

It's time to build

COMMUNITY

WA STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2025-26

This is a hard time for many Western Australians. The financial pressures on households are acute. Three years of rising living costs and slow wage growth mean many families have run down their reserves and are running out of options.

Housing costs are the largest weekly expense. Record high rents and record low vacancy rates mean the financial stress is locked in for some time. The high cost of rent is forcing people to cut back on food, utilities, transport, and health care. Many can't afford visits to the doctor or the medicines they need, leading to overuse of emergency services and higher rates of chronic disease.

Western Australia has grown rapidly over the last decade and our population is ageing. After a decade of constrained spending on social services our community infrastructure cannot sustain this growth.

Rising living costs and a growing population are driving unprecedented levels of social need. Community services across our state are overwhelmed by growing demand from clients facing complex challenges. Meanwhile, insufficient and uncertain funding leaves them unable to do regional outreach, provide their staff with job security, or reduce waitlists.

It is time to build community

The decisions we make now are critical for the resilience of our economy and the wellbeing of our community for years to come. This is why we need to restore our social safety net, invest in social infrastructure, build human capital, and diversify our economy to be future-focused.

Western Australians share a vision for the future where everyone has access to a safe and healthy home. Where our children have the best start in life, and our young people are given the backing they need to build our future. It is a vision where everyone can access social services that are timely and enabling, where all of us have the chance to live our best lives.

WA is a great state – let's make it a fair one too.

Investing in the building blocks for a good life

- Expand universal breakfast and lunch programs to all WA schools.
- Increase emergency relief and financial counselling funding to meet increasing demand.
- Commission a study into a freight subsidy scheme for remote areas.
- Expand eligibility for HUGS to include water hardship in public housing and those with pre-payment meters.
- Increase funding for HUGS, lifting grant limits to cover all outstanding debt.
- Invest in a 'Knock to Stay Connected' Pilot to prevent electricity disconnections.
- Commit to a total overhaul and reform of the youth justice system by implementing SRWA's Blueprint for a Better Future.
- Review the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme.
- Ensure families can receive early intervention for children with developmental delays.
- Increase funding to mental health services, including youth, the missing middle and step-up step-down.
- Invest in alcohol and other drug services, including regional detox facilities and sobering up centres.
- Implement the recommendations of the Facing the Facts report.

- Invest in alternate education options for children disengaging with mainstream services.
- Invest in traineeships and further study options for people in regional and remote communities.
- Targeted participation support funding for students from families in financial hardship.
- Support the transition between school and employment for young people living with a disability.
- Extend transport concessions and discounts to all Centrelink Health Care Card holders and students.
- Extend car registration concessions to those on low incomes, including all Centrelink Health Care Card holders.
- Invest in regional transport systems and networks.
- Implement the Digital Inclusion Blueprint.
- Subsidise and facilitate reliable internet connection for all social housing residents.
- Commit to sustainable funding of community services and a one-off catch-up to fix current shortfalls.
- Undertake a state-wide review of social service gaps and develop a state-wide social service plan.

Investing in safe and secure homes

- Implement second-generation rent stabilisation measures.
- Identify unused Government Regional Officer Housing stock and allocate to community workers.
- Develop a State rental affordability scheme to replace the National Rental Affordability Scheme.
- Increase social housing to 10 per cent of all housing stock.
- Transfer management of more public housing stock to CHOs and ACCOs.
- Invest in safe accommodation pathways for victim-survivors of family violence.
- Invest in the delivery of rapid, innovative and diverse accommodation options.
- Increase investment in Housing First programs and Common Grounds facilities.
- Invest in visitor accommodation in urban and regional centres.
- Invest in basic facilities for people sleeping rough.
- Abolish no reason evictions in the Residential Tenancies Act.
- Develop and implement Minimum Standards for rental properties.

Investing in communities

- Create and resource an Office of Early Childhood.
- Universal access to quality early education and care.
- Increase the Grandcare Support payment and provide more active support to carers.
- Invest in navigator models that improve community connectivity and service coordination
- Increase the availability and accessibility of respite care.
- Expand delivery of integrated child and family hubs.
- Invest in Third Spaces as critical community infrastructure.
- Ensure the needs of children and young people are included in responses to family violence.
- Increase investment in sexual violence services, including CSATS and IHS.
- Expand counselling and support services for young people experiencing harmful sexual behaviours.
- Increase programs that engage with men who use, or at risk of family violence, to provide accountability, behaviour change, and victim-survivor safety.
- Implement the recommendations of the Parliamentary inquiry to improve options for survivors of child sexual abuse.
- Establish a redress scheme for those directly affected by past forced adoption in WA.
- Establish a WA Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme.
- Implement an immediate advertising ban for unhealthy products on all State-owned assets.
- Ban gas connection in new homes and develop a roadmap to transition to all-electric households.
- Fund the implementation of the Community Disaster Resilience Strategy.

Investing in equity and good process

- Introduce a WA Gender Equality Act and a Gender Equality Commissioner.
- Invest in a Gender Responsive Budgeting Unit with WA Treasury.
- Create a WA child, youth and family wellbeing framework.
- Create a WA Early Intervention Investment Fund.
- Resource an early intervention analytics unit within Treasury.
- Reform budget process operating rules to include second round fiscal effects.
- Adapt regulation of People WA to build capability for cross-government impact assessment.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND