

### Aboriginal Wellbeing

Spending for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is spread across most budget priorities and portfolios, and sometimes not identified in budget papers. Notable dedicated investment into Aboriginal Wellbeing in this budget includes targeted housing initiatives, expansion of the Aboriginal Rangers program and investments in Aboriginal health services in the regions.

There are many other measures in this state budget which have the potential to positively impact wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, it's essential to ensure that consideration is made to ensure their accessibility and cultural appropriateness. For instance, initiatives such as Student Assistance Payments require digital access and literacy, while Regional Pensioners Travel Cards rely on access to relevant identification documentation, which can be difficult for many Aboriginal people.

On 27 May 2025, the Premier announced the long-overdue Stolen Generation Redress Scheme, which will see survivors forcibly removed from their families before 1972 receive \$85,000 in reparations — a small but important step toward truth and healing, after years of tireless advocacy. It's important to note that there is no provision for this indicative in this budget as the announcement was made after the budget initiative cut off, the budget papers indicate it will be included in the 2025-26 Mid-year Review.

Overall, it's hard to see a dedicated and coordinated commitment to Closing the Gap through this budget, which is a concern when there is still very significant progress that needs to be made in many domains. It is, however, promising to see a gradual move towards Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations delivering services for Aboriginal people.

#### WA Labor 2025 Election Commitments

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>Expansion of Aboriginal Ranger Program</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V2, P685, P700) (BP3, V1, P156, P157, P218, P220)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$20 million over 3 years, starting from 2026-27</b>
<b>Description</b>	The Government will spend an additional \$20 million over 2026-27 to 2028-29 to expand the Aboriginal Ranger Program, which will provide further support to regional and metropolitan Aboriginal Corporations to set up and deliver ranger programs.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>Since its establishment following the 2017 election, the Aboriginal Ranger Program has delivered on country jobs and training for Aboriginal people in regional and remote communities across WA. To date, this program has created more than 1,400 jobs, with about 45 per cent of jobs taken up by women. It contributes to the Western Australian Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Targets, across economic participation and maintaining relationship with country.</i>

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>\$54 million to bolster Pilbara Health Services</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Partially Funded (BP2, V1, P323)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$11.8 Million</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>Some renal dialysis aspects of this commitment have been funded, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1 million project planning funding for delivery of an 8-bed Karratha Renal Dialysis Facility, a new hostel and expansion of Geraldton Renal Dialysis Unit; (BP2, V1, P323)</li> <li>• \$10.8 million (BP2, V1, P321) for Renal Dialysis and Support Services</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	<i>The commitment to providing significant investments in Pilbara Health Services has fallen well short of the election commitment of \$54 million and will have significant negative impact on Aboriginal health in the Pilbara. The Wirraka Maya Aboriginal Health Services in South Hedland is mentioned in the budget papers, but with no funding listed.</i>

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>Kimberley Health Service Upgrades</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Partially Funded (BP2, V1, P303, 321, 336, 339)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$24.5 Million</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>Funding has been provided for several health service upgrades in the Kimberley, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$8.8 million for Derby Wellness Centre, providing alcohol and other drug, mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services (BP2, V1, P339)</li> <li>• \$8.6 million for Broome Sobering Up Centre</li> <li>• \$5.1 million to transition Dampier Peninsula Clinics to Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (BP2, V1, P303)</li> <li>• \$2 million for planning a future detox centre in the Broome Community (BP2, V1, P336)</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	<i>Prioritising these health services for Aboriginal people to access health care closer to home is very welcomed. It's unclear if the dialysis expansion for Fitzroy Crossing has been included in this budget.</i>

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>Remote School Infrastructure program</b>
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<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2 V2 P372)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$2 million / year for 4 years</b>
<b>Description</b>	Funding for the election commitment, Remote Schools Infrastructure Program, which will deliver infrastructure upgrades to eligible non-government schools across the Kimberley region.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>Aboriginal students in remote Kimberly communities are predominantly serviced by non-government schools. Investment in education facilities helps address ongoing disparities in educational outcomes for remote and Aboriginal students.</i>

