

# Investing in people, building our future

WA STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2026-27



## About WACOSS

The Western Australian Council of Social Service is the peak body for the community services sector in Western Australia and works to create an inclusive, just and equitable society. We advocate for social and economic change to improve the wellbeing of Western Australians, and to strengthen the community services sector that supports them. WACOSS is part of a network consisting of National, State and Territory Councils of Social Service, who advance the interests of people on low incomes and those made vulnerable by the systems that have been put in place.

## Acknowledgment of Country

WACOSS respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and to elders both past and present. We acknowledge the land on which we live and work is, and always will be, Aboriginal land. Sovereignty was never ceded.

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# Investing in people, building our future

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**Western Australia thrives when every community is vibrant and everyone can live well, participate meaningfully and be supported. Our vision is for a fairer, more inclusive WA where investment builds lasting prosperity for all.**

The 2025-26 WA Budget highlighted another year of growth in the WA economy (state final demand up 3.4 per cent) and another budget surplus (\$2.5 billion) occurring on the back of rapid population growth (300,000 people or 11.3 per cent over the last five years, including 2.4 per cent in 2024). The Treasurer spoke of \$13.7 billion investment in “economic infrastructure” to maintain our prosperity – but the announcements spoke only of “poles and wires, pipes and ports.”

Our economy isn’t powered by concrete and cables alone. It’s powered by people – their ideas, skills, creativity, care and work. Investment in productivity and the wellbeing of our people has the greatest impact on future prosperity and resilience. This is where we need to target public investment.

When communities are supported by strong health and care systems, people live longer, safer, healthier lives. Quality education ensures our population has the skills and confidence to participate meaningfully in society. These services create the conditions for WA to thrive, which in turn strengthens our social fabric.

Social infrastructure drives economic growth, enabling the productivity and capability of our workers and decision makers. A well-supported, healthier workforce is more creative and productive, and less likely to burn out or make dangerous and costly mistakes. Care services are also enablers of workforce participation both as female-dominated industries advancing gender pay equity and as enablers of disability employment inclusion (where the untapped workforce potential remains huge).<sup>1</sup> Early education and care, schooling and further education also play a crucial role in helping us to identify and develop our latent talents, enabling innovations that underpin future technological and economic transformations. Investments in these industries yield returns, not just in gross domestic product or state final demand, but in economic stability and innovation.

Policy makers must remember that a strong economy cannot be built on short-term gains or narrow measures of success. When we focus on generating and measuring real outcomes for our community, we are better able to identify and invest in programs and systems that deliver more productive and cost-effective longer-term economic outcomes. Better targeting of support earlier reduces the cost of crisis services and improves wellbeing. Investments in early education and development, for example, are long-term and well beyond the impacts of this year’s budget and election cycle. They are also absolutely foundational, which is why their returns are so high. Underinvestment in our children and young people today may prove costly

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<sup>1</sup> See BCEC (2024) [Employment and Disability in Australia](#) and BCEC/WGEA [Gender Equity Insights Series](#).



and difficult to undo into the future. Recent data shows the consequences of failure to invest – WA children have gone significantly backwards on their school readiness in the last three years.<sup>2</sup>

When governments invest in health, education and care services, they are enabling economic activity. Too often these investments are perceived as mere costs and not linked to their outcomes. By prioritising these investments, the WA Government can lay the groundwork for a more sustainable future where prosperity is better shared and more enduring. It is clear that now is the time to focus and align our efforts to build a better future in the West.

**Mark Glasson**  
President

**Louise Giolitto**  
Chief Executive Officer

The recommendations in this year's WACOSS State Budget Submission will support the State Government to deliver on its vision — that no matter where we live, in our suburbs, towns, regional centres or remote communities, all Western Australians have access to the infrastructure and services we need.<sup>3</sup>

To this end, this year's WACOSS State Budget Submission includes recommendations throughout that are specific to regional WA.

<sup>2</sup> AEDC (2024) The Australian Early Development Census. Discussed in more detail later in this report.

<sup>3</sup> Government of Western Australia (2025) Jobs, Health, Housing: Our priorities for government 2025-2029.

# Investing in People

This part of our State Budget Submission explores the strategic policy reforms needed to enable decision making that puts Western Australians' long-term prosperity at the centre.

## Productivity with Purpose

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Improving productivity is currently the key focus of the national debate on our political economy, being led by Federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers. Care services play a critical role as supporters and enablers of economic participation, workforce capability, productivity and wellbeing. They have been recognised as one of the five key pillars of the progressive productivity agenda by the *Productivity Commission* leading into the *National Economic Reform Roundtable*.

However, productivity cannot easily and meaningfully be measured across health care and social services. Hence, we need to be clear and deliberate in how we understand the relationship between productivity, quality and outcomes in care. Our best path forward is by focusing on measuring and driving better and meaningful outcomes (measuring what matters)<sup>4</sup>. Pursuing narrow productivity measures of inputs versus outputs or relying on market or financial proxies for productivity does not work well and leads to perverse incentives and outcomes. State investments in social infrastructure underpin the social contract upon which our democratic institutions rely – the promise that if we work to the best of our ability and pay our taxes, then we and our loved ones will be supported in our time of need. When we talk about “investing in people” it is critical that we see them not just as isolated individuals with work-ready skills, but also understand that social and political engagement and trust is essential for them to invest in their work and actively contribute to building our community. Hence productivity is more than an abstraction – it is the sum of what individuals can contribute, adapt to and create together.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Such as implementation by Treasury of the [National Wellbeing Framework](#) using wellbeing budget measures to incentivise aligned measurement and investment via National Partnership Agreements in services that matter.

5 Paraphrasing Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury Dr Andrew Leigh in his [Address to the McKell Institute](#), June 2025.

While classical economics may encourage us to focus on competition policy as an institutional lever for driving productivity and investment in the market economy, there is a real risk in applying quasi-market models to the non-market economy.<sup>6</sup> When it comes to the human services components of our global and domestic economies, it is unlikely that the concept of eternal productivity growth is possible or even makes sense.

While it makes sense to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the services we deliver, beyond a certain level of service efficiency we are ultimately eroding the quality of those services (and the human relationships that underlie them). We have seen this taken to an extreme in home-care services, where market models have driven an increasingly casualised workforce to deliver units of care as quickly as possible – reducing costs at the expense of quality, connections and outcomes. Along the way, the risk of harmful errors is also magnified. This has played out in the aged care and disability Royal Commissions, as well as recent Four Corners exposés on quality, safety and abuse in for-profit early childhood services.

## Investing in People

Our strategy for maintaining and growing our social infrastructure needs to reflect the real costs associated with population growth, demographic change and the growth in need and complexity arising from historic underinvestment.<sup>7</sup> We should benchmark funding levels against per capita investments in successful jurisdictions, also making allowance for the additional costs of servicing a large State.

WA Premier Roger Cook recently announced the creation of a *WA Productivity Commission* to strengthen the WA economy and the delivery of public services. Consultations to date have overlooked the critical role of social infrastructure needed to support a productive and resilient workforce. With health care and social services both the largest employer and the fastest growing segment of our workforce, it makes sense to engage the sector in planning for a productive future.<sup>8</sup>

### Recommendation:

- **Direct the WA Productivity Commission to review social service gaps and unmet need to develop a State-wide social service plan.**

## Collaboration, not Competition

The greatest opportunities for improving outcomes across social service systems are more likely to come through better collaboration, not competition. We need to work together to build our shared capability to measure meaningful outcomes and better attribute them across service systems. We need to work together to better align and integrate services to better provide wrap-around support, to know which services and combinations best meet the needs of which clients. To better support them to navigate these systems and find what they need to thrive.

Marketised social service systems are increasingly open to market failure, where populations are too difficult, expensive or remote to prove profitable, and additional interventions are required to ensure public service delivery.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, because so many human services are enabled by the

6 Gilchrist & Perks (2023) "[Economic Paper 5: Myths and Biases Derailing Australian Human Service's Sustainability](#)", UWA Centre for Public Value.

7 Nous Group (2024) [Leaving no one behind: the economic imperative to invest in WA's community sector and its workforce](#)

8 Jobs and Skills Australia's [Industry Profile](#) from February 2025 cites 236,200 workers.

9 Gilchrist & Feenan (2024) "[Economic Paper 3: Markets and Human Services](#)", UWA Centre for Public Value

relationship between client and carer, counsellor or physician, detailed service specifications still miss the critical component of that underlying human relationship – the quality of engagement and trust – that enables transformative outcomes.

Improving outcomes for all Western Australians requires the WA Government and the community service sector to work together on solutions to our most challenging problems. The best way to support an effective ongoing collaboration across our sectors is through a Community Services Accord. A coming together to develop a shared vision across the WA Government, our public agencies, and community-based services that commits us to a shared set of goals and outcomes and a plan to achieve them that builds a stronger future for all Western Australians.

### Recommendation:

- **Develop a WA Community Services Accord in partnership with the community services sector.**

The Productivity Commission discussion paper on *Delivering quality care more efficiently* for the 2025 National Economic Reform Roundtable prioritised collaborative commissioning as one of three critical reforms to improve the quality, efficiency and impact of health care and social services.

Public sector agencies in WA have begun to explore the potential benefits of collaborative commissioning models that bring together agencies and service providers across portfolios to focus on how to deliver the best outcomes for a particular place or a specific at-risk group with complex needs. More work is needed to address the systemic and cultural barriers to working collaboratively across agencies and portfolios, and a culture of risk aversion that prioritises political and legal risks ahead of the risks to service users.

