

State Budget 2008/09 Information Sheet Care and Support

WACOSS advocates for government investment in strong, basic infrastructure that will benefit the community, in particular our most vulnerable members. Western Australia is in the midst of a resources boom. But while the state is undeniably more prosperous, the gap between rich and poor is widening and the increasing inequity is impacting on our most valuable and vulnerable community members, our children, youth and families; carers, seniors and people with disabilities. It is the care and support that is offered to these groups in our communities that reflects highly on the quality of the social fabric of our state.

Overall, there is funding of \$180 million being provided for new child protection initiatives and \$112M to services (largely frontline workers to manage 16% increase in children under care) to meet increasing demand for child protection services

WACOSS' Recommendations	Budget Outcome & Comments
Children, Youth and Families	
Children in Care: Increase funding for children in the State Care system by 1.25 million dollars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$77.8 million over two years, including an extra 128 beds (provided by NGOs) for residential care facilities. - \$9.24 million over four years for 54 additional out of home care placements - Foster carers \$65 fortnight (\$15 increase in addition to \$50 previously announced)
Therapeutic Counselling for Children: Increase funding for both non-government and government therapeutic counselling services for children, including children in care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Included in the \$77 million mentioned above, another 16 treatment specific beds for new residential care facilities, providing treatment focussed therapeutic services for young people with complex needs - \$5.64 million from funding associated with mandatory reporting to fund non-government child sexual abuse treatment services.
Keeping Children Safe: Provision of funding for a dedicated policy and research project to investigate early intervention and protection responses for the needs of children who are victims or witnesses of domestic or family violence.	No New Government funding commitment.
Services for the Health Needs of Aboriginal Children: Commitment to improve health services for Aboriginal children in Western Australian hospitals.	See 'Health' – inclusion of neo-natal services in the Kimberley regions.
Children in Women's Refuge Services: Increase core funding levels to ensure that to ensure that women's refuges, DV services and homeless services employ a minimum of two full-time Child Support Workers.	No New Government funding commitment.
A Holistic, Child Focused Approach to Child Protection: Provision of funding to establish a Child Advocacy Centre in Western Australia.	No New Government funding commitment.

Family Centres and Community Based Child Care Centres: Maintenance of current funding for minor works and capital upgrade of state owned premises operated as Family Centres and Community Based Child Care Centres.	No New Government funding commitment.
Young People Leaving Care: Provision of funds to resource and support all young people up to the age of 25 leaving care.	No New Government funding commitment.
Young People Abused in Care: Provision of funds for the provision of information, access and support to young people who have experienced abuse while in care or who have been victims of crime.	Continuation of the Redress WA Scheme, open until 30 April 2009.
Early Childhood Years: Provision of funds for a review of the Early Years Strategy.	No New Government funding commitment.
People with Disabilities	
Support Services for People with Disabilities: - - - Provision of funding and planning required to ensure that all people with a disability in need of access and respite services have access to these. - Provision of funding and planning required to ensure that people with disabilities in need of assistance are able to access the support and services they need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$17 million increase, including \$6.4 million to assist NGO's with higher costs. - \$285k p/a for four years to make the Companion Card free. - Additional grants of \$750k will be provided to assist with daily living to enable participation in the community
Supporting Advocacy for People with Disabilities: Allocation of additional recurrent funding to organisations funded to provide advocacy for people with disabilities.	No New Government funding commitment.
Supporting People with Disabilities to Secure and Maintain Work: Provision of funding for programs that support people with disabilities to secure and maintain work.	No New Government funding commitment.
Aged Care	
Housing Information, Advice and Security for Senior Citizens: Provision of funding to establish a Seniors Housing Advisory Service.	No New Government funding commitment.
Protecting Vulnerable Seniors: The funding of crime prevention strategies aimed at seniors.	No New Government funding commitment.
Increase Mobility Equipment Assistance for Seniors: Provision of financial assistance to low-income seniors for purchasing mobility equipment.	No New Government funding commitment.
Carers	
Carer Representation Framework: Provision of funding for Carer Representation in order to recognise, engage and support carers in systemic and operational levels of service delivery across the sector.	No New Government funding commitment.
Mental Health Carer Representation and Advocacy: Increased funding for Mental Health Carer Representation and Advocacy.	No New Government funding commitment.

<p>Mental Health and Carer Information-Sharing: The approval of Phase Two of a research project addressing the use of forms and checklists by mental health clinicians to provide a consistent process of gaining consent to release information to family carers.</p>	<p>No New Government funding commitment.</p>
<p>Support Services for Young Carers: Provision of ongoing, re-current funding in order to provide consistency for a high number of carers in need of support services.</p>	<p>\$150k p/a for four years to Carers WA to coordinate provision of information, counselling and peer support for young carers and siblings</p>
<p>Support for Grandparents as Carers: Provision of funding for a range of appropriate services for grandparents, including financial support and additional Grandparent Playgroups.</p>	<p>No New Government funding commitment.</p>

Additional budget announcements:

Mandatory Reporting - \$65million, of which \$43.9 is new funding (\$1 million in 2007/08, \$15million in 2008/09, \$49 million in out-years), spread across Departments (Police, Health, Education, Child Protection). A special unit will be established for child sexual abuse investigation, support services and the establishment of a call-centre staffed by qualified professionals. \$5.46million provided for NGO counselling and support over 3 years and \$4.9M will be provided for remote areas frontline staff

Working with Children Checks \$19.4million for Working with Children Screening

New Community Services Child Protection Advisory Group The establishment comprised of up to 12 leaders in the community services sector and 4 Department Staff – no funds committed