

# SUPPORTING THE REGIONS

A FUTURE  
FOR ALL OF US



# SUPPORTING WA REGIONS▲

**The Greens will invest in our regions, ensuring a future of thriving regional communities across Western Australia - from regional centres, to our most rural and remote communities.**

The regions are a crucial part of WA's social and cultural identity and essential to our food security and economy. Yet, successive governments have left our regions under resourced. For too long, government spending has been concentrated on the city leaving the regions begging.

To ensure our regions are able to thrive, we must invest in rural health and mental health services, educational opportunities and innovative industry practices in agriculture, forestry and in the renewables sector - all providing quality long-term local jobs.

In a state as large as WA, we also need an extensive and efficient transport system to overcome vast distances. We must invest in an efficient and accessible public transport system that connects across regional centres, and the re-opening of Tier 3 rail lines to shift grain trucks off our roads.

We can achieve all of this while also protecting our precious natural places that make regional WA unique - from preserving our waterways and native forests to making it easier for more farmers to transition to sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices.

## **The Greens will:**

- ▲ **Improve health and mental health services in the regions**
- ▲ **Establish a world-class regional transport system for Western Australia**
- ▲ **Invest in small-scale renewable energy projects and ensure a just transition for workers in the fossil fuel industry**
- ▲ **Protect our forests and create a sustainable, high-value plantation-based timber industry**
- ▲ **Support regional tourism by investing in WA's eco-tourism and First Nations cultural tourism sectors**
- ▲ **Support farmers and farming communities transition to sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices**

# CREATING LIVEABLE REGIONS.



# IMPROVING ACCESS TO REGIONAL AND REMOTE HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

**No matter where you live everyone has a right to access a regular service provider or health professional they know and trust, and who meets their needs.**

Currently, far too many people are forced to travel outside their communities and are unable to receive continuity of care from a permanent or regular practitioner in their region.

Consistent and ongoing specialist services such as oncology, obstetrics, dialysis and psychology are particularly difficult to access and too many disabled people cannot get the support they need to live in their community.

**There is an urgent need to improve access to health services throughout our regions.**

Investment in regional health and mental health services will provide our communities with these crucial services and support, and create thousands of new jobs in regional Western Australia.

## **The Greens will:**

- ▲ **Direct new investments into aged care, health, mental health and disability services** where there is unmet demand or growing need, including in education and training in these sectors
- ▲ **Invest in mental health prevention and community-managed services**, increasing funding for both to a total of \$270 million annually across the State

- ▲ **Ensure hospital emergency rooms are equipped and staffed to support people who require mental health care**
- ▲ **Fund long-term, locally developed and delivered suicide prevention programs**
- ▲ **Invest in specialist services and supports for children who have experienced trauma**
- ▲ **Target programs for the early years, parent and baby services**
- ▲ **Invest in accessible hospital equipment, accessible communications and accessibility training for health care professionals**
- ▲ **Integrate the care disabled patients can access in hospital with their NDIS supports** to ensure greater interoperability and benefits for all
- ▲ **Make TAFE courses free, reducing barriers for regional students** to enter into education and obtain training in the health, mental health and caring sectors

# ESTABLISHING WORLD-CLASS TRANSPORT IN THE REGIONS

**Right now, if you live in regional WA without a car it can be very isolating.** Bus and rail services are, at best, few and far between and in many cases non-existent.

WA's public transport system is failing the regions because consecutive Labor and Liberal governments have consistently cut regional transport network services.

The WA Labor Government is pouring billions of dollars into congestion-inducing road projects that reinforce car dependence and do nothing to help people get around their towns and communities in clean, affordable, and sustainable ways. It is currently cheaper for groups to drive between locations than to take a TransWA service.

**The Greens will invest in expanding the state's regional transport network,** providing regional WA with a genuine alternative to car ownership and unlocking opportunities for our tourism sector by better connecting the city with the country.

To incentivise public transport usage, we will provide discounted group tickets to regional destinations and investigate establishing a travel pass for use across the entire TransWA network.

The Greens will investigate opportunities to increase the frequency of intercity rail and coach services and commission a business case for a high-speed rail system between Perth and Bunbury. We will establish a minimum hourly service frequency for TransGeraldton and TransBunbury services and extend operating times to coincide with the trading hours of key employment districts.

