



# **Budget Briefing Pack 2020/21**

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## WACOSS Media Release

Thursday 8 October 2020

### **WA Budget: Welcome focus on people's hip-pocket and Aboriginal wellbeing**

The Western Australian Council of Social Service has welcomed the focus on Aboriginal communities and wellbeing in today's State Budget, as well as keeping household bills manageable.

"Today's Budget makes clear that the difficult decisions made by the McGowan Government to keep Western Australian's safe during this pandemic have also cushioned our state's economy from the impacts seen in the rest of the country and around the world," said Dr Jennie Gray, WACOSS Deputy CEO.

"It is heartening to see the announced record investment in supporting WA's Aboriginal communities. The State has stepped up following the Commonwealth abandoning their responsibilities in this space, and have committed to build and improve the infrastructure for those communities, while extending other programs like the Aboriginal Community Connectors.

"The number of police officers is set to be drastically increased. Rather than bringing more people into contact with the justice system, we need to invest in the services and community support that addresses the causes of crime and diverts people early.

"Providing the \$600 electricity bill credit, while also freezing increases to tariffs and charges, will help put money in the pockets of low-income earners. This is a prudent decision to quickly stimulate spending in the local economy.

"We are pleased to see more than \$7 million being spent to enable the new 'shuttle conferencing' model for contested family violence restraining order applications, which will assist in improving outcomes for women and children affected by family violence.

"Providing access to low cost and, in some cases, free training through the TAFE system is good to see. Linking it to areas like the NDIS and the McGowan Government's signature METRONET infrastructure pipeline, means we can be confident this training will lead to sustained employment opportunities.

"This Budget provides greater support for women than we saw from the Commonwealth earlier in the week, with investment in the skills and training of female dominated

industries. The majority of the stimulus investment in job creation and infrastructure, however, still targets male-heavy industries.

“The supplementation payments to assist not-for-profits to meet wage rises, announced in the Mid-Year Review, are welcome. We remained concerned that there has not been improved funding for the community services sector to meet rising need. With increasing unemployment and financial hardship predicted, it is crucial we are providing more support for those worst impacted.

“This sector has worked tirelessly during the pandemic, stretching themselves beyond their resources. These services need greater support to be able to intervene early to assist families before they become entangled in an ongoing cycle of hardship.

“The new investment into social housing is very welcome, but it simply does not meet the existing level of need in the community, let alone what we will see into the future. With the tightening rental market, more people will struggle to keep a roof over their head, particularly once the eviction moratorium end and banks stop deferring mortgage payments.

“This Budget sets out a strong vision for building up Western Australia’s capacities and resilience to see us through this crisis and into the future. To truly be resilient though, we need to ensure we are building thriving and inclusive communities where nobody is left behind,” said Dr Gray.

Ends.

### Focus Area: Household Fees and Concessions

The McGowan Government's energy support measures, including the \$600 bill credit, and the freeze to fees and charges are a prudent measure to financially assist households during this time, while also enabling people to spend more broadly.

#### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	Household Electricity Credit
<b>Investment</b>	\$644 million
<b>Description</b>	All residential customers of Synergy and Horizon Power, and customers that receive the Energy Concession Extension Scheme
<b>Implications</b>	This measure provides an immediate stimulus boost for consumers by freeing up money that would otherwise be needed for electricity bills. It also provides a one-off financial support for those households who may not be eligible for concession payments. Though it will inevitably be received by some households who do not require it and people who have multiple electricity accounts will receive more than one payment, State Governments have limited capacity to means-test or otherwise directly provide payments to households.

<b>Initiative</b>	Temporary expansion of the Energy Assistance Payment
<b>Investment</b>	\$102 million
<b>Description</b>	A one-off doubling of the Energy Assistance Payment for eligible customers from \$305 to \$610
<b>Implications</b>	It is anticipated that this will support more than 300,000 Western Australian households. This has been a crucial measure to assist the increased number of people accessing concessions. A permanent solution to address the adequacy and equity of energy concessions needs to be implemented going forward.

<b>Initiative</b>	Freeze on increases to household fees and charges
<b>Investment</b>	\$439 million
<b>Description</b>	No increases to electricity and water tariffs, motor vehicle relates charges and public transport fares. Reduction in the Emergency Services Levy, wastewater and drainage charges due to lower gross rental values.
<b>Implications</b>	Not increasing household fees and charges is a prudent measure at this time. When they increase again with the next Budget, it will be essential that work is done to ensure that concessions are able to appropriately shield people on low incomes from those rises.

### Focus Area: Aboriginal Services and Initiatives

WACOSS is pleased to see a significant investment in Aboriginal services and initiatives. While the fiscal commitment in the WA State Budget (2020-21) is promising, WACOSS emphasises the importance of place-based, Aboriginal-led and co-designed approach to local challenges.

#### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	Improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal people, including Aboriginal Suicide Prevention
<b>Investment</b>	\$19.8 million, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$9.7m across WA on Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans (as part of the WA Suicide Prevention Action Plan)</li> <li>• \$10m under the Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Package.</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	Mental health initiatives to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal people.
<b>Implications</b>	The Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing package was a response to the State Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of 13 children and young persons in the Kimberley. WACOSS is awaiting to see the results of the government's efforts, however, supports any investment into mental health initiatives, particularly on Aboriginal suicide prevention.

<b>Initiative</b>	Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services
<b>Investment</b>	\$97m/ 5 years
<b>Description</b>	Awarded \$97m over five years to continue to operate renal dialysis chairs across the Kimberley region.
<b>Implications</b>	This is a welcome initiative to support the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services to continue their work in the Kimberley.

