

### Health

The Greens (WA) believe that access to a comprehensive, high quality health care system is a basic human right, and that a public health system is the best way to deliver health services. Governments are responsible for ensuring that all people have access to the resources and opportunities essential for good health. Health service provision should be equitable, socially just and responsive to changing needs. Individual health outcomes are influenced by biological, social, economic and environmental factors and these must be addressed as part of a comprehensive health care system.

The Greens (WA) endorse the World Health Organisation definition of health as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity and therefore seek a holistic approach to health that includes an emphasis on disease prevention, health promotion and social and environmental determinants of health.

#### **Aims**

*The Greens (WA) want:*

- a universal public health care system that ensures access and equity for all Western Australians
- healthcare available to all, free at the point of delivery and funded through progressive<sup>1</sup> general taxation
- healthcare provision to be based on the needs of the population, which should be determined independently of the providers of health care
- essential non-acute needs being met in the community, along with increased an increased emphasis on health promotion, illness prevention and early diagnosis
- a focus on primary care for health that addresses social and environmental determinants of health
- full provision of government funded public dental services based on need
- the provision of integrated publicly funded community-based mental health services (see also The Greens (WA) [Mental Health](#) policy)
- all current and future public hospital developments being publicly owned
- effective home-based health care support, especially for the elderly and those with a disability, being fully available to all who require it (see also The Greens (WA) [Seniors](#) policy)
- an integrated whole-of-government approach to good health, by co-ordinating activities in related portfolios
- neighbourhood-level planning and policy development for community health services
- a skilled, well-resourced health workforce who are included in policy development and planning
- effective community participation in all health decision-making, planning and implementation

- funding to be directed to priority health areas without duplication, gaps or unnecessary bureaucracy
- substantially quicker access and improved health care provision for young children, recognising that their needs are always urgent, and meeting those needs earlier will have a flow on effect for the future of our society
- all Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people to have easy access to affordable and culturally appropriate comprehensive primary health care (see also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander](#) policy)
- to address pressing health problems, including hospital waiting lists, deficiencies in rural health services, dental health, mental health, substance abuse and the poor health and reduced lifespan of Aboriginal peoples and socio-economically disadvantaged people
- planning for increased pressures on the health system due to climate change, international food shortages and economic instability

### **Measures**

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

#### Primary Health Care, Allied and Community Health

- review health priorities and funding allocation to ensure a focus on primary health care
- ensure the provision of allied health professionals to communities and suburbs according to needs
- establish primary health care centres with multidisciplinary teams
- provide incentives to encourage the co-location of GPs in community health centres
- develop a code of practice for the provision of health information
- substantially increase funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary care for health, particularly for community controlled care (see also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander](#) policy)
- ensure increased funding for public emergency dental services and preventive dental health programs
- increase access to dental services for those who are at a higher risk of poor dental health and fund targeted initiatives for those most in need
- establish a holistic cancer control plan to provide timely and efficient access to all treatment modalities, especially radiotherapy and palliative care
- ensure adequate funding for health care services in rural and regional areas

#### Public Hospital Services

- reduce emergency department and out patient waiting times
- ensure universal access to public hospitals is based on need rather than health insurance status
- develop new programs to address the needs of patients with complex psychosocial needs who currently use emergency systems heavily as centres of last resort
- improve linkages between hospitals and community-based services, especially in relation to hospital discharge and prevention of avoidable admissions

- increase the number of outpatient services offered through public hospitals, especially in rural areas
- ensure public ownership of all current and future public hospital developments, including the provision of services within those developments
- ensure that public hospital services are delivered as close as possible to the communities they serve
- strengthen the primary care sector so that it can more effectively provide care and support to people in their homes
- ensure appropriate planning is conducted for the provision of expensive facilities and equipment to service populations large enough to justify their use
- improve the process of review and accountability in hospital care and medical practice
- require hospitals to cater for the needs of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity<sup>2</sup> sufferers