The most effective approach is for the public and community sectors to jointly build their capability to undertake collaborative commissioning, understand the mechanisms and activities that support and enable greater service integration (referred to as ‘the glue’),<sup>10</sup> and build a common approach to the measurement of meaningful outcomes.<sup>11</sup>

### Recommendation:

- **Develop systems and capability to progress collaborative commissioning across programs and portfolios and with local, State and Federal governments to implement place-based integrated services.**



10 SVA (2024) [Approaches to integration in the early years](#). Murdoch Children’s Research Institute (2025) [National child and family hubs network](#).

11 See also Centre for Policy Development (2025) [Productivity with Purpose: Clear pathways to a more equitable future](#).

**CASE STUDY:**

## Transforming Outcomes via Integrated, Place-Based Legal and Health Support

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In October 2023, Women's Legal Service WA (WLSWA), in partnership with the Department of Health, launched a ground-breaking Health Justice Partnership (HJP) pilot at two Women's Health Care Centres (WHCCs): Luma in Northbridge and Goldfields WHCC in Kalgoorlie. This \$1.353 million initiative embeds legal professionals within health settings to address the complex, interconnected needs of women — particularly those experiencing family and domestic violence.

It shows how shared capability, co-design based on the WA Outcomes Measurement Framework (OMF) and place-based commissioning can deliver meaningful outcomes across portfolios. By co-locating legal and health services, the model provides wraparound support in culturally secure, trauma-informed environments. Women receive legal assistance across areas including protection and care, family law, restraining orders, injury compensation and sexual assault — without the presence of perpetrators and in spaces they already trust.

### Impact

Women experiencing Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) are up to 10 times more likely to face compounding legal and health challenges. The HJP model enables early intervention, improves safety and wellbeing, and reduces pressure on acute health services. Independent evaluations show:

- Improved physical and mental health outcomes
- Reduced FDV-related harm
- Enhanced access to justice for women from CALD and regional communities

The WLSWA HJP exemplifies the principles of the WA OMF and the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy. It demonstrates:

- The use of outcomes-focused evaluation and cross-sector collaboration to track improvements in health, safety and legal access for women.
- Operationalisation of the OMF in a priority commissioning area — through integrated service delivery and shared outcome metrics.
- Joint investment and service integration between the Department of Health and WLSWA, with potential for expansion across the justice, housing and community services portfolios.

## Measuring What Really Matters to our Community

WA has taken the first steps on a path of substantial reform that has the potential to transform our social services system across programs, agencies and portfolios to be more productive, efficient and responsive to community needs.

In 2017, WACOSS began a project in partnership with the Department of Premier and Cabinet under the guidance of the Supporting Communities Forum to develop the WA Outcomes Measurement Framework (OMF). In 2019, the framework outline was endorsed by the forum, incorporated into the *Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy*<sup>12</sup> and enacted in 2022 under the *State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services*,<sup>13</sup> with the oversight of the Community Services Procurement Policy unit with Department of Finance (now the Department of Treasury and Finance). Unfortunately, the State Commissioning Strategy has been framed as ‘aspirational’, when this should be core business with clear reportable targets and outcomes. Despite clear direction that the outcomes framework should be implemented in Agency Commissioning Plans as the basis of outcomes-based codesign and commissioning processes, we have yet to see the meaningful development and implementation of outcomes measures at the program and portfolio level.

To be truly effective, we need to be measuring what matters consistently and comparably across services and programs. To have impact, we need to ensure our measures are meaningful and useful to three stakeholder groups. Firstly, outcomes need to be meaningful to service users – addressing why they sought service support and aligning with their needs and life aspirations to improve their wellbeing. Secondly, they need to be

practical and useful for service providers – helping them to measure success, to better target services and support, and to support continuous service improvements. Thirdly, they need to be meaningful to funding agencies – helping them to assess progress against government policy priorities, measure social impact and target investment where it creates the greatest return on investment (including reducing future service costs and the need for crisis services).

More recently, the Department of Communities has flagged an intention to develop and implement the outcomes framework within the priority FDV commissioning stream. Similar opportunities arise in Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS) and Homelessness Services commissioning.

### Recommendations:

- **Build shared capability across the public and community services to consistently measure what matters and co-produce meaningful outcomes.**
- **Resource consistent implementation of the WA Outcomes Measurement Framework in priority commissioning areas.**

## Intervening Earlier and more Effectively

The other area where there are unrealised opportunities for major gains is in the provision and targeting of prevention and early intervention services to drive better outcomes at lower costs, systematically reducing the growing cost of crisis and acute services over time. *The Cost of Late Intervention Report 2024* found that the cost of statutory, acute and crisis services has risen 43 per cent between 2019 and 2024 (from \$15.2 billion to

<sup>12</sup> See page 27 (Streamlined reporting and Outcomes Measurement) in the 2023 and 2025 DCSP policies.

<sup>13</sup> Page 21 of the State Commissioning Strategy states that “Implementation of the States’ Outcomes Measurement Framework will be undertaken to support the Strategy”.

\$22.3 billion), significantly outpacing inflation. The biggest drivers of this growth are child protection, youth mental health and family violence. Emerging issues for which there is inadequate data for analysis include children disengaging from mainstream schools and children and young people with a disability. These costs do not include the costs and growing pressure on WA's health system arising from population growth combined with increasing environmental health and lifestyle impacts on rates of chronic disease. This mirrors a growing international trend, as analysed in Tim Jackson's (2025) *The Care Economy*.

To tackle these issues effectively as a State and a nation, we need to address the vertical fiscal imbalance between Australian governments. The majority of costs of early intervention are at the State level, while the benefits of early intervention accrue more at the national level. Early intervention is flagged in the Productivity Commission's 2025 *Delivering quality care more efficiently* as one of three major priorities for the National Economic Reform Roundtable (alongside collaborative commissioning and greater alignment in quality and safety regulation).

We recommend building on the Centre for Policy Development reports *Banking the Benefits* (2024) and *Embedding Progress* (2025), the *Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre submissions* to the National Economic Reform Roundtable and the learnings from the *Victorian Early Intervention Investment Framework* as promising starting points for national and jurisdictional reforms. Creating a central early intervention fund, changing budget process operating rules to include second-round fiscal effects and resourcing an analytics unit within Treasury would transform our ability to securely achieve major budget savings into the future. A strategic whole-of-State approach to securing resources through initiatives like the Commonwealth Outcomes Fund and the Building Early Education Fund will increase our capacity at scale.

### Recommendation:

- **Create a WA Early Intervention Investment Fund and resource an early intervention analytics unit within Treasury.**



# Sustainable Services

The last decade has been the perfect storm for the funding and contracting of community services in WA. A rolling series of machinery of government changes and loss of contracting capability delayed the repricing and recontracting of existing service programs. These delays were further extended by the development and implementation of a new State Commissioning Strategy and challenges in implementing agency commissioning plans within budget authorisation processes. This exposed the inadequacy of existing service indexation models based on average wages, with award wages growing twice as fast due to Fair Work Commission efforts to address the systemic underpayment of the sector.<sup>14</sup> For the majority of services which have not been recommissioned or received additional top-ups, this represents a gap of 12.95 per cent between the national wage case and Non-Government Human Services Sector (NGHSS) indexation over the decade since 2015.<sup>15</sup> We have seen welcome one-off top-ups in strategic commissioning areas including FDV, Homelessness, CSATS and Financial Counselling services that have partially addressed this gap to maintain existing services during the recommissioning process.

Meanwhile, our population has also grown rapidly, with new housing developments in unserved and under-served areas – particularly on the metro fringe and in our regional centres. At the same time, our population demographics have changed – with both an ageing population as well as an influx of young migrant working families in these areas.<sup>16</sup>

The diminishing of service funding in real terms forces service providers to reduce hours or quality, and to cut back on their

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14 Gilchrist & Feenan (2023) "[Economic Paper 2: Why the CPI and WPI are not Appropriate Bases for Human Services Funding Indexation](#)," UWA Centre for Public Value.

15 Unpublished WACOSS analysis, shared with the WA Government, including the cost of the superannuation guarantee.

16 Gilchrist & Perks (2025) "[Appropriateness of Applying an Annual Population Growth Adjustment to Community Sector Contracts](#)," UWA Centre for Public Value.

investment in staff training and innovation. Short-term funding contracts create insecure work, leading to greater staff turnover and a loss of knowledge and expertise. This in turn reduces the incentive to invest in staff training and further professional development.<sup>17</sup> It also leads to gaps in service provision and greater costs for staff recruitment and administration.

In addition, ensuring service sustainability requires organisations to keep pace with emerging technologies. These systems — ranging from digital case management platforms to secure communication tools and advanced data analytics — are essential for delivering safe, efficient, and responsive support. However, the costs associated with adopting, maintaining, and training staff in these technologies are escalating and remain largely overlooked in current funding models.

The impact of short-term and insecure funding is a hollowing out of our service system, reducing its effectiveness and resilience. An intangible loss is the knowledge and connection across local place-based service networks that we rely on for effective cross-referral and the provision of wrap-around support – at a time when the complexity of need is rising.<sup>18</sup>

## Recommendations:

- **Commit to the sustainable funding of community services and provide a one-off uplift for services whose contracts are extended.**
- **Fully fund the outcomes of the Fair Work Commission gender pay equity determination by linking indexation directly to award wage increases.**
- **Co-produce a shared costing and pricing tool and regularly update details at the program level.**
- **Change the Non-Government Human Services Sector indexation formula to  $(SCHADS \times 0.75 + \text{increase in the superannuation guarantee}) + 0.25$  per cent increase in the rate of non-discretionary inflation.**



17 Gilchrist & Feenan (2023) "Economic Paper 4: Job Quality Threats to Human Services Sustainability," UWA Centre for Public Value.