<b>Initiative</b>	Essential services and Infrastructure
<b>Investment</b>	\$201 million
<b>Description</b>	Investment to support essential services and remote Aboriginal communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This includes \$38.9m for remote communities and town-based communities water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	The investment to support essential services and remote Aboriginal communities is important, particularly when it comes to ensuring all Australians live in an inclusive, just and equitable society.

<b>Initiative</b>	Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation
<b>Investment</b>	Investment of \$56 million on Aboriginal Short Stay accommodation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$20m: Kununurra (70 beds)</li> <li>\$18m: Geraldton (75 beds)</li> <li>\$18.5m: Derby, Broome, and Kalgoorlie</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	Investment of \$56m on Aboriginal Short Stay accommodation in Kununurra, Geraldton, Derby, Broome, and Kalgoorlie.
<b>Implications</b>	The investment into Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation in Kununurra, Geraldton, Derby, Broome, and Kalgoorlie will assist in supporting Aboriginal communities when travelling to regional towns to access healthcare.

<b>Initiative</b>	Culturally appropriate accommodation for Aboriginal patients
<b>Investment</b>	\$1.6 million
<b>Description</b>	Supports the creation of culturally appropriate accommodation for Aboriginal patients and their carers while visiting metropolitan hospitals.
<b>Implications</b>	This funding will ensure the creation of a culturally appropriate accommodation for Aboriginal patients and their carers is accessible for those visiting metropolitan hospitals. With the <a href="#">opening</a> of the Royal Perth Bentley Group Medihotel in August 2020, this is a promising addition and will ensure those from regional and remote towns will be able to access healthcare in the metropolitan regions.

<b>Initiative</b>	Empowered Youth Leadership Network, Kimberley
<b>Investment</b>	\$1.3 million
<b>Description</b>	\$1.3m to be spent from 2020-23 to establish an Empowered Youth Leadership Network in the Kimberley, as part of the \$10m Government Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing. This program will emphasise the importance of listening to young people when developing policies and programs that affect them.
<b>Implications</b>	WACOSS believes in the importance of including young people in the development of policies and programs that affect them. While this remains in <a href="#">its early stages</a> , WACOSS looks forward to seeing how the government works together with Kimberley youth to address issues such as Aboriginal youth suicide in the region.

<b>Initiative</b>	Revival of Connecting to Country Grants
<b>Investment</b>	\$1.4 million / 3 years
<b>Description</b>	The revival of Connecting to Country grants program to facilitate sharing of cultural knowledge and skills between generations (language, stories, dance), recognition of Aboriginal cultural leadership within the Aboriginal community, stronger community mental health and wellbeing and promotion of traditional ways of maintaining cultural knowledge
<b>Implications</b>	While Connecting to Country Grants are an <a href="#">established pathway</a> to foster intergenerational transfer of knowledge and preservation and strengthening to culture and communities, investment of \$1.4m over three years is a welcoming initiative.

<b>Initiative</b>	Encourage Aboriginal girls to participate in school
<b>Investment</b>	\$11.6 million
<b>Description</b>	Educational engagement programs across WA to encourage Aboriginal girls to participate in school.
<b>Implications</b>	This funding is an encouraging initiative, however, upon investigation no other information is provided for this. WACOSS highly encourages that any program with a focus on Aboriginal youth must be community-led, place-based and co-designed with the local communities.

**Focus Area: Family and Domestic Violence**

This Budget continues the McGowan Government’s focus on addressing family and domestic violence. It includes spending commitments resulting from recent legislative changes and the Family and Domestic Violence Strategy, released this year.

**New and Key Initiatives**

<b>Initiative</b>	Family Violence Reform Legislation
<b>Investment</b>	\$9 million / 4 years
<b>Description</b>	Includes \$7 million towards shuttle-conferencing model to divert contested family violence restraining orders; \$4.7 million to the Department of Justice and \$2.6 million to Legal Aid announced <a href="#">here</a>
<b>Implications</b>	This is based on the ACT model and is a much needed initiative to protect survivors of family and domestic violence and support them through the justice sector. Peak bodies that implementation will be critical, with proper training for mediators and sufficient perpetrator programs to support.

<b>Initiative</b>	Mobile Outreach Workers
<b>Investment</b>	\$8.6 million over 2 years
<b>Description</b>	Will provide a pool of 23 mobile outreach workers in refuges across the State to provide support to women and children experiencing or at further risk of FDV.
<b>Implications</b>	The need for flexible and proactive outreach support for FDV victims is essential. There is a concern that this new funding does not include resourcing for the operational and other costs associated with delivering outreach, especially in the regions.

<b>Initiative</b>	FDV Response Teams
<b>Investment</b>	\$6.7 million over 2 years
<b>Description</b>	Through a partnership between the Department, the WA Police Force and the community services sector, an additional 17 FTE will be deployed in locations across the State to strengthen FDV Response Teams
<b>Implications</b>	Part of the state’s recovery plan, and connected to the Coordinated Response Services, this additional supports are needed.

<b>Initiative</b>	Family and Domestic Violence One Stop Hub in Kalgoorlie and Mirrabooka
<b>Investment</b>	\$11.7 million
<b>Description</b>	Two new Family and Domestic Violence One Stop Hubs will be established to provide integrated, wraparound services to make it easier for victims to get help sooner, announced <a href="#">here</a> , these will bring together health, legal, housing and financial counselling services, with specialist domestic violence workers to support victims from diverse backgrounds.
<b>Implications</b>	This initiative is welcome, and was allocated in this last budget with Hubs expected to be established in 2020.

