

The Greens (WA) 2020 policy

Biodiversity

The protection and conservation of biodiversity¹ is essential for the wellbeing of all life on Earth. The reduction of Western Australia's biodiversity has harmful impacts on the resilience and stability of ecosystems, affecting their capacity to cope with human and environmental stressors, including over-clearing, over-fishing, pollution, fire and the climate change crisis.

The conservation and restoration of natural areas is the only way to protect our biodiversity and threatened species, to ensure we have a healthy and stable life support system.

In particular, the South West Eco-region, as 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.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- a Comprehensive Adequate Representative (CAR)⁵ and secure reserve system linked across all of Western Australia's bioregions²
- an all-of-government commitment to mitigating climate change as a priority in order to give our biodiversity and ecosystems the best chance of survival (see also The Greens (WA) [Climate Change](#) policy)
- 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)
- restoration of damaged ecosystems, and re-establishment of 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, dieback, inappropriate fire regimes, land clearing, and the considered and humane removal of feral animals where necessary

Measures

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

- employ the precautionary principle³ when considering the zoning of land for transport, residential and industrial uses, the importation of any new species into Western Australia or the management of existing non-endemic populations
- increase funding to biosecurity services to anticipate new invasive species threats posed by climate change and expanded pathways resulting from globalised trade and travel
- ensure that threats to biodiversity such as invasive weeds, feral animals, dieback infections, inappropriate fire regimes and land clearing are removed

or reduced with feral animals being controlled in a considered and humane way that avoids unnecessary suffering

- 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 Communities⁴ identified by the State Government by their declaration under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016
- establish a complete scientific assessment of species in existence and biodiversity in Western Australia, especially the identification of Threatened Ecological Communities
- implement genuine joint management for biodiversity conservation with First Nations peoples (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations 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)

Glossary

1. **biodiversity** - the variety of species, populations, habitats and ecosystems.

2. 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.
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. **Threatened Ecological Communities** - ecological communities presumed to be at risk of becoming totally destroyed.
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 2020

The Greens (WA) spokesperson on biodiversity is [Robin Chapple](#)
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