



It is an honour to represent you as a Greens Senator for South Australia in the federal parliament since 2015.

This newsletter summarises my most recent work in the parliament and the community. If you would like any more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch. My office can be reached on (08) 8410 4588 or you can email me at [senator.simms@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.simms@aph.gov.au)



### Promoting SA jobs

Last year, I introduced [a bill](#) into the Senate to support electric car manufacturing in South Australia. With hundreds of jobs to be lost by the closure of Holden and Mitsubishi in our state, it's critical that we harness the skills and experience of our manufacturing industry to support green jobs for the future. Electric cars are a growing industry that would provide long term, environmentally sustainable jobs for our state and I will continue to pursue this in the next parliament.

I also travelled to Whyalla for a Senate Inquiry into the future of the steel industry and heard from members of the community about the pressures they are facing. I have been advocating for [increased mental health support](#) from the State and Federal Government to assist communities during this challenging time, but also [local procurement policies to support jobs](#) in the high quality Australian steel industry.



In April, the Greens announced [our policy to make South Australia 100 per cent renewable by 2030](#). This plan would create thousands of new jobs as we transition our economy away from coal and carbon. More recently the Greens have pledged [\\$100 million for a solar thermal plant in Port Augusta](#), to assist this important regional centre with its transition to a green economy. There are huge opportunities for South Australia through increased investment in renewables – our state can be a global leader in tackling climate change and create new jobs in the process.

## Green transport for SA

This month the Greens announced a push for greater federal investment in public transport and bikeways in Adelaide and its surrounds. As part of the Greens' \$10 billion public transport package nationwide, [\\$500 million was pledged for the AdeLINK tram network extension](#), and [\\$70 million to improve cycling infrastructure](#), including completion of Adelaide's Frome Street Bikeway and extending the Adelaide Hills' Amy Gillett Bikeway.



### Protecting the Bight

In February, I initiated a Senate Inquiry into BP's plans to drill in the Great Australian Bight. The Greens are deeply concerned about the implications of this plan for our beautiful marine life and tourism industry and do not believe this pristine environment should be put at risk for corporate profit. [Have you signed our petition to defend the Bight?](#) It will be a Greens priority to continue this inquiry once parliament resumes after the election. In the meantime, we call on BP to release its environmental plan to the public – which has already been rejected twice by the regulator NOPSEMA.



### No nuclear dump in SA

The Greens will continue to fight to stop SA becoming the world's largest nuclear waste dump, creating a costly and dangerous burden for future generations. In March I visited the region of the proposed dump site, meeting with concerned members of the community and traditional owners in Hawker to discuss the impact of the plans. [The Greens stand with the community in opposing this agenda.](#) The strong attendance at the 'Wrong Way for SA' community forum on 9 June, hosted by my state Greens parliamentary colleague Mark Parnell MLC, indicated the high level of concern about this issue. You can read more about the [Greens' nuclear policy on our website.](#)

## Marriage equality

In November I successfully moved a motion calling on Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to drop his plans for a costly and divisive plebiscite and give his members a free vote on the matter in the parliament. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister has still not taken action on this issue. We do not need to spend \$160 million on a plebiscite for marriage equality - we just need a vote in the parliament.

[Watch the Greens' video about standing up for LGBTI Australians.](#)

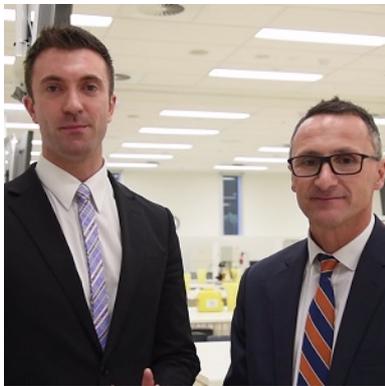
Like so many South Australians, I was appalled by the treatment of British man Marco Bulmer-Rizzi in early January. When his husband David tragically died in while the couple was in Adelaide on their honeymoon, Marco was denied next of kin status and David's death certificate read "never married". [I re-introduced a Bill into the Senate to recognise same-sex marriages performed overseas](#) which would ensure that such a tragedy could never happen again. The Greens will continue to fight for marriage equality and I am proud to fight for the rights of the LGBTI community in the Senate.



## Safe Schools

In March, after attacks on the Safe Schools program which is designed to make schools safer and more inclusive places, [I tabled two petitions totalling more than 70,000 signatures](#) in support of this important work. I have been a strong advocate for this issue in the parliament and have welcomed the opportunity to share the powerful stories of the many constituents who have written to me about this issue. In April, I convened a public meeting to discuss how we can further support the program.

The Greens recently announced our [policy to boost funding for Safe Schools](#) to see this made available throughout the country, and I will continue to advocate for the right of LGBTI young people to feel safe and supported at school.



