

## Mental Health

Investment in this budget focuses largely on clinical responses and in particular, supports for children experiencing mental-ill health. Whilst targeted investment is welcome, this is a missed opportunity to address the ongoing shortfall in prevention and early intervention funding for mental health. The introduction of the State Government's new preventative health portfolio in conjunction with the development of a new 5-year Mental Health and AOD Strategy, marks an opportune time to set the strategic direction of mental health investment in WA. The implementation of this new strategy should be supported by funding for effective implementation, whilst also considering the State's role in the National Suicide Prevention Agreement and the NDIS reforms. Strong investment in community supports will be crucial for creating more accessible mental health supports for people in WA.

### WA Labor 2025 Election Commitments

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>Bunbury Acute Care and Response Team</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V1, P332)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$13.8 million over 4 years. Part of a \$65 million investment to improve mental health support for WA children.</b>
<b>Description</b>	To establish an Acute Care and Response Team in the South West. This team will provide mobile and virtual crisis response, and intensive support, to children and families. This means that children won't have to present to an emergency department for care in crisis, receiving care at home.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This program will allow young people to receive care within the home and will reduce emergency department admissions.</i>

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>Ngala Residential Parenting Service</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V1, P332)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$39.5 million over 4 years. Part of a \$65 million investment to improve mental health support for WA children.</b>
<b>Description</b>	To deliver no-cost public access to the Ngala Residential Parenting Service, providing mental health, early intervention and prevention support to families across WA.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>These services are currently only available to those referred by the Department of Communities, or who are able to self-fund, such as those covered by private health insurance. This investment will provide vital access to mental health support for more WA families.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Virtual Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Hub</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V1, P332 &amp; BP2, V1, P333)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$12.2 million over 4 years. Part of a \$65 million investment to improve mental health support for WA children</b>
<b>Description</b>	To establish the Virtual Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (ICAMHS) Hub. The Virtual ICAMHS Hub will comprise specialist practitioners who will support regional community services to respond to children with complex mental health needs.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This investment will strengthen the specialist mental health support available for children in WA. However, considerations must be given to the ability to access virtual services for digitally excluded people, particularly given the prevalence of digital exclusion in regional, rural, and remote WA.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Transition of the Kalgoorlie Step Up / Step Down Service</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V1, P332)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$9.9 million over 3 years, commencing from 2026-27</b>
<b>Description</b>	To improve mental health service access in the Goldfields by transitioning the Kalgoorlie Step Up / Step Down service into a public mental health facility (under the WA Country Health Service).
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This investment will improve access to mental health services for more people in the region. The service should be provided by suitably qualified staff who support the intersectional needs of people experiencing mental health challenges in the Goldfields.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Establishment of a residential Eating Disorder facility</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Appears to be partially funded (BP2, V1, P332)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$5 million over 3 years</b>
<b>Description</b>	Planning for a community-based residential eating disorder facility.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>Aligns with the WA Eating Disorder Framework 2025 – 2030. Investment should exist alongside other treatment options, such as those based in the community or through outreach in the home.</i>

**Other Significant Investments**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Program Support Fund</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>4 million over 4 years (BP2, V2, P516)</b>
<b>Description</b>	The Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Program Support Fund is intended to support good mental health in the workplace. The Fund will support industry bodies to develop, implement and run mental health and suicide prevention programs at work.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This recognises the important role workplaces play in the mental wellbeing of their workforce.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Initiatives</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$2.2 million over 4 years (BP2, V2, P493, P496)</b>
<b>Description</b>	The Government is providing \$2.2 million to strengthen the LGBTQIA+ sector and initiatives and deliver a new grants program aligned with the development and implementation of Western Australia's first whole-of-government LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Strategy.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>The Strategy and subsequent investment will improve the safety and accessibility of mainstream services, whilst strengthening specialist supports. This will contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBTQIA+ people in WA.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Active Recovery Team Extension</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$11.2 million 2025-2026 (BP2, V1, P332)</b>
<b>Description</b>	\$10.5 million was announced in the 2024-2025 budget as part of the ART Pilot. ART is 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.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>The ART Pilot has demonstrated early outcomes for patients with complex needs. Whilst it is positive to see the ART Pilot extended, sustainable investment should replace the short-term funding.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Psychiatric Assistance Dogs Program</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$240,000 over 2025-26 (BP2, V1, P61, P62, P63 &amp; BP3, P104)</b>
<b>Description</b>	This funding is part of the Government's investment in the Psychiatric Assistance Dogs pilot program (2023) that supports veterans with service-related mental health conditions. The program is delivered by RSL and Laizan K9. The investment will provide an additional eight dogs to support the mental health of Western Australian veterans.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>It is welcome to see the expansion of this pilot program.</i>