

The Greens (WA) 2017 policy

Air Pollution

The Greens (WA) recognise the concerns of the community regarding air pollution and are committed to solving this problem. The topography of the Perth metro area makes it particularly susceptible to air quality issues. Air quality issues also impact a number of regional centres. Poor air quality can damage lung and bronchial tissue, cause eye irritation, coughs, headaches and respiratory illness, increase asthma and cause cancers.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- continuous ambient air monitoring for all air toxins and pollutants identified under Perth's Air Quality Management Plan (July 2000), including local and regional locations considered as being at risk
- Independent ambient air monitoring with all data made publicly available
- improved regulatory control of industrial emissions monitoring and regular auditing as required
- all emitting industries to implement Management Plans which have been approved by a peer review process and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), through enforced licence conditions
- all new industrial proposals that have the potential to impact air quality to conduct health impact assessments in conjunction with environmental impact assessments
- industry licences to demonstrate use of world best practice technology for treatment of emissions and programs for environmental audits

Measures

The Greens (WA) will initiate and support legislation and actions that:

- immediately implement all recommendations of the Perth Air Quality Management Plan (July 2000)
- develop and implement air quality management plans for regional areas
- provide improved public notification of imminent air pollution events
- increase the use of clean renewable energy sources, including solar power and wind generation (see also The Greens (WA) [Energy Policy](#))
- support legislation similar to the New South Wales Clean Air (Control of Burning) Regulations 1995 to restrict open fire burning
- review controlled burn practices
- facilitate the uptake of non-polluting transport, including electric vehicles, cycling and walking
- provide cheap, accessible and zero-emissions public transport (see also The Greens (WA) [Transport Policy](#))

Background

Perth already has significant air pollution from photochemical smog, haze and other chemicals. As of 1998 carbon monoxide, nitrous oxide, photochemical oxidants, sulphur dioxide and particulates have all exceeded national guidelines for the protection of public health.

The two major contributors to air pollution are vehicles and industrial emissions. In particular, cars generate about 90% of carbon monoxide and industry generates the majority of reactive organic compounds, sulphur dioxide and particulates.

The decline in Perth's air quality has become a major environmental health issue. The Perth community has responded overwhelmingly in favour of a full, integrated approach to bring about an immediate reversal of air quality decline.

The effects of particle exposure on health, including respiratory symptoms, show the smallest particles, particulate matter (PM) 2.5, are the most damaging. Many PM 2.5 particles are produced during coal-fired power generation (Source: William M. Castleden, David Shearman, George Crisp and Philip Finch, 'The Mining and Burning of Coal: Effects on Health and the Environment.' MJA 195 (6) 19 September 2011).

Air Pollution policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017