<b>Initiative</b>	Kimberley Family Violence Service
<b>Investment</b>	\$2.6 million
<b>Description</b>	Kimberley Family Violence Service trial extended to work collaboratively with other agencies to provide a wrap-around response that promotes the safety and recovery of adult and child victims and reduces or manages the risk posed by the perpetrator. The Service comprises Men's Family Violence Workers and Women's Family Violence Workers in Broome, Derby, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing and Kununurra – part of the <a href="#">National Plan</a> .
<b>Implications</b>	No forward estimate beyond 2022, uncertainty in funding is unsettling for the region as the service transitions from NFP to an ACCO.

<b>Initiative</b>	Electronic monitoring of offenders
<b>Investment</b>	\$4.6 million
<b>Description</b>	Expansion of electronic monitoring of offenders in the community announced <a href="#">here</a> . The two-year trial launched in August 2020 involves GPS tracking of up to 100 high-risk offenders who have breached a restraining order and committed a further act of family violence.
<b>Implications</b>	This is part of the government's family violence package and legislative amendments and is aligned with similar initiatives in other jurisdictions.

<b>Initiative</b>	Peel and Kwinana Women's Refuges
<b>Investment</b>	\$4 million
<b>Description</b>	Further expansion with six accommodation units to be built at each site. In Peel, the State's first therapeutic refuge will deliver co-ordinated services to support women with complex needs. Building is expected to commence operations before the end of 2020 announced <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Implications</b>	This was included in last year's budget with original time frames complicated by COVID. Kwinana has the capacity to be physically extended further to 10 families.

## Focus Area: Children and Families

## New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	Aboriginal Family-led Decision-making (pilot)
<b>Investment</b>	\$700,000
<b>Description</b>	To combat rising figures in Aboriginal children entering the care system the Department will trial the Aboriginal Family-led Decision-making to support improved collaboration with families at risk of child protection intervention. The two-year pilot will be led and co-designed by Aboriginal people in Western Australia, focusing on three cohorts in several metropolitan and/or regional areas, Announced <a href="#">here</a> in August 2020.
<b>Implications</b>	Working alongside Aboriginal communities and promoting self-determination practices is a valuable and encouraging step for the state government to take, and something WACOSS and the sector as a whole has been advocating for a long time. We would like to see this trial broadened to a full scale initiative and appropriately resourced to ensure this becomes a benchmark practice.

<b>Initiative</b>	Diverting children and young people from the child protection system
<b>Investment</b>	\$96.1 million for 2020/21
<b>Description</b>	Earlier and more intense services to divert children and young people from the child protection system and prevent them from needing to enter care and an increase of \$7.4 million or 9% on last financial year.
<b>Implications</b>	Increasing efforts to redirect children and young people from the child protection system is a significantly positive step for the government to take. However, in order to appropriately and effectively support preventive measures in this area, greater, multi-layered, innovative sustained approaches are needed that address underpinning issues that cause families to reach that stage, and concerning that there are reductions in the forward estimates after 2020/21.

<b>Initiative</b>	Out-of-Home Care, Foster Carer and Family Support Grants
<b>Investment</b>	\$300,000 / 4 years
<b>Description</b>	Funding reduction for 2020/21 followed by a freeze for following 3 years

<b>Implications</b>	Funding reductions during a period of crisis (that is projected to persist), while rates of children entering the out-of-home care system continues to grow, is only likely to perpetuate growing need and worsening outcomes.
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<b>Initiative</b>	Development of National Child Friendly Complaints Resource and Speaking Out Survey 2021
<b>Investment</b>	\$130,000 + \$50,000
<b>Description</b>	Continuing on from last financial year, the new initiative of the complaints resource has received continued funding. An additional \$50K will be invested towards the Speaking Out survey involving more than 10,000 children and young people on their views on health, wellbeing and the community they live.
<b>Implications</b>	These two initiatives are welcomed and hopefully will provide necessary mechanisms that promote children and young people's rights and ultimately have their voices heard.

<b>Initiative</b>	Implementing recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Statutory Review of the Children and Community Services Act 2004
<b>Investment</b>	No funding allocated
<b>Description</b>	The Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2019, introduced into State Parliament on 18 November 2019, implements recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the 2017 Statutory Review of the Children and Community Services Act 2004. The amendments in the Bill strengthen the Act to better protect WA's children from harm and improve outcomes for children in out-of-home care. The DPC is providing policy coordination support to the combined implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
<b>Implications</b>	It is unclear if there are funds allocated within this budget that support this critical initiative, and if there is, what this looks like is further unclear. The assumption is that responsibility for implementing the Royal Commission recommendations will be absorbed within the relevant state departments existing budgets. This will have an impact on how the Department undertakes its child protection services.

<b>Initiative</b>	National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse
<b>Investment</b>	\$93 million over next 4 years
<b>Description</b>	The National Redress Scheme provides support to people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse including helping people who have experienced abuse gain access to counselling and psychological services, and a receive a monetary payment.
<b>Implications</b>	It is encouraging to see this scheme is committed to continued funding over the next four years, ensuring redress to eligible survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. Given the government's own admission that there has been a slower than expected uptake by survivors accessing the redress scheme and with concerns over the slow pace in which applications are processed, WACOSS promotes that adequate consideration is given to mitigating these issues going forward.

