

Budget Area 4: Complex Needs



About this Issue

The Council is concerned by the prevalence of mental health and drug and alcohol issues in clients across community service areas, as clients with complex needs complicate the provision of other support services and place demands on service staff not trained or resourced to address all the issues. A person may present to an issue-specific service in one part of the community sector, only to be found to have highly complex and interrelated needs that must all to be addressed to achieve a positive and sustainable outcome. Cross-sectoral collaboration needs to be encouraged and resourced in order to develop innovative service responses that assist people with complex needs.

The Council believes that areas of concentrated and intergenerational disadvantage are best addressed through local strengths-based wrap-around programs. Successful service provision will emphasise social inclusion, local community responses and cultural appropriateness. Recognition of the need for flexibility will be central to the success of such service responses, as will improvements in integration and collaboration between the government and community sectors, as well as between government agencies.

The Council's 2013-14 Pre-Budget Submission

Outcome sought:	Innovative, integrated and flexible service responses reflecting collaboration across government and community services that provide assistance and address gaps in services for people with complex needs	\$57m
------------------------	--	--------------

Proposed strategies
Capacity building for integrated care-coordination services.
Regional outreach services for people with complex mental health and co-morbidity needs.
Increased funding for mental health & wrap-around services for young people.
Introduction of an ongoing audit of rates of mental illness and drug and alcohol problems among prisoners to evaluate in-prison service, and preventative program needs.
Increased funding for community programs designed to support people leaving formal AOD treatment programs.
Establishment of an Aboriginal-specific residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation in Perth/the South West region.
Expansion of the existing Drug Court to incorporate an alcohol-related diversion program.
Funding of strengths-based diversion programs for juvenile offenders (particularly Aboriginal offenders).

Relevant Budget Portfolio(s)

Lead government agencies:	Mental Health Commission (including the Drug & Alcohol Office), Department of Corrective Services and Department for Child Protection.
Other government agencies:	WA Police, Disability Services Commission, Department for Communities, Department of Education, Department of Health, Office of the Public Advocate, and Department of Housing.

Complex Needs: The 2013-14 Budget in Summary

This year, one of the Government's four budget themes was "community safety". In the budget papers we can see that for the Government, this primarily means spending hundreds of millions over the next four years on police officers, and installing \$36 million worth of solar-powered flashing Light LED speed zone signs. No significant new attempts have been made to address the underlying causes of crime or criminal behaviour. Through the budget papers, many issues which are known to contribute to criminal behaviour are identified as being of concern, but the Budget fails to identify or fund any new programs or initiatives to address these concerns.

The funding for any new, innovative and evidence-based programs seem have given way to business as usual in a range of policy areas in desperate need of improved outcomes.

Initiatives at a Glance

Notable funding announcements in the 2013-14 State Budget:

- ✦ Community and Youth Justice - Office Establishment and Refurbishment within Department of Corrective Services. Budget of \$1.3m in 2013-14 and \$800,000+ pA for 2014-15 through 2016-17.¹
- ✦ \$13.6 million funding over the next 3 years has been allocated by the Mental Health Commission for the establishment of Early Psychosis Youth Centre(s) to "increase young people's access to early mental health interventions."²
- ✦ Lifeline has been allocated approximately \$500,000 per annum funding by the Mental Health Commission.³
- ✦ \$10.3 million dollars has been allocated in the WA Police budget for the upgrade Police and Community Youth Centres (PCYC) infrastructure (though no indication of increased funding for PCYC or other crime prevention programs.⁴)
- ✦ \$400,000 over four years has been allocated from Royalties for Regions for research into foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) in the Fitzroy area.⁵
- ✦ The Department of Health has allocated new funding of \$6 million over 4 years to help combat ear health issues in remote Aboriginal communities.⁶ (Nb. During the 2013 State Election campaign, the Liberal Party promised \$8 million over 4 years.⁷)
- ✦ In 2013-14 (no forward estimates), the Department for Child Protection & Family Support will spend \$1 million on night and day youth patrols in Kununurra to "prevent harm to children, provide youth intervention, and maintain community peace and safety".⁸

Need more information:

- ✦ In July 2013, DAO will commence implementation of an alcohol court diversion program (expanding the existing drug court diversion program) in the Perth Central Law Courts (as promised during the 2013 State Election campaign). However, there is no indication the level of amount of funding allocated for this program. In addition, the pilot Mental Health Court Diversion and Support Project is due to be evaluated in 2013-14.⁹
- ✦ \$2.1 million in funding for the Mental Health Commission to expand the delivery of essential crisis support services.¹⁰

Key Observations/Implications

1. The Department of Corrective Services' bottomless funding pit

The Department of Corrective Services budget continues to grow, with this year the 2013-14 budget estimate representing a 7.9% (\$53.5 million) increase on the on the 2012-13 budget for Adult Corrective Services alone.¹¹ These large increases reflect the demand-based nature of the Department's budget, and the significant increases in prisoner numbers since 2007-08.¹²

Expenses	2008-09 Actual Budget ¹³	2013 -14 Budget Estimate ¹⁴	\$ increase over 5 years	% increase over 5 years
Adult Corrective Services	\$498.5million	\$729.2million	\$230.7million	46.3%
Youth Justice Services	\$80.4million	\$99.4million	\$19.0million	23.6%

The Department's Asset Investment spending drops significantly in 2013-14 (and over the forward estimates), this is a notable change after very high levels of investment in new and expanded detention facilities in in recent years.¹⁵

2. Lack of funding for new initiatives to prevent crime & recidivism

The budget papers state that:

*Aboriginal people are significantly over-represented in Western Australia's prisons and detention centres. The Department has a renewed focus on improved inter-agency and community collaboration, with a focus on the identification of strategies to improve outcomes for Aboriginal offenders, especially Aboriginal young people from the metropolitan area who offend, and prolific youth offenders.*¹⁶

However, the budget papers identify no initiatives, and no new funding to directly target this concern (which is far from new).

