

## The Greens (WA) 2017 policy

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### Alcohol & Other Drugs

The use of both legal and illegal drugs may harm individual users, their families and the community.

Tobacco smoking is the single largest cause of preventable death and disease in Australia. Risky alcohol use is second only to tobacco as a preventable cause of death and hospitalisation and plays a significant role in a wide range of social problems including road crashes, crime and violence.

The current punitive model is failing to reduce harm resulting from illicit drug use, so The Greens (WA) recommend the decriminalisation<sup>1</sup> (as distinct from legalisation) of personal drug use.

The Greens (WA) believe in an approach that is evidence-based and seeks to prevent and minimise harm as the most effective way to manage these issues, irrespective of whether the drugs are legal or illegal. This approach should accord with the recommendations of the Global Commission on Drugs Policy\* and robust scientific evidence.

### Aims

*The Greens (WA) want:*

- to prevent and reduce harmful drug use and drug-related deaths, disease, crime and corruption
- regulations to prevent and reduce alcohol and tobacco related harm
- decriminalisation<sup>1</sup> of currently prohibited drugs with criminal sanctions reserved for manufacture, sale and supply of currently prohibited drugs
- increased resources for drug education programs (See also The Greens (WA) [Justice](#) policy)
- increased resources for harm minimisation programs
- continued support for proven programs in reducing drug related harm such as needle and syringe exchange programs and substitution therapies
- significantly expanded programs for people with mental health issues along with co-existing alcohol or drug abuse problems (See also The Greens (WA) [Mental Health](#) Policy)
- increased attention given to legal and illegal drug use among marginalised and/or disadvantaged populations
- recognition that the current approach to alcohol and drugs contributes to excessive imprisonment rates, especially for Indigenous Australians (See also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) policy)

### Measures

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

- commit substantial resources to evidence based public and community education on tobacco use and alcohol, illegal drug and pharmaceutical drug misuse
- ensure that all local communities have drug education information kits in their public libraries and community centres (See also The Greens (WA) [Local Government](#) policy)
- support special initiatives for young people to prevent and delay onset of substance use (See also The Greens (WA) [Youth](#) policy)
- ensure drug and alcohol education becomes a mandatory part of the curriculum in all schools (See also The Greens (WA) [Education](#) policy)
- provide more drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres
- ban donations from alcohol, tobacco, and pharmaceutical industries to all levels of government
- index funding to the health sector for substance use prevention and treatment programs, so that funding levels keep pace with the increased cost of services and need (See also The Greens (WA) [Health](#) policy)
- increase access to suitable training for health professionals to increase their understanding of social and cultural determinants of Indigenous health and substance use

### **Currently Illegal Drugs**

- decriminalise<sup>1</sup> the use and possession of currently prohibited drugs so that users do not face criminal sanctions
- apply criminal sanctions for the manufacture, sale and supply of currently prohibited drugs
- allow cannabis to be regulated and prescribed for medicinal purposes
- increase government funding to provide easily accessible and sensitive counselling and treatment programs with adequate follow-up for drug users and affected family members
- provide adequate support for families of people undergoing drug treatment and/or rehabilitation
- increase funding for programs for drug dependent persons released from prison, to assist their wellbeing and re-integration into society
- expand availability of needle exchange and safe disposal programs to all regional areas and prisons
- introduce medically supervised injecting centres in suitable locations in metropolitan and regional centres
- support opioid substitution therapy programs

### **Alcohol**

- maintain bans on advertising and promotion of alcohol products, particularly at times and places available to young people
- ensure interventions and programs for Aboriginal communities recognise social and cultural considerations (See also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) policy)
- adequate treatment resources for alcohol related crime, including treatment in prison (See also The Greens (WA) [Justice](#) policy)
- adequately fund an independent regulator of liquor licensing and alcohol sales

- enhance the capacity of local communities to have input to liquor licensing decisions including the number of outlets in their area
- improve enforcement of the responsible service of alcohol
- introduce a minimum floor price to prevent excessive consumption of very low priced alcohol
- increase excises and other taxes on alcohol in proportion to the alcohol content of beverages (a tiered volumetric tax), and use the money raised for alcohol-related health care and health promotion programs
- phase out the sponsorship of sporting bodies by alcohol companies and provide additional funds to organisations such as Healthway to provide alternative sponsorship
- continue the testing of blood alcohol concentrations in drivers, with strong penalties for driving over the limit

### **Tobacco**

- increase the accessibility of Quitline services, culturally secure tobacco cessation programs and nicotine replacement therapy
- maintain regulatory measures to ensure all people are protected from exposure to tobacco smoke in all public and work environments (See also The Greens (WA) [Workplace Relations](#) policy)
- maintain bans on advertising and promotion of tobacco products so that the bans are complete and comprehensive
- ensure regular and substantial increases to the taxation on tobacco products and with a specific percentage of this tax used to fund tobacco control and health promotion activities

### **Other Drugs**

- support a review of prescribing and regulatory processes to ensure that oversupply and abuse of prescription medication is minimised
- ensure mandatory labelling and verbal advice by doctors as to the effects and potential for dependence on prescribed drugs
- recognise that volatile substances<sup>2</sup>, such as spray-paint, can be used as drugs and that their sale should be regulated
- continue support for the comprehensive roll out of non-sniffable fuel, or conversion of entire communities to diesel or electric vehicles only, throughout regions in Western Australia where petrol sniffing and trafficking is a problem

(See also the [Australian Greens Drugs, Substance Abuse & Addiction](#) policy)

### **Glossary**

1. While **decriminalised** acts are no longer crimes, they may still be the subject of penalties; for example a monetary fine in place of a criminal charge for the possession of a decriminalized drug. This should be contrasted with **legalisation**, which removes all or most legal detriments from a previously illegal act

2. **Volatile substance** use is the deliberate inhalation of substances, which produce a vapour or gas at room temperature, for their intoxicating effects. It is commonly also referred to as 'sniffing', 'solvent use' or 'inhalant use'

### **Footnote**

\* <http://www.gcdpsummary2014.com/#foreword-from-the-chair>

**Alcohol & Other Drugs policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017**