<b>Initiative</b>	Senior Support Initiatives
<b>Investment</b>	\$430,000
<b>Description</b>	Funding for senior support initiatives that seek to reduce social isolation of older people due to the COVID-19 pandemic and build capacity in the sector in case of any further restrictions.
<b>Implications</b>	The amount allocated to address such an entrenched and growing issue within our communities, appears to be significantly underestimated. Detail on what else these initiatives entail and what timeline they will be rolled over is unclear.

### Focus Area: Housing and Homelessness

The new investment into social housing is very welcome. but does not meet the existing level of need in the community, let alone what will be seen into the future. With the tightening rental market, more people will struggle to keep a roof over their head, particularly once the eviction moratorium end and banks stop deferring mortgage payments.

#### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	Social Housing Economic Recovery Package
<b>Investment</b>	\$319 million/3 years
<b>Description</b>	The package includes \$97 million to buy or build 250 properties, \$142 million for housing refurbishment and \$80 million for targeted maintenance in regional and remote areas.
<b>Implications</b>	Combined with the existing METRONET Social and Affordable Housing and Jobs Package and the Housing and Homelessness Investment Package, this will lead to the construction of 831 new social housing dwellings. The investment in social housing is very welcome, but falls far short of the 14,000 on the wait list, let alone the demand.

<b>Initiative</b>	Housing First Homelessness Initiative
<b>Investment</b>	\$34.5 million/5 years
<b>Description</b>	The extension of the Housing First Homelessness Initiative to new locations, including Perth, Rockingham, Mandurah, Bunbury and Geraldton.
<b>Implications</b>	This funding enables the continued support and expansion of the housing first approach in WA across the next five years. There are concerns that there is insufficient support to provide immediate support for people currently sleeping rough.

<b>Initiative</b>	Common Ground
<b>Investment</b>	\$35 million/3 years
<b>Description</b>	Planning, designing and constructing two Common Ground facilities.
<b>Implications</b>	Common Ground is a model of permanent, supported housing in a purpose-built complex for adults who have experienced chronic homelessness or are low income earners.

<b>Initiative</b>	Renewable Energy for Social Housing
<b>Investment</b>	\$6 million/4 years
<b>Description</b>	Installing solar panels on social housing properties.
<b>Implications</b>	It is anticipated that this project will benefit around 500 properties. Providing access to solar power for people living in social housing is essential for driving down their power bills and improving equitable access to the benefits of renewables. WACOSS would hope to see this extended further into the future.

### Focus Area: Justice and Corrective Services

The Budget delivers a \$52.8 million in justice specific funding for early intervention, diversion, and rehabilitation in our justice system, which is a promising step in the right direction of increasing community safety by preventing the underlying causes of offending. However, the significant funding injection is over \$637.2 million tertiary end of the justice system – reactive responses to crime such as massively increased policing and prison expansion. Without justice reinvestment we will fail to respond to the underlying causes of offending, and expenditure will continue to balloon without a real increase in community safety. We know this government understands the importance of justice reinvestment, and reducing reoffending and Aboriginal incarceration. We hope to see new funding for prevention and diversion in future.

#### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	800 New Police Officers
<b>Investment</b>	\$314 million/ 4 years
<b>Description</b>	Employment of 800 new police officers on top of 150 previously announced over 4 years, with 'flow-on' resourcing to criminal justice system.
<b>Implications</b>	Despite Western Australia currently experiencing record low rates of crime, and an earlier announcement of 150 new police officers; the McGowan Government has chosen to employ an additional 800 police officers. The flow on impact of such a measure will see a significant increase in pressure on both the courts and Legal Aid, and the prison and corrections population. The cost impact over the next four years on increased case volume of courts is an additional \$30.6 million, and an additional \$14.6 million needed for Legal Aid.

<b>Initiative</b>	Prison Expansion
<b>Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prison Expansion, 1228 Beds Bunbury and Casuarina: \$310 million</li> <li>Planning to build new Broome Regional Prison: \$1.3 million / 1 year.</li> <li>Upgrade female unit at Greenough: \$11.9 million / 1 year.</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	Expansion, planning, and upgrades (beyond maintenance) to prisons.
<b>Implications</b>	It is critical to keep our prisons up to a humane standard and overcrowding is a serious contributor to tensions building in prisons. Upgrades to prisons are necessary such as the female unit at Greenough prison. However, building new prisons and significant expansion generally <i>lead</i> to a rise in prison populations. When there are less spaces in prison, justice authorities utilise diversion, rehabilitation, and community sentencing options for low risk offenders, which contribute to reductions in offending behaviour, and costs less.

<b>Initiative</b>	New Prison Rehabilitation
<b>Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing Mental Health Unit at Bandyup Womens Prison: \$2.4 million/1 year.</li> <li>Delivery of Alcohol and Drug Treatment Prison Casuarina: \$17.6 /3 years; \$5.6 million/1 year</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	Conversion of existing prisons to support AOD and Mental Health recovery.
<b>Implications</b>	The establishment of the Therapeutic Community rehabilitation program at Wandoo has shown promising results in effectively rehabilitating women and reducing recidivism rates. Introducing similar initiatives at Bandyup and Casuarina is an effective step in the right direction for our justice system. It is worth noting that potentially similar investment in infrastructure and programs in the community before people with AOD issues end up in corrections would be effective at rehabilitating people earlier on, though this is outside justice's current remit.