The papers also identify the need to preventing young people from entering the **youth justice system**, or to divert them away from the system. However, no *new* funding has been allocated by the Department to achieve this. The papers describe \$2 million pA as being redirected to increase the availability of prevention and early intervention programs and services for young people.¹⁷ However it is unclear whether this is an increase on the \$1 million increase (on top of the existing \$2 million budget) proposed by Minister Francis back in May.¹⁸

The Budget provides additional funding of \$282million over four years for the recruitment of 550 **extra police** and auxiliary officers, including over 80 additional officers in 2013-14 to improve community safety. The Council is disappointed by the Government's over-emphasis on increased police numbers — especially in light of public comments by Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan. regarding the need to address the underlying drivers of crime and criminal behaviour, given most of these "are already well known and most of them are out of the hands of police". As the Commissioner has also noted:

*The measure of police success (the number of people prosecuted and sentenced) is also a measure of community failure.*¹⁹

3. Still talking about FASD

\$400,000 over four years has been allocated from Royalties for Regions for research into foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) in the Fitzroy area.²⁰ However, the Council questions whether further research is required, or whether it's time to increase investment in targeted programs to both prevent FASD, and address the cost to the community. As recently as 2012, the WA Legislative Assembly Education and Health Standing Committee published the report *Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: the invisible disability*, which made a range of recommendations.²¹

Nb. Confusingly, the Department of Health budget also identifies funding of \$400,000 over four years to "provide better coordinated healthcare for children and families in the Fitzroy Valley".²²

4. Community mental health and AOD services

The Mental Health Commission budget shows significant anticipated growth in spending on public inpatient mental health services — \$110.4 million over the forward estimates (plus a growth of \$21 million dollars in 2013-14).²³ The budget papers indicate significant growth in the purchase of non-government mental health and drug and alcohol services between 2012-13 and 2013-14 (\$124.8 million to \$149.2 million — almost 20%). However there is little *further* growth over the forward estimates.²⁴

5. Housing remains a concern

Housing options for people with complex needs will remain a concern in 2013-14 and beyond, with further investment in housing desperately needed to address the difficulties many people with complex needs experience trying to access secure, stable and affordable housing (including supported and transitional accommodation options). The Council notes that an additional 16 houses and 18 packages of support will be provided under the part of the Mental Health Commission's *Individualised Community Living* program (an increase from the 100 people with a mental illness currently being supported).²⁵

6. Complex needs of children and their families

Growing complexity in challenges facing parents and the needs of children²⁶ referred to the Department for Child Protection & Family Services is driving significant increases in service need, and creating challenges for DCPFS:

*Child protection notifications have increased more than 80% from 10,067 in 2008-09 to 18,327 in 2012-13. Family and domestic violence, mental health issues, and parental drug and alcohol abuse continue to be key drivers of demand for child protection and family support services.*²⁷

-
- ¹ Department of Corrective Services, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 886.
 - ² Mental Health Commission, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), pp. 537 & 539.
 - ³ Mental Health Commission, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 537.
 - ⁴ WA Police, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 492.
 - ⁵ Budget Paper 3, p. 132.
 - ⁶ Department of Health, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 1), p. 136.
 - ⁷ Liberal Party of WA (2013) *The Liberals' Regional Development Policy*, <http://goo.gl/0ZxHmj>.
 - ⁸ Budget Paper 3, p. 152.
 - ⁹ Mental Health Commission, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 539.
 - ¹⁰ Budget Paper 3, p. 12.
 - ¹¹ Department of Corrective Services, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 886.
 - ¹² Department of Corrective Services, Budget Paper 3, p. 170.
 - ¹³ Department of Corrective Services, 2010-11 Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 682; 2013-14 Budget Speech by Treasurer Troy Buswell (9 August 2013), p. 5.
 - ¹⁴ Department of Corrective Services, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 882.
 - ¹⁵ Department of Corrective Services, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 886.
 - ¹⁶ Department of Corrective Services, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 883.
 - ¹⁷ Department of Corrective Services, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 882.
 - ¹⁸ The West Australian (6 May 2013) Lift for crime prevention spending, <http://goo.gl/vAB6ZK>
 - ¹⁹ WA Police (No date) *Justice Reinvestment by WA Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan*, <http://goo.gl/kethWb>.
 - ²⁰ Budget Paper 3, p. 132.
 - ²¹ Legislative Assembly Education and Health Standing Committee (2012) *Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: the invisible disability*, <http://goo.gl/JDy9wm>.
 - ²² Department of Health, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 1), p. 136.
 - ²³ Mental Health Commission, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 537; and Budget Paper 3, p. 150.
 - ²⁴ Mental Health Commission, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 546 (see: *Supplies and services*).
 - ²⁵ Mental Health Commission, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 539.
 - ²⁶ DCPFS, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 563.
 - ²⁷ DCPFS, Budget Paper 2 (Vol 2), p. 563.