



Budget Briefing Pack 2023-2024

In partnership with



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This Budget Briefing Pack compiles key investments and initiatives in this year's State Budget. To access the full Budget papers, visit www.ourstatebudget.wa.gov.au.

Media Release

Thursday 11 May 2023

Temporary cost of living relief welcome, but much larger challenges remain

The Western Australian Council of Social Service has welcomed state budget investments to address cost of living pressures, build more social housing, expand family and domestic violence support, and for decarbonisation and climate change initiatives.

For the fourth year in a row Premier Mark McGowan has ushered in a huge surplus and delivered a state budget that promises to keep government fees and charges down, and provide \$400 electricity credits for all households.

WACOSS CEO Louise Giolitto said that this timely cost of living relief is critical, but more needs to be done to prepare for the increasing wave of households entering financial hardship.

"We are pleased to see the Premier has responded to our calls from previous budgets and provided additional targeted relief to concession card holders, providing them with an additional \$100 on that credit," Ms Giolitto said.

"We are keen to work with the WA Government on how we can boost emergency relief and financial counselling services to help WA households through this difficult period and prevent too many falling into long-term financial difficulties.

"The increase to the Hardship Utility Grant limits (HUGS) by 10 per cent is welcome and much needed, with payments remaining static since 2017/18 not keeping pace with increases in energy and water costs. This will provide better support for those households experiencing difficulties with their utility bills.

"The electricity credits provide temporary assistance to households in the midst of the current cost of living crisis, but we are concerned there is a lack of investment in community services to provide the ongoing assistance households will need as this situation continues.

"The community services sector – which already operates on a shoestring budget – is in desperate need of extra funding, to continue to deliver essential services and supports to people in the community who are doing it tough, and retain and better pay the workforce who are predominantly women.

"The lack of affordable rental properties for low income households in WA is the most critical pressure on living costs. Building more social housing will help, but this will take years and more can be done right now.

“WACOSS has repeatedly called for a re-introduction of a rent-relief subsidy scheme to provide rental relief to households struggling right now. It is disappointing not to see that in this year’s budget.

“The budget includes critical investment to decarbonise our electricity system, including in generation and transmission. At the same time, we need to ensure that low income households are able to benefit from this transformation by making rental homes more energy efficient and supporting them to transition away from gas.”

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	1. \$6,000,000 - Aboriginal Community Controlled Peak Body 2. \$412,000 – Empowered Youth Network funding removed
Description	1. This body will provide a centralised point for interaction and collaboration between the Government, ACCOs and Aboriginal communities. 2. Funding unspent in 2022-23 budget that has not been carried over to 2023-24 budget.
Implications	1. 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. 2. 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)
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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. 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.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

The sector has been calling for improved coordination, and the establishment of an Alcohol and other Drug Interagency Strategy for Western Australia. The investment in this budget does not indicate a strategic response towards Alcohol and other Drug commissioning, planning and policy. Further investment is needed in the areas of prevention and early intervention.

Initiative	Impaired Driving Detection (BP2, V2, P400)
Investment	\$ 327,000 over 2023-24
Description	Investment will contribute to the RTTA Impaired Driving Detection (Alcohol and Drug) Program.
Implications	More information is needed to understand how this program will support people to access services that assist them to minimise problematic alcohol and other drug use.

Initiative	Casuarina Prison Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) Unit (BP2, V2, P415)
Investment	\$5.98 million over 2023-24
Description	An election commitment under the Methamphetamine Action Plan. An additional \$5.98 million will be spent in 2023-24 to support the treatment and rehabilitation of male offenders at Casuarina Prison through the Alcohol and other Drug program.
Implications	Investment that supports people prior to their reintegration into the community is welcome.

Initiative	Asset Investment Program (AIP) to support the delivery of mental health and AOD services (BP2, V1, P332)
Investment	\$40.9 million over the forward estimates period
Description	<p>The AIP includes the continued delivery of the Government's 2021 election commitments. Property, plant and equipment is expected to increase by \$39.1 million over the forward estimates period due to the acquisition of a 20-bed AOD rehabilitation facility, and youth housing and step up/step down facilities. These are funded by equity contributions from the Government, including through the Royalties for Regions Fund. The investment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction of a 20-bed AOD Rehabilitation facility • refurbishment of the Immediate Drug Assistance Coordination Centre • construction of a 10-bed step up/step down facility in South Hedland

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• acquisition of dwellings for the Youth Long-term Housing and Support Program• construction of a 10-bed Youth Mental Health and AOD step up/step down facility. <p>Other works include the construction of step up/step down facilities in Broome and Karratha</p>
Implications	Will improve service access, particularly for young people in regional WA with acute mental health and AOD challenges.

Climate Resilience and Energy

The budget includes critical investment to decarbonise our electricity system, including in generation and transmission. At the same time, we need to ensure that low income households are able to benefit from this transformation by making rental homes more energy efficient and supporting them to transition away from gas.

Initiative	Battery Energy Storage Systems (BP3, P166)
Investment	\$2.3 billion over 2022-23 to 2023-24
Description	A 500 MW Battery Energy Storage System will be delivered in Collie, the largest in the State, and a second 200 MW Battery in Kwinana.
Implications	The investment in large scale battery storage is a critical component of Western Australia's transition to reliance on renewable energy, supporting energy system security and reliability.

Initiative	Synergy Wind Generation Capacity (BP3, P166)
Investment	\$368 million over 2022-23 to 2023-24
Description	Investment for Synergy to build a new wind farm at King Rocks and a proposed expansion of the Warradarge Wind Farm near Eneabba, with a combined wind capacity of up to 210 MW.
Implications	These projects will help replace the electricity generation that will be lost from the upcoming retirement of Synergy's Muja C Unit 6 coal-fired power station by October 2024 and the Collie Power Station in late-2027.

Initiative	Western Power Transmission Network Investment (BP3, P167)
Investment	\$126 million over 2022-23 to 2023-24
Description	Investment on Western Power's transmission network, including planning works and procurement of long lead time equipment.
Implications	This investment into the transmission network will support the connection of additional renewable generation and the transition away from coal-fired power.

Initiative	Climate Action Fund – Climate Adaptation (BP3, P145)
Investment	\$38.9 million over the forward estimates
Description	The Government has allocated \$38.9 million across seven agencies for 19 priority adaptation initiatives in line with Climate Resilient WA: Directions for the State's Climate Adaptation Strategy. This includes Stage 2 of the Climate Science Initiative, the Sector Adaptation Plan Program, the development of a First Nations Climate Resilience Fund and Heat Modelling of Perth Metropolitan Area.

Implications

These initiatives are crucial to progress Western Australia's climate adaptation efforts, both to develop climate resilient communities and to improve the information and capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change.

Digital Inclusion

Investment from the State Government continues through the Digital Capability Fund across a number of new measures to support the Digital Inclusion Blueprint that was announced in December 2022. These include improving access and service delivery through the ServiceWA App, digitising the Taxi User Subsidy Scheme and funding Legal Aid WA to improve digital access to legal services. There has also been a boost in funding for regional connectivity, improving availability of reliable internet in regional and remote areas.

Initiative	Regional Telecommunications Project Continuation Rural, Regional and Remote Network Continuation (BP2, V1, P209)
Investment	1. \$4,730,000 in 2023-24. 2. \$700,000 over forward estimates.
Description	Improved availability of reliable and cost-effective broadband in regional locations.
Implications	Reliable and cost-effective Improved access to digital services by residents in regional locations increases digital inclusiveness.