<b>Initiative</b>	Early Intervention and Prevention
<b>Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target 120 Government Run Early Intervention Program: \$20.5 million, \$4.3 million this year.</li> <li>Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy: \$6.2 million /4 years.</li> <li>Aboriginal Community Connectors Program: \$6.8 million/ 1 year</li> <li>PCYC funding: \$11.3 million.</li> </ul>
<b>Description</b>	Existing Early Intervention program for young offenders across five sites and expansion; Night patrols, place based activities, youth engagement program and integrated learning program.; Safe transport options, connection to culturally responsive crisis support, and local employment; Programs, refurbishments for four Police and Community Youth Centres.
<b>Implications</b>	Place based strategies, early intervention, and Aboriginal Community Controlled programs are all welcome initiatives to increase community safety, build healthier communities and reduce justice costs. This is a promising transition for the way WA responds to justice issues, and we hope the WA Government continues to transition spending and funding to the prevention, intervention, diversion, and rehabilitation area- so we can prevent the underlying issues that lead to offending and recidivism.

### Focus Area: Mental Health

The government has invested record amounts in to mental health this budget, however spending on prevention remained low at 1.7% of overall mental health budget. Spending across community supports reached only 5% of the total budget.

#### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	Youth Mental health and Alcohol and Other Drug Accommodation Service
<b>Investment</b>	\$ 4.9 million / 4 years
<b>Description</b>	16 bed metropolitan youth accommodation
<b>Implications</b>	This previously announced program is to go some way to addressing youth homelessness in metropolitan Perth for young people with co-occurring mental health and AOD issues and forms part of the state governments A Safe Place Strategy.

<b>Initiative</b>	Community Care Unit
<b>Investment</b>	\$ 24.1 million/ 4 years
<b>Description</b>	To provide high level support and rehabilitation in a home like environment with a capacity for 20 adult beds
<b>Implications</b>	This Community Care unit makes up part of the Government's A Safe Place Strategy.

<b>Initiative</b>	Fremantle Acute Mental Health Unit
<b>Investment</b>	\$39.9 million / 4 years
<b>Description</b>	Additional 40 acute beds
<b>Implications</b>	This is a previously announced election commitment providing an investment in additional mental health beds.

<b>Initiative</b>	WA Suicide Prevention Action Plan
<b>Investment</b>	\$46.9 million / 4 years
<b>Description</b>	Funding to implement the new Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2021-25.
<b>Implications</b>	This plan promotes a whole-of-state approach to suicide prevention, and includes the development and implementation of regional specific Aboriginal suicide prevention plans.

<b>Initiative</b>	Mental Health Hospital Services
<b>Investment</b>	\$62.8 million
<b>Description</b>	Allocated to mental health hospital services in the public health system.

### Focus Area: Alcohol and Other Drugs

The Alcohol and Other Drug sector has welcomed the spending commitments in this Budget. Though many of the initiatives in this space were previously announced, it is positive to see clear Budget commitments for them across the forward estimates.

#### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	Midland Intervention Centre
<b>Investment</b>	\$930,000 / 4 years
<b>Description</b>	10 bed methamphetamine crisis centre
<b>Implications</b>	As part of the 2019-20 Budget, \$4.8 million over four years was allocated for the establishment of the Midland Intervention Centre.

<b>Initiative</b>	Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development
<b>Investment</b>	\$914,000
<b>Description</b>	To provide training and workforce development opportunities.
<b>Implications</b>	WACOSS hopes to see further detail regarding the Aboriginal workforce development initiative with the release of the workforce strategic framework.

<b>Initiative</b>	Northwest Drug and Alcohol Support Program
<b>Investment</b>	\$27,100,000 / 4 years
<b>Description</b>	Northwest Drug and Alcohol Support
<b>Implications</b>	Aims to reduce AOD related harms in the Mid-West, Pilbara & Kimberley

## Focus Area: Disability Services

### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	WA Sector Transition Fund
<b>Investment</b>	\$23 million / 2 years
<b>Description</b>	Additional funding (\$14 million in 2020-21 and \$9 million in 2021-22) to safeguard the WA Disability sector as it transitions to NDIS. This is extra to the \$20.3 million that was announced in 2018-19 <a href="#">here</a> . This \$23 million over 2 years sits <i>within</i> a total expenditure of \$4.3 billion over four years on Disability Services, which commits to maintaining essential State-run disability services.
<b>Implications</b>	This is welcome initiative to support the sustainability of the WA Disability sector during the changeover to the federal system, to ensure people with disabilities have supports in this period, especially those that are outside the scope of the NDIS.

<b>Initiative</b>	NDIS Training Centre at North Regional TAFE Karratha campus
<b>Investment</b>	\$270,000
<b>Description</b>	In complement to the <i>Lower fees, local skills</i> initiative, the facility will include including a simulated in-home care training environment to support NDIS-related training.
<b>Implications</b>	This investment has implications not only for job creation, education and training, but also for the disability and aged care sectors, and more broadly the long-term regional care economy.

## Focus Area: Education and Training

### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	<i>Lower Fees, Local Skills</i> initiative
<b>Investment</b>	\$62 million
<b>Description</b>	<p>Fee waivers for courses such as human resources, young work, early childhood education, and care and community services, to help increase employment opportunities for vulnerable women. It also includes the introduction of a modest \$100K job retraining scheme for women in refuges and more financial support for family and domestic violence and short course in infection control.</p> <p>This investment encompasses initiatives at regional TAFE campuses. This is an expansion of the <i>Lower Fees, Lower Skills</i> initiative announced October 2019 <a href="#">here</a>. This is complemented by the JobTrainer Fund National Partnership Agreement, which is to support a rapid increase in low or no fee training places for JobSeekers, and comes from a Commonwealth grant. \$52 million</p>
<b>Implications</b>	These training subsidies are targeting female-dominated industries, and will partially redress many other budget initiatives announced that will assist men's pathway to employment in particular.