## Other Significant Investments

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Stolen Generations Redress Scheme</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$0, Investment announced after budget cut off (BP3, V1, P71)</b>
<b>Description</b>	On 27 May 2025, the Premier announced a new Western Australia Stolen Generations Redress Scheme for Aboriginal people who were removed as children from their families in Western Australia before 1 July 1972. Registrations are expected to open in the second half of 2025 and individual payments of \$85,000 are expected to commence late 2025.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>As this decision was announced after the 2025-26 Budget cut-off date, the State's financial aggregates presented in these statements do not include provision for this initiative at this time. The total cost of the initiative will be impacted by factors including the number of survivors accessing redress and non-cash supports and is expected to be included as part of the 2025-26 Mid-year Review.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Custody Notification Service</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$2.185 million over 4 years (BP2, V2, P414)</b>
<b>Description</b>	The CNS is a phone service operating 24/7 for Aboriginal people in WA who are detained by police, aiming to prevent deaths in custody, harm suffered, and the infringement of legal rights.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>A decrease in funding to the lifesaving CNS is a matter of significant concern at a time when we are seeing more deaths in custody of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, across the country and in Western Australia. Responding to discrimination and ensuring WA has culturally safe services is critical to Closing the Gap.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Aboriginal Community Controlled Community Support Services</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>Over \$22 Million (BO P22, BP2 V2 P495, P532, P598, P609)</b>
<b>Description</b>	The budget includes specific investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to deliver a range of services including

	housing, family support, youth and sporting programs. This includes \$13 Million for Binar Futures (BO P22), \$3.3 Million for Julyardi Aboriginal Corporation (BP2 V2 p.495), \$3 million for Marra Woora Worra (BP2 V2 P532), and \$2.7 million for Robe River Kurura Aboriginal Corporation (BP2, V2, P598, 609). There will also be additional investment in ACCO services not explicitly identified in the budget papers.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>Dedicated investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations supports priority reform 2 of Closing the Gap, while supporting culturally safe and community-led support services. It empowers Aboriginal communities to design and deliver services that respond to local priorities, cultural contexts, and the holistic wellbeing of their people, particularly vulnerable young people and families. This also aligns with recommendations from the WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy, WA Aboriginal Expenditure Review and Whole of Government ACCO Strategy.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Aboriginal Focused Housing Initiatives</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>Over \$80 million</b> (BP2 V2 P493, P609, P598, P599, P111, P707)
<b>Description</b>	<p>There are a range of Aboriginal focused housing initiatives across the budget, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$20 Million for Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation</li> <li>• \$22 Million for Fitzroy Valley Additional Homes and Temporary Accommodation Units Disposal</li> <li>• \$20 Million for North West Aboriginal Housing Fund</li> <li>• \$10.4 million for expansion of the metropolitan homelessness outreach program, including assisting Aboriginal people to return to country</li> <li>• \$7.5 Mill Remote Aboriginal Housing and Municipal Services</li> <li>• \$1 Million for Remote Aboriginal Communities</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	<i>Ensuring Aboriginal people have secure, appropriate, affordable housing aligned with their priorities and needs is a key outcome of Closing the Gap. At last report, WA still has a 17% gap to close in this domain. Investment in dedicated Aboriginal Housing initiatives is important to achieve meaningful change in this area.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Government Policy Management - Aboriginal Affairs</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$36,028,000</b> (BP2 V2, P69-70)
<b>Description</b>	The Aboriginal Affairs Division provides strategic policy advice and coordination to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs including cross portfolio advice on Native Title Negotiation and implementation and Aboriginal Affairs policy.

<b>Implications</b>	<i>The budget allocations for Aboriginal Affairs within Department of Premier &amp; Cabinet have increased significantly over two years and remain higher into the forward estimates. This relates to delays with the implementation of the South West Native Title Settlement and the Bidyadanga Project, as well as additional resourcing to support significant Native Title Future Act Matters. Recent Public Sector Reforms have included a consolidated leadership role in Aboriginal Affairs policy to improve social outcomes.</i>
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