Initiative	Department of Transport digitisation of the Taxi User Subsidy Scheme (TUSS) (BP2, V2, P582)
Investment	\$5,152,000 (TUSS Reform Program)
Description	Digitisation of the existing manual voucher mechanism. The TUSS is part of the Department's commitment to facilitating safe, accessible and efficient means of travel for those who are unable to use conventional public transport services.
Implications	Need to ensure that accessibility for all users of the new digital scheme is maintained.

Initiative	Legal Aid WA – Transforming Our Business program (Digital Capability Fund) (BP2, V2, P416, 417)
Investment	\$4,200,000
Description	This program will deliver a number of multi-stage ICT lead projects, aimed at bringing about enduring innovative change and the capacity to leverage technology to improve service delivery at Legal Aid WA.
Implications	Improved accessibility of legal information and advice online.

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Initiative	ServiceWA App – Various improvements (Digital Capability Fund) (BP2, V1, P62)
Investment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. \$1,406,000 (New services) 2. \$4,900,000 (Operational support – new investment)
Description	Various improvements and service additions to the ServiceWA App, including new verifiable credentials that will become accessible via the app and assistance services for citizens using the app.
Implications	More services integrated to, and better functionality of, ServiceWA App.

Disability

The 2023-24 budget prioritises investment in students with a disability. The budget also acknowledges that recent Federal NDIS funding decisions will change the face of disability funding. Whilst it is too early to know how this NDIS reform will impact State finances, it is important to note that into the future the State will have to ensure they have sufficient capacity to support the needs of Western Australians with disability.

Initiative	State support for NDIS (B2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$1.3 billion for 2023-24
Description	This represents WA's required contribution to the NDIS. WA's ongoing contribution will be subject to participant numbers, the NDIS Review and the Bilateral Agreements.
Implications	Federal decisions to change the way NDIS is funded will place increased pressure on State based disability services. While this funding is an important step in ensuring an increased number of WA people with disabilities can access the NDIS, ongoing funding will be required to ensure the continued provision of quality care.

Initiative	Supporting students with disability and complex behaviour (B2, V2, P350)
Investment	\$533.8 million over the forward estimates, which represents \$74.6 million more than last year's allocation
Description	This includes an expansion of the specialist learning programs for students with autism spectrum disorder, and an increase in the educational adjustment allocation to support more students with undiagnosed disabilities and learning difficulties.
Implications	This important investment will ensure students have access to services to meet their complex learning needs. <i>See WACOSS 'Early Years' and 'Youth' fact sheets for further comment.</i>

Initiative	National Disability Data Asset (B2, V2, P501)
Investment	\$3.8 million in 2024-25
Description	This investment supports Western Australia to participation in the National Disability Data Asset project.
Implications	Investment in this will mean we have a more complete picture of the lived experiences of people with disability in Western Australia.

Initiative	Royal Commission (BP2, V2, P437)
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Investment	\$660,000 in 2023-24 for the Disability Royal Commission
Description	The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability aims to respond to community concerns about widespread violence and neglect. The Commission is due to deliver a final report by 29 September 2023. The SSO will continue to support the State's response to the report and implementation of any recommendations.
Implications	Supporting the Royal Commission will ensure the voices of people with disability are heard and will ensure Western Australia is well-placed to understand and implement recommendations.

Initiative	Support for Ageing Australians (BP2, V2, P505)
Investment	\$2 million over the forward estimates
Description	<p>This \$2 million package focuses on ensuring ageing Australians have access to services that meet their diverse needs including disability status. This package includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$750,000 to extend the existing Seniors Peak Body service contract • \$500,000 to support the Age-friendly Communities Social Connectivity grants program • \$340,000 to develop more accessible information and improve awareness of existing services and concessions • \$400,000 advertising campaign to raise awareness of ageism.
Implications	While this investment highlights the increasing need to provide service and supports to older Western Australians, the funding provided, particularly for the Seniors Peak Body is not sufficient to drive improved outcomes for clients. Additionally, no funding has been allocated to the specific needs of ageing Western Australians with disability.

Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilience and Emergency Management

WACOSS welcomes critical investment into rebuilding and recovering from the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Seroja and ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie. However, given the likelihood of increasing disaster events of this scale in future, we are concerned that there is no direct investment in disaster risk reduction, community preparedness and resilience.

Initiative	Future drought resilience funding for Western Australian Farms and Regions (BP2, V1, P209)
Investment	\$20.2 million in forward estimates over the next 3-years.
Description	The State Government has invested \$10.1 million to match the Federal Government contribution of \$10.1 million towards the Future Drought Fund. The funding will build on the state government's previous investment in Farm Business Resilience and Regional Drought Resilience Planning programs.
Implications	The Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program supports partnerships between regional organisations, local government, communities, and industry to create community-driven drought plans that identify actions to prepare for future droughts.

Initiative	Community Benefit Fund – Cyclone Seroja (BP2, V2, P445) (BP2, V2, P451)
Investment	\$9.2 million in 2023-24
Description	<p>This initiative is to support the Community Benefit Fund and Resilience Grant programs for local governments affected by Tropical Cyclone Seroja. This is intended to empower local community recovery efforts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$8 million towards grants for 16 local governments impact by Tropical Cyclone Seroja each worth \$500,000 • \$1.2 million will be shared between the 5 worst impacted local governments for recovery • \$400,000 will be made available to the local government of Northampton • \$200,000 will be made available to the local governments of Chapman Valley, Morrowa, Perenjori & Mingenew
Implications	While WACOSS welcomes additional recovery funding for impacted local governments, we are concerned that there hasn't been a more significant investment made to ensure local governments have

	ongoing capacity and capability to reduce local disaster risk, prepare for future disaster events and drive early recovery planning.
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Initiative	Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie State Disaster Recovery Capability (BP2, V2, P445) (BP3, P129)
Investment	\$38 million from 2022-23 to 2024-25
Description	<p>This funding package includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$24.9 million provided to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services for 29 FTE • \$13.4 million to be dedicated to Kimberly Recovery Taskforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ \$6.3 million investment in State Disaster Recovery Capability: including 20 FTE for 2 years and 12 FTE for 1 year to manage and support Kimberly communities to recover from the catastrophic flooding caused by ex-tropical cyclone Ellie ◦ \$6.9 million in Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie Recovery Taskforce
Implications	WACOSS is pleased to see a significant investment in the Kimberley recovery and the funding of dedicated Western Australian recovery capability. We will be watching to see that the Recovery Taskforce is driven by impacted communities and aligned with the National Recovery Principles.

Initiative	Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie Recovery Assistance Package (BP1, P17)
Investment	<p>Measures funded by the State Government include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$80 million for emergency road recovery works and to repair flood-affected internal community and access roads (BP2, V2, P591) • \$42 million for a Freight Assistance Package (BP2, V2, P209) • \$33 million for temporary accommodation (BP3, P132)
Description	This funding will be used to repair damaged roads, subsidise some of the additional costs with transportation and implement emergency accommodation for flood-impacted residents.
Implications	WACOSS welcomes investment to repair critical infrastructure and provide temporary shelter for impacted community members, however, notes there is no detail regarding the rebuilding of housing in line with climate resilience and risk reduction.

Early Years

The 2023-24 Budget works to support children's early years by investing in infrastructure, supports for students with disability and infant, child and youth mental health. An additional \$123.8 million is provided for Child Protection Services and out of home care services (see WACOSS 'Youth' fact sheet for further detail). There appears to be very limited investment in targeted early years programs. The absence of such funding mirrors the government's broader lack of investment in preventative service provision and puts children at increased risk of adverse experiences.

