

Women

The budget does not demonstrate significant commitment to women in WA, or building an environment in which they can thrive. While the budget funded a range of initiatives, when looked at holistically funding for women appears to be caught in a dance of one step forward and one step back.

The 2024-2025 Budget demonstrated the desire to increase WA's capacity and capability to address the State's family and domestic violence crisis through considerable investment in a range of initiatives. Sadly, the budget did not provide much needed funding to critical refuge and safe house services or the implementation of the Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy. As one woman dies every four days in Australia sustained investment is urgent and vital.

Funding to support women's economic independence was limited to small grants, upgrades to locker rooms, and programs that benefit public sector employees. This budget saw minimal investment in ensuring women have the tools to navigate work - including affordable childcare - to enter historical male dominated sectors or be adequately remunerated for their work in feminised industries.

Importantly we see upgrades to women's health infrastructure and ensuring access to life saving services – such as a dedicated women's mental health facility focused on eating disorders. Yet, the lack of funding for community-based services or specialist sexual assault services, lack of initiatives to address medical misogyny, and a lack of investment in preventative health, suggest the budget is lacking dedication to systemic improvements on women's health outcomes.

As seen in previous years, the 'Supporting WA Women' snapshot highlights a range of large investments in areas such as housing, mental health, and cost-of-living. While some of these investments are gender specific, many are not. Critically the investments highlighted in the snapshot reflects only a small proportion of total budget expenditure.

We continue to call for the WA Government to adopt a gender response budgeting approach that analyses, and transparently reports on, the gendered impacts of public spending – particularly the significant percentage of state spending that is not identified in the 'Support Women Snapshot'.

While we have seen investment on some issues impacting women in WA, this budget was ultimately a missed opportunity to fund a gender responsive budgeting unit within WA Treasury and truly consider how our social systems, structures, and spending contributes to gender inequity in WA.

Family and Domestic Violence

Initiative	FDV Taskforce – Strengthen Responses (BP2, V2, P503-504)
Investment	\$60.5 million over four years

Description	<p>Package includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6 million over two years for Aboriginal Family Safety Grants • \$600,000 over two years to boost Access to Domestic Violence Counselling • \$2 million over three years for Coercive Control Education and First Responder Training • \$6.04 million over two years for continuation and expansion of Perpetrator Intervention Programs • \$7 million over two years for the Flexible Support Package • \$300,000 over two years for the Housing Families Program • \$2.4 million over one year for Munda Mia • \$6.6 million over four years for a new Perth CBD Women’s Refuge • \$814,000 over two years to Preventing Violence Together • \$6 million over two years for Primary Prevention Grants • \$4 million over two years on a Public Awareness Campaign • \$1.5 million over two years to Respectful Relationships • \$14.2 million over four years for the Ruah Perth CBD One-Stop Hub • \$3.1 million over two years to Safe at Home
Implications	<p>The initiatives under ‘Strengthen Responses’ are welcome, particularly in primary prevention and early intervention areas which historically has had very little resourcing. Despite this, longer term commitment to these areas would be necessary to create the change we need to see to prevent violence from occurring.</p> <p>The FDV Perth Hub will offer victim-survivors easier access to support services with a range of community services co-located.</p>

Initiative	FDV Taskforce – System Reform Plan (BP2, V2, P504)
Investment	\$53.8 million over four years
Description	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$405,000 over two years for a Central Information Point • \$25.6 million over four years to expand the FDV Response Teams • \$1.9 million over four years for a Lived Experience Advisory Group • \$4 million over four years for new Crisis Beds • \$6.2 million over four years for the development of a Workforce Entity • \$2.06 million over three years for administration
Implications	We are pleased to see funding commitments aligned with the System Reform Plan, created by the FDV Taskforce.

