

State Budget 2006/07 Information Sheet Children and Young People

The centrepiece of the Government's 06/07 budget in relation to children and young people is the injection of \$140 million over four years into the Department for Community Development. This money is largely earmarked to employ a significant number of new staff to improve the Department's ability to support vulnerable children. WACOSS welcomes the Government's commitment to a Department that has been universally recognised as being under great strain. This budget however, fails to provide a similar commitment to the non government sector who also have a significant role in the protection of vulnerable children and whose resources are also stretched beyond their limits.

Young people are almost completely overlooked in the budget with the exception of \$600,000 being made available to Albany and Peel to programs that provide outreach services to at-risk young people living in these areas. Overall very few of the budget announcements relate directly to what WACOSS proposed in the Children and Young People's sections of the Pre Budget Submission.

WACOSS' Recommendation	Budget Outcome	Comments
<p>Ensure the Effectiveness of the Office of Commissioner for Children and Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the State Government adequately resource the recently established Office of Commissioner for Children and Young People to the sum of \$5 million per year. • That the Office of Commissioner for Children and Young People be independent of Government. • That the Safety Screening Unit function be quarantined from the rest of the Office of Commissioner for Children and Young People. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	
<p>Whole-of-Government Child Protection Strategy</p> <p>That the State Government develop a whole-of-government strategy for the protection of children in Western Australia including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit resources to a community forum on child protection • Increase funds for quality counselling and therapeutic services for children, adolescents and their families dealing with abuse issues both in and out of care. • Progress the review of the real cost of providing out of home care and provide appropriate funding. 	<p>The Government has taken steps towards addressing this issue. They have allocated eight and a half million dollars over four years for 20 new treatment based placements to care for children with high care needs, including disturbed behaviour. 10 placements will be provided by non government agencies and 10 by the department.</p> <p>Further, funding of \$700,000 over four years has been allocated to two new Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Services, on in the Bunbury region and another in the Peel region.</p>	

<p>Enhance Child Protection Training That the State Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make child protection training available to government and non-government agencies who have direct and/or indirect contact with children as well as parents/caregivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	
<p>Increase Parenting Services That a strategically planned approach is developed in relation to parenting services, and in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the State Government provide more local services for men in parenting and other family roles and continue funding of Mensplace beyond June 2006. • That the State Government fund more multidisciplinary early childhood and parenting services in the metropolitan area for children from birth to school entry age. • That the State Government commits funds to ensure better linkages between parenting services and other key agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	
<p>Working with Children Processes That the State Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement consistent recording of animal cruelty convictions • Improve the selection and recruitment processes of employers by expanding the Employright program • Ensure that there is a streamlined process so employers/employees can obtain a 'working with children check' and a general police clearance at a one stop shop and at no extra cost • Compensate all NGO agencies who may need to recruit, screen and induct new staff or retrain existing staff where a loss has been experienced as a result of compliance with the Working with Children legislation • Apply the working with children check to parents who volunteer for activities with their children • Ensure the Working with Children Screening Unit employ an expert in the assessment of future probability of offending before dispensing a Negative Notice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has not directly addressed any of the issues outlined in the Pre Budget Submission in relation to the Working with Children Checks in this budget. The only new budget line item related to the Checks is \$280,000 over four years available to the Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering to enable it to provide a "free second criminal check" for those volunteers that require both a general criminal record check and a similar check under the Working with Children legislation. 	
<p>Programs to Promote Physical Activity That the State Government commit to initiatives to promote physical activity among children and young people by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that any new urban developments have large public parks and reserves suitable for team sports • Conducting a research project into the costs of sporting activities for school aged children from low- income families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	

<p>Maintenance of Family Centres and Community Based Child Care Centres That the State Government continues allocation of funding for minor works and capital upgrade of state owned premises operated as Family Centres and Community Based Child Care Centres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	
<p>Youth Services Mapping Exercise That the State Government undertake a mapping exercise of youth service agencies across the State. The mapping exercise should build on the 2004 Service Group Review undertaken by Department for Community Development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	
<p>Whole of Government Review of Youth Consultation Processes The government needs to undertake a cross-Government review of their processes for ensuring appropriate youth consultation strategies are undertaken to ensure youth input into all Government decision making and not just those issues deemed to be 'youth issues'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	
<p>Training for Government Workers on Dealing with Young People That a specific training program be developed for all government workers, especially the police, in effective and appropriate ways of dealing with young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	
<p>Young Carer Support Program Implement a recurrent young carer support program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific budget allocation 	