To increase tourism in regional centres, the Greens will establish a pilot program for a tourist passenger rail service between Perth and Albany, and pilot extended weekend and special event services on the Australind, MerredinLink and AvonLink lines.



With the transport sector representing Australia's second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, the Greens also have a plan to electrify our public transport bus fleet by 2025, and will fast track the electric vehicle revolution by investing \$50 million to install charging stations across WA.

**The Greens have worked with unions and community groups to lobby the Government to re-open hundreds of kilometers of unutilised rail network.**

The Greens support recommissioning the Tier 3 rail network to reduce the number of trucks on regional roads, improving road safety and further driving down transport emissions.

### **The Greens will:**

- ▲ **Provide genuine alternatives to car ownership for regional communities by investing in quality public transport options** for regional WA including increasing the frequency of intercity rail and coach services, and commissioning a business case into a Perth-Bunbury high-speed rail network
- ▲ **Support regional tourism by establishing a pilot program for a tourist passenger rail service between Perth and Albany**, and pilot extended weekend and special event services on the Australind, MerredinLink and AvonLink lines
- ▲ **Invest \$50 million in the installation of a WA-wide charging network to encourage the use of electric vehicles**
- ▲ **Get more grain back on rail by recommissioning Tier 3 rail lines**

# CREATING JOBS IN THE REGIONS.



# SUPPORTING REGIONAL BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRY

**Our regional towns are home to some of WA's most lively small-scale businesses and local economies.**

These communities can thrive with government support for local ventures such as sustainable tourism, First Nations' businesses, and sustainable food production, bringing new job opportunities into local economies. **Supporting local ventures will help ensure profits are held by local providers for local reinvestment**, where currently very little of the revenue from extractive industries are reinvested back into regional communities.

The regions are also well placed to benefit from the transition to new green industries such as renewable energy projects, green hydrogen, lithium processing and battery manufacturing, and green steel production. Understanding the mutual relationship between industry and regional employment, the Greens will ensure no one is left behind in the transition to becoming a renewable energy hub and during the establishment of green industries.

**The Greens will broker partnerships between regional education and training, and the wider labour market, to ensure regional youth and people employed in the fossil fuel industry have a transition pathway to meaningful careers in sectors where they're needed.**

**This includes:**

- ▲ **Reducing barriers to training and education by making all TAFE courses free**
- ▲ **Creating more localised partnership agreements between 'clean' industries (e.g. health, education, caring and arts industries), schools and communities to broaden young people's career opportunities**
- ▲ **Funding First Nations engagement coordinators in all TAFEs** to link industries and community members and small business development organisations
- ▲ **Providing additional incentives to lecturing and support staff to relocate to regional areas** to ensure a wider range of courses is available on site



# INVESTING IN THE GREEN INDUSTRIES

**The regions are uniquely placed to maximise the opportunities available to Western Australia in the clean, green industries of the future.** The Greens have developed a comprehensive plan to take advantage of these opportunities, and set us on a path to a zero-carbon economy and net-zero emissions by 2035.

## **The Greens will create 55,000 new jobs across WA in local green industries by:**

- ▲ Replacing LNG exports with green hydrogen, helping WA to achieve net-zero emissions by 2035 and creating opportunities particularly in the Pilbara and Mid West;
- ▲ Generate over 48,000 jobs in green iron and steel;
- ▲ Create 4,000 jobs in recycling & waste minimisation projects; and
- ▲ Increasing start-up funding and supports for First Nation's enterprises, such as in cultural tourism and food production.

In addition, the Greens will establish a Sustainable Industry Investment Fund worth \$2.5 billion over 10 years to drive these key projects<sup>1</sup>.

The Greens will take advantage of Western Australia's significant mineral reserves and make WA a hub for the processing, manufacturing and recycling of rechargeable batteries, creating new employment opportunities in the South West. In particular, Collie is positioned well to be part of the growing lithium battery assembly industry.

The Greens will work with the Collie community to ensure there are

opportunities for coal industry workers to re-train and find secure and meaningful employment in 'clean' and emerging industries, such as the emerging rechargeable batteries industry.