## Equality for LGBTI Australians

The Greens' comprehensive LGBTI policy has been launched and is [available online](#). As well as marriage equality and Safe Schools, the Greens are standing up for greater access to the HIV preventative medication PrEP (which I announced with Greens leader Richard Di Natale at Melbourne's Doherty Institute last month – [watch the video here](#)), and the need to remove religious exemptions from anti-discrimination laws. I joined Radio National's Religion and Ethics Report to debate this latter issue, and you can [listen to the podcast here](#).



## Affordable education

As the Greens spokesperson for Higher Education, I've been proud to launch our Higher Education package, comprised of policies to support students and properly fund universities. In a nutshell, the Greens will push for:

- reducing students' HELP costs by 20%,
- reinstating the Student Start-Up Scholarships as a grant, not a loan attracting more debt,

- reversing the Coalition's harsh cuts and funding a 10% increase in base funding per student at public universities, and
- investing \$1.306 billion into research to reverse government cuts to our most successful university research.

We Greens see education as an investment, rather than a cost. You can read more about our higher education policies [on our website](#).

The Greens have also been advocating for increased investment in our schools and have been calling on the Government to commit to six years of Gonski funding to fund schools on the basis of need. Find out more at [www.greens.org.au/education-equality](http://www.greens.org.au/education-equality)



## Save TAFE

As Higher Education spokesperson I've also been working on saving our public TAFE (technical and further education) system, as recent stories of rorts by for-profit training providers have shown the VET (vocational education and training) sector is in desperate need of reform. This month the Greens announced we will urge the Federal Government to:

- cease providing federal government funds to for-profit VET providers,
- implement a TAFE federal rescue package which boosts funding by \$400 million a year, and
- establish a VET Ombudsman.

TAFE is a critical part of the Australian education system, with more than a million students enrolled across hundreds of campuses throughout the country. Our full policy document can be viewed at [www.greens.org.au/save-tafe](http://www.greens.org.au/save-tafe)



## Phasing out live animal exports

It was great to be joined by Greens spokesperson on Animal Welfare, Senator Lee Rhiannon, in Adelaide on 2 June to launch the Greens' plan to phase out live animal exports. Recent news reports of the treatment of animals exported from Australia have been harrowing and show that we must do more to ensure humane practices. Ending live animal export from Australia would not only see animals being treated better, but also boost jobs in our local chilled meat industry. [Read our plan here.](#)

Lee and I also held a public forum on animal rights with our state Greens colleague Tammy Franks MLC that evening,

which was very well attended. It was wonderful to see so many community members concerned about these important issues.



### **In the media: Raucous Caucus**

It was fun to be invited onto the pilot episode of Raucous Caucus, the new political game show series produced by Adelaide TV station Channel 44 – and great to support community broadcasting! [You can watch the episode here.](#) Future shows will be broadcast Thursdays at 7.30pm on Channel 44 on your TV, or via their [YouTube channel.](#)

### **In the community**

I've been enjoying attending a diverse range of public meetings and forums, hearing what fellow South Australians have to say on important issues, and sharing the Greens' vision for our state. These include the [Future Adelaide Forum](#) at the Jade in May, discussing a progressive vision for our capital city, and local community forums in Blackwood, St Morris, Mount Barker, McLaren Vale and Mylor. It was also fantastic to head out doorknocking on 21 May for the Greens' [National Day of Action on Marriage Equality](#), encountering overwhelming support for the Federal Parliament legislating for this important reform. Community organisations have also organised some passionate and thought-provoking events that it's been a pleasure to speak at, including [One Community's Education Funding Our Future forum](#), and the [Anti-Poverty Network's meeting](#) about unemployment and income support.

### **Out and about**

Some snapshots of the highlights of my travels around Adelaide and South Australia over the past several weeks...



1. Meeting Saied, owner of the lovely Safavi Cafe in Port Pirie – he is a refugee from Iran who has started a wonderful new life here in Australia
2. Touring the incredibly important Royal Flying Doctor Service in Port Augusta
3. Introducing Senator Scott Ludlam to some of our most passionate South Australian Greens members
4. Touring solar panel manufacturer Tindo in Mawson Lakes with my Greens colleagues Richard Di Natale and Sarah Hanson-Young



5. Visiting the Paris Creek Biodynamic-Organic Farm in the Adelaide Hills – delicious!
6. Meeting with the inspirational Benny Wenda of the Australia West Papua Association
7. Attending the Feast Festival quiz night with Greens MLC Tammy Franks
8. Showing Greens leader Senator Richard Di Natale around Adelaide’s Central Market with my fellow SA Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young
9. Visiting health organisation SAMESH in Adelaide to talk about the importance of access to PrEP.

## Stay in touch

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