

Aboriginal Wellbeing

The Aboriginal Wellbeing budget seems to be business as usual in 2026-27. We are pleased to see more investment in health services, social and emotional wellbeing services and housing - particularly in remote communities. It is also good to see investments in economic development opportunities, such as Aboriginal tourism, though in some instances, such as Aboriginal home ownership in the Pilbara, the investment seems inadequate to meet stated outcomes.

Funding for the Stolen Generations Redress Scheme continues to be an important and welcome step towards healing and acknowledging historical injustices. However, it is disappointing to see a lack of investment in active anti-racism initiatives or ongoing truth-telling considering the recent rise in racism towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as demonstrated at the attempted bombing of the Invasion Day Rally on 26 January this year.

Worth positively noting is the significant investment in Aboriginal led decision-making and self-determination, particularly for a representative body and family-led decision making in the child protection sector, which catches WA up to national standards.

Initiative	Social and Emotional Wellbeing Services (BP2, V1, P322)
Investment	\$48.6 million over four years.
Description	To support social and emotional wellbeing targets in Closing the Gap, \$48.6 million has been committed to continue the Social and Emotional Wellbeing program across WA, providing holistic and culturally appropriate support to better meet the needs of Aboriginal people.
Implications	<i>We are pleased to see significant investment in social and emotional wellbeing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and hope the investment will improve outcomes in Target 14 of the Closing the Gap Agreement. We are interested to see the cultural appropriateness and accessibility of these services.</i>

Initiative	Stolen Generations Redress Scheme (BP2, V1, P62, P74)
Investment	\$260.5 million over four years.
Description	Provision for individual repatriations of \$85,000 and support for Aboriginal people who were removed as children from their families in Western Australia before 1 July 1972.

Implications	<i>Funding for the Stolen Generations Redress Scheme is welcomed as an important investment in the healing of Aboriginal people who were removed from their families as part of the Stolen Generations. We hope this allows Stolen Generations survivors, and their families, to begin healing intergenerational trauma, and is an important step in addressing historical injustices.</i>
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Initiative	Aboriginal Representative Organisation in Child Protection (BP2, V2, P480, P482)
Investment	\$37.7 million over four years.
Description	To fund expansion of the Aboriginal Representative Organisations (ARO) program for a further four years, delivering on a legislative obligation to empower Aboriginal organisations to lead consultation in support of improved decision making and cultural outcomes for children and families in contact with the child protection system.
Implications	<i>We are pleased to see investment in Aboriginal leadership and decision-making for children and families in contact with the child protection system. It should be a continued priority of the WA Government to build the capability and capacity of Aboriginal organisations to influence policy for better outcomes.</i>

Initiative	Aboriginal Family-Led Decision-Making (BP2, V2, P480)
Investment	\$7.2 million over four years.
Description	To continue the Aboriginal Family-Led Decision-Making initiative in Mirrabooka and the Mid West-Gascoyne region. Aboriginal Family-Led Decision-Making supports the right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to make decisions about how to keep their child or young person safe and connected to their family, culture, Country and community.
Implications	<i>It is promising to see an investment in the right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to make decisions about how to keep their own children and young people safe. This investment supports Priority Reform 1 of the Closing the Gap Agreement as well as Target 12, and should be expanded across other policy areas.</i>

Initiative	Custody Notification Service (BP2, V2, P402)
Investment	\$3.9 million over four years.

Description	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.
Implications	<i>A decrease in funding to the lifesaving CNS was raised as a matter of concern last financial year (\$2.2 million), due to more deaths in custody of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, across the country and in WA. The increase by almost 79 per cent this financial year is significant.</i>

Initiative	Remote Communities Housing (BP2, V1, P229) (BP2, V2, P581, P584)
Investment	Remote communities housing investment totalling \$159.5 million: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$12.7 million over four years for Asset Lifecycle Investment • \$61.8 million over four years for Housing & Municipal Services • \$11 million in forward estimates for Municipal Vehicles, Plant, Machinery & Equipment • \$69 million over four years for the Remote Communities Fund • \$5 million over two years for the North West Aboriginal Housing Initiative
Description	There is a range of funding allocated for key initiatives aimed at improving housing conditions and increasing housing availability in remote Aboriginal communities. Ensuring Aboriginal people have secure, appropriate, affordable housing aligned with their priorities and needs is a key outcome under Target 9 of the Closing the Gap Agreement.
Implications	<i>Significant investment in housing in remote communities is essential to improving Aboriginal wellbeing. However, it is unlikely this investment will be enough to address the negative effects of overcrowding which Aboriginal people experience in remote WA.</i>

Initiative	Pilbara Aboriginal Home Ownership Program (BP2, V2, P591) (BP3, P239)
Investment	\$26.7 million over three years.
Description	The program aims to deliver up to 24 affordable and secure rental homes to employed Aboriginal families in the Pilbara funded by the North-West Aboriginal Housing Fund. Families will have the opportunity to purchase the homes. The program will also provide strengths-based, culturally secure support services to support participants to achieve their own goals in employment, education, financial wellbeing and home ownership.
Implications	<i>It is encouraging to see investment of \$16.9 million this financial year, however funding reduces to \$8.5 million in 2027-28 and reduces to \$1.2</i>

	<i>million in 2028-29. With land and construction costs being circa \$1 million in South Hedland and Karratha, and rising construction and freight costs, it is difficult to ascertain how 24 homes as well as costs for wraparound services can be offered with the budgeted amounts.</i>
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Initiative	Jina: Western Australian Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2026-30 <i>(BP2, V1, P199)</i>
Investment	\$20 million over four years.
Description	A renewed investment to support a range of Aboriginal tourism initiatives. This funding supports tourism product development, cultural experiences, and capacity-building for Aboriginal tourism operators.
Implications	<i>Additional funding for Aboriginal tourism initiatives provides both economic development and cultural empowerment opportunities, particularly in remote Western Australia.</i>

Initiative	Aboriginal Ranger Program <i>(BP2, V2, P680) (BP3, P241)</i>
Investment	\$62.8 million over four years.
Description	Funding is allocated based on ongoing operational expenditure of an expanded Aboriginal Ranger Program (ARP) which was budgeted for last financial year.
Implications	<i>It is promising to see continued investment in the Ranger Program, however the decrease in funding from approximately \$21.8 million for expansion of the Ranger Program last financial year, to approximately \$15.5 million per year indicates no further expansions are being budgeted for, which is disappointing considering the positive outcomes the Ranger Program has produced.</i>

Initiative	Broome Renal Hostel <i>(BP2, V1, P300, P311)</i>
Investment	\$22.6 million for one year.
Description	To deliver the Broome Renal Hostel, which will provide 20 beds for renal patients and carers in northern WA. The service will be operated by the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service.
Implications	<i>This will add to the current 10 renal beds available in Broome and is a sorely needed addition to the total amount of renal facilities, contributing to improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Kimberley region by improving access and allowing people to stay on Country when receiving treatment.</i>

Initiative	Renal Dialysis Centre in Halls Creek <i>(BP2, V1, P312)</i>
Investment	\$23.9 million over two years.
Description	Funding allocated this financial year for the long awaited eight-chair renal facility in Halls Creek for up to 32 patients and may include accommodation for staff. \$10.7 million is budgeted this financial year and \$13.2 million in 27-28. The service will be operated by the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service.
Implications	<i>The centre was initially announced in 2021 and has been subject to significant delays. Halls Creek has just one dialysis unit, which has led to poor health outcomes for Aboriginal communities in the region. This is a welcomed and long overdue investment in the health of remote communities in the East Kimberley.</i>