18 Gilchrist & Perks (2025) "Real Costs, Real Impacts: A Path to Social Services Sustainability," UWA Centre for Public Value for Catholic Social Services (Australia).

## Sustainable Services in the Regions

Delivering equitable, high-quality community services in regional and remote WA requires a funding model that reflects the true cost of service provision across the State's vast and diverse geography. Current funding and indexation settings fail to account for the structural and operational challenges unique to non-metropolitan areas – resulting in persistent underinvestment, workforce instability and service withdrawal from communities most in need.

The 2024 and 2025 WACOSS Sector Surveys revealed that regional organisations consistently report more severe underfunding than their metropolitan counterparts. This inequity directly impacts service users, with many organisations forced to reduce or cease operations in outlying towns due to unsustainable costs. Without urgent reform, regional communities will continue to face diminished access to essential supports.

### Key Cost Drivers in Regional Service Delivery

- **Housing Scarcity and Cost:** Lack of affordable housing for staff and service users often requires agencies to rent or purchase accommodation. Current contracts do not include housing subsidies or allowances, undermining workforce retention.
- **Travel and Transit Burden:** Long distances between service hubs increase costs for transport, accommodation and staff time, while reducing productivity.
- **Workforce Challenges:** Recruitment and retention are hindered by limited numbers of qualified local workers, professional isolation and the need for financial incentives (for example, regional loadings, relocation support).
- **Digital Connectivity Gaps:** Poor internet and phone coverage restrict remote service delivery and digital innovation.
- **Higher Operating Costs:** Utilities, food, fuel and basic supplies are more expensive due to freight and market limitations.
- **Service Isolation:** Regional providers often operate without nearby services, limiting referral pathways and increasing the scope of unfunded work.
- **Cultural and Relational Demands:** Effective engagement requires time to build trust and adapt services to local cultural security.

To effectively tackle these problems, the WA Government should undertake a comprehensive review of demand, unmet need and service gaps at the regional level to inform the design of a regional service network model and industry plan. A regional cost index is also needed across all agencies and service programs that reflects the true cost of service delivery, including travel, housing and workforce incentives. To support staff attraction and retention, all regional service contracts should be required to include provisions for housing subsidies or employer-provided accommodation for key staff.<sup>19</sup> Finally, there is a pressing need to ensure that funding allows for service models to be adapted to the local context, particularly to meet the needs of First Nations communities for appropriate and culturally safe services.

### Recommendations:

- **Commission a Regional Service Gap Analysis.**
- **Embed Regional Cost Adjustments in Funding Models.**

<sup>19</sup> See recommendation to 'include regional housing allowances in service contracts' in the Essential Workforce in the Regions section on page 16.

## An Essential Workforce

The community service sector workforce is one of WA's most vital assets. We are one of the state's largest and fastest growing workforces – and a key partner to the WA Government.<sup>20</sup> Our workforce is fundamental to the health and resilience of our communities. And plays a critical role as supporter and enabler of economic participation, workforce capability, productivity and wellbeing. The community service sector workforce deserves recognition as key workers.<sup>21</sup>

Progressing gender equity in the workplace is essential for building a fair, safe, inclusive and economically secure WA. As a significant employer of women, the WA community service sector plays an important role in supporting women's long-term economic security and gender equity more broadly. For their role in delivering critical public services, women in the community service sector deserve secure jobs with decent pay and entitlements, such as paid parental leave.<sup>22</sup>

### Recommendation:

- **Resource community organisations to implement workplace policies and supports that progress gender equity, including through a special grants program.**

Lived experience engagement is critical to good service delivery. To enable peaks and community services to embed lived and living experience engagement within their policies, practices and workforces, a program to develop appropriate tools and training is required.

### Recommendation:

- **Commit resourcing to embed lived and living experience into the community service sector.**

Volunteers play a critical role in the community service sector, and our society more broadly, including through significant productivity contribution.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, WACOSS has heard across the State that volunteer numbers are in decline.

### Recommendation:

- **Support volunteers by removing charges for volunteer checks and streamlining the application process.**



20 Nours Group (2024) [Leaving no one behind: the economic imperative to invest in WA's community sector and its workforce.](#)

21 Government of Western Australia (2025) [Jobs, Health, Housing: Our priorities for government 2025-2029.](#)

22 WACOSS & Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing (2025) [Stronger Together: gender equity in the WA community services sector.](#)

23 Nours Group (2024) [Leaving no one behind: the economic imperative to invest in WA's community sector and its workforce.](#)

## An Essential Workforce in the Regions

Regional communities want place-based community services that are responsive to local needs. However, years of underfunding and delayed recommissioning have caused service delivery in regional WA to decline. Services have been scaled back, staff hours reduced or programs cut entirely. Many organisations operate with limited capacity, unable to meet growing demand.

In every region WACOSS visited, we heard that the cost of housing is significantly exacerbating this issue. Community services report chronic difficulty recruiting and retaining staff because workers simply cannot find a place to live where the jobs are. Unlike government agencies that are able to offer staff housing in regional areas, community services are rarely funded to do the same. Some organisations have resorted to fly-in fly-out models, however this is expensive, unsustainable and not aligned with what communities want.

This workforce instability undermines the efficacy of services. Chronic understaffing increases the burden on staff, increasing the risk of vicarious trauma and burnout. When positions remain vacant for extended periods of time, communities lose access to critical programs. And when staff turnover is high, communities miss out on the relationships that make services work – relationships built on trust, cultural understanding and local knowledge.

Without locally based supports, regional Western Australians are forced to travel to seek help from unfamiliar services. This not only incurs financial costs and time away from work and family, but also creates barriers to trust and continuity of care.

The community service sector plays a vital role in the wellbeing of WA. Investment in housing access for this workforce is critical to fulfilling the WA Government's priority of delivering housing for key workers in the regions.<sup>24</sup>

### Recommendations:

- **Prioritise investment in place-based support services.**
- **Invest in traineeships and further study options that enable people to stay in regional and remote communities.**
- **Introduce a worker housing allowance in community service contracts in regional areas.**
- **Subsidise flights where community service workers are unable to live where they work due to housing unaffordability.**
- **Include the construction of worker housing in regional service infrastructure investment.**

<sup>24</sup> Government of Western Australia (2025) [Jobs, Health, Housing: Our priorities for government 2025-2029](#).

# Surviving

Nutritious food, affordable energy, water and transport and access to essential services are fundamental to an adequate standard of living. After years of sharp increases in the cost of essentials, a growing number of Western Australians cannot afford these basics.<sup>25</sup>

As WACOSS travelled across the State, we heard repeated stories from Western Australians – including those in paid work – whose budgets are stretched beyond breaking point. Many are going without nutritious food, heating or cooling and other everyday essentials just to stay afloat.<sup>26</sup> These sacrifices are having real impacts on health, education and quality of life. Frontline workers described intensifying crises, with families pushed to the edge and societal wellbeing increasingly at risk.

*People are literally breaking down now... at their wits' end.<sup>27</sup>*

Failure to ensure universal access to life's essentials is a policy and budgetary decision. It carries serious consequences for individual health and safety and undermines social cohesion and economic resilience.



25 WACOSS (2024) [Cost of Living Report](#).

26 WACOSS (2025) [Living Realities – Understanding life of low incomes in WA, Part One & Part Two](#).

27 Feedback from State Emergency Relief Committee consultations.

## Utilities

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Rising utility debt is placing increasing pressure on low-income households, especially as the temporary relief of the Household Electricity Credits end. *The Hardship Utility Grant Scheme* (HUGS), while vital, excludes groups at risk of energy stress, such as pre-payment meter users and regional households reliant on bottled gas. These gaps create serious equity concerns. Other programs like *Energy Ahead* have demonstrated the effectiveness of proactive, tailored assistances in reducing energy costs and improving household wellbeing.

### Recommendations:

- **Increase funding for HUGS, increase grant limits and allow grants to cover all outstanding debt.**
- **Remove barriers to utility hardship support for customers using pre-payment meters and bottled gas.**
- **Commit funding to Energy Ahead for five years.**

## Transport

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Transport costs are a significant burden for Western Australians on low income. The cost of vehicle registrations, SmartRider card purchases and punitive fines limit access to essential services, education and employment. A car, for example, can be a lifeline – enabling access to work, medical care, school and groceries. Cars also increasingly serve as a place of refuge for women escaping violence and people experiencing homelessness. Without the means to register their vehicle, people face an impossible choice: risk fines and debt or lose access to transport and safety. During the Summer of Free PT, Transperth passengers received fines for not tagging their SmartRider on ‘free’ services. This punitive approach is contrary to the purpose

of free public transport and exacerbates financial stress for those already struggling to make ends meet.

### Recommendations:

- **Reduce the SmartRider card purchase cost to \$0.**
- **Extend car registration concessions to Health Care Card holders.**

## Income

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Financial counsellors and emergency relief providers offer lifesaving support to Western Australians struggling to make ends meet, yet current investment does not reflect the scale of need. Grandparents raising grandchildren without formal financial support are at risk of poverty, and unpaid carers excluded from the Seniors Card miss out on vital concessions.<sup>28</sup>

### Recommendations:

- **Increase investment in direct cost of living relief, through financial counsellors and emergency relief services.**
- **Establish a Carer’s Card and increase the Grandcarers Support Scheme payment.**

A key driver of financial hardship is the punishingly low rate of income support, which is insufficient to cover the cost of basics. As a result, State governments are forced to pick up additional costs in emergency relief and hardship supports.

