



1 September 2010

STATEMENT

Labor alliance with Greens of concern to independent schools

The caretaker Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and the Australian Greens today announced that they have reached a formal agreement which would ensure supply to a Labor Government in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The agreement (copy attached) contains a wide range of policies and issues that the parties will work together on but makes no mention of education or schools funding policy.

Prior to the federal election the non-government schools sector reached agreement with Labor that it would extend the current school funding arrangements by one year and extend the Capital Grants program to 2014. Enacting these decisions requires an Act of Parliament which, should Labor form government, may require the support of the Greens in both houses. It is unclear at this stage whether such a Bill would receive this support.

The independent schools sector is currently making representations to the caretaker Government to ensure that the agreed extension to the funding arrangements will go ahead despite the pact made today with the Greens, in light of the Greens' well documented attitude to the funding of non-government schools.

The AIS has previously sent to you material which outlines some of the education and school funding policies of the Australian Greens. These include their intention to:

- end the current non-government school funding arrangements by the end of 2010,
- end funding to the 'very wealthiest private schools',
- return the total level of funding for all non-government schools to the 2003-04 levels
 - *this means that independent schools would receive at least \$1,000 less per student than current rates, with that figure considerably higher for most schools, and*
- restrict the development of 'new private schools'.

The Greens education policies, if used as a bargaining tool with the Government, could have a disastrous impact on independent schools.

We call on the Labor Party to honour their agreement with the non-government schools sector and for the Greens to put sensible policy before ideology and consider the effect that their current education policies would have on more than one-third of all Australian students and their families.



Australian Senate

Bob Brown

Leader of the Australian Greens

1 September 2010

Australian Greens, Labor commit to agreement for stable Government

The Australian Greens and the Labor Party have signed an agreement to ensure stability for Labor in Government. The Greens will ensure supply and oppose any motion of no confidence in the Government from other parties or MPs.

Labor will work with the Greens to deliver improved transparency and integrity to Parliament and pursue policies that promote the national interest and address climate change.

As part of the agreement there will be regular meetings between the Prime Minister and Australian Greens Leader Bob Brown and newly-elected Lower House MP Adam Bandt.

“There will be a Climate Change Committee resourced as a Cabinet Committee, an investment in dental health care in the next budget and completion of a \$20 million study into High Speed Rail by July 2011,” said Australian Greens Leader Bob Brown.

“The agreement includes a wide range of measures. These include:

- A Climate Change Committee
- A full parliamentary debate on Afghanistan
- A commitment to work with the Greens on dental health care investment
- Completion of a \$20 million High Speed Rail study by July 2011
- Legislating for truth in political advertising
- A Leaders’ Debate Commission
- Establishing a Parliamentary Integrity Commissioner
- Establishing a Parliamentary Budget Office
- Restrictions on political donations
- A move toward full three year governments
- Specially allocated time for debate and voting on private members bills and a fixed and fair allocation of questions for Independent and minor party members in Question Time
- Referenda for constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians and Local Government
- A commitment for reform to provide above the line voting in the Senate
- Better processes for the release of documents in the public interest in both Houses of Parliament
- Access to relevant departments, including Treasury and Finance & Deregulation for Greens election policies.

Media contact: Erin Farley 0438 376 082

www.greensmps.org.au

media release

The Australian Greens & The Australian Labor Party ('The Parties') – Agreement

Between:

The Hon Julia Gillard MP Prime Minister, MP Lalor, Leader of the Australian Labor Party
The Hon Wayne Swan MP Deputy Prime Minister, MP Lilley, Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party

And

Senator Bob Brown Senator for Tasmania, Leader of the Australian Greens
Senator Christine Milne Senator for Tasmania, Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens
Adam Bandt MP -elect MP Melbourne, Australian Greens representative in the House

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This agreement establishes a basis for stable and effective government.
- 1.2 The Greens will vote with the ALP government to ensure supply.
- 1.3 The Greens will oppose any motion of no confidence in the government from any non-Greens member.

2. Principles

The Parties agree to work together to pursue the following principles:

- a) transparent and accountable government;
- b) improved process and integrity of parliament;
- c) policies which promote the national interest; and
- d) policies which address climate change.

3. Goals

The Parties will work together and with other parliamentarians to:

- a) Establish a Leaders' Debate Commission
- b) Seek immediate reform of funding of political parties and election campaigns by legislating to lower the donation disclosure threshold from an indexed \$11,500 to \$1,000; to prevent donation splitting between different branches of political parties; to ban foreign donations; to ban anonymous donations over \$50; to increase timeliness and frequency of donation disclosure; to tie public funding to genuine campaign expenditure and to create a 'truth in advertising' offence in the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

- c) Seek further reform of funding of political parties and election campaigns by having a truly representative committee of the Parliament conduct a national inquiry into a range of options with the final report to be received no later than 1 October 2011, enabling any legislative reform to be dealt with in 2012.
 - i. The Parties note that the Greens are predisposed to a system of full public funding for elections as in Canada.
- d) The Parties note that Senator Bob Brown will reintroduce as a Private Members Bill the *Commonwealth Electoral (Above-the-Line Voting) Amendment Bill 2008*. The ALP will consider the Bill and work with the Greens to reach reforms satisfactory to the Parties.
- e) Refer issues of public interest disclosure, where the Senate or House votes on the floor against the decision of a Minister, to the Information Commissioner, who will arbitrate on the release of relevant documents and report to both Houses.
- f) Hold referenda during the 43rd Parliament or at the next election on Indigenous constitutional recognition and recognition of local government in the Constitution.
- g) Agree that this Parliament should serve its full term and further agree to investigate legislative proposals, which are within the terms of the Constitution and give greater certainty to the Australian people about the Parliament serving full three year terms.

