



## Policy Statement

# Community and Services

Endorsed by the Melbourne City Greens as local policy of the Australian Greens (Victoria). This policy is part of a broader Melbourne City Greens Policy Platform, which has been released throughout 2008, prior to the November election.

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### **Background**

In the past twenty years, Melbourne has been transformed. Whole new suburbs, such as Southgate and Docklands, have been built, and historic suburbs such as Carlton have changed. Southgate's population grew by 12 per cent between 2001 and 2007; 47 per cent of Carlton residents are between 12 and 25 years old; children are coming back into the city. These developments are emblematic of changes across the city. The Greens will work for a city where social services keep pace with these changes.

Melbourne's suburbs are distinct and varied, and the services available to them are uneven. For example, unlike North Melbourne, which in the past was its own municipality, Carlton has no town hall, no library and no community centre. The Greens will develop community hubs for one of Melbourne's newest suburbs, Southgate, and one of its oldest, Carlton.

Childcare is a key local government service. Its benefits to children and their families are significant. Over the last decade, there has been a sustained push to privatise childcare, regardless of the impact on quality. The Greens believe that childcare is a service, not a business, and will continue to support council and community-managed children's services.

Local government has a key role to play in providing recreational activities. Greens on council will ensure that these available to all people, including people with a disability, and will make sure groups that have traditionally missed out on organised activities are given access to sport and leisure opportunities.

### **Policies**

Greens on Melbourne City Council will:

1. Ensure the 2006 Council pledge of 200 additional quality and affordable childcare places by 2008 is revised upwards to 400 additional places by 2009, through:
  - offering to purchase the two ABC Learning Centres within the City of Melbourne at East Melbourne (with 101 places) and at Melbourne Central (88 places);
  - ensuring that the redeveloped Buncle St Community Hub in North Melbourne includes a significant increase in childcare places;
  - adding 25 places to Lady Huntingfield in North Melbourne; and
  - ensuring that the places at Kensington are properly funded and filled as soon as possible.
2. Fast-track the development of the former Boyd High School site as a community hub and library for Southbank;
3. Fast-track the creation of a dedicated community hub and library for Carlton, preferably at the Kathleen Syme Centre;

4. Expand and resource the environmental education program as piloted at Lady Huntingfield in North Melbourne to all childcare centres in the City of Melbourne;
5. Expand Council's provision of children's services including long-day care and preschool services;
6. Build an adventure playground in the CBD;
7. Offer more children activities at council facilities, particularly during school holidays;
8. Defend all parks and sporting fields from interference by developers and other levels of Government, and protect all suitable space for local (and especially youth) sporting clubs.
9. Ensure that sporting clubs that use council facilities or have council support develop social inclusion strategies;
10. Invest in facilities to address historical imbalances in the provision of male-dominated sports and women's sports (e.g. netballs courts);
11. Address the affordable accommodation crisis for community organisations by developing a register of government-owned properties suitable for leasing to local community service providers at a very low rate;

A Green Lord Mayor of Melbourne will advocate to:

12. Reduce the number of electronic gaming machines within the City of Melbourne.

### **Costing discussion**

The Greens propose to ensure that libraries and childcare places approved by the current Council are actually matched in dollars in the budget. The Greens believe that there is significant wastage in the current Melbourne City Council budget, and that any funds currently gifted to State Government projects (to the tune of \$70 million over the course of the current term) should first have been spent on fundamental Local Government services. Furthermore, there is at least \$500,000 annually being misspent from the marketing and events budget, on self-promotion for political purposes, that would also be better spent on, for example, actually funding pledged childcare places.