### Recommendation:

- **Advocate to the Federal Government for an increase in the rates of JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and other related income support payments to ensure they adequately meet the cost of living and support economic and social wellbeing.**

<sup>28</sup> See the [Grandcarers Support Scheme](#).

## Digital Inclusion

Essential services are rapidly shifting online, and digital technology has become central to social, cultural and economic participation. Yet, many Western Australians remain digitally excluded – without access to reliable and affordable internet, or devices, or unable to navigate the online world confidently. This impacts our ability to access services, engage in employment or education, and stay socially connected.<sup>29</sup> To address this, we need more community-led programs that build skills and confidence in navigating online, and free or subsidised devices and connectivity for people on low income. Public-facing services like libraries and community resource centres are also well placed to offer digital inclusion programs and online access. Additionally, and critically, online government services must be made accessible to all. We need adequate resourcing and oversight from the Office of Digital Government, as well as resourcing to line agencies to implement the necessary changes.

## Recommendations:

- **Resource programs to support the digitally excluded, prioritising community-led initiatives, programs in libraries and community resource centres, and free or subsidised devices and connectivity.**
- **Ensure all government agencies, including the Office of Digital Government, are adequately resourced to embed and provide digital inclusion support when delivering services online.**



29 Office of Digital Government (2024) [Digital Inclusion in WA Blueprint](#). WACOSS (2025) [WA Digital Inclusion Project](#).

## Surviving in the Regions

Where you live should not determine whether you can succeed. While living in regional WA offers strong community and natural beauty, the cost of distance from Perth is real.<sup>30</sup> Too many regional and remote residents are struggling to access everyday basics and the services they need.

Public transport is scarce or non-existent in many regional areas. While TransWA exists to transport people between regions, there are few public transport options for residents within regional towns or connecting small communities to town centres. For those with a car, fuel prices are a significant impost and barrier to getting where they need to go. For those without a car, getting to work, school, the supermarket or GP is a major challenge. In Northam, a community service shared an account of a woman who, without access to transport, had to walk several hours with her five children to attend medical appointments. Community services across regional WA called for free local bus services.

### Recommendation:

- **Invest in public transport in the regions, including community bus services which are free for at least people on low income.**

Food insecurity is a major issue across WA, but it hits harder in the regions. People living in regional and remote parts of the State are 30 per cent more likely to experience food insecurity than those in Perth.<sup>31</sup> Lengthy and inefficient supply chains, vulnerable to disruption by poor weather, mean regional and remote residents experience high prices and limited fresh food. WA's Regional Price Index confirms food is more expensive in regional areas, with a basket of food in the Kimberley costing around 7.2 per cent more than in Perth.<sup>32</sup> For those on the lowest incomes, food insecurity is likely to be entrenched and drives a range of unacceptable health outcomes.

The National Strategy for Food Security in Remote First Nations Communities aims to achieve healthy and food secure remote communities.<sup>33</sup> To ensure its success, the State Government should actively engage in its implementation and tailor actions to suit our local contexts. In the absence of a State-based policy to address remote food insecurity, WA should use the strategy as a framework to coordinate efforts across relevant portfolios. This approach will help deliver more consistent, effective responses to food insecurity and ensure that communities benefit from national investment and leadership. Additionally, a targeted freight assistance scheme can reduce the amount of freight costs passed on to consumers of essential goods in remote communities to deliver cost of living relief and better nutrition.<sup>34</sup>

30 Jesuit Social Services (2021) [Dropping Off the Edge: Western Australia](#).

31 OzHarvest (2025) [Food Waste Facts](#). Foodbank (2024) [Foodbank Hunger Report 2024](#).

32 Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (2023) [WA's Regional Price Index](#).

33 National Indigenous Australians Agency (2025) [National Strategy for Food Security in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities](#).

34 For example, the Queensland RIDC [Remote Communities Freight Assistance Scheme](#).

## Recommendations:

- **Leverage the National Strategy for Food Security in Remote First Nations Communities to coordinate and implement locally tailored action in WA.**
- **Commission a study into a freight subsidy scheme to make food and essential items more affordable in regional WA.**

Digital access is vital to ensure regional and remote residents can access ongoing support and emergency services during a crisis or disaster. During consultations, WACOSS heard that inadequate funding is eroding support service delivery in regional and remote areas, leaving residents with only online support. This is not viable when the internet is inaccessible or unaffordable.<sup>35</sup>

Regional WA is particularly vulnerable to climate extremes. In northern parts of the State, residents endure average maximum summer temperatures nearing 40 degrees. In some communities, households without air-conditioning rely on neighbours and relatives who do – often gathering in a single home to escape extreme heat. While this offers temporary relief, it places pressure on cooling systems, increases energy costs for the host and can lead to discomfort and strain within already crowded living spaces.<sup>36</sup> Many must go without access to cooling at all, putting their health at significant risk.<sup>37</sup>



<sup>35</sup> See Digital Inclusion section, page 19.

<sup>36</sup> See the Finding Home section, page 24, for how to improve the thermal efficiency of social homes.

<sup>37</sup> See the Living Safely section, page 29.

# Finding Home

Ensuring every Western Australian has access to a safe, secure and affordable home is essential to our State's wellbeing and prosperity. Yet, housing affordability has deteriorated sharply, leaving many locked out of home ownership and struggling to maintain tenancies. Between June 2020 and December 2024, Perth's median advertised rent rose by 76 per cent – an increase of \$320 per week. Now, only 39 per cent of private renters consider their rent affordable.<sup>38</sup> Many are forced to sacrifice essentials to keep a roof over their heads.

*...the rental market here is atrocious... 50 to 100 people applying for every single house... I am living pay check to pay check. Sometimes I go without eating as often... or like I'll skip fruit and veg for myself so that [my child] will have it.*

**CLARA, SINGLE PARENT IN REGIONAL WA<sup>39</sup>**

WA renters also endure the worst housing conditions nationally.<sup>40</sup> Nearly three in five report leaks, dampness or mould and over half struggle to keep their house at a safe temperature – driving up energy costs and impacting health.<sup>41</sup> In consultations in Midland, WACOSS heard public housing tenants are not given blinds or a heater. Trying to stay warm but unable to afford the upfront cost of a more energy efficient option, tenants use their ovens to heat their homes or buy cheap space heaters that add hundreds to their bills. During the summer, renters face extreme heat with little relief, especially in northern parts of the State.<sup>42</sup>

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38 Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (2025) [Housing Affordability in Western Australia](#).

39 Clara in WACOSS (2025) [Living Realities Report, Part One](#).

40 Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (2025) [Housing Affordability in Western Australia](#). Everybody's Home (2025) [Priced Out](#).

41 Shelter WA (2025) [Report uncovers severe impact of renting in WA without minimum standards](#).

42 Kimberley Community Legal Services (2022), [Stuck in the Heat: Lived Experiences of Public Housing Tenants in the Kimberley](#). WACOSS (2025) Heat Vulnerability Project.

Homelessness has surged, including among those in entrenched circumstances. Older women, people escaping violence, young people and Aboriginal Western Australians are disproportionately impacted. One in ten people accessing homelessness services are employed. While the 2024-25 State Budget provided a welcome funding uplift, service capacity remains far below demand. In 2024, 28,855 requests for homelessness support went unassisted, an increase of 39 per cent since 2017.<sup>43</sup>

The increased investment in social housing growth by the WA Government is a welcome and necessary step toward addressing our housing crisis. However, current policy and investment settings do not yet meet the scale of need – particularly for people on low incomes, essential workers and others at risk of housing insecurity. Without broader, sustained commitment to tenancy reform, homelessness services and affordable housing supply, we risk deepening inequality and weakening economic stability.

## Improving Access to Affordable Housing

WA's social and affordable housing system needs to evolve to meet the needs of the growing cross-section of the community unable to afford the private market. A more inclusive, broad-based social housing strategy – easily accessible to low-income earners and essential workers – would offer a fairer and more effective response to our housing crisis. Such a strategy would not only improve access to secure housing but also deliver significant social, health and economic benefits.

The expiry of the National Rental Affordability Scheme in 2026 risks a significant loss of affordable rental stock, leaving many families without viable housing options. A State rental affordability scheme is urgently needed to

maintain and grow the supply of affordable homes. At the same time, recognising that homes take time to build, WA should invest in rapid accommodation delivery options – such as pre-fabricated homes, ancillary dwellings and conversions of existing building – to provide immediate relief and prevent a further rise in homelessness.

### Recommendations:

- **Increase social housing to 10 per cent of all housing.**
- **Develop a State rental affordability scheme.**
- **Invest in rapid accommodation delivery options.**

While increasing supply is critical, keeping people in their homes is equally vital. WA's current social housing income eligibility limits are among the lowest in the country, creating a punitive system where tenants are discouraged from pursuing employment. The recent threshold increase, while welcome, merely keeps pace with modest rises in income support payments and fails to address the broader issue. The gap between subsidised social housing rents and the high cost of private rentals leaves no viable pathway into the private market. As a result, many tenants face an impossible choice: pursue economic participation and risk losing their home, or remain housed and forgo financial independence.

