

# The Greens (WA) 2017 policy

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## Biodiversity

*The Greens (WA) believe that:*

- the protection and conservation of biodiversity<sup>1</sup> is essential for the wellbeing of all life on Earth, including human life
- as well as the intrinsic loss, any reduction in biodiversity leads to economic and social costs for Western Australia's people
- the reduction of Western Australia's biodiversity has dramatic impacts on the resilience and stability of ecosystems. This includes their capacity to cope with environmental stress including over-clearing, over-fishing, pollution, fire and climate change
- the conservation and restoration of natural areas is the only permanent way to protect our biodiversity and threatened species, to ensure we have a healthy and stable life support system
- the South West Eco-region, one of the planet's biodiversity hotspots, is under threat. It is one of only five Mediterranean systems listed as globally significant and it is the only Australian hotspot to be recognised globally<sup>2</sup>
- the precautionary principle<sup>3</sup> must be employed when considering the zoning of land for transport, residential or industrial uses, the importation of any new non-endemic species into Western Australia, or the management of existing non-endemic populations

### Aims

*The Greens (WA) want:*

- a Comprehensive Adequate Representative (CAR)<sup>5</sup> and secure reserve system linked across all of Western Australia's bioregions<sup>4</sup>
- adequate funding and proper management of the 'CAR' reserve system
- increased public awareness of Western Australia's unique wildlife and the importance of its conservation (see also The Greens (WA) [Education](#) policy)
- to restore damaged ecosystems, and re-establish the linkages between remnant vegetation across all bioregions on both private and public land
- removal or mitigation of threats to biodiversity: for example, invasive weeds, feral animals, dieback, inappropriate fire regimes and land clearing

### Measures

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

- implement a Biodiversity Conservation Act for Western Australia
- implement a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Western Australia including the urgent introduction of a 'CAR' reserve system with linkages across all bioregions
- strengthen and rigorously enforce the clearing regulations under the Environmental Protection Act

- prohibit clearing in local government areas with less than 30% native vegetation remaining and prohibit further clearing of vegetation types that are found to be at less than 10% of their pre-European settlement extent
- improve monitoring of illegal clearing and breaches of conditions under the Environmental Protection Act and take legal action with effective penalties where appropriate
- give immediate statutory protection to 'Threatened Ecological Communities' identified by the State Government by their declaration under the Wildlife Conservation Act and any new Biodiversity Act
- establish a complete scientific assessment of species in existence and biodiversity in Western Australia
- implement genuine joint management for biodiversity conservation with Aboriginal peoples (see also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) policy)
- implement the recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority's Fire Management of the Kimberley and other Rangeland Regions of Western Australia
- improve programs for introduced animal surveillance and control (see also The Greens (WA) [Animals](#) policy)
- fully implement the Environmental Weed Strategy for Western Australia (see also The Greens (WA) [Agriculture](#) policy)
- develop and implement an effective whole of Government approach to reduce the spread of *Phytophthora* dieback and other significant plant pathogens
- give community groups and individuals legal standing to present matters of environmental protection in legal proceedings
- provide greater funding for environmental projects and facilitate participation by local communities in planning and implementing strategies to protect the environment
- establish a system of 'biodiversity credits' to place an economic value on protecting and restoring natural areas
- prohibit mining, clearing and land development in conservation reserves and in environmentally sensitive areas
- protect wetlands and ground water dependent ecosystems (see The Greens (WA) [Wetlands](#) policy)

(See also [the Australian Greens Biological Diversity](#) policy)

### Footnotes and Glossary

1. **biodiversity** - the variety of species, populations, habitats and ecosystems
2. Western Australia has 423 plants and 245 animals listed as “likely to become extinct or rare and therefore in need of special protection” in the Department of Parks and Wildlife’s Wildlife Conservation Notice 2015. As of June 2015, there were 21 ecological communities endorsed by the WA Environment Minister as “critically endangered”, 17 as “endangered”, 28 as “vulnerable” and 3 as “presumed destroyed”.
3. The **precautionary principle** states that if an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to the public or to the environment, in the absence of scientific consensus that the action or policy is harmful, the burden of proof that it is not harmful falls on those taking the action.

4. A **bioregion** is an area constituting a natural ecological community with characteristic flora, fauna and environmental conditions and bounded by natural rather than artificial borders.
5. The **CAR reserve system** is based on three principles:
  - including the full range of vegetation communities (comprehensive)
  - ensuring the level of reservation is large enough to maintain species diversity, as well as community interaction and evolution (adequate), and
  - conserving the diversity within each vegetation community, including genetic diversity (representative).

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