

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

While the small injection of social and affordable housing is welcome, it is far below what is needed to meet demand. As of the end of 2016-17, there were 16,516 households on the public housing waitlist, with 1,590 on the priority waitlist. On average, applicants waited 139 weeks to be housed (or around 2.7 years).

There is significant uncertainty about funding for remote Aboriginal housing and homelessness services as a result of the cessation of Commonwealth support. The ongoing negotiations with the Commonwealth around the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) are another source of uncertainty. Addressing both of these needs to be a major priority for the WA Government in coming months.

Metronet

- \$394 million Social and Affordable Housing and Jobs Package, comprising:
 - \$41 million in capital expenditure
 - \$143 million in operating expenditure by the State; and
 - \$209 million of private sector investment
- Package will deliver 1,390 new homes, including:
 - Up to 320 new social housing dwellings
 - At least 400 affordable homes; and
 - Eight high-density METRONET-oriented developments

Commonwealth/State Relations

- On 9 May 2017, the Commonwealth announced its intention to establish the NHHA, which would replace the housing National Specific Purpose Payment (NSPP) and the Homelessness National Partnership (NP) from 2018-19
 - Negotiations with the Commonwealth are still ongoing - NHHA will effectively maintain current funding level and provide ongoing homelessness funding, but conditions on expenditure are yet to be agreed. The State Budget reflects a continuation of funding at the NSPP level
- A commitment to continued Commonwealth funding for remote housing is also being sought following the expiry of the current agreement (around \$100 million per annum) on 30 June 2018
 - Any reduction or cessation in this funding would be on top of the Commonwealth's 2015 withdrawal of investment in essential and municipal services in these communities

Homelessness Support Services

- Reduction in total cost of service from \$87.4 million, to \$63.1 million
- Reduction in income from \$31.9 million, to \$15.6 million
- Reductions despite an assumption of numbers of clients increasing from 16,184 in 2017-18, to 16,600 in 2018-19.



2018-19 BUDGET BRIEFING

- Budget Papers state decrease in expense and income, from 2017-18 Estimated Actual to 2018-19 Budget Target, is mainly due to a reduction in funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

Regional

- Continuation of funding for the North West Aboriginal Housing Fund
- Election commitment delivery of Crisis and Transitional Accommodation in Collie

See the WACOSS Regional factsheet for more details

Strategy and Legislative Reform

- Mental Health Commission is developing the *Western Australian Mental Health, AOD Accommodation and Support Strategy 2018-2025* to guide the development of appropriate accommodation and support for people with mental health and AOD issues. It is anticipated to be available for public consultation in mid-2018
- Amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987* will support victims of family violence to resolve tenancy issues
- Amendments to the *Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Act 2006* will be implemented, providing greater certainty and transparency about contracts and costs
- Consultations will occur early in 2018-19 to inform future regulatory reform for retirement villages and residential tenancies