Initiative	Consultation, Research and Promotion of the Wellbeing of Children and Young People (BP2, V1, P107)
Investment	\$3.5 million for 2023-24
Description	Consultation, research and the promotion of the wellbeing of children and young people are a responsibility of the Commissioner and the scope and goals for this are prescribed in the Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006.
Implications	This important funding works to ensure the voices of children and young people are heard, and their needs and wellbeing are prioritised.

Initiative	Access to regional childcare (BP2, V2, P521)
Investment	\$1.4 million over 2023-24
Description	As part of election commitments, the Government committed to boost funding to support access to regional childcare, including through initiatives to help attract and retain regional childcare staff. The 2023-24 budget continues to support this commitment.
Implications	Increased childcare, particularly in regional areas, allows parents and carers to return to work. This initiative supports women's economic empowerment and helps to create safe environments where children are supported to flourish in their early years.

Initiative	Infants, Children and Adolescents (ICA) Taskforce – improved mental health outcomes for children and adolescents (BP2, V1, P322)
Investment	\$35.5 million for the forward estimates

Description	<p>The investment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of a 2.5 year pilot of a Community ICA Mental Health Service Hub in Bunbury • continuation of a 9.5 FTE uplift at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) • establishment of a 2.5 year pilot of an East Metropolitan Acute Care Response Team • funding for 10 additional Aboriginal Mental Health Workers • an expansion to the Touchstone Service which provides specialised intensive treatment for children aged 12-17 years with complex personality disorders.
Implications	<p>Investment in infant and child mental health is a proactive approach to ensuring community wellbeing both now, and in the future. While the identified investment is a positive start to addressing the significant gap in infant and child mental health services, it is unclear how the funding will specifically target improving mental health in the early years. Ongoing, and targeted, investment is required to drive significant and sustained change in this area.</p> <p><i>See 'WACOSS Youth' fact sheet for further comment.</i></p>

Initiative	Supporting students with disability and complex behaviour (BP2, V1, P350)
Investment	\$533.8 million over the forward estimates, which represents \$74.6 million more than last year's allocation
Description	This package works to support students with disability and complex behaviour. This package includes the expansion of specialist learning programs for students with autism spectrum disorder and an increase to the educational adjustment allocation to support more students with undiagnosed disabilities and learning difficulties.
Implications	<p>This important investment will ensure young students have access to services that both identify and meet their complex learning needs. Early intervention improves immediate and long-term outcomes for students with disability and complex behaviour.</p> <p><i>See WACOSS 'Disability' and 'Youth' fact sheets for further comment.</i></p>

Family Violence

While the McGowan Government recognises the importance of family and domestic violence, this isn't sufficiently reflected in their level of investment. It's important to see investment in updating women's health infrastructure, however, the budget overall is lacking dedication to women's health issues more broadly, such as access to community-based services, addressing medical misogyny, and investing in preventative health.

Family and Domestic Violence

Initiative	FDV Broome Hub (BP2, V2, P501)
Investment	\$16.3 million over the forward estimates
Description	Funding has been allocated to deliver a regional One Stop Hub (Hub) for family and domestic violence in Broome, announced in 2022. This investment covers the commercial and operations funding for the FDV hub for four years.
Implications	The Broome Hub will be designed to deliver a culturally appropriate service and reflect the needs of the community in Broome and the surrounding areas, which has a high rate of Aboriginal women experiencing family violence.

Initiative	FDV Refuge and Safe House Sustainability (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$18.25 million over the forward estimates
Description	Additional funding for refuges and safe houses to address sustainability of services. On average, a 27% uplift for services that are no longer able to deliver on the original specifications of their contracts, which equates to a \$150 000 - \$300 000 uplift per service.
Implications	While this has established a much-needed new baseline of funding for services, it does not come anywhere near meeting the scale of the problem as specialist FDV services are facing ever-increasing demand and can't address unmet need.

Initiative	Extension of operation of the Mirrabooka and Kalgoorlie FDV Hubs (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$13.4 million over the forward estimates
Description	Extended funding for the Kalgoorlie and Mirrabooka hubs to enable continuation of these important services beyond June 2024.
Implications	Funding is always welcome to support the ongoing work of the hubs, however, investment across the continuum from primary prevention through to crisis response and recovery is needed to ensure the system can better support all people experiencing family and domestic violence.

Initiative	FDV Response Teams - Coordinated Response Services (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$3.4 million
Description	This investment is for a two-year extension on base funding and a 12-month commitment to supplementary funding for Coordinated Response Services (front line response workers located in various police stations across the State).
Implications	This commitment enables long-term employment contracts and decreased workforce turnover and attrition which has a significant impact on the quality and continuity of services for victim-survivors.

Health

The 2023-24 Budget delivers an addition \$2.7 billion investment in health, with a focus on infrastructure, capacity building and future proofing. The budget also invests in ensuring older Western Australians stay out of emergency departments and provides support to the terminally ill, particularly in regional areas, through investment in voluntary assisted dying and palliative care. There appears to be little investment in community-based care or preventative health services, both of which are vital to healthy communities and an effective health system.

Initiative	Community Health in a Virtual Environment Pilot (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$3.4 million over 2023-24
Description	Targeted funding to expand the Community Health in a Virtual Environment project to all services in the East Metropolitan Health Service. This project works to help deliver more pathways to care for aged care residents who have traditionally had to attend an emergency department.
Implications	Important to see investment into implementing alternative models of care to support treatment of patients in the most appropriate setting. This will help reduce avoidable presentation and admissions to emergency department for people living in aged care.

Initiative	Integrated Older Adult Model of Care (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$2.9 million over 2023-24
Description	Continuation of the Integrated Older Adult Model of Care program and extension of the pilot to targeted hospitals as a proof of concept. The model of care incorporates a geriatric assessment team in the ED, an ED care navigator to support complex patients to transition away from hospital-based services, and a geriatric residential outreach program to prevent hospitalisation through a proactive review and follow-up within 24 hours of discharge.
Implications	Important to see investment models that support patients to transition away from hospital-based services into more appropriate settings. The focus on preventing hospitalisation and discharge follow up will help reduce the pressure of preventable readmissions and improve health outcomes for older adults.

Initiative	Emergency Access Response/Reform Program (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$8.2 million over 2023-24 to 2024-25
Description	Dedicated reform teams to examine hospital processes, eliminate barriers to timely care, and optimise the patient experience through

	initiatives that are developed locally, tested, refined and scaled across the health system.
Implications	Important to see investment in implementing alternative models of care to support treatment of patients in the most appropriate setting and to reduce avoidable presentation and admissions for people with complex needs.

Initiative	Regional Palliative Care (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$3.1 million over 2023-24
Description	To support the palliative care workforce and enhance end-of-life choices for terminally ill patients in the regions.
Implications	It is not clear what projects will be included in this investment. Nevertheless, it is important to see investment in ensuring people living in WA's regions have access to high quality end of life options. This helps ensure people can live with dignity in their community until their death, rather than be required to move to Perth to access appropriate services. Ongoing investment will be required to ensure regional Western Australians have access to high quality end of life services.

