

The Greens (WA) 2020 policy

Resource Mining

The Greens (WA) recognise the value of many mining commodities in resourcing contemporary society and that the mining sector currently forms the backbone of many regional economies. While acknowledging the important role of mining to the Western Australian economy, the Greens (WA) call for decision-makers to mitigate the adverse impacts of the mining industry on environmental, economic and social sustainability, as well as to ensure the protection of First Nations heritage areas. The mining sector must be held responsible for the full reparation of impacts it has on the Western Australian landscape, ecology, economy and community, now and in the future.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- a mining and mineral exploration sector that meets stringent and social protection standards and delivers both long- and short-term benefits to the wider Western Australian community
- mining and material extraction regulation and implementation not to be privileged or preferred over and above any other sectors of society
- the use of renewable and recycled resources promoted, and resource recovery from the waste stream expanded
- environmental and heritage assessments to be given regular attention and priority by responsible Ministers, and public concerns and appeals taken into proper account, and our most important natural and cultural heritage protected
- sites disturbed by mining and mining exploration to be restored to a condition agreed as acceptable by First Nations traditional owners, the community or the long-term land managers
- the Agencies responsible for environmental assessment, advice, approvals and compliance to be open, transparent and accountable
- members of bodies assessing the environmental or heritage merit of a proposal to be free of relevant vested interests
- regional communities to benefit from mining in a sustainable and responsible manner
- all mining activity to be subject to the rights and needs of First Nations people with a cultural connection to the land that is the subject of the mining activity (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations Peoples](#) policy)

Measures

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

Planning, Development and Regulation

- prevent the *Mining Act 1978* and/or the Development assessment Panel from overriding other legislative and regulatory instruments such as the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*
- ensure the rights and needs of First Nations peoples who have cultural connection to areas subject to mining proposals are heard, respected and adhered to
- prohibit the exploration, mining, and export of uranium or other materials used for nuclear energy or nuclear weapons manufacture, and continue to prohibit the passage and storage of nuclear waste in Western Australia (see also The Greens (WA) [Nuclear Issues](#) policy)
- prohibit exploration, mining, development of other industrial hubs associated with resource beneficiation¹ within native forests, National Parks and other Conservation Reserves, and other protected areas such as those under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*
- ensure that all mineral sands mining projects are developed under the *Mining Act 1978*, not under quarry legislation
- ensure full community consultation and approval for mining or mineral sands mining in agricultural areas or in spaces populated by native flora and fauna
- expand exclusion zones to a minimum of 500 metres from the closest private property or residence
- oppose the development of any further *State Agreement Acts*² and encourage the phasing out of existing *State Agreement Acts*, and refer these to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to investigate the potential for disadvantaging other industry stakeholders and the community (see also The Greens (WA) [Economics](#) policy)
- maintain and enhance an open and transparent process for third party appeals against mining proposals, including maintenance of the rights for public interest objections in the Mining Wardens Court
- ensure Government agreements with mining and exploration companies are transparent and adhere to the principles of open and honest Government (see also The Greens (WA) [Open & Honest Government](#) policy)
- require all mining operations, including exploration, to comply with, at a minimum the latest ISO certifications for quality,

environmental management, Occupation Health and Safety (OH&S), and corporate social responsibility

- ensure significant deterrents for non-compliance with legislation, regulations and licence conditions are enforced
- review the systems and processes of all relevant State regulatory agencies and make necessary changes to enhance inter-agency communication and collaboration
- ensure appropriate State funding to the Department of Mines, industry Regulation and Safety, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other oversight bodies, in order to effectively carry out their roles in assessment, regulation and compliance

