

The Greens (WA) 2020 policy

Regions

Western Australia's population is highly centralised, and the regions are often sparsely populated. Despite the significant revenue generated in the regions through mining and agriculture, regional West Australians often face greater challenges related to under resourcing of their communities, in health care, educational facilities, land-use planning, environmental services and a range of other government provisions.

With local governments limited by the resources that they raise through the blunt instrument of rates, they are often individually unable to provide significant cohesive and strategic regional initiatives, although many, through voluntary regional organisations of Councils, are moving in this direction. This is particularly true in regions that are very large in area, but very sparsely populated, like the Pilbara and Kimberley.

The resilience of regional communities to future challenges can be enhanced by diversification of local economies, effective stewardship of the natural environment, supporting local communities and allowing for more participation of regional communities in creating their own futures.

The Greens (WA) strongly support a regional approach to governance that recognises and places the environment at the foundation of governance. Regional governance, based on bio-geographical boundaries provides the most efficient way to foster ecologically sustainable development, whilst building stronger, more resilient, and better designed communities.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- the full inclusion of Aboriginal people in regional governance (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations Peoples](#) policy)
- vibrant regional communities with efficient government services, including but not limited to health, public transport, education and communication services, which are transparent, accessible and resourced in proportion to the needs of each community
- regions to formulate their own development programs that are sustainable and specific to their region, in concert with and supported by state and federal governments
- local governments which are resourced to develop and maintain regional services
- collaboration between local governments to increase resource efficiency
- fairer distribution of the State's wealth between the city and country
- safe and secure food production (see also The Greens (WA) [Food](#) policy)
- safe, secure and reliable distribution of locally and regionally based renewable energy (see also The Greens (WA) [Energy](#) policy)
- economic diversification in regions
- restoration of degraded soil, waters and vegetation.

Measures

The Greens (WA) will initiate or support legislation and other measures that:

- establish a stronger regional governance framework via the creation of statutory regional authorities that integrate the work of:
 - local governments;
 - the Regional Development Commissions;
 - State Departmental services;
 - Commonwealth Regional Development Authorities;
 - First Nations Representatives;
 - Natural Resource Management Groups;
 - industry;
 - tourism; and
 - NGOs - into a coherent and representative regional structure.
- prioritise the strengthening of regional governance in the Kimberley and Pilbara as the two regions in most urgent need of improved coordination of governance with more local input
- implement the 2011 recommendations of the Indigenous Implementation Board (the Sanderson Report) to include Aboriginal people in regional governance (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations Peoples](#) policy)

Environment

- better protect native vegetation across all regions by:
 - supporting re-vegetation initiatives in critical water catchments and ecologically important areas;
 - integrating native vegetation into traditional agricultural system; and
 - supporting crop diversification and carbon farming² initiatives.
- establish integrated and efficient waste management systems across the regions drawing on regional collaboration and regionalised delivery of services where feasible (see also The Greens (WA) [Beyond Waste](#) policy)
- support to reuse and recycling initiatives in regional areas

Economy

- upgrade regional rail systems including high speed passenger services between significant population centres and expand the freight rail network (see also The Greens (WA) [Transport](#) policy)
- provide expanded, low cost public transport in regional towns
- increase the availability of robust, modern telecommunications infrastructure
- encourage economic diversification, particularly into industries that are helping to create the low carbon economy of the future
- amend legislation to ensure local governments can apply full rateability over all mining tenements, including those under State Agreements (see also The Greens (WA) [Mining](#) policy)
- provide support for artisans, the arts, music and cultural enterprises and events
- establish renewable energy measures for regional areas that match those for the metro area and the state as a whole

- investigate and implement safe secure and reliable energy distribution of locally and regionally based renewable energy such as solar projects in the goldfields and wind-based projects on the south coast

Community

- promote decentralisation, and the re-establishment of regional and remote communities, through:
 - State-based measures seeking to counter trends which disadvantage regions (such as FIFO), including seeking to change State Agreement Acts;
 - strong advocacy with the Federal Government to change laws and policies which disadvantage regions; and
 - increased support to arts organisations and touring events in regional areas.

Royalties for Regions (RfR)

- modify the criteria and objectives of the RfR funding to:
 - build resilient communities and achieve long-term security for regions beyond the current resources driven economic framework by developing diverse industries;
 - respond to local needs while also acknowledging that the short term benefits of new infrastructure can place a long term asset management burden on local governments and therefore on communities; (see also The Greens (WA) [Local Government](#) policy)
 - require a percentage of royalty revenue be allocated to alleviating disadvantage, particularly if caused or exacerbated by the displacement of regional industry or social marginalisation caused by the resources industries;
 - address regional sustainability issues, including sustainable energy provision and generation, water provision and recycling and sustainable waste management options;
 - increase the sustainability and autonomy of regional local governments through efficiency measures (i.e. water, energy, waste);
 - acknowledge the need for incentives to attract permanent residents into regional areas, and service these needs appropriately (i.e. housing affordability, social infrastructure, cultural engagement etc);
 - require a percentage of royalty revenue annually (additional to usual state and federal funding) to be allocated to regional environmental and landcare purposes, with associated employment and community development opportunities; and
 - invest in local food production in the Kimberley and the Pilbara.

Footnote and Glossary

1. 20% of Western Australians reside on 99.7% of the land, and 80% reside on .03% of the land.
2. **Carbon farming** is the process of changing agricultural practices or land use to increase the amount of carbon stored in the soil and vegetation

(sequestration) and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from livestock, soil or vegetation (avoidance).

Regions policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2020

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