Initiative	South West Aboriginal Medical Service Health Hub (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$18.3 million over 2023-24 to 2024-25
Description	Funding to build a new South West Aboriginal Medical Services Health Hub in Bunbury to provide culturally appropriate, comprehensive health care to the Aboriginal population in the southwest regions of the State. This investment matches that of the Commonwealth for this initiative.
Implications	These services will provide much needed culturally appropriate care to Aboriginal people living in the South West, increase the uptake of health care and improve overall health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Initiative	Medical Respite Centre Services (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$2.2 million over 2023-24 to 2024-25
Description	To extend support for people experiencing homelessness to receive post-acute care during their recovery from illness or injury in a safe, community-based environment while linking the person with housing, community and social supports. This initiative was a key deliverable of the Sustainable Health Review.
Implications	Access to safe and secure accommodation is key to increasing rates of recovery and reducing unnecessary readmission to health services.

Initiative	Voluntary Assisted Dying (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$2.9 million for 2023-24
Description	This funding will increase support for voluntary assisted dying services in Western Australia. This is a key activity under the Sustainable Health Review.
Implications	Important investment in supporting the continued development of Voluntary Assisted Dying care in WA. Voluntary Assisted Dying, introduced in 2021, helps ensure WA adults can continue to hold autonomy over their life, even in their death. Ongoing investment will be required to ensure the continued development of Voluntary Assisted Dying services, with high quality care available to all Western Australians.

Initiative	WA Children's Hospice (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$1 million over 2023-24 to 2024-25
Description	Funding to support children accessing the Paediatric Palliative Care Service, which offers holistic and compassionate care to children with life-limiting conditions and their families while a dedicated hospice is being built. This is a key activity under the Sustainable Health Review.
Implications	Investment in interim palliative care services will provide a much-needed boost to support available to children and their families while the children's hospice is under development.

Initiative	COVID-19 Spending (BP2, V1, P296)
Investment	\$13.6 million over 2023-24 to 2024-25
Description	To fund residual COVID-19 response costs, including outbreak prevention activities.
Implications	There is little clarity on the intent on the intended projects included in this investment, but none the less, important funding to support the health systems continued transition through COVID-19 recovery. The distribution of funding, majority of which is in 2023-24, is appropriate and reflects our progress through the recovery phase.

Household Fees, Charges and Concessions

The McGowan Government has delivered a state budget that promises to keep government fees and charges below CPI, as well as providing electricity credits for all households and a much-needed boost to the Hardship Utility Grant Scheme limits. The Budget misses the opportunity, however, to expand eligibility for certain concessions such as water charges, vehicle registration and free public transit periods to all concession card holders.

Table 8.7

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON THE 'REPRESENTATIVE' HOUSEHOLD

	2022-23 \$ level	% change	\$ change	2023-24 \$ level
Utility Charges ^(a)				
Electricity ^(b)	1,812.52	2.5	45.30	1,857.82
\$400 Household Electricity Credit ^(c)	-400.00	n/a	n/a	-400.00
Water, wastewater, and drainage ^{(d)(e)}	1,803.71	2.5	45.11	1,848.82
<i>Total</i>	3,216.23	2.8	90.41	3,306.64
Public Transport ^(f)				
Student fares ^(g)	280.00	—	—	280.00
Standard fares ^(h)	1,152.00	2.0	23.04	1,175.04
<i>Total</i>	1,432.00	1.6	23.04	1,455.04
Motor Vehicles ⁽ⁱ⁾				
Vehicle licence charge	414.92	3.9	16.00	430.92
Recording fee	10.30	—	—	10.30
Driver's licence	93.70	—	—	93.70
Motor Injury Insurance (MII)	426.10	2.3	9.76	435.86
<i>Total</i>	945.02	2.7	25.76	970.78
Emergency Services Levy (ESL) ^(e)	297.26	5.0	14.86	312.12
Stamp Duty ^(j)				
Stamp duty on general insurance ^(k)	203.50	—	—	203.50
Stamp duty on MII	42.61	—	—	42.61
<i>Total</i>	246.11	—	—	246.11
Total Expenditure	6,136.62	2.5	154.07	6,290.69
Total Expenditure (excluding electricity credits)	6,536.62	2.4	154.07	6,690.69

Initiative	Household Electricity Credit – (BP3, P7)
Investment	\$566 million (\$450 million funded by the State Government and \$116 million funded by the Commonwealth)
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Western Australian households to receive a minimum \$400 Household Electricity Credit Energy Assistance Payment (EAP) eligible households to receive a \$500 Household Electricity Credit Small businesses with annual electricity consumption of less than 50 megawatt hours to receive a \$650 credit
Implications	The electricity credits provide temporary assistance to households in the midst of the current cost of living crisis. EAP eligible households receive an additional \$100 of electricity credit to provide greater support than the rest of the population. It is unclear how the Federal contribution is factored into this.

Initiative	Hardship Utility Grant Scheme Limit Increase – (BP3, P7)
Investment	\$3 million over the forward estimates
Description	The maximum Hardship Utility Grant Scheme limits increased from \$580 to \$640 (below the 26th parallel) and from \$960 to \$1,060 (above the 26th parallel)
Implications	The increase to the Hardship Utility Grant (HUGS) limits by 10 per cent is welcome and much needed. HUGS payment limits have remained static since 2017/18, not keeping pace with increases in energy and water costs. This will provide better support for those households experiencing difficulties with their utility bills.

Initiative	Fare Free Sunday Sessions – (BP3, P7)
Investment	\$2 million
Description	To encourage the continued use of public transport, the Government has established Fare Free Sunday Sessions - free public transport for Smart Rider users on the first Sunday of every month, commencing June 2023.
Implications	Increasing public transport patronage is critical, but it is unclear how much impact this initiative will have. WACOSS has advocated for an expansion of the eligibility for the current daily free travel periods for seniors to include all concession card holders.

Initiative	Seniors' Cost of Living Rebate Increase – (BP3, P7)
Investment	\$16 million over the forward estimates
Description	An increase to the Seniors' Cost of Living Rebate in line with the Consumer Price Index, boosting the 2023-24 rebate to \$104 for singles and \$156 for couples.
Implications	This increase ensures that the value of the Seniors' Cost of Living Rebate maintains relativity with rises in CPI.

Housing and Homelessness

The State Budget contains welcome and significant new investment into social housing. It lacks, however, any significant boost to specialist homelessness support services or a dedicated rent relief package to assist renters facing significant hardship in the current rental market.

Initiative	Top-up to the Social Housing Investment Fund (BP3, P277)
Investment	\$450 million in 2023-24
Description	<p>The top-up to the Social Housing Investment Fund will build on the state's existing social housing stock.</p> <p>Across forward estimates, this will be distributed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$208.7 million for construction of new social housing dwellings; • \$200.2 million for the acquisition of additional social housing dwellings through spot purchasing; and • \$35.2 million to deliver dwellings through industry partnership projects • \$46 million has been set aside for a Regional Supportive Landlord Model, to acquire around 100 houses for people sleeping rough in regional towns
Implications	The Government states that this will deliver an additional 700 dwellings – which is an average cost of \$643,000 per dwelling. In addition, \$300m has been brought forward from the existing Social Housing Investment Funding (announced in 2021) including \$254m for receipt of business cases for social housing and homelessness proposals and \$46m for the regional supportive landlord model.

Initiative	Funding increase for Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH)
Investment	\$61.6 million over the forward estimates
Description	\$14 million across the forward estimates for a continued freeze on GROH rents and \$45 million over the forward estimates for a refurbishment program.
Implications	This investment will assist the supply of affordable housing for public sector workers in regional areas. A similar investment for not-for-profit sector workers would be welcome.

Initiative	Geraldton Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation facilities funding – details on this investment are discussed in the Aboriginal Wellbeing fact sheet.
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Initiative	Wrap around support for the regional supportive landlord model (BP2, V1)
Investment	\$3 million over forward estimates
Description	\$3 million has been provisioned from consolidated accounts to provide operational costs - including wrap-around support for the regional supportive landlord model for Community Housing Organisations
Implications	This funding will enable the operation of the Regional Supportive Landlord Model discussed above.