Environmental

- employ the precautionary principle³ where there is significant uncertainty around a project's impact on the environment
- ensure that all mineral exploration and mining projects are assessed against the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- reinstate and appropriately fund the EPA as the independent ultimate decision making, oversight, monitoring and compliance enforcement body for the environmental approval and environmental regulation of all mining and exploration operations
- improve the quality, thoroughness, timeliness, and transparency of environmental impact assessments
- develop regional water resource management plans for extractive industries regions so that the cumulative impact of the those industries on surface and groundwater is clearly understood, well managed, and ensures that future developments are assessed with an emphasis on cumulative impact of these resources (see also The Greens (WA) [Water](#) policy)
- reinstate a full cost environmental recovery bonds system and/or insurance to protect the community and taxpayers from bearing the financial burden of mine rehabilitation and cleanup
- require mining and exploration companies to plan for and carry out environmental rehabilitation and/or pastoral land regeneration across the entire lease hold area from beginning to end of lease life
- ensure increased efficiencies in raw material use while reducing demand for virgin resources⁴ by promoting the reuse and recycling of mineral products (see also The Greens (WA) [Beyond Waste](#) policy)
- place significant legal and financial penalties on any company found in breach of environmental legislation including those

extractive industries projects that do not trigger EPA assessment under current laws and regulations

- improve the environmental assessment process to include full life-cycle assessment of energy associated with mineral extraction, transportation and use (see also The Greens (WA) [Energy](#) policy)
- require full site by site reporting of, and significant reductions in, scope 1,2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions, including those generated from transportation and accommodation of FIFO (Fly In, Fly Out) or DIDO (Drive In, Drive Out) employees
- ensure greater funding and support for monitoring and the deployment of sustainable mechanisms to clean up and rehabilitate tailings dams
- develop waste disposal regulations that ensure food waste from mining camps is not disposed of with mining extraction waste to avoid scavenging animals accessing contaminated food
- ensure that all environment related reporting is made public, and parameters expanded to include wildlife kills, specifically highlighting endangered or threatened species

Social & Economic

- promote alternatives to 12 hour shifts to prevent fatigue related unsafe work practices and accidents (see also The Greens (WA) [Workplace Relations](#) policy)
- ensure greater encouragement or regulation of even time rosters to better protect the mental health and wellbeing of the FIFO workforce
- require a full review of 'Mine Safety', OH&S and national Work Health and Safety (WHS) regulatory and legal frameworks, including laws to charge negligent employers with industrial manslaughter in the event of workplace fatality
- address any skill shortages in the mining industry by prioritising education, training and apprenticeships
- promote greater local downstream processing of mining commodities and boosts to local economies
- implement State based measures in consultation with communities that address negative impacts of mining activities, such as FIFO work arrangements, on regional towns (see also The Greens (WA) [Regions](#) policy)
- prohibit Royalties for Regions funding being utilised in support of the mining industry, either directly or indirectly
- ensure royalty rates are increased to a level that represents a fair rate of return to the community, now and into the future

- amend royalty legislation and regulations to ensure more funds are directed back to regional and remote Western Australia, prioritising where the social and environmental needs are greatest
- provide local governments with greater State Government support to maintain and provide staffing for infrastructure that is built from royalties funding, or from the 'gifting' of buildings or infrastructure from mining companies (see also The Greens (WA) [Local Government](#) policy)
- limit the ability of government to permit royalty 'holidays' by requiring approval by both house of State Parliament
- amend legislation to enable local governments to broaden criteria for rateable buildings on mining leases in order to greater support the financial burden local governments may bear for mining activity
- increase the percentage of royalties collected for saving to the WA Future Fund to five percent

(See also the Australian Greens [Natural Resources](#) policy)

Glossary

1. **beneficiation** - the removal of impurities from an ore in preparation for refining.
2. a **State Agreement** is a legal contract between the Western Australian Government and a proponent of a major project within the boundaries of Western Australia. It is a highly visible sign of the state's support for and commitment to the project. State Agreements detail the rights, obligations, terms and conditions for the development of the specific project.
3. the **precautionary principle** - where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
4. **virgin resources** - newly processed raw materials containing no recycled materials.

The Resource Mining policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2020

The Greens (WA) mining spokesperson is [Robin Chapple MLC](#)