We will also work alongside rural local governments to introduce community-scale renewable energy and storage to support local de-carbonisation and to improve the capacity, reliability, affordability, safety and efficiency of rural power supplies.

With the ability to generate their own electricity, communities should be able to on-sell any oversupply, allowing greater control over both renewable energy investment and production.

## **The Greens will:**

- ▲ **Create 55,000 jobs across WA in innovative, carbon-neutral, green industries**
- ▲ **Develop a green hydrogen industry**, providing new opportunities for the Pilbara and Mid-West
- ▲ **Make WA a lithium rechargeable batteries manufacturing hub**, and work with the Collie community in a transition away from coal
- ▲ **Develop comprehensive transition plans with and for coal and gas workers and communities, including training and support**
- ▲ **Assist rural communities to generate, store and sell their own renewable energy power supply**

# ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE REGIONS

**Cultural tourism provides avenues for educating the public about First Nations heritage and culture, for landscape preservation, and for self-determination and financial independence for individuals, their families and communities<sup>2,3</sup>.**

The Aboriginal Cultural Tourism sector generated around \$30 million in income for First Nations operators in WA<sup>4</sup> (2016-2017) and demand is increasing. In line with the aspirations of the WA Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC)<sup>5</sup>, the Greens will provide a suite of funding for multiple areas of Cultural Tourism to support and expand businesses and initiatives.

The Greens will deliver a \$51.4 million package for Aboriginal cultural tourism to boost First Nations' businesses, jobs and support tourism operators. This package includes and expands on the requested funding by WAITOC.

## **The Greens will:**

- ▲ **Invest up to \$10m for the development of five regional Aboriginal Cultural Centres in key tourism areas across WA**
- ▲ **Commit \$10m over the next 4 years to employ First Nations staff for these five regional Aboriginal Cultural Centres**
- ▲ **Invest \$15m to expand the Camping with Custodians<sup>4</sup> initiative**
- ▲ **Allocate \$4.4m to expand WAITOC's funding to at least \$2m per year to support new and existing cultural tourism businesses and initiatives**
- ▲ **Invest \$12m over 4 years to fully support the Aboriginal Tourism Academy**

# CREATING SUSTAINABLE REGIONS.



# 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 so<sup>5</sup>.

**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 Life 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 complementary local industries** such as nature-based tourism and honey production

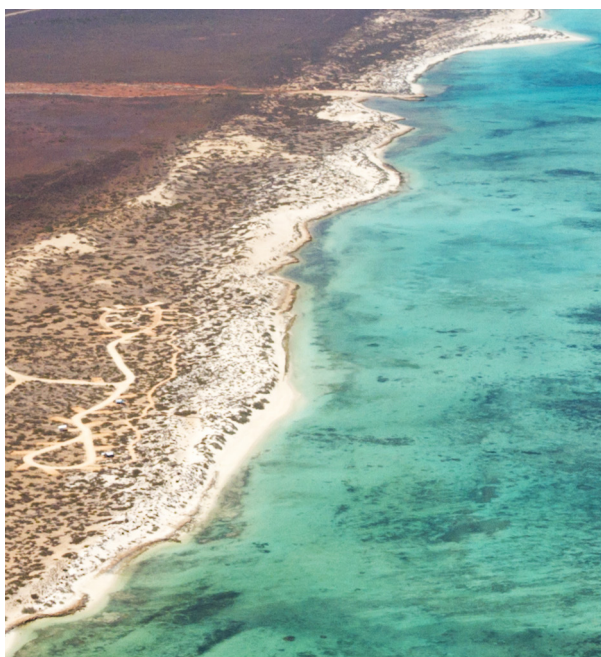
# INVESTING IN WA'S ECO-TOURISM INDUSTRY

**Our natural environment makes Western Australia's regions incredibly unique.** Let's invest in protecting these precious places and enabling more people to experience the beauty of regional WA.

Tourism in WA is a \$12 billion dollar industry, supporting over 100,000 jobs<sup>6</sup> - of which eco-tourism and nature-based tourism is a rapidly growing sub-section.

