

## Youth

*This State Budget has some welcome investment in young people, particularly in mental health and workforce training. The expansion of the School Breakfast Program and the continuation of the Student Assistance Payments and free public transport are important cost-of-living measures to support either young people directly or their families.*

*But given the strength of the State's economy and population growth in a time of housing crisis, we would have liked to see more investment in social infrastructure to support youth and pathways to help them access affordable housing.*

### WA Labor 2025 Election Commitments

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>School Breakfast expansion</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V1, P353 &amp; P354 &amp; BP3, P129)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$28.5 million over 4 years</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The Government will invest an additional \$28.5 million over 2025-26 to 2028-29 to expand the School Breakfast Program from two to five days per week for schools currently participating in the program, and to expand the program to additional schools under broadened socio-economic eligibility criteria. The program will be available at over 670 locations under the expanded program.</p> <p>There is further funding beyond the four outyears, with a total investment of \$37.2 million over 2025-26 to 2029-30.</p>
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This targeted cost of living relief will meaningfully reduce food costs for families doing it tough. It will also encourage school engagement and set kids up to learn.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Initiatives</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Partially funded (BP2, V2, P494)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$36 million</b>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$8.1 million over 3 years for FDV Support for Children and Young People</li> <li>• \$1.53 million over 4 years for the Safe at Home program</li> <li>• \$21.78 million over 4 years for the Safe House Uplift</li> <li>• \$5.05 million for Targeted Family and Sexual Violence Frontline Services</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This includes the support towards planning and business case development for the expansion of Albany and Geraldton refuge capacity, and further expansions of FDV refuges at five locations across the State.</i>

	<i>The Safe at Home program will reach an additional seven locations, including several in regional Western Australia. While these initiatives support victim survivors of FDV, more funding is required in preventing FDV from happening in the first place.</i>
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<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>Fund 16 Police and Community Youth Centres (PCYC) &amp; safeSPACE programs</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V2, P400 &amp; BP3, 134)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$10.5 million over 4 years</b>
<b>Description</b>	This funding includes \$5.5 million for sustainability for the Police and Community Youth Centres across Western Australia (bringing the total approved sustainability funding to \$24 million). This package includes \$5 million to continue the delivery of safeSPACE programs, extending the PCYC safeSPACE Program at five locations into 2025-26 and 2026-27.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This is a welcome support for maintaining early intervention, diversionary and recreational programs for young people, especially in regional WA.</i>

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>Youth Crime Bail Reform Package</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V2, P413 - 414)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$14.5 million over 4 years</b>
<b>Description</b>	This funding includes \$14.5 million (\$10.3 million recurrent and \$4.2 million capital) to progress the Youth Crime Bail Reform Package election commitment, including repurposing the Old Armadale Courthouse as a Children's Court and to develop electronic curfew checking of young people on bail, and reforms to fast-track trials and ensure bail decisions for violent young offenders can be reviewed immediately.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>There are continued expert concerns about the practicality of fast tracking trials. Extra funding for one Children's Court alone will not enable a significant reduction in sentencing times, as trial times are influenced by capacity of police, prosecution and defensive legal teams, not just court capacity. There is evidence that electronic monitoring has a net widening effect, rather than increasing numbers successfully bailed, those who would already be bailed could be monitored.</i>

<b>Election Commitment</b>	<b>Expand Night Space in Kununurra</b>
<b>Status</b>	<i>Funded (BP2, V2, P493 &amp; P413)</i>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$5.9 million over 3 years</b>
<b>Description</b>	Replicate the Ngurra Buru (Broome Night Space) in Kununurra to provide a safe place for vulnerable young people.

	Planning for the three-year pilot will commence in consultation with local community representatives and the Department of Communities to identify a suitable location and engage support services including meals, access to youth mentors and next-day family follow-up.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This will provide a safe place for young people in Kununurra. This is a welcome commitment, however, it is disappointing to see that it is not recurrent funding.</i>

