

Regional Investment

This budget includes investment in key areas such as health, housing and transport to support regional WA. Access to essential services is important for people living in regional areas and government investment must also reach WA's most remote communities, where housing, energy, food and transport affordability pressures are already critical and have been intensified by the fuel crisis

The Seven Cities vision was the centrepiece for regional investment in this budget. As the government's long-term plan for regional economic development, this will deliver infrastructure in areas identified as critical, including Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, Port Hedland, Karratha, Broome, Geraldton and Albany. We welcome commitment to a planned and sustained approach to strategic regional development. Investment into the creation of more housing for government workers and a range of housing-related measures to support the attraction and retention of skilled workers to the regions is needed.

To ensure success, this vision should also include investment to support the sustainability of the community service workforce in regional WA and secure access to appropriate and affordable housing for these key workers.

Initiative	Expansion of TransBroome bus service (BP2, V2, P567)
Investment	\$7.2 million over four years.
Description	Spending changes to support the continuation of Broome town bus services.
Implications	<i>Will provide an affordable transport option for Broome residents.</i>

Initiative	Air services for regional communities (BP2, V2, P32)
Investment	\$1.3 million over four years.
Description	Regional Regular Public Transport Air Services for Derby-Broome and Kununurra-Halls Creek-Balgo.
Implications	<i>Will contribute to lower airfares for residents of regional and remote WA, supporting access to essential services and return to Country.</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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$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 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 overcrowding 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 million in 2028-29. With land and construction costs being circa \$1m in South Hedland and Karratha, and rising construction and freight costs, it is difficult to ascertain how 24 homes as well as funding for wraparound services can be offered with the budgeted amounts.</i>

Initiative	More pharmacists brought on board to care for everyday conditions (BP2, V1, 294) (BP3, P131)
Investment	\$4.1 million
Description	Boost access to primary care across WA, through the Enhanced Access Community Pharmacy Pilot. Under the pilot, qualified pharmacists will be able to diagnose and treat an additional 17 mild, common conditions, including asthma, shingles, and acne. This investment will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subsidise up to 200 additional pharmacists • About one in three pharmacists in the program are based in regional Western Australia

Implications	<i>Expanding the role of pharmacists to diagnose and treat common conditions is a practical way to deal with workforce shortages, especially in regional WA, where it can be hard to see a GP or other health professional. Supporting up to 200 more pharmacists, about one-third in regional areas, will help people get care sooner and closer to home for simple health issues. This approach can ease pressure on busy health services and make it easier for people to get help when they need it. Its success will depend on how well services reach smaller and more remote communities, and on strong connections between pharmacists and other health providers to support safe, ongoing care.</i>
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Initiative	Expand Patient Assisted Travel Scheme <i>(BP2, Vol 1, P293, P294, P296, P307)</i>
Investment	\$15.5 million over four years.
Description	This measure represents the second stage of an election commitment and was also outlined in the 2025–26 Mid-Year Financial Projections (MYEFO). It will expand eligibility criteria so that more regional and remote patients, including those needing allied health and dental services, can access support through the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS).
Implications	<i>This will support greater access to healthcare for people in regional and remote areas by expanding eligibility for the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme, particularly for those who need to travel long distances to receive specialist care.</i> <i>While increased investment and expanded eligibility are welcome, further changes will be needed for the program to fully meet its purpose. This includes reviewing reimbursement levels, improving administrative processes, and ensuring supports better reflect the real costs and complexity of accessing care from regional and remote areas.</i>

Initiative	Expanding Albany Health Campus <i>(BP2, V1, P300, P311)</i>
Investment	\$59 million.
Description	The previous State Budget included \$1 million for essential project planning, with the additional \$59 million in the 2026-27 budget fully funding design and construction.
Implications	<i>This reflects growing demand for hospital services in regional areas, particularly in the Great Southern, where population growth and service pressures have increased over time. Expanding inpatient capacity through the addition of a new 32-bed ward supports improved patient flow, helps</i>

	<i>reduce pressure on emergency services, and enables more timely access to care. This in turn reduces the need for people to travel to metropolitan hospitals and supporting more equitable service provision across the State. This is a positive step in improving regional health infrastructure and addressing capacity constraints. It also highlights the importance of strengthening community-based care models to support people outside hospital and reduce avoidable admissions.</i>
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Initiative	Broome Renal Hostel (BP2, V1, P300, P311)
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 the State's North. 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 (BP2, V1, P312)
Investment	\$23.9 million over two years.
Description	Funding allocated this financial year for the long awaited 8 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, until completion 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>

Initiative	Increased Suicide Prevention and Supports (BP2, V1, P232) (BP3, P134)
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>

Initiative	Regional Water Source Fund (BP2, V2, P775)
Investment	\$52.9 million over four years from 2025-26.
Description	To fast-track planning for future regional water sources.
Implications	<i>Securing WA's water future requires sustained planning, investment, and delivery of resilient water sources. This fund will help ensure regional communities have secure access to water in a changing climate.</i>

Initiative	Additional GROH housing (BP3, P190) (BP2, V1, P132)
Investment	\$419 million over four years.
Description	To support accommodation for essential workers in regional areas, including more than 500 GROH dwellings as part of the Seven Cities vision. Includes a \$170 million investment by major resource companies.
Implications	<i>Represents a doubling the GROH construction program committed in the 2025-26 State Budget.</i>

Initiative	Shared Equity Home Ownership Subsidy Scheme Pilot (BP3, P228) (BP2, V1, P133)
Investment	\$123.0 million over four years.
Description	A new Shared Equity Home Ownership Subsidy Scheme pilot for Government workers in regional WA.
Implications	<i>A provision to support the implementation of the pilot which is expected to increase home ownership for Government Regional Officer Housing.</i>

Initiative	Continuation of the Kimberley Schools Project (BP2, V1, P344)
Investment	\$6.5 million over one year.

Description	The project aims to strengthen the education of children in the Kimberley, by supporting principals and teachers to deliver targeted teaching tailored to the specific needs of students in the region.
Implications	<i>An important initiative that will improve educational outcomes for students in WA's Kimberley region, where Aboriginal children make up more than 60 per cent of the region's student population.</i>

Initiative	Land purchase for Geraldton refuge (BP2, V2, P492) (BP3, P230)
Investment	\$1.3 million.
Description	Funding to purchase land in Geraldton for the purpose of developing a new family and domestic violence refuge to serve the Mid-West.
Implications	<i>This investment will increase refuge capacity in the Mid-West in the longer term though it will require additional funding in future budgets for building construction and service delivery.</i>

Initiative	Sexual Assault Support Services Uplift (BP3, P156)
Investment	\$3 million over three years.
Description	For baseline funding for sexual assault support services.
Implications	<i>This is a welcome funding increase for sexual assault support services in health settings. It will boost the counselling workforce capacity, providing trauma-informed support and therapy to victim-survivors of all sexualities and gender identities aged 13 and older. It will also support services in Bunbury, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Mandurah and South Hedland.</i>

Initiative	Spending uplift in delivery of regional services (BP2, V1, P296, P297)
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>Improve 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</i>

	<i>and metro areas and ensure everyone can get the mental health support they need.</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 WA.</i>