*... I can only earn a certain amount before I get kicked out. So, if I went and got a full-time job I'd be homeless immediately... It feels like I'm in this trap that I can't get out of... It's kind of like a choice between inclusion and a career or sitting in that house.*

**MATILDA<sup>44</sup>**

43 Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (2025) [Housing Affordability in Western Australia](#).

44 Matilda, WACOSS (2025) [Living Realities, Part Two](#)

The *WA Rent Relief Program* has already demonstrated its effectiveness, helping over 3,000 households avoid eviction and homelessness. With cost of living pressures still high, failing to extend this program puts thousands of families at risk. Continued investment in rent relief is a practical and compassionate measure that keeps people housed and communities stable.

*I have used the Rent Relief Program in the past. That saved my life at that time.*

HEATHER, SINGLE PARENT<sup>45</sup>

### Recommendations:

- **Invest in the WA Rent Relief Program for a further two years.**
- **Reform income eligibility limits in social housing.**

## Reducing Homelessness

Preventing homelessness means actively investing in supports that help people stay housed. WA is building more social housing, but funding for tenancy support services has not kept pace. Investment is needed in tenancy supports across the spectrum of needs – from simply what is needed to maintain a tenancy, to more intensive, holistic and long-term supports.

With rising rates of youth homelessness, WACOSS member organisations highlighted the need for targeted youth housing solutions. In Mandurah, for example, 27 young people appeared on the By-Name List in a single night, far exceeding the number of crisis beds available – illustrating the inadequacy of current investment.<sup>46</sup> A Housing First for Youth approach complements existing youth homelessness services and provides

low-barrier, low-threshold access to safe and stable homes with support from youth specialist services focused on the developmental needs of young people.<sup>47</sup>

No grounds evictions continue to push tenants – particularly those living in public housing with limited alternatives – into homelessness. By replacing no grounds evictions with a clear list of reasonable grounds, as has been done in NSW, SA, VIC and the ACT, WA can protect renters and landlords, while reducing the risk of homelessness.<sup>48</sup>

### Recommendations:

- **Increase investment in tenancy supports and permanent supportive housing.**
- **Increase investment in housing models for young people, including a Housing First for Youth approach.**
- **Establish a prescribed list of reasonable grounds for eviction in the Residential Tenancies Act.**

## Tenancy Reform to Address WA's Housing and Cost of Living Crises

The WA Government has made steps to increase rental supply, but that alone won't protect renters from unsafe homes or unaffordable living costs. Western Australians need both more housing and better housing. Minimum rental standards – covering health, thermal safety, energy efficiency and disability access – would ensure homes support wellbeing, not undermine it. Signing up to the Liveable Housing Design Standard and committing to energy retrofits for social housing would deliver long-term savings for

45 Heather, WACOSS (2025) [Living Realities, Part One](#)

46 Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (2025) [By-name list](#).

47 Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (2023) [Housing First for Youth \(HF4Y\) Project report](#).

48 Make Renting Fair (2023) [No grounds evictions](#). Shelter WA (2023) [Tenancy Law Changes](#).

Western Australians<sup>49</sup> and reduce pressure on health and social services. Implementing second-generation rent stabilisation measures would help protect renters from unreasonable price hikes and ensure that housing remains affordable – not just available – in the face of ongoing cost of living pressures.

### Recommendations:

- **Develop and implement Minimum Standards for rental properties and sign up to the Liveable Housing Design Standard of the National Construction Code.**
- **Commit to energy retrofitting all social housing dwellings by 2030.<sup>50</sup>**
- **Implement second-generation rent stabilisation measures.**



49 Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (2025) A focus on homes, not power plants, could halve energy bills. Analysis finds upgrading Perth homes from a 2-star to a 7-star NatHERS energy rating can reduce energy bills by 19 per cent, efficient electric appliances can save the average household \$443 per year and installing solar panels can save \$1,227 annually.

50 Make Renting Fair (2024) Out With the Mould.

## Finding Home in the Regions

To honour the WA Government's commitment that “no matter where we live – in our suburbs, towns, regional centres and remote communities – all Western Australians have access to the infrastructure and services we need,” measures to increase social and affordable housing supply and quality must be implemented in the regions.<sup>51</sup> This includes culturally appropriate support services and place-based programs that reflect the unique needs of regional and remote communities. It also means ensuring those delivering these essential community services can afford a place to call home.<sup>52</sup>

Rental homes are less affordable in regional WA. In the Kimberley, low-income households spend on average 75.7 per cent of their income on rent, while in Mandurah, the Gascoyne and the South West the figure hovers around 50 per cent.<sup>53</sup> At these levels, tenants experience significant housing stress – unable to afford other essentials. Regional and remote Western Australians, particularly Aboriginal people, also experience a higher rate of homelessness. Rough sleeping is increasing and many homes are dangerously overcrowded.<sup>54</sup>

Public housing is often in poor condition, exacerbated by systemic failures in maintenance and oversight. Community members report long delays and high costs when repairs are finally carried out, with issues like broken windows and doors, holes in walls, broken plumbing and insect infestations left unresolved for months.<sup>55</sup> In the Kimberley, organisations have observed public housing dwellings sitting vacant, waiting for repairs for long periods.

A review by the WA Auditor General confirms these concerns: 85 per cent of all public housing maintenance is reactive rather than planned, the State lacks a clear understanding of the condition of its housing assets, and both the time and cost to turn over vacant properties have increased. In Balgo, a tenant waited eight months for their hot water to be restored despite repeated maintenance requests.<sup>56</sup>

Aboriginal communities should be actively and meaningfully engaged in the governance, planning and delivery of public housing maintenance. This may include more community-based housing officers, maintenance oversight by Aboriginal organisations or local workers employed to carry out the maintenance works. Self-determination should be prioritised, with each community guiding the most appropriate approach for them.

### Recommendation:

- **Implement a proactive, planned maintenance program for public housing that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of regional communities.**

51 Delivering more social, community and affordable housing as well as housing for key workers, Government of Western Australia (2025) [Jobs, Health, Housing: Our priorities for government 2025-2029](#).

52 See An Essential Workforce in the Regions section, page 10.

53 Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (2025) [Housing Affordability in Western Australia](#).

54 Torre (2024) [Grim new stats reveal homelessness crisis in regional WA](#), National Indigenous Times.

55 Kimberley Community Legal Services (2022) [Stuck in the Heat: Lived Experiences of Public Housing Tenants in the Kimberley](#). Shelter WA (2022) [Stuck in the Heat](#).

56 Clark (2025) [Audit exposes public housing system failures in Kimberley's remote Aboriginal communities](#), National Indigenous Times.

# Living Safely

## **Strengthening WA's Response to Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence**

The scale and complexity of family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) in WA demands a coordinated, sustained and well-resourced response. Increasing refuge capacity is essential to ensure victim-survivors can access safety when they need it. However, safety must also begin earlier — through prevention, education and targeted intervention.

We must do far more to engage with men to change attitudes and reduce rates of offending and re-offending. Men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs) are a critical component of the FDSV system, yet access remains limited, inconsistent, and underfunded across WA. These programs must be trauma-informed, culturally safe, and delivered by accredited specialist providers with strong accountability frameworks. To be effective, MBCPs should be embedded within a broader system of coordinated risk assessment, victim-survivor support and justice responses. WA should invest in expanding the reach and quality of these programs, particularly in regional and remote areas, and ensure they are integrated into court diversion pathways and community-based interventions.

Respectful Relationships programs in schools help children understand coercive control and build the skills to form healthy relationships. These programs are best delivered by specialist services and should be embedded across the education system. Teachers play a critical role in identifying children at risk and responding to harmful behaviours, and they need training and resourcing to do so effectively.

Meanwhile, the scale of our response for children and young people harmed by sexual abuse is inadequate to meet the needs of the one in four Australians who experience child sexual abuse. WA must invest in therapeutic services for children who have experienced

sexual abuse and expand programs that address harmful sexual behaviours and rising rates of peer abuse among young people.

## Recommendations

- **Increase FDV refuge capacity to ensure victim-survivors can access safety when they need it.**
- **Expand access to Men's Behaviour Change Programs, ensuring they are trauma-informed, culturally safe, and integrated into justice and community pathways.**
- **Increase access to Respectful Relationships programs in schools to address peer abuse and coercive control.**
- **Resource and upskill teachers and school leadership to identify children at risk and manage harmful behaviours.**
- **Increase state-wide access to Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services and Indigenous Healing Services.**
- **Invest in a state-wide rollout of services to address harmful sexual behaviours in young people.**

## Living Safely in the Regions

Western Australians in remote and regional communities, including Aboriginal people, experience disproportionately high rates of FDV – compounded by geographical isolation and limited service availability. Family violence in Aboriginal communities is shaped by complex and intersecting factors - including the ongoing impacts of violent colonisation, forced removal from land, disruption of kinship systems, systemic marginalisation and intergenerational trauma stemming from policies such as the Stolen Generations. Untreated trauma, across generations, can manifest in cycles of harm. Effective responses must be grounded in Aboriginal knowledge, leadership and healing frameworks that recognise the strength and resilience of communities.

While we have recommended increasing refuge capacity for victim survivors – who are primarily women – it is equally important to acknowledge the lack of services available for men. During regional consultations, WACOSS heard that men who use violence and recognise the need to leave the house, have nowhere safe to go. We also heard a strong call for safe spaces where men can talk, heal and be supported to take accountability for their actions. Without dedicated, culturally safe accommodation and support services for men, we miss critical opportunities for early intervention, prevention and healing. These supports are essential for building safer families and communities.

