

Regions

Western Australia has one of the most centralised demographic concentrations in the world where the vast majority of our population live in a single metropolitan area. However, it is Western Australia's regions, and the West Australians who live and work there, which generate most of our primary wealth.

Despite this, the regions are often less well serviced than the metropolitan area in terms of health, education, land-use planning, environmental services and a range of other government provisions. Regional communities are also responsible for managing a diverse, fragile and often degraded environment.

With local governments limited by the resources that they raise through the blunt instrument of rates, they are often individually unable to provide significant cohesive and strategic regional initiatives, although many, through voluntary regional organisations of Councils, are moving in this direction. This is particularly true in regions that are very large in area, but very sparsely populated, like the Pilbara and Kimberley.

The resilience of regional communities to future challenges can be enhanced by diversification of local economies, effective stewardship of the natural environment, supporting local communities and allowing for more participation of regional communities in creating their own futures.

The Greens (WA) strongly support a regional approach to governance that recognises and places the environment at the foundation of governance. Regional governance, based on bio-geographical boundaries provides the most efficient way to foster ecologically sustainable development, whilst building stronger, more resilient, and better designed communities.

Aims

The Greens (WA) want:

- vibrant regional communities with efficient government services
- more input for regions into their own sustainable development
- local governments which are resourced to develop and maintain regional services including: waste, road networks, street lighting networks, information and communications technology, community infrastructure, public health, emergency services and environmental services
- regional collaboration between local governments to increase resource efficiency
- fairer distribution of the State's wealth between the city and country
- the full inclusion of Aboriginal people in regional governance (see also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander](#) policy)
- safe and secure food production (see also The Greens (WA) [Food](#) policy)
- safe, secure and reliable energy distribution

- economic diversification in regions, including incentives for the development of downstream processing of resources and manufacturing in the regions, and a particular focus on creating the new low carbon economy of the future (see also The Greens (WA) [Energy](#) policy)
- restoration of degraded soil, waters and vegetation.

Measures

The Greens (WA) will initiate or support legislation and other measures that:

- establish a stronger regional governance framework via the creation of statutory regional authorities that integrate the work of:
 - local governments;
 - the Regional Development Commissions;
 - State Departmental services;
 - Commonwealth Regional Development Authorities;
 - Aboriginal Representatives;
 - Natural Resource Management Groups;
 - industry;
 - tourism; and
 - NGOs

into a coherent and representative regional structure.

- standardise any anomalous regional boundaries used by State departments
- prioritise the strengthening of regional governance in the Kimberley and Pilbara as the two regions in most urgent need of improved coordination of governance with more local input
- implement the 2011 recommendations of the Indigenous Implementation Board (the Sanderson Report) to include Aboriginal people in regional governance (see also The Greens (WA) [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander](#) policy)
- better protect native vegetation across all regions by:
 - supporting revegetation initiatives in critical water catchments and ecologically important areas;
 - integrating native vegetation into traditional agricultural system; and
 - supporting crop diversification and carbon farming initiatives.
- establish integrated and efficient waste management systems across the regions drawing on regional collaboration and regionalised delivery of services where feasible (see also The Greens (WA) [Beyond Waste](#) policy)
- upgrade regional rail systems including high speed passenger services between significant population centres and retaining the freight rail network (see also The Greens (WA) [Transport](#) policy)
- provide expanded, low cost public transport in regional towns
- encourage economic diversification, particularly into industries that are helping to create the low carbon economy of the future
- create full rateability of tenements of extractive industries to resolve the rating inequity for local governments in which State Agreements operate (see also The Greens (WA) [Mining](#) policy)

- promote decentralisation, and the re-establishment of regional and remote communities, through:
 - State-based measures seeking to counter trends which disadvantage regions (such as FIFO), including seeking to change State Agreement Acts; and
 - strong advocacy with the Federal Government to change laws and policies which disadvantage regions.

Royalties for Regions (RfR).

- Modify the criteria and objectives of the RfR funding to:
 - build resilient communities and achieving long-term security for regions which look beyond the current resources driven economic framework and towards the development of other more diverse industry (tourism, renewable energy and manufacturing in particular);
 - respond to local needs while also acknowledging that the short term benefits of new infrastructure can place a long term asset management burden on local governments and therefore on communities; (see also The Greens (WA) [Local Government](#) policy)
 - require a percentage of royalty revenue be allocated to alleviating disadvantage, particularly if caused or exacerbated by the displacement of regional industry or social marginalisation caused by the resources industries;
 - address regional sustainability issues including: sustainable energy provision and generation, water provision and recycling and sustainable waste management options;
 - increase the sustainability and autonomy of regional local governments through efficiency measures (i.e. water, energy, waste); and
 - acknowledge the need for incentives to attract permanent residents into regional areas, and service these needs appropriately (i.e. housing affordability, social infrastructure, cultural engagement etc).

Regions policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2017