

SA GREENS

2023-24 STATE BUDGET

SUBMISSION



THE SA GREENS' PLAN FOR THE 2023-24 STATE BUDGET

The cost of living is skyrocketing out of control and more South Australians are struggling to make ends meet than ever before.

Inflation is seeing soaring prices for food, groceries, energy, housing, fuel, and other essentials. Meanwhile some of our state's biggest corporations are continuing to make record profits.

The Greens have a plan to tackle the cost-of-living crisis, providing relief to South Australians who are struggling while boosting protection for our natural environment.



Robert Simms and Tammy Franks, SA Greens MLCs.

Tackling the Housing Crisis

South Australia is in the middle of a full-blown housing crisis. While thousands remain on the waitlist for social housing, rent prices have continued to spiral out of control. The Government must urgently invest in public housing and cap rents so that more South Australians are not plunged into poverty and homelessness.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Boost public housing by building 10,000 public homes over the next year.
- Cap the number of nights a property can be listed on short stay rentals and offer incentives to encourage more properties into the long-term rental market.
- Establish minimum energy efficiency standards for private and public rental properties and mandatory disclosure of energy efficiency ratings for all rental properties.
- Freeze rent increases for 2 years and cap future rental increases to 2% every two years after that.
- Increase the Cost of Living concession for renters to the same level as homeowners.
- Lift the eligibility for the Cost of Living Concession so that it is in line with the threshold for the Low Income Health Care Card, and introduce a partial concession for low-income earners in share housing.
- Increase annual funding support for Foodbank SA to \$1.2 million, enabling it to reduce the growing level of food insecurity in South Australia.
- Establish an independent advocacy body for renters funded by interest on bond money held by the Government.



Protecting our Environment

If we protect our environment, we will ensure a strong and sustainable future for our state. We can create jobs, benefit our environment, and tackle the impact of the climate crisis by investing in projects to help national parks deal with invasive species, repair our sensitive coastal areas, increase tree cover in our cities and suburbs, and support bushfire recovery.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Initiate a 10-year program to plant 2.5 million trees throughout Adelaide and regional centres to mitigate rising local temperatures, allow native wildlife to return, reduce energy costs for residents and businesses, and improve local amenity.
- Create a Disaster Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund with an initial investment of \$1.25 million.
- Fund a long-term plan to restore the damaged St Kilda samphire, salt marsh and mangroves.
- Fund a strategy to protect coastal communities and beaches from storm surges and sea level rise.
- Make cigarette companies responsible for cleaning up toxic and hazardous cigarette waste and charge a fine for those that don't comply.



Reducing Power Prices

With so many South Australians struggling with the rising cost of living, any increase in energy prices will hit hard. It's vital the Government acts now. Restoring the rebates axed in the previous budget and increasing funding for energy concessions would provide significant relief to consumers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Establish a commission of inquiry to examine how to re-establish ETSA as a publicly owned statutory authority to deliver lower energy prices.
- Increase energy concession expenditure by 50% and pay concessions as a percentage of household energy bills, instead of the current flat rate.
- Restore funding to the Grid Scale Storage Scheme and Home Battery Scheme, targeted at renters and low-income earners.
- Provide rebates to support homeowners and renters to replace old gas appliances with new energy-efficient, electric ones.



Promoting Healthy Communities

Decades of successive Government failure to properly invest in healthcare means our emergency departments are regularly overwhelmed and people are missing out on the urgent care they need. There are many strategies for ending ramping in our state, and the Government must act with urgency to protect our community and our health workers. Preventive measures will help people live long and healthy lives regardless of their income or postcode.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Establish minimum nurse/midwife to patient ratios to ensure the safest quality of care for every patient in the SA public hospital system.
- Provide a bonus of \$3,000 to all nurses and paramedics working in the public health system to act as an incentive to stay.
- Provide free paramedic services for those on the aged pension, JobSeeker and very low incomes.
- Commit a minimum 5% of ongoing health expenditure towards disease prevention and health promotion.
- Provide free flu vaccinations for all South Australians.
- Increase funding and provide funding certainty for community sector delivery of mental health services, including Mental Health Clubhouses.
- Run a 12-month trial of a fixed-site pill and drug testing clinic and pop-up pill testing at music festivals as part of a harm minimisation approach to drugs.
- Provide funding to enable online access to abortion consultations.
- Include Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation as a treatment option in our public health system.
- Legalise and regulate cannabis. Invest tax revenue into the health system, including drug rehabilitation and harm reduction programs.