<b>Initiative</b>	Employer incentive for re-engaging displaced apprentices / trainees
<b>Investment</b>	\$4.8 million
<b>Description</b>	Eligible employers receive \$6K/apprentice and \$3K/trainee whose pathway to employment was ceased during COVID and they are now re-engaged by a new employer.
<b>Implications</b>	This is welcome as young people and people on low incomes were especially impacted during the economic downturn arising out of the pandemic.

<b>Initiative</b>	Financial support for international TAFE students
<b>Investment</b>	\$415,000 in 2019/20
<b>Description</b>	Support package during the COVID-19 crisis.
<b>Implications</b>	International students on temporary visas, likely to have lost employment in precarious and part time work and ineligible for many of the government support packages, have been especially impacted during the pandemic.

## Other Community Services Areas

The following are key Budget announcements supporting an increase to financial counselling services, addressing accountability and oversight within the Department of Communities, and some provision towards addressing wage increases in the community services sector.

### New and Key Initiatives

<b>Initiative</b>	Financial counselling expansion
<b>Investment</b>	\$6.8 million/1-2 years
<b>Description</b>	<p>Announced in July 2020 <a href="#">here</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3.7 million expansion of financial counselling services</li> <li>• \$1.7 million for skill development and additional financial counsellors</li> <li>• \$1.5 million for financial counselling services in the regions</li> </ul> <p>This will support more than 40 FTE jobs to respond to increasingly complex client issues and provide expertise in small business debt</p>
<b>Implications</b>	Expanded financial counselling services will be needed when supports, such as JobKeeper and the moratorium on residential tenancy evictions and utilities end, and as the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic become fully apparent.

<b>Initiative</b>	Agency Capability Program
<b>Investment</b>	None specified
<b>Description</b>	A range of mechanisms to strengthen standards and accountability, systems and processes. This includes establishing Specialist Child Protection Unit, Office of Disability, the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Unit, and Audit and Risk Committee.
<b>Implications</b>	This Program is aimed at enhancing integrity and transparency and restoring confidence following the revelations of financial embezzlement, highlighting 'blind spots' arising out of the machinery of government changes. Other similar initiatives include shifting responsibilities to Development WA and Independent review.

<b>Initiative</b>	Supplementation Of Eligible Not-for-Profit Contracts
<b>Investment</b>	\$82.1 million/4 years 2019-20 to 2023-24; comprised of \$43.7 Mental Health Commission, \$33.5m Communities, \$4.9m Legal Aid.
<b>Description</b>	Ongoing funding for community service to meet higher wage costs for eligible organisations with service contracts that pre-date

	1/7/2013 impacted by the 2012 Fair Work Australia Equal Remuneration Order announced in December 2019 <a href="#">here</a>
<b>Implications</b>	A commitment to ongoing equal pay funding for parts of the sector was included in the Federal budget, with the previous 'supplements' rolled into the base contract funding for all DSS contracts, and other Federal government department contracts such as AGD, \$132.6m for 20/21. State-federal partnership funded contracts (such as homelessness services), have not been included and these are still to be negotiated. This commitment will put pressure on state governments to match.

## Other Regional Investments

Many of the areas above outline Budget announcements of investments in and that will benefit regional areas of Western Australia. The following are some other key regional investments of interest to the community services sector.

### New and Key Initiatives

#### State-wide

**Initiative:** Regional and Rural Health Services

**Investment:** Total of \$70.5m investment in regional and rural health facilitates and services. \$18.8m six regional renal hostels, \$6.4m renal dialysis services, \$10.3m expansion of WACHS Command Centre, \$9.2m system-wide patient transport, \$5.5m address funding gap for hospital services, \$7.7m redevelopment Newman Health Service, \$4.7m North West Eye Hub, \$3.9m syphilis prevention program, \$1.2m Ear Bus program

**Initiative:** Regional Men's Health Initiative

**Investment:** \$3.2 million to continue the Regional Men's Health Initiative that focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of men in rural WA

**Initiative:** Upgrades for Sobering Up Centres

**Investment:** \$1.4m for upgrades to alcohol and other drug facilities, including sobering up centres in Wyndham, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Carnarvon and across the State

**Initiative:** Targeted Maintenance Programs for regional social, remote and government workers housing properties

**Investment:** \$80m – 100 homes in Goldfields-Esperance; 2,500 homes in the Pilbara; 200 homes in Great Southern; 100 homes in Gascoyne and Mid West; 700 homes in the Kimberley

**Initiative:** Regional state road safety improvement program. 1,400km of roads will be treated, with shoulder sealing and audible lines installed in every region of WA

**Investment:** \$223 million

#### Pilbara

**Initiative:** West Pilbara Plan – Roebourne Refurbishments

**Investment:** \$286 mil, Implemented the West Pilbara Plan with a number of initiatives for Roebourne including safe houses, a men's shelter and stronger links between education and job training

**Initiative:** Banned Drinkers Register

**Investment:** The Department is administering a two-year trial of a Banned Drinkers Register (BDR) which will commence across the Pilbara region in December 2020. Along with current liquor restrictions in the Pilbara, the BDR will act as a complementary measure to reduce alcohol related harm. A section 64 inquiry under the Liquor Control Act 1988 will also take place in the Kimberley region as a result of the Coroner's report into Aboriginal Youth Suicide in the Kimberley.