Initiative	National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA population adjustment) (BP3, P134)
Investment	\$36.9 million in 2023-24
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$36.9 million upward revision as a result of the Commonwealth's population adjustment for the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) Treasury has also provisioned for indexation of extended agreement, pending finalisation

Initiative	Bentley Residential Redevelopment (BP3, P191)
Investment	\$48 million over the forward estimates
Description	DevelopmentWA has allocated \$48 million of capital expenditure to facilitate delivery of medium-to-high density infill in the Bentley redevelopment area.
Implications	The redevelopment is slated to deliver 900 residential properties, including approximately 130 social housing dwellings.

Initiative	Social housing refurbishments (BP3, P197)
Investment	\$77.5 million over forward estimates
Description	Funding to establish a rolling program of refurbishments for existing social housing dwellings.
Implications	Funded from the remainder of the original \$750 million allocation to the Social Housing Investment Fund, it will see the refurbishment of 553 social housing dwellings.

Initiative	Extension Koort Boodja Homelessness Response (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$1.428 million in 2023-24
Description	Funding to continue Koort Boodja's operational services.
Implications	This funding enables the continuation of Koort Boodja's transitional accommodation and wrap-around case management support for another year.

Initiative	Office of Homelessness Boost
Investment	\$3.9 million over the forward estimates

Description	A boost to resourcing for the Office of Homelessness to support the delivery of All Paths Lead to Home: Western Australia's 10-year Strategy on Homelessness
Implications	Department of Communities established the Office of Homelessness in early 2022 to provide a dedicated focus on the stewardship, coordination, strategic planning, and practices relating to homelessness. This boost in funding is likely to represent additional FTE for the office.

Initiative	Funding for Perth homelessness services (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$500,000 over 2023-34 and 2023-25
Description	A total of \$500,000 additional funding has been committed to Perth homelessness services to the end of 2025.
Implications	It is unclear how this funding will be distributed.

Initiative	Wrap-around support and tenancy services at the East Perth Common Ground facility (BP3, P134)
Investment	\$6.9 million over the forward estimates
Description	This funding is to provide wrap-around support and tenancy services at the East Perth Common Ground facility.
Implications	\$45.4 million was previously committed in 2021-2022 for the plan/design/construction of East Perth Common Ground committed FY21/22. This new funding will provide for support services following the construction of that facility. Capital funding is also provisioned for Communities' Asset Investment Program for the Mandurah Common Ground project pending approval of a project definition plan.

Initiative	Tenancy Advice and Education Services (BP3, P110)
Investment	\$4.9 million over two years
Description	This additional funding is to provide a temporary uplift in the capacity of the Tenancy Advice and Education Services network delivered through 16 community legal centres across WA. This is an increase of 36% on current funding, and advocates provide advice, information, education and court representation services to help keep vulnerable tenants in their homes.
Implications	This funding over two years supports community legal centres to plan and retain staff in response to increased demand for this service driven by rising cost-of-living and a housing crisis. This will help tenants understand their rights when renting and access support to negotiate with their landlord or property manager such as negotiating lease renewals or terminations, dealing with rent increases and resolving bond disputes.

Justice

Funding for justice in the State Budget has focused closely on crisis-end services, such as prisons and policing, with little investment in community-based solutions to address the underlying causes of crime. A big focus was on Operation Regional Shield and expansions to prison infrastructure. Previous funding announcements for Banksia Hill also needs to be spent and operationalised. Some of these investments are positive, particularly improved mental health and alcohol and other drug support in prisons, however this approach is not sustainable. A therapeutic approach within detention is needed to effectively rehabilitate and end the regular incidents and disruptions in Banksia Hill. Funding for smart justice such as early intervention, justice reinvestment approaches, and alternatives to custody are needed to improve outcomes in the community before crime occurs.

Initiative	Operation Regional Shield (BP2, V2, P400)
Investment	\$11.7 million in 2023/24
Description	Operation Regional Shield is an investment announced in 2022 to provide additional police staff and resources to the crime affected regions. This significant investment follows last year's \$2.5 million investment, extending the increased resources.
Implications	The previous three budgets have made continuous investments into policing. However, efforts to reduce crime must ensure they address the underlying causes, which are primarily social and economic. The WA Police Union has labelled this initiative 'unsustainable'.

Initiative	Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Reforms (BP2, V2, P415)
Investment	\$4.68 million in 2023-24
Description	This election commitment repeals previous legislation and provides a framework for people with mental impairment in the justice system. These reforms limit custody orders and allow the judiciary additional options for people who are mentally impaired and found unfit to stand trial. This funding is split across multiple departments and agencies and includes funding for Legal Aid.
Implications	This is a significant and highly welcomed improvement for Western Australia's justice system and is aligned with human rights standards after condemnation from the United Nations. Improving therapeutic and appropriate options available to the judiciary should ensure responses in the courts are effective and improve community safety.

Initiative	Banksia Hill Detention Centre – Increased Mental Health In-Reach (BP2, V1, P322)
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Investment	\$8.8 million over the next four years
Description	This is progressing the Child and Adolescent Forensic Service (CAFS), including a dedicated multidisciplinary service for young people at Banksia Hill Detention Centre. The CAFS aims to improve the mental health and social outcomes of those in detention, on transition out of detention, living in the community that are at risk of offending, and those otherwise involved in the justice system.
Implications	There has been a significant increase in self-harm and suicide attempts in Banksia and Unit 18. This additional funding is welcome, however ongoing staffing issues and lockdowns at Banksia Hill and Unit 18 may pose problems operationalising the new service.

Initiative	Banksia Hill Detention Centre – Upgrades and Urgent Works (BP2, V2, P429)
Investment	\$35.15 million over the next three years
Description	Infrastructures upgrades are required at Banksia Hill Detention Centre after significant damage to cells and security risks. This funding includes roof and fence treatments, CCTV upgrades and creation of a dedicated Crisis Care Unit. \$30.4 million of this is to be spent in 2023/24.
Implications	The May Riot at Banksia Hill has further damaged infrastructure, which may delay completion of urgent works. Completion of these works is required to close the Unit 18 facility in Casuarina Prison which has been used to house several young people after major damage.

Initiative	Banksia Hill Detention Centre – New Service Model (BP3, P155)
Investment	\$15.9 million
Description	A new model-of-care and operating philosophy for Banksia Hill was developed in 2022 after previous attempts to change the culture at the centre had failed to last. This funding is to implement this new service model focused on improving therapeutic and rehabilitative care including an additional 38 Youth Custodial Officers at Banksia Hill Detention Centre.
Implications	Banksia Hill needs urgent improvements after a series of high-profile incidents. Successful implementation of a model-of-care to provide therapeutic support is critical to improve safety for staff and the community. However, issues attracting and retaining staff have posed ongoing problems – worsened by the poor quality-of-care currently inside the centre.

Initiative	Increased funding for Community Legal Centres and Legal Aid private practitioners (BP2, V2, P416)
Investment	\$9.5 million for Community Legal Centres over 4 years. \$14.6 million for Legal Aid over 4 years
Description	<p>Community Legal Centres (CLCs) have received boost funding of \$9.5 million for 23-24 and 24-25. This is a continuation of boost funding in 2022-23 of around \$3.7million, which is not shown in the budget. CLCs have also been included in the Non-Government Human Services Indexation Policy for the first time.</p> <p>The Legal Aid funding enables Legal Aid to increase the hourly rate for outsourcing matters to practitioners that deliver legal services via grants of aid.</p>
Implications	The CLC funding boost will enable CLCs to continue vital services across the state, with a small increase to help meet costs or raise services slightly, in a context of rising demand. The funding term is for two years, which aligns with the funding provided to CLCs by State government via the National Legal Assistance Partnership agreement.

Initiative	Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy (BP2, V2, P416)
Investment	\$11.8 million over the next 2 years
Description	The Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy aims to engage young individuals in a variety of culturally appropriate activities and tackle the disproportionate representation and imprisonment of Aboriginal people within the criminal justice system. Efforts are also directed towards addressing the issue of a high number of young children encountering the justice system in the Kimberley region.
Implications	This funding continues prior investment in the Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy. There is a need for culturally-appropriate and Aboriginal-led initiatives across Western Australia.

Initiative	Casuarina Prison Alcohol and Other Drug Unit (BP2, V2, P415)
Investment	\$6 million in 2023/24
Description	The funding is an election commitment to extend the AOD service at Casuarina Prison providing offenders with mental health, alcohol and other drug needs with access to appropriate services.
Implications	Prisoners often have complex needs and require multidisciplinary, rehabilitative supports. This is a welcome investment to provide appropriate services for people inside prisons. Investment is needed, however, to improve throughcare and preventative supports based in the community.

Initiative	Banned Drinkers Register/Takeaway Alcohol Management System (BP2, V2, P529)
Investment	\$10.2 million across three years to 2025/26, including \$2.26 million to expand the trial into Carnarvon.
Description	The Banned Drinkers Register aims to reduce alcohol-related harm by restricting high-risk drinkers from purchasing packaged liquor. This initiative is currently being trialled in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Goldfields.
Implications	A review of the program by UWA found small numbers of registered banned drinkers, and alcohol and other drug experts believe it will have little impact on alcohol-related harm. There is a need to focus on underlying causes of excessive drinking and domestic violence to make a community-wide impact. The impacts of this program being applied in specific regions remains to be seen.

Initiative	Target 120 Extension (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$14.7 million over the next 2 years
Description	Target 120 is an early intervention program for young people at risk of repeat offending and engagement with the justice system and works intensively with young people and their families. This funding is to expand the program to nine additional sites, including the Kimberley and the Pilbara.
Implications	Target 120 has seen significant investment in recent years, but evaluation details have not been released. Early intervention with children and families is highly welcome, but evidence of effectiveness is needed to guide this program and ensure it is achieving results. It is our hope to see this program with promising results to hand over the reins to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in other T120 locations. Initiatives such as this must include housing for workers as part of the cost.

Initiative	Roebourne Regional Prison Air-Conditioning (BP2, V2, P429)
Investment	\$14.5 million in 2023-24
Description	This funding will install air conditioning in every cell at Roebourne Prison in the Pilbara region, where temperatures have exceeded 50 degrees in the summer.
Implications	This is a major improvement that will improve safety and prisoners' health and has been long called for by advocates. The overincarceration of Aboriginal people has meant previous dangerous conditions have risked a potential death in custody.

Mental Health

The 2023-24 budget saw a significant investment of \$420 million on a package of mental health initiatives. The package prioritises investment on acute care and mental health treatment. It appears that minimal funding has been dedicated to preventative services and mental health supports within the community. This will have to be a priority in future budgets if the government wishes to deliver on their vision of a collaborative recovery based mental health system.

Initiative	Graylands Reconfiguration and Forensics Taskforce (BP2, V1, P314)
Investment	\$218.9 million in forward estimates towards the Graylands Reconfiguration and Forensic Taskforce project.
Description	A business case for first stage works is under development for future Government consideration, with options to include at least 53 additional forensic beds (of which five beds are for a children and adolescent unit).
Implications	<p>After three decades of no increases to forensic mental health bed capacity, this investment will ensure better access to secure inpatient mental health care for individuals with mental illness. More information is needed to understand the breakdown of these beds for patients with different levels of need.</p> <p>This is a critical system capacity needed to support the implementation of the Criminal Law Mental Impaired Act – more information is needed to understand how this investment will support the implementation of the reforms.</p>

Initiative	Response to the Infant, Child and Adolescent (ICA) Taskforce Report (BP 2, V1, P322)
Investment	\$35.5 million to improve mental health outcomes for children and adolescents, and expand the Government's response to the Infant, Child and Adolescent (ICA) Taskforce report.
Description	<p>The Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents aged 0-18 years in Western Australia (ICA Taskforce) proposed eight key actions and 32 recommendations to transform the public infant, child and adolescent mental health system. The Commission is continuing to deliver the immediate actions funded as part of the 2022-23 Budget, including uplifts to metropolitan and regional service.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$7.1 million for a pilot of the Bunbury ICA Mental Health Service Hub

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$6.4 million for continuation/extension of uplifted mental health workers at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (9.5 FTE) ○ \$7.7 million to reconfigure Perth Children's Hospital Mental Health Inpatient Unit (Ward 5A) ○ \$3.6 million to pilot the East Metropolitan Acute Care Response Team ○ \$4.8 million Expansion of Touchstone service - a specialised intensive treatment service for children aged 12-17 years with complex personality disorders ○ \$5.8 million for an additional 10 Aboriginal Mental Health Workers (FTE) to support Aboriginal children and families to access and engage with mental health services
Implications	Uplift in community treatment services are welcome however more investment should be targeted at preventative measures and those delivered by the community sector.

Initiative	Emergency Telehealth Service for regional WA (BP2, V1, P323)
Investment	\$24.4 million to continue funding for the WACHS Mental Health Emergency Telehealth service across the forward estimates.
Description	We support the continuation of telehealth mental health services, however hope to see further resourcing support for mental health services to be delivered locally across the regions.

Initiative	National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (BP2, V1, P323)
Investment	\$9.8 million towards suicide prevention.
Description	The State Government will spend an additional \$9.8 million contributions to support the continuation of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.
Implications	A welcome investment from State Government to fund early intervention and prevention measures in partnership with Federal Government under the Agreement however, this appears to be the only new measure for early intervention and prevention in this budget.

Initiative	Additional funding for the Active Recovery Teams (BP2, V1, P322)
Investment	\$9.9 million for a one-year extension to the Active Recovery Teams.
Description	ART is a partnership between community mental health teams and non-government organisations that provides recovery planning and crisis response for individuals with complex needs recovering from an acute or crisis episode. These teams aim to minimise future presentations to emergency departments (ED) and prolonged inpatient stays.

Implications	Whilst the extension is welcomed, this program continues to be funded on yearly cycles. More longer-term investment is needed to support specialist community based mental health services to have the greatest impact.
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Initiative	Community Mental Health Treatment Services (BP2, V1, P322)
Investment	\$8.8 million additional funding, this includes the delivery of hospital in the Home Services which along with other programs aims to alleviate pressures on hospitals.
Description	Led by the Commission, the Community Mental Health Treatment and Emergency Response Services Project will provide the framework and future service configuration to transform public specialist community mental health and emergency response services to better meet the needs of youth, adults and older adults.
Implications	Extension of this measure is welcome as it will enable more people to access treatment within their home whilst also reducing stress on hospitals.

