

The Greens (WA) 2020 policy

Beyond Waste

Today's waste management decisions leave a legacy for future generations. Waste in landfill generates many harmful pollutants, including methane, a greenhouse gas more damaging than carbon dioxide.

Enhanced recovery of discarded materials presents considerable potential to positively contribute to climate change solutions and create jobs within a sustainable economy.

Progress towards a 'zero waste', circular economy society will require a significant shift in thinking and behaviour including a shared responsibility for waste.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- a zero waste¹, circular economy² achieved by waste avoidance, reduction, re-use/repair, recycling and recovery
- to motivate individuals and businesses to understand and support the environmental, social and economic benefits of waste minimisation
- to minimise the use of limited resources
- specific targets to eliminate industrial and hazardous waste streams and drive clean production
- policy and financial incentives to develop processes for recycling and recovery of domestic and industrial wastes
- to remove economic drivers that encourage waste and wasteful practices
- a legislated, independent authority that protects the community and the environment from the impacts of toxic and hazardous waste streams

Measures

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

- build a state waste strategy that fully articulates, prioritises and applies the waste hierarchy of avoidance and minimisation, reuse, recycling, recovery, and disposal
- develop appropriate planning and infrastructure plans to ensure waste management is incorporated into urban and regional planning with appropriate legislated buffer zones
- improve the funding of government regulatory agencies to ensure safer and better waste management facilities and landfills
- educate and engage the community in waste generation and management
- research, fund and publicise independent testing and evaluation of products to minimise the manufacture, import and sale of products found to be unreliable, transitory, inefficient, non-recyclable, unreasonably costly to repair, toxic or dangerous

- redirect revenues from the fines collected under the Waste Levy Act to the relevant local governments and ensure the waste levy is spent on waste management strategies in line with the waste hierarchy³
- place an environmental tax on products according to their ability to be recycled

Reduction

- require mandatory minimisation of packaging material by manufacturers and retailers of consumer goods
- create incentives for industrial design responsibility which reduces virgin resource⁴ use in the manufacture of products, and which requires full recyclability of products where possible
- ensure that the full ecological costs of resources and waste management are borne by the producer
- establish specific rules to minimise waste from materials in the construction and demolition industry in Western Australia through application of the waste hierarchy
- create cost efficient reporting systems to define the true volumes, generators and types of waste, so as to target reduction strategies and evaluate success

Recycling

- implement a fully costed, comprehensive and well-regulated container deposit system for Western Australia
- require mandatory extended producer responsibility, particularly for products that are difficult to recycle or have limited recycling value
- oppose export to, or siting of, waste treatment facilities in disadvantaged communities in Australia or overseas
- ensure that local governments are fully supported and well-resourced to apply recovery and recycling schemes which divert waste from landfill

Disposal

- focus on reducing biodegradable waste to landfill to zero levels within five years
- ensure that any new proposals that generate dioxin and persistent organic pollutants⁴ (such as mixed waste landfills) comply with Australia's obligations under the Stockholm Treaty and phase out any existing non-complying technologies
- reject the incineration of waste through thermal waste technologies (such as, mass combustion incineration, pyrolysis, gasification, plasma arc and direct thermal desorption) and reject the classification of these technologies as renewable energy
- ensure stringent standards are met for waste derived soil amendments, composts and 'fertilisers' to prevent contamination of agricultural lands and to increase soil productivity
- provide government incentives and education schemes for home composting systems, local government and private alternative waste management options

that divert putrescible organic waste from landfill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

- support and fund comprehensive recycling and recovery infrastructure tailored to regional Western Australia
- adopt appropriate Best Practice Environment Management (BPEM) guidelines for the siting and management of landfills in WA, along the lines of the BPEM guidelines issued by the Victorian EPA. These guidelines should include clear advice regarding the siting of the landfills in relation to nearby sensitive flora and fauna populations and groundwater resources, as well as management of predator and scavenger species.

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

Glossary

1. **Zero Waste** is a set of principles focused on waste prevention that encourages the redesign of resource life cycles so that all products are reused. The goal is for no rubbish to be sent to landfills, incinerators or the ocean.
2. A **circular economy** is one that exchanges the typical cycle of make, use, dispose in favour of as much re-use and recycling as possible. The longer materials and resources are in use, the more value is extracted from them.
3. **Waste hierarchy** - avoidance and minimisation, reuse, recycling, recovery, including energy recovery, and, as a last option, safe disposal.
4. **Virgin resources** – newly extracted and processed raw materials containing no recycled content.
5. **Persistent organic pollutants** - Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are a class of chemicals that persist in the environment, are capable of long-range transport, bio-accumulate in human and animal tissue, and have significant impacts on human health and the environment, even at low concentrations. They include such substances as dioxin, PCBs and DDT.

Beyond Waste policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2020

The Greens (WA) spokesperson for waste issues is [Robin Chapple MLC](#)