

Mental Health

WA continues to face growing mental health challenges, including rising demand, long wait times and barriers to accessing support.

It is positive to see that this budget includes investment in mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, alongside the release of the State's new five-year Mental Health and AOD Strategy. The continuation of key programs such as the Active Recovery Team, Infant, Child and Adolescent System Transformation program, and Ambulance Mental Health Co-response services is a positive step in maintaining essential supports.

However, this budget does not fully address longstanding gaps in prevention, early intervention and psychosocial supports. While investment in clinical services remains important, achieving sustainable improvements in mental health outcomes will require a stronger investment and priority for integrated, coordinated placed-based prevention and early intervention approaches to support long-term system sustainability and better community mental health outcomes.

Initiative	Community Mental Health Services Uplift (BP3, P99, P134)
Investment	\$43.8 million over four years.
Description	To continue uplifted funding for community services contracts and associated costs.
Implications	<i>We are still seeking clarity on the detail of this measure. However, it appears to represent a new uplift, increasing baseline funding to support service continuity while commissioning is occurring. This is a positive step in recognising the sustainability pressures facing services operating under extended contracts.</i>

Initiative	Crisis Recovery and Intervention Support Service (BP3, P99, P129, P135)
Investment	\$15.4 million over five years.
Description	Establish a Crisis Recovery and Intervention Support Service in one location in the metropolitan region. The program will provide support for individuals who require short-term care that is more intensive than primary care but does not require hospital admission, reducing pressure on emergency departments and providing better care for patients.
Implications	<i>This pilot is a positive step towards more flexible, community-based mental health care, offering an alternative to hospital settings and better matching support to people's needs. It has the potential to improve access to timely, appropriate care and reduce pressure on emergency departments.</i>

Initiative	Mental Health Advocacy Service <i>(BP3, P135, P283)</i>
Investment	\$9.7 million
Description	Uplift pay rates for advocates and provide advocacy services for additional mental health hospital beds, and psychiatric hostel residents;
Implications	<i>Funding to increase pay for mental health advocates and expand their support for people in hospital care and supported accommodation, helping to ensure people can access advice, have their rights upheld and improve outcomes.</i>

Initiative	Spending uplift in delivery of regional services <i>(BP2, V1, P296, P297)</i>
Investment	\$19.7 million
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$15.6 million to enable regional commissioning of expanded services with the phased onboarding and training of clinical specialists in the areas of Intensive Care and Mental Health • \$4.1 million over two years for Mental Health Patient Transport Officers to safely transport vulnerable patients in regional Western Australia to appropriate care.
Implications	<i>Improves access to mental health care in regional WA, where services are often harder to access. While this is a good start, more significant and longer-term investment will be needed to reduce the gap between regional and metro areas and ensure everyone can get the mental health support they need.</i>

Initiative	Increased Suicide Prevention and Supports <i>(BP2, V1, P232) (BP3, P134)</i>
Investment	\$9.7 million
Description	\$4.9 million for the expansion of the Children and Young People Responsive Suicide Support program into the South West, providing individual, group or family counselling supports to children and young people who have lost someone to suicide; and \$4.8 million for more suicide prevention workers in regional areas, to implement, lead and support suicide prevention activities in their communities.
Implications	<i>These measures may help improve support for children and young people affected by suicide and strengthen local prevention efforts in regional communities. Expanding counselling services and workforce capacity is a positive development, though ongoing investment and broader system changes will be needed to ensure consistent access and long-term impact across different regions.</i>

