

PROTECTING & RESTORING OUR ENVIRONMENT

A FUTURE
FOR ALL OF US



PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT.▲

Whether you live in the suburbs along the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River), the Karri forests of the South West or the astonishing reefs of Ningaloo, West Australians have always prided ourselves on our magnificent environment.

Originally covered by chains of wetlands, banksia woodlands and coastal heath, our state is home to rich biodiversity found nowhere else in the world, leading to the South West of WA being recognised globally as a biodiversity hotspot.

A healthy, resilient environment ensures we have clean air. It provides habitats for animals and protects biodiversity, and is good for our physical and mental health. In addition, our soils, forests, oceans and wetlands are some of our most valuable assets when it comes to tackling the climate crisis. These ecosystems are all vast carbon sinks, drawing down and storing carbon from the atmosphere.

However, decades of uncoordinated growth and suburban sprawl, land clearing and native forest logging, overfishing, unsustainable agricultural and pastoralism practices, and large scale mining has devastated our natural environment. This has had a devastating impact on our biodiversity and has resulted in poor soil quality, increased salinity and greater vulnerability to drought in our regions. We have sprawling neighbourhoods that are increasingly hot and uninviting, marine environments on the brink of collapse, over 600 WA species threatened with extinction¹ and, of course, a warming climate. It is an environmental, health and economic disaster.

The Greens have a plan to protect, rehabilitate and reconnect our forests, bushland, wetlands and waterways across our vast state. Doing so will not only protect the inherent value of the natural environment, support biodiversity, build climate resilience, and sequester carbon but it will also stimulate the economy and grow jobs in the conservation and regeneration industries in the process.

The Greens will:

- ▲ **Establish a \$125 million per annum Nature Fund** to support conservation and rehabilitation projects
- ▲ **End logging, protect the forests of the South West and transform the forestry industry**
- ▲ **Establish a state-wide urban forest strategy** - increasing public green spaces and urban tree canopy
- ▲ **Ensure First Nations Peoples lead restoration projects on country**, with a focus on expanding the Aboriginal Rangers Program

ESTABLISH A \$125 MILLION PER ANNUM NATURE FUND

To ensure the ongoing protection of our environment and biodiversity, The Greens will establish a Nature Fund to the value of \$125 million per annum. This fund will support conservation and rehabilitation projects and drawdown tonnes of carbon in the process.

The Nature Fund will be created from allocating 10% of Royalties for Regions funding to regional conservation projects and a contribution of \$25m from consolidated revenue for metropolitan projects.

By providing an ongoing and secure source of funding, the Nature Fund will ensure critical restoration and ecological management work can be performed - protecting our natural environment and improving our state's resilience against the impacts of climate change.

At the same time our plan will create thousands of direct and indirect jobs in conservation and related industry across regional and metropolitan Western Australia.

The Greens will:

- ▲ **Establish a Nature Fund with funding of \$125 million per annum**
- ▲ **Support WA's 7 Natural Resource Management (NRM) Regions and Landcare Network to undertake critical ecological restoration and management work across the state²**
- ▲ **Align Nature Fund activities with a state-wide 'urban forest' plan** that protects, rebuilds & connects corridors of bushland and increases tree canopy in our cities, towns and suburbs
- ▲ **Deliver 2,000 new jobs through the conservation and related industry jobs** that come out of this initiative



PROTECT THE FORESTS OF THE SOUTH WEST & TRANSFORM THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Forests store and draw down vast amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. Protecting WA's South West forests from logging has the potential to prevent 40-60 million tonnes of CO2 from being emitted over 10 years. This is the equivalent of taking 1.2 million cars off the road every year for 10 years.

Yet, in Western Australia - where we have cleared 90% of the forests and woodlands that existed prior to European arrival - we are still cutting down 10 football fields of karri and jarrah forest every day.

Instead of recognising that our forests provide the most value standing, the WA Labor Government - through the Forest Products Commission (FPC) - is tearing them down predominantly for wood chips, firewood and charcoal. At the same time WA's native forest timber industry is operating at a loss to the state. The FPC has made a profit of just \$45 million over 16 years while using \$110 million in taxpayer funds to do so³.

The logging of native forests has no financial justification and no social licence to continue.

By supporting the development of a high-value plantation-based forestry industry and incentivising the use of timber products for long-term uses such as furniture and construction, we can also reduce the embedded emissions in other sectors of our economy.