Eco-tourism provides unique and educational experiences for visitors that are responsible to the natural environment, as well as contribute to conservation and regional economies as the vast majority are owned and operated by local small businesses<sup>7,8</sup>.

**The Greens will support eco-tourism initiatives that foster the conservation and protection of biodiversity alongside people's appreciation and respect for our much-loved natural spaces.**



## The Greens will:

- ▲ **Invest \$22 million for upgrades to nature trails, signage, and visitor centres in WA's national parks and reserves, doubling the Government's commitment<sup>9</sup>**
- ▲ **Provide \$60 million over five years for additional First Nations Rangers<sup>10</sup> and give powers to monitor animals, lands and human impacts**
- ▲ **Promote Western Australia's regional World Heritage Areas, such as the Ningaloo Reef and the broader Exmouth region, to the rest of Australia through a Tourism WA destination marketing campaign**
- ▲ **Protect wildlife, sand dunes and landscapes by increasing signage and redirecting vehicle and pedestrian traffic in Exmouth and boating traffic in and around the Ningaloo Reef**
- ▲ **Commit \$10m to construct the Australian Underwater Discovery Centre at Busselton Jetty, creating the largest natural underwater observatory in the world, 200 construction jobs and 2500 ongoing jobs, and a net economic benefit of \$200m to WA<sup>11</sup>.**

# SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE & REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

In the face of climate change, Western Australia's agriculture sector is under increasing pressure. With increased extreme weather conditions, drought and flooding, **we must invest in the knowledge and innovation needed to boost and sustain agricultural productivity, and ensure we provide farming communities with the resources they need to adapt and thrive.**

Regenerative agriculture is a set of sustainable farming practices that seek to improve the resources it uses rather than depleting them, by focusing on soil health, water management and fertiliser use.

There is no known mechanism that is as effective as photosynthesis for drawing down carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Regenerative agriculture seizes the capacity of plants to draw carbon out of the atmosphere and into the soil - increasing resilience to drought.

Conventional agriculture treats the soil as an exploitable resource - to which chemicals and fertilizers are added. The soil is plowed or tilled multiple times per year and a cocktail of herbicides, pesticides and fungicides is used to kill anything that would live in the soil. A lack of water is compensated for with large-scale irrigation, regularly causing salinification of pasture that currently costs the Western Australian economy \$519 million per year<sup>12</sup>.

Regenerative agriculture turns conventional agriculture on its head by increasing the levels of carbon in the soil through regenerative principles. When carbon is

stored in the soil, microbial life thrives, soil texture improves, roots go deeper, worms thrive producing nitrogen-rich castings, nutrient uptake is fortified and water retention improves dramatically - resulting in soils that are more drought tolerant and flood resistant.

Extensive use of regenerative practices compound to a state in which chemical additives are no longer necessary, saving farmers millions of dollars and increasing the viability of farming businesses.

**The Greens have a plan to assist farming communities to implement regenerative agricultural practices to improve soil quality, increase productivity, help maintain ecosystems, and build resilience against a changing climate and harsher conditions.**

Under the Greens' plan, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development will be funded to undertake research into innovative regenerative practices, and to support our farmers and farming communities transition to regenerative practices.

We will also establish a future farming fund to help WA farmers invest in improving the resilience of their farms against the impacts of the climate crisis by implementing regenerative practices.

# SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE & REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

## The Greens will:

- ▲ **Establish a \$125 million per annum Future Farming fund** to issue grants to WA farmers to improve the resilience of their farms against the impacts of the climate crisis and to transition to using regenerative farming practices
- ▲ **Increase annual funding to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to undertake research on regenerative agriculture practices**, and to appoint farm liaison officers to assist and collaborate with farmers and farming communities on regenerative practices
- ▲ **Establish a certification process by which farmers practicing regenerative agriculture can have the drawdown of carbon into their soils recognised for carbon credits**
- ▲ **Implement a public awareness campaign to buy locally grown produce**, stimulating local job creation and reducing transport
- ▲ **Establish a \$125 million per annum Nature Fund to assist local Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups undertake critical ecological restoration and management work in the regions<sup>13</sup>**

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13. Refer to The Greens (WA) Protecting and Restoring our Environment 2021 State Election initiative