

Aboriginal Wellbeing

There is spending spread across a number of areas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The most significant new spending is \$77 million on renewal of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act and related services, plus sizeable investments for the Aboriginal Community Connectors program and Remote municipal upgrades (mostly waterworks), which is good news for regional and remote communities. While some money is allocated for housing and short stays, it's questionable whether the level of investment will be sufficient for communities already experiencing severe overcrowding and recently hit by floods. We are pleased to see funds for the new Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Peak Body.

Initiative	Housing and Homelessness (BP3, P134)
Investment	\$8,300,000 - Geraldton Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation
Description	Establish, operate and maintain the Geraldton Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation facility, with operations expected to commence mid-2025.
Implications	First Nations peoples coming into Geraldton for services will be able to access safe, culturally-appropriate accommodation.

Initiative	Peak Bodies and Leadership (1. BP3, P94; 2. BP2, V2, P522)
Investment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> \$6,000,000 - Aboriginal Community Controlled Peak Body \$412,000 – Empowered Youth Network funding removed
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> This body will provide a centralised point for interaction and collaboration between the Government, ACCOs and Aboriginal communities. Funding unspent in 2022-23 budget that has not been carried over to 2023-24 budget.
Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The peak will work to increase ACCOs' capabilities as service providers to Aboriginal communities in Western Australia and assist in fulfilling Western Australia's commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the forthcoming ACCO Strategy. We note the discontinuation of funding for the Empowered Youth network, which began conceptually in 2017 and concluded its design phase in 2021. The EYN purpose was to develop a group of young leaders across the Kimberley to give them a voice on decisions that affected them, we would like to see an explanation for this decision.

Initiative	Regional and Remote Communities (BP3, P96 & P134)
-------------------	--

2023 - 2024 Budget

Investment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. \$673,000 - Bidyadanga Project to complete stage one. 2. \$31,100,000 - Aboriginal Community Connectors Program.
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A partnership between the Government, community residents, leaseholders and native title holders to reform land tenure. 2. Investment over four years to continue the program in 13 locations across WA.
Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sustainable future for Bidyadanga, Western Australia's largest remote Aboriginal community. 2. First Nations peoples can access culturally responsive crisis supports including mediation and engagement services and safe transport options to support personal and community safety.

Initiative	Heritage and Country (BP2, V2, P692 & P714)
Investment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. \$27,500,000 - Wadjemup Burial Ground 2. \$77,000,000 - Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Services
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgrades to the Wadjemup Burial Ground and repairs to the Quod building on Rottnest Island, including funding for consultation to develop a plan for the site. 2. Ongoing operational costs associated with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021 and to fund Local Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Services.
Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing protection for important Aboriginal cultural heritage sites on Wadjemup. 2. Important investment into Aboriginal Heritage across Western Australia, in line with the new act passed in 2021.

Initiative	Family and Domestic Violence Spending (BP2, V2, P502,503)
Investment	\$1,100,000 - Respectful Relationships Teaching Support Program
Description	Funds for the provision of culturally appropriate services for victims of Family and Domestic Violence in regional areas.
Implications	It's positive to see commitment to education and prevention of family and domestic violence, particularly culturally appropriate services, however funding needs to be scaled up in this space to meet community needs.

Initiative	Health and Mental Health (BP2, V1, P296, 322, 322)
Investment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. \$18,300,00 - Southwest Aboriginal Medical Service Health Hub 2. \$5,800,000 - Aboriginal Mental Health Workers 3. \$5,400,000 - Psychiatric Services in the East Kimberley
Description	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Matched Commonwealth funding to support construction of South West Aboriginal Health Hub in Bunbury.

2023 - 2024 Budget

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Employment of 10 additional Aboriginal Mental Health Workers (10 FTE).3. Continuation of psychiatry and staff educator positions in East Kimberley.
Implications	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Aboriginal people living in the South West will have access to additional mental health programs and other health services.2. Infants, Children and Adolescents Taskforce will be able to hire more Aboriginal Mental Health Workers to provide culturally-safe mental health support.3. Ongoing commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing in the East Kimberley by continuing specialist psychiatric services in the region.