Making Public Education Free

Public education should be free, but last year South Australian parents had to pay hundreds of dollars in public school fees. Scrapping school fees and introducing a free school lunches and breakfast plan would reduce pressure on parents, improve learning outcomes and ensure that every South Australian child receives the education they deserve.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Increase the South Australian Government's share of the School Resource Standard funding from 75% to 80% for public schools.
- Abolish Materials and Services charges and other subject fees for parents.
- Introduce a universal, free healthy breakfast and lunch program in every public primary and secondary school in South Australia.
- Establish a \$102 million fund for state schools to upgrade infrastructure where needed to accommodate the breakfast and lunch program including kitchen facilities and eating areas.



Getting SA Moving

For too long, our state governments have been addicted to roads and ribbon cutting, often at the expense of cheaper public transport and active transport solutions that are better for people and the planet. Investing in public transport and active transport will reduce traffic, get us where we want to go faster, and cost less.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Invest \$54.17 million to make public transport free for the next 6 months to provide relief from soaring petrol prices.
- Invest \$250 million this year into a Public Transport Expansion Fund to upgrade and expand the SA public transport system, including the Adelaide Hills and regions.
- Bring bus services back into public hands and invest in 1000 new electric buses, to be manufactured in northern Adelaide and incorporated into the Adelaide Metro fleet.
- Activate the regional rail network and trial passenger train services from Mount Barker to Adelaide in the next 12 months.
- Allocate an additional \$5 million this year to the State Bike Fund to improve cycling infrastructure.
- Establish a Walking and Cycling Commissioner to encourage walking and cycling as modes of travel and prepare and promote strategies to make walking and cycling inclusive for all South Australians.



First Nations Justice

This year, South Australia made history by establishing a First Nations Voice to State Parliament. SA's journey to reconciliation must continue by exploring and reckoning with our past and the impact it continues to have on First Nations people and their cultures, and by supporting First Nations people to use their science, knowledge, and culture to care for and manage Country as they have done for thousands of years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Urgently provide a grant to the State Library to fund the digitisation of Aboriginal state archives and support self-determination by improving access for community members.
- Create a dedicated SA Indigenous Ranger community-based program to develop and support land and sea management in the state, utilising \$746 million in federal funding. Provide 50 full-time equivalent jobs for Aboriginal people and commit to \$20 million to fund wages, equipment, support staff and training.
- Establish a Truth and Justice Commission to investigate and reveal historic and ongoing human rights abuses, wrongdoing, and provide recommendations on how to heal from them.



Supporting Creative Industries and the Arts

Creative industries and the arts are a key part of South Australia's identity and an important part of our state's economy. Tens of thousands of visitors come to SA every year to attend our festivals, theatres, music events and more. But arts organisations struggle with funding uncertainties, and artists are leaving the sector because it's too hard to make ends meet. It's time to treat the arts as a public good, matched by public funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Establish a Living Wage for SA Artists pilot program to give artists a stable foundation to develop, create and innovate, and develop a scheme to give artists and arts workers the same rights as other casual and contract workers.
- Develop a program to provide free tickets for people on low incomes to attend South Australian productions and events to support local artists.
- Establish the Adelaide College of the Arts as a standalone entity and boost its funding.



Improve Animal Welfare in Our State

South Australia's animal welfare laws are currently some of the weakest in the nation. The State Government must ensure that we properly care for animals and shutdown harmful industries like factory farming and gambling-fueled commercial racing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Establish an Independent Office of Animal Welfare with responsibility for advising on strong standards for animal welfare and protection issues.
- Fund free de-sexing programs for cats to reduce shelter intake, overpopulation, and strain on shelter workers and volunteers.
- Introduce a levy of 1% of betting turnover related to commercial horse and greyhound racing to finance transition activities, including retraining programs for workers, re-homing schemes for animals, and redeveloping racecourses.
- End the cruel practice of factory farming and ensure that every worker is supported in a transition to a more humane industry.



Making Big Corporations Pay Their Fair Share and Cracking Down on Land-banking

While South Australia is in the grip of a cost-of-living crisis and people are doing it tougher than ever, developers, big corporations, and mining companies are making massive profits and fuelling inflation. It's time for them to pay their fair share so that we can fund the world class public services that we deserve.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Implement a tax to be applied on residential properties that have been left vacant for more than 12 months without reason.
- Make developers pay their fair share in tax with a 75% Developer Tax on land value gains from rezoning, discourage useless and parasitic land speculation.
- Impose a state-based Big Bank Levy, like the one proposed by Labor in 2017, of 0.05% of total liabilities per quarter on the five biggest banks operating in South Australia.
- Raise the refined mineral and mineral ore/concentrate royalty rates to 20% of the value of the resources.
- Raise the petroleum royalty rate to 25% of the wellhead value of the petroleum.
- Establish a Covid Recovery Levy by introducing an increase in land tax for those who own multiple investment properties and an increase in payroll tax for big businesses.