4. Improved processes and integrity of parliament

- 4.1 The Parties agree to work together and with other parliamentarians to implement parliamentary reforms.
- 4.2 The immediate reforms include:
 - a) Improving Question Time in the House of Representatives by setting fixed time limits for questions and answers with supplementary questions given at the discretion of the Speaker.
 - b) A fixed and fair allocation of questions for independent and minor party members with the first question no later than the 6th question in each Question Time.
 - c) At least 2.5 hours dedicated for debating and voting on private members' bills including a fixed and fair allocation of time for independents and minor party members in every full sitting week in both houses.
 - d) In addition to clause 4.2(c), dedicated time for voting on motions from independents and minor party members in every full sitting week in the House of Representatives.
 - e) The House of Representatives will debate and vote, during Government Business time, private senators' bills as passed by the Senate within 6 sitting days of the message being received by the House.
 - f) Amending the Standing Orders of both Houses so that there can be a recommittal of any vote within one sitting day where a member was absent from that vote due to inadvertence.

- g) Agreeing that in the House of Representatives, 'pairs' may be made by private arrangement during votes, similar to the arrangements which currently occur between Whips in the Senate or that another arrangement to facilitate Members who cannot attend due to ill health, family circumstances or performing Government or electorate business be agreed.

4.3 Further reforms include:

- a) Establishing within 12 months a Parliamentary Budget Office within the Parliamentary Library with the structure, resourcing and protocols being the subject of decision by a special committee of the Parliament which is truly representative of the Parliament.
- b) Establishing within 12 months a Parliamentary Integrity Commissioner, supervised by the Privileges Committees from both houses to:
 - i. provide advice, administration and reporting on parliamentary entitlements to report to the Parliament;
 - ii. to investigate and make recommendations to the Privileges Committees on individual investigations, to provide advice to parliamentarians on ethical issues; and
 - iii. to uphold the Parliamentary Code of Conduct and to control and maintain the Government's lobbyists register.

5. Working relationships

5.1 The following arrangements will govern the working relationship between the Greens and the ALP for the duration of the 43rd Parliament. These arrangements may be altered by mutual agreement.

- a) When Parliament is in session, the Prime Minister will meet with Senator Brown and Mr Bandt each sitting week, principally to discuss and negotiate any planned legislation.
- b) When Parliament is not in session, the Prime Minister, or her delegate, will meet with Senator Brown and Mr Bandt, or their delegate, at least once each fortnight, principally to discuss the upcoming legislative agenda.
- c) The Government will endeavour to give at least six working days notice of the introduction of legislation to the House.
- d) If the Greens Party Room has not considered legislation, the vote of Mr Bandt on legislation to facilitate its promulgation should not be interpreted as reflecting or determining the final position of the Greens in the Senate.
- e) The Parties will ensure that the ALP's budget is subject to an exchange of information and views between the Parties as follows:
 - i. The Greens Treasury spokesperson and Mr Bandt receiving economic and financial briefings from the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance and the Secretaries of the Departments of Treasury and Finance and Deregulation at regularly agreed times.

- ii. The Greens Treasury spokesperson and Mr Bandt having regular discussions with the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance on economic circumstances, fiscal strategy and budget preparation.
- f) Should Senator Brown, Mr Bandt and other Greens Senators with portfolios, wish to propose new policies, these proposals may be formally submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister and forwarded to the appropriate Department and Minister for analysis. Where the proposal is likely to involve costs, it may also be sent to the Department of Treasury, and the Treasurer, and the Department of Finance and Deregulation, and the Minister for Finance, for costing.
 - i. The number of proposals that may be considered in this way is not limited in number but the Parties will ensure that the workload arising is reasonable
 - ii. Every endeavour will be made to provide required advice within ten business days
 - iii. The Parties acknowledge that during the six week period leading up to the Federal Budget, the turnaround time may be greater than ten business days.
 - g) The Parties acknowledge that the above mechanism can be used to have any of the Greens' policies for the 2010 election considered.
 - h) The ALP notes the Senate resolution on appropriations bills which contain matters which should have been the subject of separate legislation. To prevent this occurring, the ALP agrees to work with Greens to resolve the matter prior to the introduction of the bill.
 - i) Senior staff members of the Prime Minister's Office and Senator Brown's Office will liaise to ensure that Senator Brown, Mr Bandt and other Greens Senators with portfolios have access to Ministers, key public servants and the Prime Minister, as outlined above.
 - j) The Greens will ensure best possible access for Ministers to be informed about Greens' legislation and will endeavour to give at least six working days notice before bills are introduced.

6. Policy

6.1 The Parties agree on the following policy issues:

- a) That Australia must tackle climate change and that reducing carbon pollution by 2020 will require a price on carbon. Therefore the Parties agree to form a well resourced Climate Change Committee which encompasses experts and representative ALP, Greens, independent and Coalition parliamentarians who are committed to tackling climate change and who acknowledge that reducing carbon pollution by 2020 will require a carbon price. The Committee will be resourced like a Cabinet Committee. The Parties will, by the end of September 2010, finalise the structure, membership and work plan of the Committee.
- b) That Australia needs urgent further action on dental care and that proposals for improving the nation's investments in dental care should be considered in the context of the 2011 Budget.

- c) That an implementation study for High Speed Rail should be completed by July 2011.
- d) That there is a full parliamentary debate on the war in the Afghanistan.

7. Administration

7.1 This agreement will come into effect on the day Government is established.

Signed on this 1st day of September 2010.

The Hon Julia Gillard MP
Prime Minister
Leader of the ALP

The Hon Wayne Swan MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Deputy Leader of the ALP

Senator Bob Brown
Leader of the Australian Greens

Adam Bandt MP - elect
Australian Greens Representative in the House

Senator Christine Milne
Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens