

A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Stronger communities
across a vast state

WA STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2024-25 SUMMARY



Many Western Australian households are facing hard times, unsure how they will see their way through the next year or two. They are worried about being able to provide for their loved-ones most basic needs and scared that no matter how hard they work and how carefully they scrimp and save, they may fall behind their financial commitments and risk losing everything.

Western Australians want to live in a state that fosters healthy, culturally rich and engaged communities. This vision relies on everyone in our community having access to the building blocks of healthy and connected lives – including a safe and inclusive environment, adequate resources, access to primary healthcare and preventative services.

Gaps in these basic needs threaten individual wellbeing and community cohesion.

We need to make much better use of our most precious resource – our people. This is a resource that will continue to grow and shine if we use it effectively but is easily eroded by misuse and neglect. We need to shift from a mindset that prioritises one-off investment in physical infrastructure to one that provides population-based and needs-based funding to critical social systems and supports.

All these things are achievable, and we have the collective knowledge and experience to make them happen. We need to act wisely and dedicate resources at an appropriate scale to build a stronger future for all Western Australians.

Affording Life's Basics

- ✔ Abolish no-fault evictions, including at the end of a fixed term tenancy; stabilise rent prices; and introduce minimum energy efficiency standards.
- ✔ Establish a two-year state-wide rent relief program.
- ✔ Establish a \$1 billion affordable housing future fund.
- ✔ Increase emergency relief and financial counselling funding.
- ✔ Additional investment in homelessness services to address the indexation gap.
- ✔ Ban gas connections to new homes and develop a roadmap to all-electric households.
- ✔ Expand eligibility for HUGS to include public housing tenants in water hardship and households with pre-payment electricity meters.
- ✔ Expand eligibility for water concessions and support water efficiency in low-income households.
- ✔ Extend transport concessions to all Centrelink Health Care Card holders.

Children, Youth and Families

- ✔ Create an Early Childhood Workforce Development Fund.
- ✔ Provide per-capita grants and targeted subsidies to community-based early education and care services.
- ✔ Create and resource an Office of Early Childhood, assisted by a cross-sector partnership forum and peak body.
- ✔ Implement the Child Safe Standards in WA.
- ✔ Make a funded commitment that all victims of child sexual abuse will receive timely and adequate support.
- ✔ Uplift funding for existing child sexual abuse therapeutic services and Indigenous healing services by 15%.
- ✔ Review current service coverage, unmet and projected need for child sexual abuse services.
- ✔ Commit to a target to evict zero children to homelessness for public housing in WA.
- ✔ Create a Child Poverty Act.
- ✔ Create a universal child lunch program in all WA schools.

Healthy and Connected Communities

- ✔ Invest in navigator models that improve community connectivity and service coordination.
- ✔ Remove charges for volunteer checks, improve the administration of volunteer screening and portability of screening checks.
- ✔ Expand existing community health services, including community health hubs and new community health services.
- ✔ Increase funding to mental health services, including investment to community-based services and prevention and early intervention services.
- ✔ Expand alcohol and other drug services across the spectrum of support.
- ✔ Introduce a minimum floor price for alcohol in WA.
- ✔ Create a WA child, youth and family wellbeing framework and strategy.
- ✔ Create a gender-responsive budget unit in WA Treasury to deliver a Women's Budget Statement.
- ✔ Establish a WA Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme.
- ✔ Fund the implementation of the Community Disaster Resilience Strategy.

Safety and Resilience

- ✔ Implement a comprehensive response to family and domestic violence, including the delivery of all asks raised in the WA Domestic and Family Violence Crisis Talks.
- ✔ Increase funding for specialist advocacy, legal and counselling services for women and children.
- ✔ Establish a cross-government mechanism to support departmental collaboration on family, domestic and sexual violence initiatives.
- ✔ Invest in expanding current and developing new family and domestic violence early intervention and prevention programs.
- ✔ Increase investment in services for men that increase perpetrator accountability, including early-stage voluntary men's behaviour change programs and accommodation services.
- ✔ Raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14.
- ✔ Develop a whole of government vision and strategy to improve youth justice outcomes across the life-course, in partnership with community and the sector.
- ✔ Develop state-wide publicly reported youth justice targets, in partnership with community and the sector.
- ✔ Co-invest to implement justice reinvestment with the Federal Government.
- ✔ Establish a cross-government mechanism to support departmental collaboration on justice reinvestment initiatives.

Thriving in Our Regions

- ✔ A long-term regional development strategy that invests in both physical and social infrastructure.
- ✔ Invest in regional service delivery networks and support local leadership to develop and deliver place-based solutions.
- ✔ Build housing subsidies into service contracts for regional centres and create more key worker housing.
- ✔ Review the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme.
- ✔ Invest in specialist, allied and dental health services in the regions.
- ✔ Improve access to fixed and mobile broadband in regional and remote locations, and support more free Wi-Fi hubs in public spaces.

Services for a Growing State

- ✔ Establish a Community Services Accord developed in partnership between the WA Government and the community service sector that outlines a set of shared goals and commitments and a plan to achieve them.
- ✔ Undertake a state-wide review of social services to create a state-wide plan for services.
- ✔ Establish a Sustainability Working Group with responsibility under the State Commissioning Implementation Plan.
- ✔ Line agencies work with the community service sector to identify the true cost and value of community services.
- ✔ Update the Non-Government Human Services Sector Indexation Policy to ensure sustainable indexation.
- ✔ Extend temporary indemnity and ensure access to physical and sexual assault insurance cover for all affected services in WA.
- ✔ Address care and social service recruitment and retention crisis through sustainable long-term service contracts and provide top up funding until services are recommissioned.
- ✔ Develop in place training and blended delivery models that cater for both new and existing workers in community services.