

# GILMORE GREENS - MEDIA RELEASE



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In March, 2015, as part of the State election campaign, The Greens launched a comprehensive Jobs Plan for Kiama and the South Coast, targeted at both protecting existing jobs as well as creating new ones, and underpinned by a comprehensive range of policies developed by The Greens.

The Greens candidate for the Federal seat of Gilmore, Carmel McCallum, said today that this plan is being further developed as the basis for the Greens Gilmore Jobs and Employment strategy. "The strategy is designed to support local opportunities for long-term work. Implementing an employment and skill-training plan is imperative.

"Estimates of youth unemployment, predicted to be above 30%, are dire. As many young people become so disillusioned by their negative prospects, they are not even on the radar.

"As a spokesperson for Habitat Personnel said last week, these young people, often from multigenerational unemployment families, are not on any government benefits, their parents are unable to help them and they just do whatever they have to do to survive and get by. This is a tragedy," Carmel McCallum said.

"Hurdles continue to be thrown in front of younger and older people, particularly those from low socio-economic backgrounds. The lack of transport, poor reception for mobiles and extremely slow internet speeds, combined with the slashing of TAFE courses, and the introduction of high student fees, introduced by the State Coalition government, make it ever-harder for people wishing to access tertiary education to surmount their tragic circumstances.

"There continue to be many factors undermining the opportunities for employment in the Gilmore electorate. Over the past two years, there have been closures of once high employers, with no help or support from the federal Coalition government, and along with the crisis in the steel works at Port Kembla, we are yet to see the full reverberation further south, where many local industries depend on the supply of high quality Australian steel.

"With pressure by big business to remove penalty rates in the retail and hospitality sectors, now currently being considered by the Fair Work Commission, there will be less money to spend in the electorate, which is highly dependent on the tourism dollar. Less pay, less to spend on 'luxuries' such as coffee, less tax going back to federal revenue."

The Greens have a strong policy and commitment on collective bargaining and union membership, to protect employees from exploitation and vulnerability.

Carmel McCallum, who is an active member of Professional Pharmacists Australia, said, "Now more than ever, joining a union is critical. If you're not in a union, you're taking a big risk if the Coalition is returned at the next election. The track record of the current government continues to show that they are on the side of big business, and it's obvious that profit for shareholders is their main aim. On the other hand, small business is the biggest employer in the nation, and will only be, ironically, undermined if penalty rates are reduced or removed."

"Of course, education is the key and we must protect the TAFE system and keep skills-training largely in government management. We have already seen the millions of dollars 'invested' and wasted by government, in schemes that have proven to be based on false economy, and with no regulatory oversight, have left thousands of students without proof of qualifications or with unfinished courses, and with debts that may never be repaid.

"The free tertiary education system introduced in the nineteen-seventies was the best and most equitable investment possible, brought Australia into a very competitive position on the world

stage, and is still a platform for The Greens Education policy. The Greens is the only party which supports the full implementation of the Gonski funding, with no cuts to university funding.

“Both public and private investment in economically, socially and environmentally sustainable projects, which protect the special values of our region, will generate gainful and satisfying employment, and assist with the transition to a renewable energy future. This commitment will produce communities which are healthier and happier places in which to live and grow.”

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