Initiative	Supporting the wellbeing of Aboriginal young people (BP2, V1, P322)
Investment	\$5.4 million across 4 years to continue Psychiatric Services in the East Kimberley to support Aboriginal youth wellbeing.
Description	<i>See WACOSS 'Aboriginal Wellbeing' Fact Sheet for further comment.</i>

Initiative	Specialised non-emergency transport services (BP2, V1, P300)
Investment	\$7.3 million will be provided to extend the delivery of specialised non-emergency transport services.
Description	Services for involuntary mental health patients travelling between health facilities and the community.
Implications	It is not clear if this investment relates to an existing package reported in the 2022-23 budget.

Initiative	Works on the North Metropolitan Health Service - Adult Mental Health Unit (BP2, V1, P314)
Investment	\$48,000 for the year 2023-24.
Description	Towards the Adult Mental Health Unit North Metropolitan Health Service.
Implications	More detail is needed to confirm if the investment will include improvements to safety for mental health patients. There have been no future investments in mental health works at regional hospitals and health facilities.

Regional Investment

The WA Government has outlined investment to address the unique needs and inequity experienced in our regional, remote and rural communities. The following initiatives will be spread across the state. To see a budget breakdown for each specific region, please see the government fact sheets [linked here](#). These initiatives are in addition to those that apply for all Western Australians. Whilst we are pleased to see significant investment in housing and staffing which are current key concerns across the regions, the level of investment does not adequately address the crisis these communities are facing.

You will find other regional investments documented in their relevant fact sheets.

Initiative	Health staffing (B2, V1, P295)
Investment	\$28.5 million
Description	Covers initiatives to attract and retain key health professionals, with funding primarily directed to regional and hard-to-staff sites.
Implications	Staffing is a key concern and barrier to delivering effective and appropriate health services across the regions. We support this investment and would welcome further support for non-government community service staffing.

Initiative	Health services (B2, V1, P29-P296)
Investment	\$25.7 million
Description	Including \$6.3 million over one year for cancer services, \$6.7 million over four years for renal support teams and \$3.1 million over one year for regional palliative care support. An additional investment of \$9.6 million to expand Ronald McDonald house, accommodation for regional families receiving healthcare in the metro area.
Implications	We are pleased to see investment in key areas of health vulnerability in regional WA as well as support for those needing to visit Perth for treatment.

Initiative	Mental health services (BP2, V1, P323)
Investment	\$24.4 million
Description	To continue the delivery of the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service over the next four years.
Implications	We support the continuation of telehealth mental health services, however hope to see further resourcing support for mental health services to be delivered locally across the regions.

Initiative	Regional Supportive Landlord Model (B3, P134)
Investment	\$49 million
Description	A new homelessness intervention service to assist and transition rough sleepers to social housing. This includes \$46 million to acquire around 100 houses for people sleeping rough in regional towns.
Implications	We welcome new initiatives that attempt to fix the housing crisis in regional areas.

Initiative	Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH)
Investment	\$61.6 million
Description	To be spent on refurbishing and delivering affordable Government Regional Officer Housing, including a 12-month rent freeze for public servants across regional WA.
Implications	Similarly, to the health staffing initiative this does not address the housing and cost of living crisis facing not-for-profit community staff in the regions.

Initiative	Regional education infrastructure (B2, V1, P351)
Investment	\$53 million over the forward estimates
Description	New and improved school infrastructure in regional WA.
Implications	Access to education in child development is critical and we are supportive of investment in school infrastructure.

Initiative	Temporary Regional Incentive for Teachers (B2, V1, P349)
Investment	\$9.2 million in 2023/24
Description	The final component of the \$12.4 million initiative announced in November 2022 to retain and attract teachers to regional and remote schools.
Implications	Quality and retention of these staff will be key with only one year of incentive budgeted.

Initiative	Student allowances (B2, V1, P370)
Investment	\$5.4 million
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2.5 million over two years to increase the travel allowance for regional TAFE students; \$2.9 million over three years to provide a weekly allowance for regional students studying a Diploma of Nursing
Implications	We are pleased to see this budget recognise the costs associated with studying whilst living remotely, this also encourages students to remain in the regions and fill much needed staff shortages.

Initiative	Access to regional childcare (BP2, V2, P521)
Investment	\$1.4 million over 2023-24
Description	As part of election commitments, the Government committed to boost funding to support access to regional childcare, including through initiatives to help attract and retain regional childcare staff. The 2023-24 budget continues to support this commitment.
Implications	Increased childcare, particularly in regional areas, allows parents and carers to return to work. This initiative supports women's economic empowerment and helps to create safe environments where children are supported to flourish in their early years.

Women

The bulk of the government's investments into 'supporting women' are large, general investments in areas such as housing, mental health and cost-of-living that are not actually gender specific. While the McGowan Government recognises the importance of family and domestic violence, this isn't sufficiently reflected in their level of investment. It's important to see investment in updating women's health infrastructure, however, the budget overall is lacking dedication to women's health issues more broadly, such as access to community-based services, addressing medical misogyny, and investing in preventative health.

Family and Domestic Violence

Initiative	FDV Broome Hub (BP2, V2, P501)
Investment	\$16.3 million over the forward estimates
Description	Funding has been allocated to deliver a regional One Stop Hub (Hub) for family and domestic violence in Broome, announced in 2022. This investment covers the commercial and operations funding for the FDV hub for four years.
Implications	The Broome Hub will be designed to deliver a culturally appropriate service and reflect the needs of the community in Broome and the surrounding areas, which has a high rate of Aboriginal women experiencing family violence.

Initiative	FDV Refuge and Safe House Sustainability (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$18.25 million over the forward estimates
Description	Additional funding for refuges and safe houses to address sustainability of services. On average, a 27% uplift for services that are no longer able to deliver on the original specifications of their contracts, which equates to a \$150 000 - \$300 000 uplift per service.
Implications	While this has established a much-needed new baseline of funding for services, it does not come anywhere near meeting the scale of the problem as specialist FDV services are facing ever-increasing demand and can't address unmet need.

Initiative	Extension of operation of the Mirrabooka and Kalgoorlie FDV Hubs (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$13.4 million over the forward estimates
Description	Extended funding for the Kalgoorlie and Mirrabooka hubs to enable continuation of these important services beyond June 2024.
Implications	Funding is always welcome to support the ongoing work of the hubs, however, investment across the continuum from primary prevention through to crisis response and recovery is needed to ensure the

	system can better support all people experiencing family and domestic violence.
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Initiative	FDV Response Teams - Coordinated Response Services (BP2, V2, P502)
Investment	\$3.4 million
Description	This investment is for a two-year extension on base funding and a 12-month commitment to supplementary funding for Coordinated Response Services (front line response workers located in various police stations across the State).
Implications	This commitment enables long-term employment contracts and decreased workforce turnover and attrition which has a significant impact on the quality and continuity of services for victim-survivors.

Women's Health and Wellbeing

Initiative	Expansion of BreastScreen WA (B2 V1, P296)
Investment	\$2 million for 2022-23 to 2023-24 (\$1 million funded by WA State Government, \$1 million funded by Commonwealth)
Description	Investment to support the continued delivery of BreastScreen Australia services to women 70-74 years of age and to increase the current participation rates, including through the delivery of recruitment activities and a focus on under-screened groups.
Implications	Important investment to ensure that all WA women have access to, and engage with, potentially lifesaving screening services.

Initiative	Commence construction of the new Women and Babies Hospital (BP2, V1, P313)
Investment	\$544 million over the forward estimates
Description	WA Government has committed \$1.8 billion to fully fund the new Women and Babies Hospital, including \$544 million to commence construction over the next four years.
Implications	This investment supports the development of a leading-edge maternity hospital and will ensure women have access to modern facilities.