When our native forests are logged, as much as 90% of the timber ends up as low-value products that have a very short

term life cycle - chiefly firewood, paper and charcoal. These products release their carbon into the atmosphere within 2 years of production, further driving climate change. By ensuring our native forests are protected in secure reserves we can make sure our forests continue to function as highly valuable biodiverse carbon sinks: drawing down and storing carbon out of the atmosphere.

The Greens will protect the forests of the South West for future generations and support the Forests For Climate, Forests For Life⁴ plan to transition to a truly sustainable, high-value plantation and farm forestry based timber industry.

The Greens will:

- ▲ **Protect the forests of the South West for future generations by abolishing the Forest Products Commission and ending native forest logging**
- ▲ **Fund the rehabilitation and expansion of our state forests through our \$125 million Nature Fund**
- ▲ **Establish a world class high-value timber industry through plantations and farm forestry, growing 40,000 hectares of fast growing trees for saw logs in a combination of state owned plantations and private land**
- ▲ **Support further development of complimentary local industries such as nature-based tourism and honey production**

ESTABLISH A STATE-WIDE URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

It is time for a state-wide urban forest strategy that protects, rehabilitates and reconnects our forests, bushland and wetlands across the state.

Protecting our remnant bushland, creating vast green corridors and then continuing this access to green spaces at a neighbourhood level with more tree canopy cover, will provide critical habitats, protect biodiversity, drawdown and store carbon, support a water sensitive city, cool our cities and suburbs and make them more enjoyable and beautiful places to live.

The Greens WA Urban Forest plan provides the missing link in our infrastructure and planning systems: a network of protected bushland, greenways, parklands and green street-scapes that everyone can access and enjoy.

Our plan would:

- ▲ **Rebuild 200ha/yr of green corridors and ecological links between existing natural habitats and parks over the next decade.**
- ▲ **Double Perth's urban tree canopy cover by 2040**, working with local government and community groups to undertake new plantings and maintain existing tree care on local streets, backyards and verges.
- ▲ **Engage an Aboriginal Stewardship Committee** to ensure indigenous knowledge and cultural sites are at the heart of all urban bushland and green space planning.



FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES LEADING RESTORATION PROJECTS ON COUNTRY

It is critical that First Nations people play a fundamental role in co-designing and leading restoration projects on country.

The unbroken connection to country and traditional knowledge, and the practices of First Nations cultures, are powerful tools in the efforts to protect, restore and reconnect bushland and ecosystems.

In addition, employment of First Nations communities, such as the WA Aboriginal Rangers Program, is helping to boost social, cultural and economic outcomes for First Nations peoples.

The Aboriginal Rangers Program has been a resounding success. For every \$1 invested, it returns \$3 in environmental and socioeconomic benefits⁵, delivering long term jobs, particularly in remote areas where many other programs have struggled.

The Greens will expand the WA Aboriginal Rangers Program by increasing investment to \$12m per annum, alongside further investment in emerging First Nations enterprises and opportunities.

The Greens will:

- ▲ **Invest an additional \$12m per annum into the existing WA Aboriginal Rangers Program, creating 200 new jobs⁶**
- ▲ **Provide increased support to expand the growing numbers of First Nations women rangers, which have doubled since 2019⁷**
- ▲ **Support better co-design and partnership models between Traditional Owners and community conservation projects** (including projects run by the WA Landcare Network & NRM Councils)
- ▲ **Fund First Nations enterprises, such as native nurseries, to establish and develop their businesses** (where, historically, attracting private investment has proved difficult due to lack of land tenure)

1. Western Australian Auditor General's Report. 2009. "Rich and Rare: Conservation of Threatened Species". https://audit.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/report2009_05-RichRare.pdf

2. CleanState. 2020. '26 Big Ideas for 200,000 Jobs: a Clean State plan for WA Jobs'. <https://www.cleanstate.org.au/jobs-plan>

3. Australia Institute. 2016. 'Barking up the wrong tree'. <https://forestsforlife.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Swann-Browne-2016-Barking-Up-The-Wrong-Trees-FINAL.pdf>

4. Forests for Life: <https://forestsforlife.org.au/the-plan/>

5. Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet. 2016. "Consolidated report on Indigenous Protected Areas following Social Return on Investment analyses". https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/SROI-Consolidated-Report-IPA_1.pdf.

6. CleanState. 2020. '26 Big Ideas for 200,000 Jobs: a Clean State plan for WA Jobs'. <https://www.cleanstate.org.au/jobs-plan>

7. Case study conducted by CleanState, https://www.cleanstate.org.au/aboriginal_rangers_carbon_savings see also: <https://www.klc.org.au/women-rangers-protecting-country-and-culture>