No. 43 affirm the rights of older women to access support when caring for elderly parents or relatives. The Greens have had a strong focus on Home and Community Care (HACC) funding and in 2010 initiated a broad ranging inquiry into Ageing and Disability and Home Care services. The inquiry has demonstrated that there is a high level of unmet need in terms of carer support and assistance.

The Greens strongly supported the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 which established the NSW Carers Charter and the Carers Advisory Council. Importantly the Greens made continuing commitments to pursue appropriate assessments of support needs and requirements during debate on this Bill. The Greens support building upon this legislation to provide greater legal recognition of carers and their needs and pursuing reforms to respite care access highlighted in the recent Auditor General report and the Social Issues Inquiry into Services of ADHC recommendations.

## **TRANSPORT**

The Greens have strongly supported the NSW City Rail Easy Access program. We have made continued representations in Parliament about the need to increase funding for the program in order to upgrade train stations at a faster rate. We have questioned the selection of stations for upgrade as there are many areas across metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW that have large concentrations of older people that do not have train stations that are accessible to the aged and mobility-impaired. The Greens will be seeking further funding prioritisation for the City Rail Easy Access program so that NSW can comply with National Access Standards obligations. One of the issues subject to ongoing discussion is the move to prepaid ticketing and the difficulty this can present for the aged and people with disabilities. If a prepaid ticketing outlet is not situated near a bus terminal there this person may face additional difficulties in obtaining a prepaid ticket. The Greens would be interested to investigate ways in which prepaid ticketing does not pose additional difficulties for those with limited mobility. While we agree that there is a need to improve access to public transport, our way of developing the detailed strategies would be in line with the process of policy development outlined above.

I do hope that this gives you sufficient guidance as to where the Greens stand on these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to OWN's election priorities. Please contact me if you would like any further information.

**Lesla de Leau**

Greens NSW Campaign Coordinator

Tel: 02 9045 6999

[lesa@nsw.greens.org.au/](mailto:lesa@nsw.greens.org.au)

[www.nsw.greens.org.au](http://www.nsw.greens.org.au)