Initiative	Supporting nurses and midwives transition into, and remain in the workforce (BP2, V1, P295)
Investment	\$7.8 million over 2023-24 to 2025-26
Description	Providing \$3.6 million to fund wrap-around transition support to newly qualified nurses and midwives. An additional \$4.2 million has been identified to provide HECS-HELP relief to newly qualified nurses and midwives employed in regional WA.

Implications	Transitioning to the workforce is a key period of poor workforce retention for new nurses and midwives as they negotiate the consolidation of complex skills with little supports. This investment package works to ensure new nurses and midwives have access to the mentorship and financial incentives required to support them remain in the workforce. This investment also has significant benefits for women in regional communities by increasing access to midwives and woman-centred care.
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Gender Equity

Initiative	TAFE Scholarships for Women in Non-Traditional Occupations (BP2, V1, P370)
Investment	\$2.6 million over the forward estimates
Description	This funding will provide 400 scholarships for women to train in non-traditional trade and technical occupations.
Implications	An important initiative to help address the underrepresentation of women in trades and technical occupations across a range of sectors. However, there is an absence of investment for women's economic opportunities in sectors that have traditionally employed a greater share of women.

Initiative	Rural, Regional and Remote Network Continuation (BP2, V1, P209)
Investment	\$700,000 over the forward estimates
Description	The Rural, Regional and Remote Network advocates on issues impacting women and their communities in rural and regional WA to various stakeholders.
Implications	This funding will help the RRR Network to continue to deliver, facilitate, and liaise on services, projects and social impact research that directly benefits RRR women and their communities.

Youth

This State Budget contains a couple of positive investments across the forward estimates aimed at addressing the issues facing young people, such as resourcing to implement the ICA Taskforce recommendations and in programs to support students with complex behaviour and/or disabilities.

However, this investment is minimal in comparison with the broader spending and fails to be coordinated under a coherent vision for youth service investment and governance in Western Australia. A strategic vision and policy for youth service investment is needed in order to see improved announcements in future State Budgets.

Initiative	Implementing the recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents (BP2, V2, P322)
Investment	\$35.5 million
Description	<p>From 2023-24 a further \$35.5 million will be invested to progress the recommendations of the ICA Taskforce, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$7.5m for the establishment of a 2.5 year pilot of a Community ICA Mental Health Service Hub in Bunbury; • \$6.4m for the continuation of a 9.5 FTE uplift at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS); • \$3.6m for the establishment of a 2.5 year pilot of an East Metropolitan Acute Care Response Team; • \$5.8m of funding for 10 additional Aboriginal Mental Health Workers; and • \$4.8m for an expansion to the Touchstone Service which provides specialised intensive treatment for children aged 12-17 years with complex personality disorders.
Implications	This is a positive start to addressing the significant gap in youth mental health services across the state, however the amount is spread thin across a range of initiatives, thereby reducing its impact. Improved resourcing is required to create sustainable long-term shifts in positive youth health and wellbeing.

Initiative	South-West End-to-End Young Driver Training Program (Media Statement - 'Big boost to keep our communities safe') (BP3, P123)
Investment	\$810,000 over four years
Description	This program works with disadvantaged young people in the South-West to help them learn to drive and get their license.
Implications	Whilst a small investment, this investment is important to bridging the gap for young people in regional areas to be able to get their driver's licenses in the South West. Supporting regional young people

	to obtain drivers licences will assist them to access education, employment, and community connection.
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Initiative	Driving Access and Equity Program (BP2, V2, P572)
Investment	\$5.8 million
Description	This program to assist young people in the Kimberley to obtain a driver's license has been extended in 2023-24.
Implications	Whilst a small investment, this investment is important to bridging the gap for young people in regional areas to be able to get their driver's license in the Kimberley.

Initiative	Child Protection Services (BP3, P133)
Investment	\$123.8 million
Description	Increased investment for the child protection system and supporting services to protect vulnerable children, at-risk youth and their families, including \$11.7 million to extend the Target 120 program across all locations to 30 June 2025.
Implications	This investment is detailed in Budget Paper No.3 however there is little information on where this spending is allocated across the Child Protection System.

Initiative	Target 120 (BP3, P134)
Investment	\$11.7 million
Description	Target 120 is a program intended to work across local organisations and service providers, government agencies and the community to support young people and their families who are at risk of becoming repeat offenders by connecting them with tailored services and supports. This investment will extent all locations until 30 June 2025.
Implications	Target 120 has seen significant investment in recent years, but evaluation details have not been released. Early intervention with children and families is highly welcome, but evidence of effectiveness is needed to guide this program and ensure it is achieving results. It is our hope to see this program with promising results to hand over the reins to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in other T120 locations. Initiatives such as this must include housing for workers as part of the cost.

Initiative	Youth Support Grants (BP2, V2, P522)
Investment	\$2,600,000 over forward estimates (\$650,000 per year)
Description	A cross section of grants to support youth engagement, development and celebration that lead to positive impacts for young people.

Implications	This funding is a continuation of 2022/23 and is resourcing small and innovative projects for young people throughout the community.
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Initiative	Provision of Menstrual Products in Public Secondary Schools (BP2, V1, P349)
Investment	\$5,236,000 over forward estimates.
Description	A state-wide initiative to supply free menstrual and sanitary products throughout public high schools to better support student engagement within education settings.
Implications	We strongly welcome this investment as a long overdue initiative to ensure equitable access to menstrual products in schools. We note spending changes in 2023-24, but it is unclear how much of this is new investment.

Initiative	National Student Wellbeing Program (BP2, V1, P349)
Investment	\$30,912,000 over forward estimates.
Description	The National Student Wellbeing Program (NSWP) supports students within schools with their wellbeing. The new NSWP provides funding for schools to choose a qualified student wellbeing officer or chaplain.
Implications	This funding shows promise but more detailed is required on the model of support provided and collaboration with youth workers is essential to providing effective support for young people. We note spending changes in 2023-24, but it is unclear how much of this is new investment.

Initiative	Suicide Prevention School Response (BP2, V1, P349)
Investment	\$560,000 in 2024/25
Description	The School Response aims to ensure that school aged youth experiencing issues associated with depression, self-harm and grief from bereavement by suicide have access to necessary services and support. It encompasses prevention, intervention and postvention activity in schools across Western Australia, including in metropolitan, regional and remote areas. This funding is a small spending change from last budget.
Implications	This investment will ensure increased mental health support for young people post-suicide and help to prevent further suicides however more detail is needed on how widespread implementation is.

Initiative	Support for Students with Disability and Complex Behaviour (BP2, V1, P350)
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Investment	\$533,800,000 over the forward estimates, which represents an increase of \$74,600,000 from 2022-23.
Description	An initiative that sees the WA government increase funding towards the expansion of specialist learning programs for students with autism spectrum disorder, and an increase to the educational adjustment allocation to support more students with undiagnosed disabilities and learning difficulties.
Implications	<p>We welcome this announcement as a positive investment to improve support and outcomes for young people with complex needs and/or disabilities, however we hope there are options for integrative classes to prevent isolation.</p> <p><i>See WACOSS 'Early Years' and 'Disability' fact sheets for further comment.</i></p>

Initiative	Adopting and Adapting the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 (BP2, V1, P349)
Investment	\$24,300,000 million
Description	An ongoing project that ensures The School Curriculum and Standards Authority is being adopted and adapting to the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0 for implementation by all Western Australian schools, which includes the provision of teacher support resources.
Implications	More detail is required to see whether this curriculum is suited to meet the needs of young people. We note spending changes in 2023-24, but it is unclear how much of this is new investment.