### Great Southern

**Initiative:** Great Southern Needle and Syringe Exchange Program

**Investment:** \$1.1m for the establishment of the Great Southern Needle and Syringe Exchange program. Bringing forward from last year's budget. [Media statement](#)

### Kimberley

**Initiative:** Broome Health and Wellbeing Campus

**Investment:** \$7.98 million towards the planning and development of the Broome Health and Wellbeing Campus, a Nyamba Buru Yawuru project

**Initiative:** Upgrades to Alcohol and Other Drug Facilities

**Investment:** \$1.42 million for upgrades to alcohol and other drug facilities in regional WA, including sobering up centres in Wyndham, Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing

**Initiative:** Wangkatjungka Family Health Clinic

**Investment:** \$3.05 million

**Initiative:** Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Prevention Package

**Investment:** \$2.7 million

**Initiative:** Alcohol and Other Drug Youth Centre

**Investment:** \$9.2 million to establish a comprehensive alcohol and other drug youth centre in the Kimberley with residential rehabilitation, low medical withdrawal beds and a day program

## Federal Budget Initiatives

The following is an overview of key announcements and initiatives outlined in the 2020/21 Federal Budget that have implications for the community services sector.

### New and Key Initiatives

#### Disability and seniors

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – ageing and aged care

**Investment:** \$746.3 million / 4 years from 2020-21. The extension of COVID-19 measures, in addition to new measures which address the recommendations of the Royal Commission specific to COVID-19.

**Initiative:** Home Care Packages

**Investment:** \$2 billion/ 4 years from 2020-21 to further support older Australians accessing aged care by providing additional home care packages as well as continuing to improve transparency and regulatory standards.

**Initiative:** Keeping young people out of residential aged care

**Investment:** \$10.6 million / 3 years from 2020-21. A new national organisation, that will connect young people with disability in residential aged care or who are at risk of entering residential aged care to look for more age-appropriate accommodation and support.

**Initiative:** National Disability Insurance Scheme

**Investment:** \$798.8 million / 4 years from 2020-21. To provide the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission with additional funding to support an estimated 500,000 participants with significant and permanent disability.

#### Jobs and Recovery

**Initiative:** Employment Services

**Investment:** \$143.7 million / 4 years from 2020-21. To provide targeted support to people who have lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Including \$35.8 million in 2021-22 to maintain Employment Fund Credits for employment service providers.

**Initiative:** JobMaker Plan – Second Women’s Economic Security Package

**Investment:** \$231.0 million / 4 years from 2020-21 which includes a number of measures to support women’s leadership and development, grants for start-ups, initiatives for women in STEM, and programs to address sexual harassment at work.

**Initiative:** JobMaker Plan – boosting apprenticeships wage subsidy

**Investment:** \$1.2 billion / 4 years from 2020-21. To increase the number of apprentices and trainees employed and build a pipeline of skilled workers to support economic recovery. From 5 October 2020 to 30 September 2021, businesses can claim the Boosting Apprentices Wage Subsidy, for new apprentices or trainees. Media release [available](#).

**Initiative:** JobMaker Plan – higher education – additional support for students and education providers.

**Investment:** \$903.5 million / 4 years from 2020-21. To provide more opportunities in higher education, and to establish new quality protections for the higher education system and the Job-Ready Graduates reforms.

**Initiative:** JobMaker Plan - Skills Reform Package

**Investment:** \$263 million / 4 years from 2020-21. To continue to improve the quality of the VET system.

**Initiative:** JobMaker Plan – JobMaker Hiring Credit

**Investment:** \$4 billion / 3 years from 2020-21. To support organisations to take on additional employees through a hiring credit. Eligible employers will receive \$200 per week for eligible employees aged 16-29 or \$100 per week for an eligible employee aged 30 -35.

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – JobKeeper Payment extension

**Investment:** \$101.3 billion over the forward estimates period. This is \$15.6 billion more than was reported in the July 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update. Media release [available](#).

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – further economic support payments

**Investment:** \$2.6 billion / 3 years from 2020-21. The Government will provide two separate \$250 economic support payments to eligible recipients of the following payments and health care card holders; Age Pension; Disability Support Pension; Carer Payment; Family Tax Benefit, including Double Orphan Pension; Carer Allowance; Pensioner Concession Card; Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders; Eligible Veterans' Affairs payment recipients and concession card holders.

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – recognising the impacts of COVID-19 for Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY independence.

**Investment:** \$25 million / 4 years from 2020-21. To temporarily revise the independence test for those applying for Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY from 1 January 2021. Under the exemption, the six-month period will automatically be recognised as contributing to an applicant's independence test.

**Initiative:** Incentives to encourage young Australians to undertake seasonal work.

**Investment:** \$16.3 million / 3 years from 2020-21. To incentivise seasonal participation in the agricultural industry, creating a temporary pathway for young people who are seeking to qualify for Youth Allowance (student) and ABSTUDY payment.

**Initiative:** Bringing forward Stage Two: Personal Income Tax Plan

**Investment:** The bringing forward of the tax cuts will cost \$17.8 billion with a \$12.5 billion cost to this year's budget. To bring forward tax cuts planned for next year and backdates them to the start of this financial year.