### Recommendation

- **Invest in culturally safe spaces, accommodation and supports for men in the regions that prioritise healing, accountability and victim-survivor safety.**



## Climate disaster

The *Community Disaster Resilience Strategy* provides a strong framework for building safer, more connected communities. However, without dedicated implementation funding, its impact remains limited. Investing in the strategy's implementation will help communities prepare for and respond to disasters in ways that protect safety, wellbeing and social cohesion. It will also ensure that those most at risk have access to the support and infrastructure they need, before, during and after a crisis.

Heatwaves are the deadliest disaster and are becoming more frequent and severe across WA. Western Australians at higher risk include those with existing health conditions, experiencing homelessness or living in

poor quality housing.<sup>57</sup> Communities need 'cool spaces' that are culturally appropriate, free to access and have freely available transportation. All communities in WA should have free access to drinking water via public drinking fountains with filters and cooling mechanisms.<sup>58</sup> These interventions can prevent adverse health outcomes and reduce hospital presentations.

### Recommendations:

- **Fund implementation of the Community Disaster Resilience Strategy.**
- **Ensure communities across WA have free access to safe 'cool spaces' that offer relief during periods of high heat.**

57 Australian Climate Service (2025) *Australia's National Climate Risk Assessment Report*.

58 WACOSS (2025) *Heat Vulnerability Project*.

# Effective Justice

WA's prisons are causing deep, lasting harm – particularly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who continue to be disproportionately imprisoned. Incarceration disconnects individuals from housing, employment and community. Over the last year, WA's prison population has surged, leading to severe overcrowding. The Inspector of Custodial Services has found that people in custody are subjected to unhygienic conditions, significant lockdowns, restricted family contact and limited access to education, rehabilitation and health programs. Instead of addressing the root causes of offending – often unmet social, economic or health needs due to trauma, poverty, addiction or mental ill health – these conditions increase the risk of violence, self-harm and suicide, further entrenching disadvantage and making reoffending more likely.

Our youth justice system is similarly hurting our kids. Many children who come into contact with the justice system have already experienced significant trauma, poverty and disadvantage, with a well-documented crossover between child protection and youth justice. Detention only compounds this harm: in 2024 alone, there were over 500 incidents of self-harm or suicide attempts in WA youth detention centres.<sup>59</sup> Two children have died in Unit 18 – a wing of an adult maximum-security prison that is fundamentally unfit for young people. Roughly 90 per cent of children in detention have severe neurodevelopmental impairment – impacting their ability to understand consequences and navigate their social environment. Evidence overwhelmingly shows that incarceration does not reduce reoffending for children; instead it perpetuates cycles of trauma and disadvantage.<sup>60</sup>

Smart investment and reform are required across the justice system to implement effective rehabilitative approaches that make our communities safer.

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<sup>59</sup> Hansard, various Questions on Notice.

<sup>60</sup> Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (October 2024) [Australia's Youth Justice and Incarceration System](#).

## Justice

Justice reinvestment models offer a more effective and humane alternative, redirecting resources into community-led supports that prevent crime and reduce recidivism. These models enable early intervention and diversion, helping people to build their lives outside the criminal justice system. This investment would enable courts to divert low-level offenders from prison, reducing burden on detention facilities and staff, and improving safety.

The *Work and Development Permit Scheme* provides a pathway to resolve fines through approved activities, however its impact could be expanded. Many Western Australians face escalating fines for minor infringements – such as failing to ‘tap on’ when using public transport – trapping people in cycles of debt and entrenching disadvantage. However, the scheme is currently not accessible for infringements and the activities available to people under 18 are limited. Reviewing and expanding the scheme would allow more people to access fair and constructive alternatives to financial penalties.

The recent funding uplift for Community Legal Services was a welcome step, but demand continues to outpace resources. Legal representation is fundamental to a fair and effective justice system, and sustained investment is needed to ensure all Western Australians can access it when they need it.

### Recommendations:

- **Increase investment in Community Legal Services.**
- **Invest in justice reinvestment models to enable diversion of low-level offenders to alternatives to incarceration.**
- **Expand the Work and Development Permit Scheme to include infringements and expand activities available to people under 18.**

## Youth Justice

As a wing of an adult maximum-security prison, Unit 18 is inherently unsuitable for children and cannot be made humane or rehabilitative. The inquest into the death of Cleveland Dodd revealed that Unit 18 was never able to provide the support that children need. As recommended by the Coroner, Unit 18 must be closed urgently – to delay is to cause more harm.

Raising the minimum age of detention to 16 and investing in alternatives to incarceration that address the root causes of offending would support children to thrive and improve community safety. It would also be a critical step to aligning WA with international human rights standards and best practice. Alternatives to incarceration may include bail houses, on-country programs, education and training pathways, and justice reinvestment initiatives. Models like Spain’s *Diagrama Foundation* and Scotland’s *Whole System Approach* demonstrate that therapeutic, rehabilitative settings are far safer and more effective than incarceration.

### Recommendations:

- **Raise the minimum age of incarceration to 16.**
- **Invest in alternatives to incarceration for children.**
- **Close Unit 18.**

# Staying Well

To build a thriving, resilient WA, we must prioritise investment in people and their health. Timely access to primary healthcare and preventive services is fundamental to fostering healthy individuals and communities. Increasing pressure on services, rising costs, and more complex presentations are making it harder for families to maintain good health. WA's health system is jointly funded by the Australian and WA Governments under a shared responsibility framework, primarily through the National Health Reform Agreement, highlighting the need for collaborative action across both levels of government to effectively address these challenges.

As the cost of living continues to rise, many Western Australians are being forced to go without everyday basics, including food and heating or cooling. We heard in our consultations that, for many, healthcare is increasingly unaffordable, leading to delayed or foregone treatment. This worsens individual health outcomes, resulting in more complex and expensive interventions later - placing greater strain on families, communities and the health system as a whole.

Through consultations across the State, communities consistently emphasised the importance of investing in services and supports that are locally relevant, culturally safe and responsive to the unique needs of each region. Place-based approaches, where services are designed and delivered in close partnership with local communities, are essential to ensuring that support is accessible, trusted and effective. These approaches recognise that no two communities are the same and that solutions must be tailored to local contexts, histories and strengths.

Investing in these kinds of supports not only addresses immediate needs but also strengthens the social fabric of our communities. It builds resilience, promotes equity, and ensures that every Western

Australian, regardless of where they live or their background, has the opportunity to thrive. Further, it can be part of a cultural shift from Western Australians being passive consumers of medical services to understanding and being actively involved in managing our health, which delivers better wellbeing outcomes and reduces long-term demand on health services.

## Navigating the Health System

The need for Health Navigator or connector models was a clear and consistent priority in our consultations, with concerns about community members falling through the cracks as they tried to navigate complex health and community services systems.

System navigators with the right knowledge, skills and networks help connect individuals and families with health and community services, peer supports and social groups that meet their needs and help achieve their goals. They offer an innovative approach to reducing the demand on social and health services while improving outcomes for community members.

### **Recommendation:**

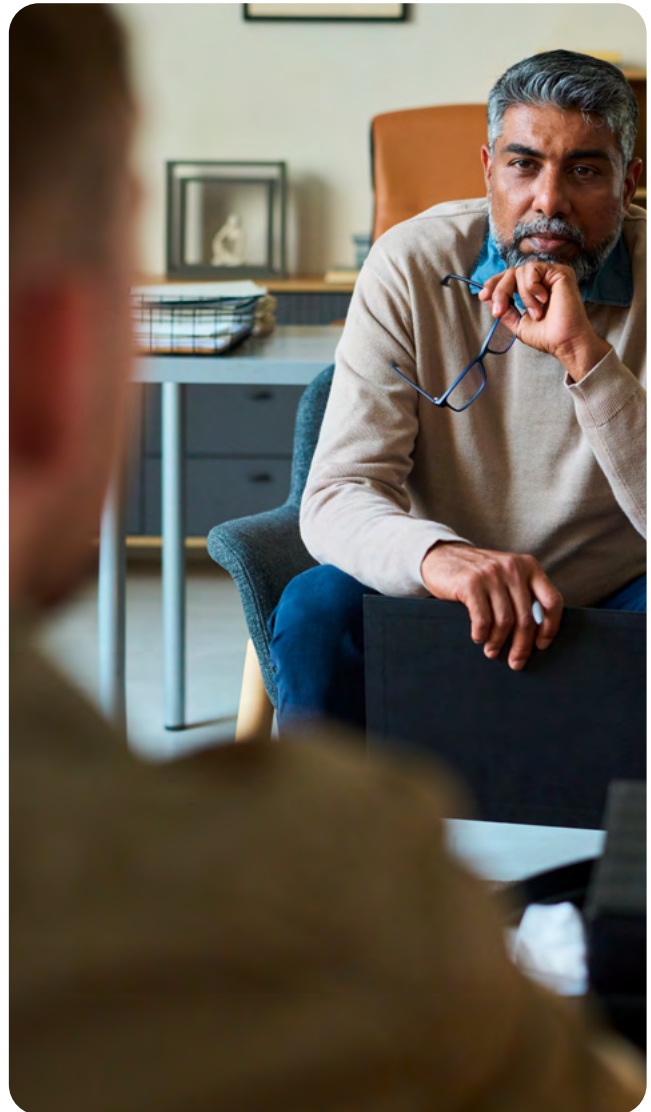
- **Invest in navigator models that improve community connectivity and service coordination.**

## Supporting Mental Health

The Western Australian Government has identified mental health as a key priority, committing to “ensuring all Western Australians can access the healthcare we need, when we need it,” and pledging to “provide more support for mental health.”<sup>61</sup>

To deliver on this commitment, it is essential to understand the current state of the mental health system in WA and the structural reforms required to ensure equitable, timely,

and effective care. The following outlines key features of the existing system and provides targeted recommendations to help the State Government achieve its stated priority.