### Population Health

- substantially increase the funding for prevention of illness, health promotion initiatives and early intervention
- explicitly recognise the role of local government and require the development of state and local public health plans
- integrate health considerations into all government policy and planning using a partnership model such as the Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach in South Australia
- establish a Health Impact Assessment process for all major planning and industrial developments to run parallel with the current Environmental Impact Assessment process
- establish partnerships with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) to develop programs that support and encourage local councils to adopt Healthy Spaces and Places planning guidelines (see also The Greens (WA) [Local Government](#) policy)
- increase funding for a variety of structured school, work and community-based physical activity programs, and promote the importance of incidental activity
- support the education sector to encourage all schools to develop, implement and evaluate health, nutrition and physical activity policies (see also The Greens (WA) [Education](#) policy)
- expand the coverage of out-of-school-care health programs such as Active After School and Eat Smart, Play Smart
- ensure that physical activity and healthy food choices are a recognised part of Occupational Health and Safety policies
- encourage and, where necessary, require all food services in hospitals, schools, universities and child care centres to offer a variety of healthy food choices
- develop a state-based integrated whole of government food policy (see also The Greens (WA) [Food](#) Policy)
- restrict the sponsorship of sporting bodies by fast food and alcohol companies and provide additional funds to organisations such as Healthway to provide alternative sponsorship opportunities

- implement a comprehensive approach to addressing tobacco, alcohol and other drug use and their related harms (see also The Greens (WA) [Alcohol & Other Drugs](#) Policy)
- ensure ongoing funding and support for HIV prevention informed by the National HIV Strategy and maintain the strong partnership between the health sector, affected communities, decision makers and researchers that is central to an effective HIV response
- recognise diseases such as Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) and other chemical injuries both medically and legally
- adequately resource the Department of Health's Environmental Health Division
- provide preventative public health measures that will enhance environmental health quality in Western Australia
- establish a management plan for the health risks posed by climate change (see also The Greens (WA) [Climate Change & Energy](#) policy)
- support everyone being registered for organ donation unless they choose to opt out
- promote the importance of healthy lifestyle choices to the general population and to specific target groups where appropriate
- fund, implement and promote effective and relevant strategies and programs to address specific issues experienced by people in low-income communities
- substantially improve essential services such as access to safe water, all-weather access, adequate waste disposal and electricity, and fresh nutritious food in remote communities up to the standard expected by the wider community
- address self-determination, land rights and economic development as essential prerequisites to improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

### Maternal and Child Health

- substantially speed up access and improve health care provision for young children, recognising that their needs are always urgent, and meeting those needs will have a flow on effect for the future of our society (see also The Greens (WA) [Children](#) policy)
- increase funding for primary maternal health care with the aim of reducing interventions in labour, including induction, instrumental and Caesarean deliveries (see also The Greens (WA) [Women](#) policy)
- ensure interventions in labour are in line with best international evidence and practice
- increase midwife-based birthing services and women-centred services, and improving continuity of culturally secure maternity care in all public hospitals
- increase breastfeeding programs based on women's needs and experiences, free from the influence of commercial interests
- encourage flexible work policies that enable mothers to breastfeed
- expand maternal and child health and early childhood services
- protect the rights of women to access the ongoing provision of medical services for the prevention and termination of pregnancy
- increase post-natal services, especially for women experiencing post-natal mental health issues

- provide programs in hospitals and the community for birthing and parenting designed for women at risk
- increase funding for education and programs that promote the benefits of mass immunisation

### Workforce Development and Community Participation

- increase resources for the training of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander health professionals
- review and implement effective measures to attract health professionals to rural and remote areas
- provide improved career structure and conditions to retain nurses, midwives, doctors and allied health professionals in the public health system
- invest in comprehensive public oral health workforce development initiatives, including the development of a workforce strategy
- increase the number of TAFE places for dental health technicians
- increase training of Australian graduates, in order to provide more doctors, nurses and health care professionals
- maintain the independence of public research and ensure priorities are focused on need rather than commercial return
- require environmental health education and training for the medical profession
- increase funding for those health consumer organisations that assist consumers to participate fully in decisions about health care and health resource allocations

*The Greens (WA) will support and advocate for Federal legislation and actions that:*

- improve Medicare and increase public health funding
- redirect existing subsidies of private health insurance to the public health system
- support the increased presence of patient and community representative on the governing councils of local health networks
- develop improved accommodation options for young people in aged care facilities
- implement accreditation standards for non-traditional practitioners and medicines, and establishing registers, professional conduct standards and complaints mechanisms for all therapeutic practitioners
- establish a multi-disciplinary group to investigate alternative therapies for safety and efficacy, and consider public funding for those therapies that are found to be safe and effective in order to give consumers more choice

(see also the Australian Greens [Health](#) policy)

### **Glossary**

1. **Progressive taxation** – personal income tax, where people with more income pay a higher percentage of that income in tax than do those with less income.
2. **Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)** is a chronic medical condition attributed to low-level chemical exposure to substances such as smoke,

pesticides, plastics, synthetic fabrics, scented products, petroleum products, and paint fumes.

**Health policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017**