

Wetlands

The many and varied wetlands across the vast landscape of our State provide biodiversity oases and are integral to our ancient cultural and natural heritage. The protection and conservation of remaining wetlands is paramount, with some regions having lost over 90% of their original wetlands and surrounding vegetation.

The current system of classification of wetland on which planning decisions are made denies their cultural and social values and downplays the enormity of their role in sustaining Western Australia's unique biodiversity.

All remaining wetlands and surrounding vegetation should be protected and actively managed for conservation. There is insufficient knowledge of the effects of grazing, introduced animals, urban development and mining on wetlands.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- all Western Australian wetlands to have Ecological Character Description and Management Plan for environmental, cultural and social attributes
- a State and Local Government program to promote the value, function and importance of wetlands
- wetlands meeting international significance under the [Ramsar Convention](#) to be immediately protected in National Parks
- protection of the remaining wetlands of Western Australia that are not protected under the Ramsar Convention
- prohibition of any activity or development that may have significant impact on a wetland
- recognition of wetlands with significance to First Nations People (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations Peoples](#) policy)
- wetlands occurring on private property or pastoral leases to be protected in collaboration with landowners/leasees

Measures

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

- ensure a coordinated approach to managing Western Australia's wetlands and provide coordinated and uniform monitoring of the health of Western Australia's wetlands
- ensure completion of the full assessment of the wetlands of Western Australia including assessment for potential impacts due to climate change, catchment protection and guaranteed environmental flow (see also The Greens (WA) [Climate Change](#) policy)
- review and release for public comment the Wetlands Conservation Policy (1997) including the comprehensive review approved by the Wetlands

Coordinating Committee in 2007, and then implement the reviewed accordingly

- independently review and release for public comment State Planning Policy 2.9 as it relates to wetlands prior to approval and implementation. As a priority the guidelines for Determination of Wetlands buffers (now incorporated in SPP2.9) to be completed, released for public comment and implemented accordingly
- ensure our obligations under international treaties (such as Ramsar¹, JAMBA², CAMBA³ and ROCKAMBA⁴) are fulfilled by adequately funding the protection and management of all internationally significant wetlands and enshrine these obligations in both state and federal legislation
- actively promote the listing of all nominated Ramsar wetlands and pursue further nominations
- ensure the original spirit and purpose of Bush Forever⁵ is respected, and provide rehabilitation and statutory protection for all remaining sites
- ensure that all wetlands determined to be of significance by first Nations people are recognised and protected
- ensure the protection and management of wetlands on public lands that are not currently protected
- provide special protection to peat based wetlands in accordance with their scarcity and value as carbon sinks
- prohibit clearing in local government areas with less than 15% native vegetation remaining and prohibit further clearing of vegetation types that have less than 10% of their pre-European extent
- greatly improve monitoring of illegal clearing and breaches of conditions set under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 and take effective action against such breaches
- prohibit extractive industries in wetlands and wetland catchments. this prohibition to include but not be limited to the extraction of water, peat, building materials, fossil fuels and mineral bearing ores
- prohibit development and other activities that have major negative impacts on wetlands
- adequately fund wetland education programs in schools and community wetlands centres
- encourage local communities to protect and manage wetlands in their area
- establish a public trust to support community management of wetlands and preservation and protection of wetlands outside of reserve areas
- ensure the protection of wetlands on private property and pastoral leases, or lands held for other purposes, through a process of negotiation and, if needed, compulsory acquisition

(See also the Australian Greens [Water and Inland Aquatic Environments](#) policy)

Glossary

1. The Ecological Character Description and Management Plan are requirements for Ramsar nomination. That level of scrutiny, assessment and care should be extended to all wetlands
2. **JAMBA** –Japan Australia Migratory Birds Agreement
3. **CAMBA** - China Australia Migratory Birds Agreement

4. **ROKAMBA** - Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
5. **Bush Forever** - the public policy framework that aims to protect the biodiversity of 51,000 ha of bushland representing the 26 vegetation complexes of the Swan Coastal Plain portion of the Perth Metropolitan Region.

Wetlands policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2020

The Greens (WA) wetlands spokesperson is [Diane Evers MLC](#)