

Mental Health

For many Western Australians experiencing mental ill health, factors including stigma, cultural barriers and a lack of easy and timely access stop them from seeking the support they need to stay or become well. When people finally seek support, services are often inaccessible due to significant gap fees or limited capacity for new admissions or referrals.

This budget works to support those in WA experiencing a mental health crisis through increased investment in the public mental health system, particularly for crisis response and acute mental health services. While this funding is very welcome, this budget does not commit to supporting community based mental health supports or addressing the underlying causes of mental ill health through increasing focus on prevention and early intervention.

Initiative	WA Virtual Emergency Department and Ambulance Co-Response Model (BP2, V1, P331)
Investment	\$7.9 million over two years.
Description	Part of the broader WAVED program funding (\$47 million package). Investment to support Stage 1 of the Mental Health Co-Response Ambulance Pilot. This program aims to provide a coordinated mental health crisis response pilot that prevents avoidable ED attendances and admissions by providing clinically appropriate alternative models of care.
Implications	Expansion of this model into mental health co-response is based on successful trails in the eastern states and, when implemented, will provide support to a person in crisis in their home. This has been shown to increase patient safety and improve outcomes. Whilst this initiative will alleviate pressure experienced by Emergency Departments, focus should remain on preventing acute mental health crises.

Initiative	Infants, Children and Adolescents (ICA) Taskforce (BP2 V1, P331 – 333)
Investment	\$46,600,000 over four years, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$22.4 million over four years to establish new Acute Care Response Teams in the North and South Metropolitan areas and the Great Southern, and to extend the existing Acute Care Response Team pilot in the East Metropolitan area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$19.5 million to extend the expansion of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services' Crisis Connect service workforce • \$4.7 million for a two-year extension of the WA Country Health Service's Brief Crisis Intervention Service to continue a vital post-emergency department follow-up service for children and their families and allow for a full evaluation of the service to be undertaken.
Description	<p>The Government is continuing its commitment to implement all 32 recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents aged 0-18 years in Western Australia (ICA Taskforce). Investment in the 2024-25 Budget brings the Government's total investment in ICA Taskforce initiatives to \$143.6 million.</p> <p><i>See Youth and Children and Families fact sheet</i></p>
Implications	<p>This initiative will improve access to vital services for young people needing an acute response.</p> <p>Ongoing investment in WACHS Brief Crisis Intervention allows for the continuation of a vital post-emergency department follow-up service for children and their families and allows for a full evaluation of the service to be undertaken. Yet, a two-year extension represents an overall shortfall for mental health funding in the regions.</p>

Initiative	Reconfiguration and refurbishment of the PCH Mental Health inpatient ward (BP2, V1, P312, P332)
Investment	\$14.2 million over an unknown period
Description	Additional funding for the reconfiguration and refurbishment of the Perth Children's Hospital Mental Health Inpatient Unit on Ward 5A. The Government is continuing its commitment to implement all 32 recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce into Public Mental Health Services for Infants, Children and Adolescents aged 0-18 years in Western Australia (ICA Taskforce). Investment in the 2024/25 Budget brings the Government's total investment in ICA Taskforce initiatives to \$143.6 million.
Implications	Important infrastructure upgrades to improve services for children receiving inpatient mental health support.

Initiative	Aboriginal Regional Governance Group (ARGG) Policy and Secretariat Team (BP2, V1, P331)
Investment	\$2.6 million over three years.

Description	To enable a policy and secretariat team to support the Kimberley ARGG in the implementation of the Partnership Agreement. The ARGG partners with Government agencies and ACCO's in the Kimberley region in response to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing.
Implications	Funding will support the sustainability of the ARGG and contribute to improving wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal Youth.

Initiative	Reforms to Mental Impairment in the Justice System (BP3, P96, P130)
Investment	\$69.9 million over four years
Description	<p>Funding for additional demand and an uplift in services resulting from the <i>Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023</i> which comes into effect on 1 September 2024. Key reforms include limiting terms for supervised persons who are currently on indefinite custody orders and enhanced statutory advocacy.</p> <p>Investment includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$26.1 million for mental health support services • \$20 million to accommodate expanded court services and establish the new Mental Impairment Review Tribunal • \$14.4 million to legal services on behalf of the State • \$7.9 million for additional disability justice services • \$1.4 million for ICT upgrades and accommodation <p>See <i>Justice fact sheet</i>.</p>
Implications	This is welcome funding to support the reforms from the <i>Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023</i> . These reforms were much needed in WA, with criticism from human rights, mental health, and disability advocates regarding the practice and lack of oversight in indefinite detention. It is unclear how much of the funding for mental health support services is being allocated to increasing the number of beds in the Franklin Centre and forensic beds, in comparison to other mental health services and supports.

Initiative	Private Psychiatric Hostels Staffing Requirements (BP2, V1, P331)
Investment	\$13.6 million over four years.
Description	To ensure private psychiatric hostels can meet new mandatory minimum staffing requirements.
Implications	The implementation of new standards relating to minimum staffing requirements are critical to ensuring the delivery of high quality care, and the prioritisation of patient safety and wellbeing.

Initiative	National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (BP2, V1, P332)
Investment	\$5.3 million over two years.
Description	Towards a continuation of initiatives under the existing Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-2025 whilst the Commission plans for the next iteration of the Framework from 2025.
Implications	A welcome investment into prevention and early intervention measures in partnership with the Federal Government.

Initiative	Continuation of the Active Recovery Teams (ART) Pilot (BP2, V1, P332)
Investment	\$10.5 million in 2024-2025.
Description	ART represents a partnership between community mental health teams and non-government organisations, providing 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 and prolonged inpatient stays.
Implications	The ART Pilot has demonstrated good early outcomes for patients with complex needs. Sustainable investment should replace the short-term funding of this pilot program.

Initiative	Content Warning: Statewide Anti-Ligature Remediation Program (BP2, V1, P323)
Investment	\$27.8 million over three years.
Description	To rectify ligature risks within Western Australian Public Mental Health inpatient units.
Implications	Important continuation of mental health service infrastructure upgrades that promote patient safety.