

REGIONAL INVESTMENTS

Due to a Government review of all Royalties for Regions initiatives, purportedly prioritising job-generating regional election commitments and the delivery of community infrastructure and services, a change has been made to how Royalties for Regions funding will be allocated. It will now be used for a number of essential services for regions as well as the new and strategic initiatives it was initially established for. The Government predicts that this will improve net debt by \$861 million across the forward estimates period.

ESSENTIAL AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES NOW FROM ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS

- Investment for Royalty for Regions over the four years is \$4,018,000
- This will cover costs in Patient Assisted Travel Scheme, and additional education assistants and Aboriginal Islander Education Officers
- It will also include funding to subsidise higher regional costs of water delivery, drainage, sewerage services, TAFE regional subsidies and upgrades and expansions to senior and primary schools
- Much of this was previously funded through consolidated accounts
- Community Resource Centres will see a 38.5% cut in allocated funding from the 19/20 budget onwards (dropping from \$13m per year to \$8m per year). No rationale for this has been found in the papers.

	2015-16 Actual \$'000	2016-17 Budget \$'000	2016-17 Estimated Actual \$'000	2017-18 Budget Estimate \$'000	2018-19 Forward Estimate \$'000	2019-20 Forward Estimate \$'000	2020-21 Forward Estimate \$'000
CASHFLOWS FROM STATE GOVERNMENT							
Service appropriations.....	1,166,755	1,234,297	1,244,383	1,270,129	1,271,226	1,273,159	1,288,137
Capital appropriation.....	44,632	44,001	53,531	29,451	17,177	7,067	6,600
Administered equity contribution ^(b)	-	-	-	-	5,229	11,975	24,168
Holding account drawdowns.....	15,137	7,856	7,856	13,530	14,200	14,200	14,200
Royalties for Regions Fund:							
Regional Community Services Fund.....	3,956	5,306	4,742	15,950	18,899	19,239	18,564
Regional Infrastructure and Headworks Fund.....	7,472	18,567	17,883	11,607	9,233	6,395	-
Receipts paid into Consolidated Account.....	-	-	(560)	(3,662)	-	-	-
Administered appropriations.....	-	-	-	-	11	25	352
Net cash provided by State Government.....	1,237,952	1,310,027	1,327,835	1,337,005	1,335,975	1,332,060	1,352,021

OVERREPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The State Budget states that specific projects are being developed to address:

- The provision of victim support services for Aboriginal people in remote areas.

The WA Council of Social Service maintains that it is not possible to significantly address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice system without repealing mandatory sentencing legislation.

EDUCATION SECTOR

- 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education officers who will be employed at WA schools over the next few years - \$10.6 million over four years, for Aboriginal Education Officers funded by Royalties to Regions.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths)

- \$1.3 million over four years for science in Primary Schools funded by Royalties for Regions.

MENTAL HEALTH

- Step Up/Step Down community-based mental health services have been scheduled for Kalgoorlie (\$7.3m), Bunbury (\$11.2 million) and Karratha (\$12.3 million). The Kalgoorlie unit, due to commence in 2020-21, is especially welcome after the previous Government scrapped it from the budget.
- A three tiered mental health program for young people and a Youth Medical Service Health Hub are being established in the Peel region. These new services could be part of those pledged to support the drug testing of welfare recipients in the area.
- Other youth-peer services include Ice Breakers at Albany PCYC and via the National Rugby League.

ALCOHOL & DRUG

- Rehabilitation centre in the South West and a drug rehabilitation prison for women at Wandoo, very welcome but at expense of award winning programs. A similar facility for men is expected in a few years. Funding also included to commence needs analysis and planning for a Kimberley service.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

- \$5 million cut to Community Resource Centres in forward estimates.
- Procurement planning for an Aboriginal short-stay facility in Broome is funded.
- \$7.4 million for financial counselling services, presumably spread over metropolitan and rural/regional services, but missing detail about whether this is reinstated and additional funding, or reinstated only.
- Establishment of the Dalyellup Family Centre is scheduled in 2019-20.

HOUSEHOLD FEES AND CHARGES

- The Water Corporation's country loss operating subsidy is currently funded from the consolidated account, however a portion of this subsidy will now be funded from the Royalties for Regions program from 2019/20. This is in aim to support the delivery of essential regional water services to regional Western Australia.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- \$20m and five year commitment to establish new Aboriginal Ranger Programs.
- National Partnership on the Skilling Australians Fund targeting growth in apprentices and trainees.

FEDERAL BUDGET (additional considerations)

- Cashless debit card trials in Kununurra and income management extended to Goldfields.
- Small scale funding initiatives for telehealth for rural, regional and remote Australia, research and suicide prevention support programs.