### Other Significant Investments

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Home Stretch</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<i>Partially Funded (BP2, V2, P509) – Future funding required</i>
<b>Description</b>	<p>Home Stretch is a program to support young people leaving state care to successfully transition to independent living. It has been developed in partnership between Communities and a number of service providers, with recent expansion of the pilot program to include more regional services and ACCO providers.</p> <p>The budget papers currently show the program fully funded this year at \$14 million, but a drop of funding down to \$3 million in future years.</p> <p>This is because a commitment has been made to extend the program, but work still needs to be done to fully cost it.</p>
<b>Implications</b>	<p><i>An announcement was made by Minister Winton last year with an in-principle commitment to expand the program statewide and make it ongoing, as it was previously funded as a time-limited trial.</i></p> <p><i>However, work is still needed to cost the program based on modelling the population of care leavers going forward, and then further funding will be allocated.</i></p> <p><i>“Home Stretch WA program continues to see positive demand and retention of young people who leave OOHC at the age of 18 years, supporting them to transition to independent adulthood by providing extended support and resources up until the age of 21 years.” BP2, V2, P495</i></p> <p><i>Media Release:</i>  <a href="https://www.wa.gov.au/government/announcements/home-stretch-wa-now-rolled-out-across-wa-463-million-of-additional-funding-provided">https://www.wa.gov.au/government/announcements/home-stretch-wa-now-rolled-out-across-wa-463-million-of-additional-funding-provided</a></p>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Fee-Free TAFE</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$22 million (BP3, P99)</b>
<b>Description</b>	The fee-free TAFE program is continuing, with fees in 2026 the same as 2025, and an additional \$22 million has been allocated to add building and construction courses.

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<b>Implications</b>	<i>This package of investments into TAFE support opportunities for youth and continue to boost the skilled workforce, specifically/especially in the building and construction industry.</i>
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<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Infants, Children and Adolescents Taskforce</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$65 million over 4 years (BP3, P122)</b>
<b>Description</b>	<p>The State Government has established the Infants, Children and Adolescents Taskforce, which includes \$65 million, including these youth services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$13.8 million 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</li> <li>• \$12.2 million 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This is welcome funding towards mental health services in regional Western Australia.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Step Up/Step Down (SUSD) Metropolitan Youth Facility</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$6.088 million over 3 years (\$800,000 spent in 2024-25, \$3 million in 2025-26, \$2.288m in 2026-27) (BP2, V1, P322)</b>
<b>Description</b>	The 2024-25 Budget is higher than the 2024-25 Estimated Actual primarily due to issues associated with securing building and construction services in regional Western Australia, with this delaying construction of the Step Up/Step Down facilities in Karratha, South Hedland and a youth-specific facility in Perth.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>We hope that this important project is prioritised for delivery and does not leave the community too much longer for these mental health services.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Kids Access All Areas Pass</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$3.1 million over two years (BP2, V1, P203 &amp; BP3, P114)</b>
<b>Description</b>	The pass will provide 50,000 vouchers for children aged between five and 15 (up to a value of \$50 per child) to subsidise the cost of tickets to events at up to 120 arts, cultural and creative venues across the State, including, Scitech, the Western Australian Museum, the Maritime Museum, Albany Entertainment Centre, and the State Theatre Centre.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>This funding over the next two years will support children and families with the cost of engaging with the arts, cultural and creative industry and events across the State.</i>

## 2025 - 2026 Budget

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>KidSport program</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$4.8 million</b> (BP2, V2, P203 & BP3, P115)
<b>Description</b>	Assists eligible children aged from five to 18 to participate in community sport, providing up to \$300 per child.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>While it is good that this initiative to support young people from low-income families to participate in community support, it appears the payments have been cut from \$500 to \$300.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Student Assistance Payments</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$5.6 million</b> (BP2, V1, P354)
<b>Description</b>	Payment will continue to support families with \$150 for each Kindergarten and primary student, and \$250 for each secondary student.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>The continued reinvestment in cost of living relief for families of students is welcomed.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Ride to School Free Program</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$10.4 million over two years</b> (BP3, P155)
<b>Description</b>	To provide further cost of living relief for families, free public transport on regular Transperth services for school students with a valid Student SmartRider will be extended to the end of the 2026 school year.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>The continued reinvestment in cost of living and transport relief for school students is welcomed, however it is important to note the requirement to hold a valid SmartRider imposes a barrier on some young people, particularly vulnerable young people who may need external support to afford the cost of a Smart Rider and ensuring it is valid.</i>

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Target 120</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>\$11.289 million</b> (BP2, V2, P494, P495, P509)
<b>Description</b>	Target 120 is an early intervention program for young people at risk of repeat offending and engagement with the justice system. The Department of Justice provides regular program monitoring as well as more in-depth data analysis.
<b>Implications</b>	<i>Target 120 has been funded for another year, but there is no funding in the out years for the continuation of the program. We are concerned about the future of this program.</i>