

## Housing & Homelessness

*Housing is the single largest living cost for Western Australians. In the current cost of living crisis, the investment committed to housing and homelessness in this Budget is to be commended. Social and affordable housing, both supply and condition, has been at crisis point for some time, as have homelessness services. We expect the investments made in this Budget will help to boost supply, improve living standards for social housing and support Western Australians who are doing it tough.*

<b>Initiative</b>	<a href="#">Homelessness Additional Funding</a> (BP2, V2, P504)
<b>Investment</b>	\$133.8 million over four years
<b>Description</b>	There will be an increase in baseline funding for more than 120 homelessness services.
<b>Implications</b>	This represents a significant increase to baseline funding for homelessness services in WA, which we know is much needed as these services have been at breaking point for many years. The uplift to funding in homelessness services is welcome. The average uplift to services will be 26%. After years of underfunding this money will enable those critical and lifesaving services to keep the doors open.

<b>Initiative</b>	<a href="#">Housing First Support Services (HFSS)</a> (BP2, V2, P504)
<b>Investment</b>	\$15.7 million over four years.
<b>Description</b>	Expansion of the Housing First Support Services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$6.7 million to support expansion in the Metro area</li> <li>• \$9 million to support expansion in the regions including Geraldton, Albany and Kalgoorlie</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	Housing is a basic human right. Homelessness is a barrier to accessing necessary support services. Housing First recognises that people need somewhere safe to live, as well as supports to maintain that housing. This funding announcement is warmly welcomed.

<b>Initiative</b>	No Wrong Door Expansion (BP2, V2, P504 & BP3, P135)
<b>Investment</b>	\$6.3 million over three years
<b>Description</b>	Funding to expand the capacity of EntryPoint and to operate the new Homelessness Services Portal
<b>Implications</b>	EntryPoint is an online access point for people experiencing homelessness and the new Homelessness Services Portal will allow

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	people to access homelessness services online. While online services are not suitable for everybody, this is an important initiative. Emergency relief services report that shame and stigma prevent people in need from accessing support. An online access point allows people to seek homelessness support simply and privately, if that suits them best.
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<b>Initiative</b>	Social and Affordable Housing Investment Fund (BP2, V2, P505 & BP3, P286)
<b>Investment</b>	\$400 million one-off contribution in 2024-25
<b>Description</b>	<p>Expansion of the Social and Affordable Housing Investment Fund (SAHIF) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the delivery and refurbishment of social housing stock, and</li> <li>• support a pipeline of affordable multi-residential housing across priority sites, including METRONET precincts, by partnering with the Commonwealth through Housing Australia and the community housing sector</li> </ul> <p>This fund was previously the Social Housing Investment Fund and has this year been expanded to also support affordable housing initiatives. A media release with further detail can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Implications</b>	Increasing availability of social and affordable housing is critical to support Western Australians who need it most. The housing crisis is felt more acutely in the regions, including when it comes to workforce capacity. The Government needs to address these challenges in the regions specifically.

<b>Initiative</b>	Maintenance Uplift for Social Housing (BP2, V2, P504 & BP2, P135)
<b>Investment</b>	\$179 million over two years, commencing 2023-24
<b>Description</b>	Additional funding to maintain the State's portfolio of around 45,000 social, key worker and Aboriginal homes.
<b>Implications</b>	Investment in maintenance of social housing stock will help to ensure that social housing is of a reasonable living standard for tenants.

<b>Initiative</b>	North West Aboriginal Housing Fund (BP2, V2, P504)
<b>Investment</b>	\$44.6 million over four years
<b>Description</b>	Includes funding to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations under the Aboriginal Housing Grants Program and funding to the Pilbara Aboriginal Housing Program.

<b>Implications</b>	The North West Aboriginal Housing Fund invests in projects in the Pilbara and Kimberley to increase housing choices and support services for Aboriginal families. WACOSS supports investment in projects that are Aboriginal-led and focus on empowerment for Aboriginal communities.
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<b>Initiative</b>	Tenancy Reforms (BP3, P112)
<b>Investment</b>	\$8.9 million over four years
<b>Description</b>	This funding will support the Consumer Protection Commissioner to perform their increased role in dispute resolution processes, including for disputes over bond payments, tenant applications to keep pets and minor modifications. A media release with further detail can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Implications</b>	Currently, all tenancy matters are heard by the Magistrates Court – a process which is onerous and intimidating. Changes to the <i>Residential Tenancies Act</i> move some of the dispute resolution processes to the Consumer Protection Commissioner in an effort to streamline the process and reach decisions more quickly. This funding will support these changes to work in practice.

<b>Initiative</b>	Regional Development-Ready - Land Development WA Asset Investment Program (BP2, V2, P757)
<b>Investment</b>	Almost \$35 million over one year
<b>Description</b>	This funding includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$16.8 million to make available 32 residential lots in Stage 5 of GreenView at Karlkurla, of which three will be social housing</li> <li>• \$13 million to make available 51 residential lots at Karratha’s Madigan at Baynton West, of which seven will be social housing and additional lots will be available for Government Regional Officer Housing</li> <li>• \$5 million to make available 26 residential lots in Stage 13 of Broome North’s Waranyjarri Estate, including three multi-residential social housing lots, two single residential social housing lots and three lots of key government workers</li> <li>• Funding to extend Tanami Drive, to provide access to around 500 future residential lots in Broome North</li> </ul> A media release with further detail can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Implications</b>	Boosting housing supply is needed to address spiralling housing costs and lack of accommodation for regional residents which impact

	community wellbeing and sustainability. Once this land is 'unlocked', it will be important that housing is built efficiently and in a way that meets the needs of the community. WACOSS would also like to see more lots and houses allocated for social housing to meet the growing need.
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<b>Initiative</b>	Vacant Property Rental Incentive Scheme (BP3, P112)
<b>Investment</b>	\$5.3 million over two years
<b>Description</b>	Under this scheme, the Government will offer \$5,000 incentives to owners of up to 1,000 vacant properties to bring them onto the long-term rental market (offering a minimum 12-month lease). A media release with further detail can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Implications</b>	This scheme is likely to boost rental housing supply, which is critically important to ensure Western Australians have access to affordable housing. It is modelled on the successful Short-Term Rental Accommodation Incentive Scheme.

<b>Initiative</b>	First Home Owner Transfer Duty Concession (BP3, P8, P72)
<b>Investment</b>	\$82.3 million over four years
<b>Description</b>	For first homebuyers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exemption from stamp duty for properties valued up to \$450,000 (formerly \$400,000)</li> <li>• Concessional rate for duty for properties valued up to \$600,000 (formerly \$530,000)</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	The Government expects around 4,800 first homebuyers to benefit per year with an average additional saving of \$4,163. While for many Western Australians, home ownership remains out of reach, this will assist some families in exiting the rental market and obtaining more stable housing.