	<p>Collaborative multi-agency approaches result in better experiences and outcomes for victim-survivors. The expansion of the FDV Response Teams is welcomed. We look forward to the inclusion of Community Corrections Officers in the Response Teams to bring focus to accountability and intervention for people who use violence.</p> <p>A Lived Experience Advisory Group will enable people with lived experience of FDV to contribute their expertise in a formalised process to inform policy and system development and improvement. This is a commitment under the FDV System Reform Plan, developed by the FDV Taskforce. A proposed model of the Lived Experience Advisory Group has been developed by Kwobap Consultancy through consultation and is with Government for consideration.</p>
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Initiative	Family and Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (BP2, V2, P421)
Investment	\$396,000 over one year
Description	The Department of Justice to undertake consultation on a new family and domestic violence disclosure scheme for victim-survivors.
Implications	This funding will go towards consultation on a disclosure scheme. If further investment is made, victim-survivors will be empowered with the knowledge of whether a person has a documented history of domestic violence.

Initiative	Breathing Space Services in Calista and Maylands (BP2, V2, P504)
Investment	\$4.5 million over one year
Description	Additional funding for men's behaviour change program 'Breathing Space' in Maylands and Calista
Implications	This means Breathing Space will have additional capacity to work with men who have used violence and support them to choose not to use violence. Men's behaviour change programs are an important component of a system which provides accountability and intervention with men who use FDV. WACOSS called for increased investment in services for men that increase perpetrator accountability in our State Budget Submission 2024-25.

Initiative	FDV Counselling and Advocacy Support Services (BP2, V2, P504)
Investment	\$3.1 million over two years
Description	Uplift to existing FDV community-based counselling and advocacy services.

Implications	This investment means more victim-survivors will have access to vital healing and recovery supports. WACOSS called for this in our State Budget Submission 2024-25.
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Women's Health and Wellbeing

Initiative	Provision of Menstrual Products in Primary Schools (BP2, V1, P354)
Investment	\$865,000 over four years
Description	Free period products in primary schools from Term 3. This is in addition to free products in high schools and TAFEs which were provided from mid-2023. Note: Existing Department Spending has been reprioritised to meet these costs. <i>See Youth fact sheet</i>
Implications	Access to free menstrual items helps to reduce stigma around menstruation and ensures that no girl goes without such basic healthcare items.

Initiative	Short-Stay, Mother-Baby Developmental, Behavioural and Parenting Interventions Pilot (BP2, V1, P306)
Investment	\$490,000 over two years
Description	Not provided.
Implications	Unable to determine due to limited description of funding.

Initiative	Bunbury Hospital Redevelopment (BP2, V1, P311)
Investment	\$173,200,000
Description	Additional funding for the redevelopment of Bunbury Hospital, which has reached contract award stage. The redevelopment includes new and expanded maternity, birthing, and neonatal services.
Implications	This investment supports the development of a leading-edge maternity hospital and will ensure women have access to modern facilities, particularly in a regional area.

Economic participation

Initiative	Payment of superannuation on unpaid parental leave (Supporting WA Women – Economic Independence)
Investment	\$46,000,000 over an unknown time period
Description	Extend the payment of superannuation on unpaid parental leave from 12 to 24 weeks, for all WA public sector employees.
Implications	Paying super on unpaid parental leave is an important investment to improve women's economic security in their later years and assist WA families in making decisions about balancing care and work. This is a practical initiative to close the gender superannuation gap and increasing the social value of parental care work.

Initiative	Upgrades to Career Fire and Rescue Station shower and locker rooms (Supporting WA Women – Economic Independence)
Investment	\$5,000,000 over an unknown time period
Description	Upgrades to Career Fire and Rescue Station shower and locker rooms to enable privacy for women.
Implications	Increasing privacy for women helps to reduce barriers to participating in what has historically been a male dominated workforce.

Initiative	Women's Grants for a Stronger Future (BP2, V2, P505)
Investment	\$1,000,000 over one year
Description	The Women's Grants for a Stronger Future program provides funding support for the community to develop initiatives based in Western Australia, that address the unique issues faced by women. In 2023-24, 57 organisations received funding for projects promoting gender equality.
Implications	Continued funding of the Stronger Future grants program provides opportunity for organisations in WA to continue to promote gender equality in a way most meaningful to them. It should be noted that the ongoing success of changes achieved by grants under this program will require the support of long-term systemic reform that promotes a more gender equal WA.