

The Greens (WA) 2020 policy

Marine & Coastal

The coastal and marine zone of Western Australia comprises an interplay of ecosystems and dynamic coastal processes. Many reef, sea grass, and mangrove ecosystems, bays, estuaries and islands are of outstanding ecological importance. These natural assets are under increased pressure from human activities and should be protected with a comprehensive, adequate and representative marine reserve system.

Marine and coastal fisheries are important economic and recreational resources, dependent on healthy ecosystems. Both wild fisheries and aquaculture systems should be managed in an ecologically sustainable manner.

Climate change leading to sea level rise, ocean warming, acidification, and increased severity and frequency of storms, poses grave threats to marine and coastal ecosystems. (see also The Greens (WA) [Climate Change](#) policy)

Planning, development and management of the coastal zone should be based on the most up to date climate science and should take account of interactions between changing coastal environment and built infrastructure. Decisions should place ecosystem health and public interest before private interests.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- a comprehensive, adequate and representative marine reserve system
- public ownership of the coastline, the estuaries and offshore islands of Western Australia
- strict licence conditions to apply to all projects having a potential to threaten or harm our marine and coastal environment
- to ensure that the State's planning systems and strategies are based on up-to-date climate science and projections (see also The Greens (WA) [Planning](#) policy)
- to ensure that First Nations traditional owners are partners in all decision making and management (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations Peoples](#) policy)
- to ensure broader community involvement in decision making at all stages of planning, development and management

Measures

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

- ensure strict enforcement of marine and coastal licence conditions by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
- ensure public access to coastal areas, except where people should be excluded for ecological reasons
- only allow non-lethal shark hazard mitigation measures
- make planning, development and management decisions that will ensure sustainability of the marine environment, and in particular that will protect:
 - vulnerable parts of the marine environment and its associated ecosystems, ecological processes and biological diversity;
 - the integrity of landforms;
 - recreation, tourism and commercial activities that are consistent with sustainability; and
 - marine values and a sense of place
- ensure that the highest standards of environmentally sensitive design are applied in engineering and infrastructure works in the marine environment
- apply the precautionary principle¹ to all planning, development and management decisions in relation to the marine environment
- protect and preserve historical and cultural sites within the marine environment, with particular consideration given to sites of First Nations significance (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations Peoples](#) policy)
- promote planned retreat of existing coastal development in the face of rising sea levels and coastal erosion (see also The Greens (WA) [Climate Change](#) policy)
- implement a coastal plan for the whole of the coastal zone that:
 - identifies the coastal compartments and sediment cells that comprise the coastal zone; and
 - identifies that part of the coastal zone most likely to be affected by the adverse impacts of coastal hazards (based on coastal risk and vulnerability assessments) in which stringent development controls will apply
- apply strict development controls within the most vulnerable area of the coastal zone as identified in the coastal plan, including:
 - adequate setbacks;
 - a prohibition on marine developments other than maritime infrastructure; and
 - only specified short term or exempt development to be permitted within that area

- apply mandatory local adaptation and management plans based on coastal compartments rather than jurisdictional boundaries
- ensure full environmental assessment of any proposal for use prior to granting of licences and leases over the seabed, riverbeds and adjoining foreshores
- seek stringent conditions on any leases or licences that may be granted
- develop strategies to phase out sewage outfalls into the ocean to:
 - implement low energy treatment alternatives;
 - prevent pollution of oceans and fish through micro-fibres in laundry water; and
 - recycle sewage to make fertilisers
- ensure that adequate resources are provided to monitor and enforce compliance with policies, legislation and regulations which assist with conservation of the marine environment
- end shell sand mining to preserve sea grass in the Cockburn Sound/Owen Anchorage area and anywhere else this practice occurs, and ensure the protection and restoration of sea grass meadows around the coast
- ensure more active maintenance and expansion of sea grass meadows and mangrove communities as protections against the impacts of rising sea levels and enhancing the viability of fisheries
- oppose coastal developments that have the potential for adverse impacts on the local marine or coastal environment and associated water bodies
- establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative network of Marine Parks and Reserves throughout the State and ensure these Parks and Reserves:
 - are selected on the basis of bio-physical criteria recommended by an independent scientific working group;
 - are zoned and managed following an agreement, across government agencies, on specific, measurable biodiversity conservation outcomes;
 - are adequately resourced and managed on an ecosystem basis;
 - contain functionally effective, representative no-take areas;
 - exclude exploration and mining; and
 - provide for full community involvement in its planning and development
- ensure all Port Authorities are required to produce and adhere to an Environment Management Plan, particularly to control acceptance of solid and oil waste, minimise pollution and prevent ballast water introduction

- assess the extent of infestations of exotic species introduced through ballast water and introduce better measures to control these pests
- ban all LNG, oil and related offshore industrial developments to stop the ongoing risk these pose to marine life, marine health, coastlines and First Nations marine and terrestrial cultural heritage sites
- permanently ban supertrawlers from Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

(See also the Australian Greens [Marine & Coastal Areas & Fisheries](#) policy)

Glossary

1. 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.

Marine & Coastal policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2020

The Greens (WA) spokesperson for marine and coastal issues is [Diane Evers MLC](#)