Western Australia is facing a growing mental health crisis, with increasing rates of distress, long wait times for care and a rising number of people unable to access the support they need. Many individuals, including young people and families, are left waiting months for treatment or are forced to make difficult choices due to gaps in the system.

Mental health issues are often heavily impacted by other factors including housing insecurity, poverty, FDV and financial stress. Yet, services are frequently siloed, making

61 Government of Western Australia (2025) *Jobs, Health, Housing: Our priorities for government 2025-2029*.

it difficult for people to access timely and coordinated care. Embedding mental health supports within existing community services through a multi-sectoral approach can help address these gaps, improve outcomes and ensure people receive the help they need in the settings they already trust and use. In practice, embedded mental health supports will look different across service types and will need to be tailored both to the nature of the service and the needs of the people they support.

Rising rates of poor mental health among young people in WA remain a major concern, with growing levels of unmet need. We need more community-based, place-based prevention and early intervention mental health programs and initiatives specifically targeting young people. Funding should support the expansion and sustainability of existing services, as well as the development of new initiatives in areas of unmet need to ensure that all children and young people have access to the timely mental health supports and services they need.

## Recommendations

- **Provide strategic funding to embed mental health supports into existing community services – such as housing, FDSV, community legal and financial counselling – so these services can offer holistic and integrated care.**
- **Increased investment in non-clinical community-based mental health services that are place-based and focused on prevention and early intervention supports and services.**

## Alcohol and Other Drugs Response

Alcohol and other drug services are struggling to meet demand. Inadequate funding across the care continuum has resulted in system bottlenecks that inhibit service delivery. For

example, through-care to residential alcohol and drug treatment services are dependent on participants accessing withdrawal services. However, restricted availability of withdrawal services limits the number of people who can access residential services. Many regional areas have little or no access to services and lack detox facilities or sobering up centres.

## Recommendation

- **Uplift investment in alcohol and other drug services, including regional detox facilities and sobering up centres.**

## Thriving with a Disability

The 2024 report of the [Select Committee into Child Development Services](#) highlighted the pressing need for better access to integrated early child development services in WA. Equity and access issues mean many children and families take years to get the diagnosis and support they need – particularly in regional and disadvantaged areas. One of the biggest barriers is a reliance on a diagnosis to gain access to advice and support services. Even small delays in development can mean children start school behind their peers and continue to fall further behind without assistance.

## Recommendation:

- **Ensure all children and families can receive timely access to early development advice and support services without having to wait for a diagnosis.**

The Cost of Late Intervention in 2024 report found that the cost of statutory, acute and crisis services for children and young people rose by 43 per cent between 2019 and 2024 (from \$15.2 billion to \$22.3 billion), significantly outpacing inflation. Thousands of children with developmental concerns are missing the support they need to thrive. Foundational supports are meant to bridge the gap for those

who are ineligible or cannot access NDIS support, but the path forward is uncertain.

Minister for Disability and the NDIS Mark Butler announced the [Thriving Kids](#) program on 20 August 2025 at the National Press Club as a strategy to divert children aged eight and under with mild to moderate autism or developmental delay away from the NDIS program, saying the final form was to be negotiated with the States. This took State ministers, child development services and families by surprise, with little information to address their questions and concerns. These are promising and important developments, but it is critical to ensure service system design integrates well with existing services and service gaps at a state level.

To be effective Thriving Kids should be underpinned by the Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention Framework<sup>62</sup> and align with other existing national early childhood strategies. Without integration of these elements, the system will continue to leave children and families behind and the long-term developmental and economic cost of inaction will continue to grow.<sup>63</sup>

### Recommendation:

- **WA actively engages in the national dialogue on foundational services to ensure Thriving Kids meets the needs of WA children and families.**

Despite critical workforce shortages in many areas and what has been described as the ‘working from home revolution’ in the post-COVID period, we have not seen a meaningful increase in disability employment outcomes over the last decade. Community service providers can become employers of choice for workers living with a disability if given appropriate support, helping to close the gap on unmet public service employment targets.

Research also suggests that young people growing up with a disability who receive meaningful career advice and transitional support go on to thrive and lead productive lives, but too few currently receive this kind of support.<sup>64</sup>

### Recommendations:

- **Pursue a work first approach to labour market inclusion of workers with a disability, providing active support to achieve public sector targets.**
- **Provide career planning to young people living with a disability and support for the transition between education and employment.**

Systemic advocacy on behalf of people with disability in WA currently lacks consistent or adequate funding. With appropriate resourcing, disability advocacy organisations would be better positioned to collaborate with the WA Government in shaping policies and legislation that promote inclusivity and accessibility. While many other sectors benefit from peak body funding, this level of support has not been extended to disability advocacy networks. To ensure equitable representation and influence, similar funding mechanisms should be made available to these organisations.

### Recommendation:

- **Strengthen disability advocacy in WA by providing peak body funding to a consortium of disability advocacy organisations.**

62 The current version is here: [National Guidelines: Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention](#). A national review by PRECI for Department of Social Services with “The Framework” will be released soon.

63 ACaFSA (2025) Insights for developing a robust national Thriving Kids program, September 2025. WACOSS and CPAC are signatories to this Australian Child and Family Supports Alliance initiative.

64 Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (2024) [Employment and Disability in Australia: Improving employment outcomes](#).

## Staying Well in the Regions

Maintaining good health and wellbeing is a fundamental right for all people, yet those living in regional and remote areas of WA often face significant barriers to accessing the services and supports they need. Geographic isolation, limited availability of specialised health professionals, long wait times and the high cost of travel can make it difficult for people to receive timely and appropriate care. It is even harder for people living with disability in the regions who struggle to access even the most basic services they need.

These challenges are compounded by the lack of culturally safe and youth-friendly services, particularly for First Nations people and those experiencing mental health distress. As a result, many people in regional WA are unable to access early intervention or preventative support, increasing the risk of crisis presentations and long-term health impacts. Long wait times also lead to later diagnosis and poorer outcomes.

### Bunbury

A key issue identified in Bunbury was the significant increase in referrals for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Whereas previously the rate was approximately 1 in 20, referrals are now much higher. Families are struggling to access appropriate support, with waitlists for children with developmental delays extending to at least 18 months. South of Bunbury, the only available support for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and ADHD is through private providers, making these services inaccessible for many low-income families.

### Northam

As WACOSS made our way across the State we heard similar issues in many areas. Below are key issues raised in the Northam consultation regarding health issues:

Workforce issues, including practitioner shortages and high staff turnover, are disrupting continuity of care and contributing to long wait times.<sup>65</sup>

Telehealth and connectivity challenges: Many clinics rely on telehealth, often due to staff shortages, but unreliable mobile data (especially after the 3G shutdown) limits the effectiveness of these services, particularly for complex health needs. This was also raised in many other regional areas.<sup>66</sup>

Feedback from communities consistently highlights a strong preference for services that are embedded locally rather than delivered remotely. The size and diversity of regions must also be recognised: for example, funding allocated for an entire region (like Peel) often only support services in the regional centre (Mandurah), leaving many people in surrounding areas without access. To ensure equitable support, funding models must reflect the unique needs and geography of each region, enabling all communities to benefit from accessible, place-based services.

<sup>65</sup> See An Essential Workforce in the Regions section, page 16.

<sup>66</sup> See Surviving section, page 17.

## Recommendation

- **Prioritise local access to place-based, community-led health solutions that offer early intervention, accessibility, continuity of care and regional workforce development.**

Despite the WA Government's commitment to improving the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS), through expanding eligibility and a small increase of the fuel subsidy, travel costs related to accessing healthcare remained a key concern in our consultations.

A range of issues were raised regarding the limitations of PATS. These include: poor coverage of accommodation; limited travel options for reimbursement, which does not always meet the needs of elderly or frail individuals who may require alternative transport options; and the exclusion of informal carers (such as family members) when the patient is unable to travel independently. Additionally, long wait times for reimbursement, a lack of cultural safety, inadequate support for regional communities and the absence of funding for patients accessing oral health services were all highlighted as areas of concern.

One consultation participant noted:

*Regional families are making medical decisions based on travel affordability.<sup>67</sup>*

This is deeply concerning, as it may lead to poorer health outcomes and further disadvantage for those living in regional and remote areas.

## Recommendations:

- **Review the Patient Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS) to better meet user need and improve program effectiveness.**
- **Provide funding to the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services sector to support Aboriginal people to navigate the PATS process and manage administrative requirements, ensuring a coordinated and culturally safe patient journey.<sup>68</sup>**



<sup>67</sup> South Metro Consultation

<sup>68</sup> As recommended by the Aboriginal Health Council of WA. This role would provide culturally safe guidance and practical support, helping to reduce barriers and ensure equitable access to travel assistance.

# Thriving Children & Families

Early childhood development is a major national priority and the focus of media attention and public concern. Recent months have seen a wave of policy announcements at State and Federal levels. Now is the time to focus on a joined-up response to the systems and services that support and enable our children to thrive — across health, education, family and community services at the national, State and local levels.

