

The Greens (WA) 2017 policy

Housing

The Greens (WA) believe that:

- housing is a basic human right
- everyone should have access to appropriate, safe, secure, sustainable and affordable housing
- housing should be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable
- public participation in the development and ongoing review of the state affordable housing strategy is a right

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- all Australians to have access to adequate, safe, secure and affordable housing¹
- the housing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to be met as a matter of urgency and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have access to adequate, secure, well-maintained, safe and culturally appropriate long-term housing, wherever they live (see also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander](#) policy)
- elimination of housing-related poverty
- increased government investment in public and social housing²
- housing affordability to be measured to account for the full cost of living in a particular place, including energy and transport costs
- local and State planning rules to ensure that affordable housing is available close to jobs, schools and other essential services
- increased infill targets to provide sustainable, high quality, higher density housing along public transport corridors with strong governance and design frameworks in place to transform these corridors back to 'high streets' which are attractive options for people to live and work in
- improved legal security of tenure and an end to discrimination
- housing incentives and subsidies to deliver improved access to affordable housing for lower income households, and reduced competition between home buyers and speculative investors.
- introduction of minimum standards in tenancy law to ensure public and private renters enjoy greater rights, comfort, physical security, and sustainability such as water and energy efficiency
- reduction in the total environmental impact of housing, during construction, throughout the life of the building and in demolition and rebuilding
- revenue generated through the sale of public housing to be reinvested into increasing the supply of new public housing

Measures

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

Planning & Design

- develop a state housing plan, including increased government investment in public and social housing, with targets set appropriate to each locality and at an average of 8% across Western Australia by 2020
- require new residential developments of more than 10 lots to provide a mix of housing for rental, purchase and other models including at least 25% affordable housing, through use of caveats on titles and Council policies for Residential Design
- introduce enabling legislation for inclusionary zoning³ that can require percentage targets for affordable and social housing stock and mandated minimum water and energy efficiency standards in all new developments
- review the provisions of the Building Code of Australia (BCA), Western Australian Residential Design Codes and the WA Town Planning and Development Act to reduce barriers to medium-density and mixed-use developments in transport and amenity-rich areas, particularly for older Australians, singles and other people with special needs
- increase developer contributions for new urban-fringe developments, re-directing government expenditure to support well-located, high-quality infill development
- support the development of housing precincts on infill land, with a substantial allocation of the areas identified to be reserved for the construction of affordable housing priced at levels accessible to lower income-earners (see also [Transforming Perth](#))
- locate new public housing⁴ close to employment, transport and other services
- include the promotion, assessment and implementation of affordable, sustainable development models in the key objectives of the Department of Housing and Works and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure

Appropriate Social Housing

- support the community housing⁵ sector, including a review of relationships between providers and the Department of Housing
- provide incentives for the community housing sector and other developers to produce more appropriate housing to meet the future needs of an increasing number of older Australians. This includes developments that facilitate ‘ageing in place’ (see also The Greens (WA) [Seniors](#) policy)
- review the targeting of public housing to consider how a wider spread of tenants might contribute to the longer term sustainability and social integration of an expanded investment in public housing
- promote action by not-for-profit community housing organisations to provide better tenancy and support services to public housing clients
- set appropriate and detailed targets for social housing, including culturally appropriate housing, diverse dwelling types for people with special needs and a social mix, in all Local Government Areas (LGAs)
- ensure the adoption by the Housing Authority of a supportive housing policy to ensure people living in public housing, many of whom have complex needs, but are also provided with ‘wrap-around’ services relevant to their situation, including disability, child support, aged care specialist services, mental health, and home maintenance; and also have housing appropriate to their needs
- retrofit all public housing to improve energy and water efficiency and insulation (see also The Greens (WA) [Energy](#) and [Water](#) policies)

- provide all public housing with adequate personal safety and security, such as security screens on doors and windows.

Affordable Housing

- require a minimum target of 50% affordable housing on LandCorp developments
- eliminate the tax bias towards investment in property by working with the federal government to implement the housing-related recommendations of the Henry Tax Review
- improve the fairness and effectiveness of the tax system by reviewing all property-related taxes and concessions, such as stamp duty, GST, the First Home Owners Grant and land tax so as to achieve the objectives of this policy
- ensure that Government concessions and subsidies for housing only apply to the supply of new affordable housing and ensure that those which simply encourage demand, speculation, or investment in property as a form of asset are phased out
- phase out stamp duty on housing and replace it with a fairer, low level and broad based land tax, working in collaboration with the federal government to ensure its introduction is fair and revenue neutral
- investigate and phase out subsidies and concessions which encourage owners of empty properties to keep them vacant
- urgently review the fairness and effectiveness of government subsidies which stimulate demand for housing such as the First Home Owners Grant
- reduce legislative, regulatory and other barriers to support public and private investment in perpetually affordable housing – including community land trusts, deed restricted mortgages, limited equity cooperatives and other models
- substantially increase investment in Aboriginal housing to address unmet need, backed up by ongoing maintenance plans and employment and training initiatives in affordable design, construction and maintenance (see also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander](#) policy)

Housing Design and Efficiency (see also The Greens (WA) [Energy](#) policy)

- encourage and promote the design and construction of adaptable housing to facilitate improved access for the elderly and disabled, and allow larger family homes to be converted into smaller separate units as life cycle needs change (see also The Greens (WA) [Seniors](#) policy)
- introduce design and construction initiatives to minimise water usage, maximise energy efficiency and minimise whole-of-life-cycle environmental footprint
- implement energy and water efficiency audit reports for all residential and commercial building sales and rental contracts, with reports available to potential buyers or renters before contacting an agreement and require new homes to have a minimum 7-Star NatHERS rating⁶ or equivalent
- require landlords to meet water and energy efficiency standards
- implement an Energy Efficiency Access and Savings Initiative (EASI), whereby 10% of existing buildings are retrofitted per year to meet sustainability goals starting with the most inefficient buildings and poorest households, by providing interest free loans repayable over 10 years through a

shared-benefit arrangement. Selection criteria for dwellings to be based on best outcomes on social, environmental and economic parameters

- implement a state-wide scheme to retrofit water saving systems and devices
- support innovation and development of appropriate new technology, including recycling of building waste in line with the State Waste Minimisation Strategy (see also The Greens (WA) [Beyond Waste](#) policy)

(See also the [Australian Greens Housing](#) policy)

Glossary

1. **Affordable housing** - housing that costs less than 30% of household income.
2. **Social housing** - affordable rental accommodation, including housing provided by the State Government and by the community sector.
3. **Inclusionary zoning** - a zoning ordinance mandating affordable housing in certain development projects.
4. **Public housing** is rental accommodation provided by the State Government (The Housing Authority).
5. **Community housing** - rental accommodation provided by not for profit community-based organisations, church groups or Local Government, that offers tenant participation in the management of their housing.
6. **National House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS)** measures the amount of energy required to keep a home comfortable. It uses a rating out of 10 stars, such as the energy rating stickers on whitegoods.

Housing policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017