

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The Greens (WA) acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the original inhabitants of this country, have a special cultural and spiritual connection with the land and water. We believe that their rights and responsibilities as owners and custodians must be respected. We hold that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a right to self-determination and political representation, and must be partners in the development and implementation of public policies, programs and services that affect them.

The Greens (WA) hold that all Australians, including those living in remote communities, have a right to essential government services including health, education, training, housing, community infrastructure, employment support and policing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should have the same life expectancy and living standards as all Australians.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- recognition, promotion and protection of the rights and freedoms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- cooperation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to ensure that the West Australian government complies with and effectively implements its obligations to them

Measures

The Greens (WA) will seek to address the failure of successive State and Federal governments to achieve equity between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in Australia. We will work to promote policies that guarantee the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to self-determination by legislation and actions that:

- ensure that obligations towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples arising from international treaties and conventions on human rights¹ are fulfilled at every level of decision-making
- recognise the prior and ongoing occupation and sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their right to land, water and resources
- seek to adopt a treaty or treaties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which enforces their right to self-determination and autonomy
- implement, in both spirit and letter, the recommendations of, but not limited to:
 - The 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
 - ‘Putting the Picture Together’ 2002 (the Gordon report)
 - ‘Bringing Them Home’ Report 1997 (Stolen Generation)
 - The Elder’s Report into Preventing Indigenous Self-harm and Youth Suicide 2014

- The Aboriginal Customary Laws Final Report of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia 2006
 - Hard Labour, Stolen Wages: National report on stolen wages 2007
 - Kimberley Appropriate Economies Roundtable Forum 2005
- close the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other West Australians and ensure community owned health services are central to the delivery of health services (see also The Greens (WA) [Health](#) policy)
- work to reduce the unacceptable rate of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including implementing the concept of justice reinvestment (see also The Greens (WA) [Justice](#) policy)
- implement a compulsory 24-hour Custody Notification Service for Aboriginal people in Western Australia
- change, and where necessary remove, laws and policies so that they no longer disproportionately impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (such as the Northbridge Curfew and mandatory sentencing of young people)
- facilitate greater representation for Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander peoples through the establishment of a treaty or treaties
- ensure that Aboriginal communities are not forcibly closed nor residents relocated without their free, prior and informed consent
- ensure that Aboriginal peoples are not deterred from living in their communities due to the inadequate provision of municipal and essential services to which they, and all West Australians, are entitled
- require Western Australia's Auditor General to audit the performance of Government agencies responsible for service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples communities every three years and provides additional resources to achieve this
- facilitate locally run, community driven and culturally-appropriate programs to address issues such as deaths in custody, domestic violence, substance abuse, suicide and the stolen generations
- seek to oppose any changes to the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 that diminish the rights of Aboriginal people to protect and preserve their cultural heritage
- replace the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 with contemporary legislation to reflect the true significance and importance of Aboriginal heritage
- ensure the return of items of cultural heritage to the rightful owners and custodians (see also The Greens (WA) [Arts & Culture](#) policy)
- prohibit the manufacture and sale of items purporting to be of Aboriginal Heritage nature
- secure World Heritage Listing for Murujuga (the Burrup Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago)
- legislate for a state based regulator of Aboriginal corporations with a capacity to investigate and advise on governance issues

(See also the [Australian Greens Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) policy)

Footnotes

1. These treaties include:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

- The International Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples policy ratified by The Greens
(WA) in 2017**