### Children, young people and families

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – federal family law courts – specialised court lists for urgent matters arising from COVID-19

**Investment:** 2.5 million / 2 years from 2020-21. This measure includes funding to assist 21 of the federal family law courts for urgent matters arising.

**Initiative:** Extension of Children and Parenting Support Services – additional services

**Investment:** \$40.1 million / 3 years from 2021-22. This measure offers specialised early intervention and prevention support to at-risk children and families with complex needs.

**Initiative:** Future National Redress Funding

**Investment:** \$104.6 million / 4 years 2020-21. To support the delivery of The Scheme.

**Initiative:** National Memorial for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

**Investment:** \$6.7 million / 4 years from 2020-21.

**Initiative:** Forced Adoption Support Services - continuation

**Investment:** \$6.1 million / 3 years from 2021-22. To continue the delivery of Forced Adoption Support Services.

### Housing

**Initiative:** National Housing and Homelessness Agreement

**Investment:** \$6.3 billion / 4 years. To maintain funding for the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA).

**Initiative:** JobMaker Plan – driving jobs through housing

**Investment:** \$0.6 million / 4 years from 2020-21. To boost the housing demand and support the residential construction industry through: Extending the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme; increasing the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation's (NHFIC) cap, and funding an independent review of the NHFIC.

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – HomeBuilder Grant

**Investment:** \$680.0 million in 2020-21 for the HomeBuilder program to support jobs in the residential construction sector. Media release [available](#).

### Aboriginal services and initiatives

**Initiative:** Students Support Package

**Investment:** \$146.3 million / 5 years from 2020-21. To improve education outcomes of young Australians, particularly disadvantaged students. Includes \$39.8 million / 4 years for the Clontarf Foundation to expand its existing program for ATSI men.

**Initiative:** Closing the Gap – partnering for delivery

**Investment:** \$10.1 million / 4 years from 2020-2. To provide funding to the Productivity Commission to deliver an annual progress report on Closing the Gap targets.

### Mental Health and Alcohol and other Drugs

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – Expanding the Better Access Pandemic Support Measure

**Investment:** \$100.8 million / 2 years from 2020-21. To fund up to 10 additional psychological therapy sessions to people with an existing Mental Health Treatment Plan under the Better Access initiative.

**Initiative:** Prioritising Mental Health – continued support

**Investment:** \$62.1 million over / 4 years from 2020-21.

- \$45.7 million / 4 years to expand the Individual Placement and Support Program under the Youth Employment Strategy.
- \$6.9 million / 2 years to support digital mental health services
- \$5 million / 1 year to provide parents, guardians and carers with mental health and career information for students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- \$2.3 million / 4 years to enhance the National Headspace network.

- \$2.1 million / 1 year for the prevention Hub led by the Black Dog Institute and Everymind to continue advanced research.

**Initiative:** Enhancing suicide prevention

**Investment:** \$65.2 million / 2 years from 2020-21. Responding to the recommendations of the new National Suicide Prevention Adviser.

### Domestic and Family Violence

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – additional funding for domestic and family violence support

**Investment:** Expenditure not published on the basis that it is commercial in confidence

### Education and training

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – JobTrainer Fund - establishment

**Investment:** \$5 million in 2020-21 to establish a national JobTrainer Fund to support job seekers to reskill and upskill, particularly school leavers.

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – higher education

**Investment:** \$7.1 million to provide up to 1,000 places in courses at non-university and private higher education providers, to re-train or up-skill people in national priority areas.

**Initiative:** COVID-19 Response Package – supporting apprentices and trainees

**Investment:** \$2.8 billion / 5 years from 2019-20 to keep apprentices and trainees employed.

**Initiative:** National Partnership Agreement on universal Access to Early Childhood Education - extension

**Investment:** \$458.3 million / 2 years from 2020-21. To extend the National Partnership Agreement.

### Justice and corrective services

**Initiative:** Time to Work Employment Services

**Investment:** \$3.9 million in 2021-22 to extend the Time to Work Employment Services program by on year to 30 June 2022 to continue to provide in-prison employment services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to help them prepare for employment post release.

### Other

**Initiative:** Extension of Funding for Financial Wellbeing and Capability Measures

**Investment:** \$44.4 million / 3 years from 2021-22. The Government will continue Microfinance, Money Support Hubs and Problem Gambling Financial Counselling measures under the Financial Wellbeing and Capability Activity.

**Initiative:** Cashless Debit Card – ongoing funding.

**Investment:** The funding of this measure is Not for Publication. This is because negotiations with potential commercial providers are yet to be finalised.

**Initiative:** Services Australia – provision of remote services - continuation

**Investment:** \$24.7 million in 2020-21. This continue to support the delivery of government payments and services in remote locations in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Northern Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania.

**Initiative:** Place Based Income Management - continuation

**Investment:** \$9.6 million in 2021-22. To extend income management for one year in all 13 current locations across Australia from 1 July 2021 until 30 June.

**Initiative:** Ongoing funding for frontline Social Services impacted by the cessation of the social and Community Services Special Account

**Investment:** \$132.6 million / 4 years from 2020-21. To deliver ongoing funding for frontline social services. These services support vulnerable Australians, who live in entrenched disadvantage.

**Initiative:** Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission Review Program

**Investment:** \$28.1 million / 2 years from 2020-21. For a program of field-based compliance reviews to intervene early where charities are at high risk of failing, to meet the obligations under the governance standards of the ACNC.