

Local Government

The Greens (WA) acknowledge Local Government's valuable role as the third tier of government. Local Governments are the tier of government closest to their communities, caring for our neighbourhoods, providing community services and advocating for residents. Federal and State Constitutions should recognise Local Governments and their obligation to provide these services according to the will of their constituents.

There are approximately 30 metropolitan and 100 regional Local Governments representing Western Australians. They are well placed to implement actions and programs that reflect core Greens principles and policies.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- Local Government, as the level of government closest to individual communities and local economies, to be empowered to take a greater role in proactively implementing change in our community
- Local Governments that represent the diversity of their communities, including First Nations People (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations Peoples](#) policy)
- Local Governments that are accessible, transparent, and accountable
- Federal and State governments to increase financial support to Local governments that play the major role in addressing the effects of climate change (see also The Greens (WA) [Climate Change](#) policy)
- Local Governments to create and sustain healthy and equitably serviced communities
- greater regional collaboration between Local Governments to promote financial and environmental sustainability
- Local Government to be empowered to increase their revenue sources and to receive State and Federal government funding in line with their increased responsibilities and community expectations

Measures

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

- require the principles of ecological, social and economic sustainability (which are articulated in the WA Local Government Act) to be the basis of all Local Government policy and practice
- ensure the rights of communities to self-determination as expressed through the poll provisions contained in schedule 2.1 of the *Local Government Act 1995*
- maintain the powers of the WA Auditor General to oversee Local Governments in order to provide independent oversight of financial and performance audits
- allow only one vote per person in Local Government elections with no proxies

- call for Local Government elections to be based on preferential voting
- call for voting in Local Government elections to be made compulsory, operating in line with the provision for State and Federal elections
- support a move away from forced Local Government amalgamations and deletions and towards models of regional collaboration and sustainability
- make the West Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC) responsible for setting boundaries for local government electoral areas and wards, with a view to retain communities and to adhere to geographic common sense where practical
- require candidates, Councillors and executive staff to disclose all donations in real time (within 7 days)
- support reform of the federal/state tax and Commonwealth Grants operation in order to appropriately resource community services and to increase equity across the spheres of government (see also The Greens (WA) [Economics](#) policy)
- support the value of the services, in particular community based environmental and social services, that Local Governments provide
- ensure that any monies allocated to Local Governments for infrastructure are only granted subject to a full business plan for continued operation being provided by the Local Government
- increase Local Governments' ability to raise revenue via its own endeavours and local enterprise
- ensure that State Governments do not hinder Local Governments' ability to achieve sustainability
- require the State Government to pay rates to the relevant Local Government
- support differential rates associated with unoccupied developed land and premises
- mandate the flying of the First Nations flag across all Local Government authorities
- end the use Development Assessment Panels (DAPS)¹ and maximise decision making by elected Local Government representatives
- encourage communities to be more involved in local governance and urge Councils to:
 - adopt the precinct concept² of direct community participation in Local Government
 - hold public forums prior to an election to inform candidates of the role, requirements and legal processes of Council
 - maintain a regular open dialogues with the community via a range of media, to give equal voice to a range of ideas and to encourage community involvement

The Greens (WA) recognise the importance and responsibilities of Councillors and propose that:

- a common Code of Conduct be adopted across Local Government in Western Australia
- a higher level of financial support for those elected to Council, in recognition of the responsibility they hold for representative decision-making, to increase accountability, and to increase the diversity of people seeking election

- comprehensive and continuous training and development for Councillors to include (but not be limited to) a full understanding of the Local Government Act and governance processes; legal and statutory planning matters; strategic planning; financial planning; communications; and consensus decision-making
- a review of the current requirements for compulsory voting at council meetings to consider the option of Councillors abstaining, similar to Federal and State representatives
- banning all corporate donations to Councillors and candidates
- the introduction of election expenditure caps and a requirement to document expenditure
- the Local Government Standards Panel be strongly supported in order to promote ethical behaviour of Councillors and that a two year enforcement period apply to any decision of a Councillor made under a declaration of pecuniary interest
- Councils not to adopt meeting procedures that have the intent of silencing dissent
- allowing Councillors to speak their minds in public about Council decisions

Glossary

1. **DAPS - Development Assessment Panels (DAPS)** are panels consisting of five members, comprising three specialist members and two Local Government Councillors. Specialist member are appointed by the Minister for Planning. DAP regulations state that applications considered by a panel cannot be determined by Local Government or the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC).
2. **Precinct concept** - Independent community precinct committees directly participate in council business with an opportunity to comment on council agendas, policies, local laws and development applications before these are considered by council.

Local Government policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2021

The Greens (WA) spokesperson for local government is [Robin Chapple MLC](#)