

The Greens (WA) 2017 policy

Urban Forest

Urban forest is bushland remaining in the built up areas of our towns and cities and in areas influenced by, or likely to be influenced by, urbanisation. These precious areas of bush are irreplaceable, and have many environmental and social functions. The flora and fauna of our region are recognised as some of the most diverse in the world, with many endemic species. To keep this biodiversity we must protect our remaining bushland and wetlands and ensure they are properly managed for conservation.

Western Australia's population is heavily concentrated in the South-West, an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot. We have pockets of significant native bushland occurring throughout our urban areas that provide valuable habitat and protection to our many endemic and localised species.

The Greens believe that:

- urban bushland provides many valuable environmental and social functions
- Western Australia's unique urban bushland should be protected from inappropriate development and managed for the conservation of its natural heritage
- nationally significant, regionally significant and locally significant areas of urban bushland should be connected via ecological linkages
- tree canopy cover in urban areas has significant environmental, social and economic benefits and is at risk of loss due to poor planning

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- significant urban bushland to be identified and protected
- education and information about urban bushland to be accessible to the community
- strong and effective clearing controls which preserve Banksia woodlands and Carnaby's Cockatoo habitat (see also The Greens (WA) [Biodiversity](#) policy)
- effective management of significant urban bushland areas to protect the habitat of Western Australian native fauna and control invasive weeds
- Western Australia's ecological linkages and green corridors to be identified and maintained or restored
- tree canopy cover in urban areas to be doubled by 2030, to cool our urban spaces and provide cleaner air (see also The Greens (WA) [Climate Change](#) policy)

Measures

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

- recognise and protect all areas of regionally significant bushland

- fully and fairly fund the acquisition and ongoing management of all Bush Forever¹ areas and significant urban bushland
- give Regional Parks legal status under the Conservation and Land Management Act
- create financial and other incentives to protect bushland, wetlands and groundwater catchments in private ownership (see also The Greens (WA) [Water](#) policy)
- recognise the environmental and social importance of urban bushland when developing land (see also The Greens (WA) [Sustainable Settlements](#) policy)
- put strong controls on sites with high risk of acid sulphate soils including a prohibition on dewatering such sites
- put strong controls on clearing new areas of bushland in urban areas
- strongly promote the outstanding natural heritage values of our unique bushland and especially our ancient Banksia woodlands
- raise public awareness of the biodiversity and human health values of urban bushland
- provide increased, consistent support for community participation in management of bushland and wetland areas (see also The Greens (WA) [Wetlands](#) policy)
- ensure that bushland is managed for its natural attributes and social benefits
- recognise and address the specific risks to bushland which is located in close proximity to urban areas
- introduce an effective regulation for the control of environmental weeds under the new Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act
- map, regulate and monitor regional-level ecological corridors² and develop staged and funded programs to restore/enhance these corridors
- support local governments in developing and protecting local ecological corridors.
- facilitate statutory processes for the protection and enhancement of these linkages
- establish a State-wide Urban Forest Strategy and funding program
- support local governments in developing local Urban Forest Strategies with detailed tree and vegetation canopy targets

Glossary

1. [Bush Forever](#) - regionally significant areas of bushland that contains natural vegetation and provides the necessary habitat for native fauna.
2. **Ecological corridor** - a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joins two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat. Corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable population.

Urban Forest policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017