We also have a pressing need to do so.

WA's recent *2024 AEDC results* were a serious wake-up call, highlighting a major decline in school readiness since 2021. While our early childhood outcomes have gone backwards across all groups and all developmental domains, the gaps have widened the most in early social and emotional development, and for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Part of the problem is that WA has under-invested in early childhood services over the past decade compared to other States – at a time when our population has grown rapidly.

The recent National Economic Reform Roundtable identified early childhood education and care (ECEC) as a key enabler of workforce engagement and productivity. Access to quality early care services was highlighted as a priority to support regional development. This is particularly true in the West, with our resources industry also identifying childcare access as a major barrier to workforce sustainability.

Our major challenge in the West is not innovation or the capability to design and deliver best practice integrated early development services – we have a host of fantastic services, along with leading expertise in early child development.

What we really need to do is share best practice more effectively, and deliver this at a scale that reflects population growth and community need. Where we need innovation, flexibility and greater resources is in our funding programs and in cross-agency collaboration. We also need to measure outcomes consistently.

## Early Childhood Education and Care

High-quality accessible ECEC services are only part of the solution to addressing the challenge we face in early development. Integrated child and family service hubs are the most effective and cost-efficient ways to ensure children and families have timely access to services when they need them. WA should build on the success of our 22 *Child and Parent Centres* by networking them. This will help to share their learnings, building communities of practice and leverage insights from best practice models through the *National Child and Family Hubs Network* and the four *Connected Community Schools* trial sites. We need to develop more hubs in areas of greatest need to give our kids the best possible start in life.<sup>69</sup>

### Recommendation:

- **Resource a WA Integrated Child and Family Hubs Network program to share best practice, and develop more integrated child and family hubs in areas of greatest need.**

Service development has simply not kept up with growing need. The last five years has seen our fastest period of population growth, while

State investment in early childhood services has remained static. WA needs an early childhood planning strategy that ensures we are developing services where they are most needed, while also avoiding an oversupply of childcare in inner metro areas, which results in more centres and more demand on the early childhood workforce, but fewer overall places.

### Recommendation:

- **Develop a National Planning Agreement between the Commonwealth and States to coordinate the planning and development of new early childhood centres.**<sup>70</sup>

While WA has a strong budget position and a tendency to go it alone, we also have a history of not getting our fair share of national program funding. We are concerned by the disconnect between national and State early childhood priorities and recommend that we should engage with and actively shape the direction of national reforms. As the Commonwealth steps in to fund universal early childhood services, it will play a greater long-term role in determining outcomes for our children and the shape of our future service system. We are late to the party in developing whole-of-government early years strategies and initiatives that align with Federal funding programs (like the \$1 billion Building



69 For more details, see SVA [Targeting Investment Where it Counts](#), the [Targeting Investment WA Brief](#), WACOSS [Make WA Fair](#) and the [Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas](#) for a list of priority locations.

70 This might require proving there is a demand for additional services in the market, and the proponent meeting high quality standards (via NQS A&R and compliance performance) prior to consideration.

Early Education Fund and the Commonwealth Outcomes Fund) despite the strong alignment of their priorities with the challenges faced by regional areas and disadvantaged families in WA. This funding could be matched with State early educator housing in unserved regional and remote areas, enabling rental subsidies via the national Community Child Care Fund.

### Recommendation:

- **Actively engage with the national Building Early Education Fund, community providers, local governments and philanthropy to ensure access to quality ECEC services in unserved and under-served areas.**

WA has recently made some major early childhood election announcements, including an Office of Early Childhood, a WA Play Strategy and a pilot of full-time four-year-old kindergarten at 10 sites. It would be good to see trials evaluate and compare high-quality community providers delivering services on school sites. The creation of the Office of Early Childhood within the Department of Premier and Cabinet could not be timelier for these emerging opportunities. Our collective challenge is to balance delivering election commitments with actively engaging in major national reforms, including the transition to a universal ECEC system and the reforms to deliver foundational services and the Thriving Kids program.

### Recommendations:

- **Develop a WA Child and Family Wellbeing Strategy with annual public reporting and five- and ten-year outcomes to coordinate whole-of-government action.**
- **Establish a high-level Early Childhood Advisory Committee, with senior leadership across the public and community sectors to guide implementation.**

Early Childhood Minister Sabine Winton recently announced a snap review of early childhood safety and the operations and resources of the Education and Care Regulatory Unit (ECRU). The review report highlighted that WA maintains a higher level of enforcement than other jurisdictions, while pointing to areas for further improvement. For reform to succeed, it is critical the public and community sectors work together to shift our focus from reactive responses to harm to proactive measures that prevent harm and keep children safe. State regulation is working relatively well, but to actually keep kids safe (and not merely respond to prevent further harm) we need to proactively build staff knowledge and capability of child safeguarding. WA has the opportunity to lead on proactive workforce training, providing support and advice to all child and family services to implement child-friendly complaints processes.<sup>71</sup>

We should have zero tolerance for child harm across all our child and family service systems in WA.

WA is currently the only State without a program to support lifting the quality and safety rankings of our early childhood services. Our current approach to quality and safety is also hampered by the complex overlap of regulatory layers. The reliance on providers to self-report safety breaches may mean a lack of awareness where serious issues are not being reported. WA should commit to regular unscheduled independent reviews of all early childhood services (including those within schools), with clear targets and a guaranteed maximum period between reviews. It is critical we ensure that ECRU has the resources to undertake these regular assessments.

### Recommendation:

- **Commit to a program of regular independent reviews of all early childhood services in WA, and implement a best-practice program to actively support lifting ECEC quality rankings.**

71 In line with recommendations of CCYP WA (2025) [Monitoring of child-focused complaints systems report](#).

Our early childhood workforce faces both skills shortages and a retention crisis, with not enough workers in the training pipeline to meet current and future needs. At the same time, we are losing good male workers in response to media stories and parental concerns about child maltreatment and abuse, and some male students have had their final-year placements cancelled. We need to include good men as positive role models in our early childhood workforce and give their teams the tools and qualifications to demonstrate they are safe and valued. Best-practice services in WA create child safety champions<sup>72</sup> with a designated role to monitor and promote awareness and child safeguarding across their services, actively engaging children and families through child-friendly complaints processes.

### Recommendation:

- **Provide proactive safety training for all early childhood workers and include safety in the VET curriculum.**

## Reducing Educational Disadvantage

The 2023 Independent Review of Public Education in WA highlighted the growing divide within our schools and the pressure on teachers facing increasing challenges supporting disadvantaged students, managing complex needs and challenging behaviours. Greater investment is needed in public education to improve outcomes and reduce educational disadvantage. Our recent regional consultations heard reports of a growing cohort of students who are failing to attend mainstream education, disconnecting from the transition to high-school, and simply falling through the cracks. Teachers need more assistance for children with

developmental and behavioural challenges to reduce *class disruption* and ensure all students get the opportunity to learn.

### Recommendations:

- **Implement the recommendations of the *Facing the Facts* report and reduce growing inequity in WA public schools.**
- **Provide outreach and alternative education options for children disengaged from mainstream schooling.**

## Child Poverty

Our community has seen big increases in child poverty in recent years, with the national rate rising from 14.5 per cent of children living under a standard poverty line in 2022 to 15 per cent in 2023, with growth projected to reach 15.6 per cent in 2025<sup>73</sup>. Taking population growth into account, the national per capita poverty headcount is projected to exceed 4 million in 2025 (14.8 per cent). WA's child poverty count was estimated at 95,800 in 2023 and is projected to be 103,900 in mid-2025 (or 16.2 per cent). We know that poverty has life-long impacts on employment, health and wellbeing. A State as prosperous as WA should leave no child growing up in poverty.

### Recommendation:

- **Create a WA Child Poverty Act that sets targets for child poverty reduction.**

72 For example, ECA [Safer Together: Practical Strategies for Strengthening Child Safety](#) webinar and resources.

73 That is an increase of 81,750 children over two years up to 950,100 in 2025. Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (2025) [Child Poverty in Australia](#) for the End Child Poverty campaign.

# State Budget Submission

## 2026-27 Organisations Consulted

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12 Buckets	City of Wanneroo	Jacaranda Community Centre
54 Reasons	Community Legal WA	Jigalong Community
Aarnja	Consumer Credit Legal Service WA	Joondalup Health Campus
Aboriginal Health Council WA	Consumers of Mental Health WA	Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
Accordwest	Council of Aboriginal Services WA	Karratha Central Healthcare
Advocare	Denmark Community Resource Centre	Karratha Family Centre
Alike WA	Desert Blue Connect	Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council
Amity Health	Escare	Kimberley Community Legal Services
Anglicare Broome	Fellowship House	Kununurra Neighbourhood House
Anglicare Karratha	Financial Counselling Association WA	Leadership WA
Anglicare Kununurra	Financial Wellbeing Collective	Linkwest
Anglicare Mandurah	Fusion Australia	Luma
Anglicare WA	Gawooleng Yawoodeng Aboriginal Corp	Marra Worra Worra
Australian Red Cross	Goldfields Women's Refuge	Martumili Arts
Befriend	Great Southern Community Legal Service	Men's Health WA
Binarri-binyja yarrowoo	Headspace	Mercycare
Broome CIRCLE	Headspace Pilbara	Midlas
Broome Youth and Families Hub	Health Consumer's Council of WA	Mindful Margaret River
Busselton Hospice Care	Hedland Well Women's Centre	Mission Australia
Cancer Council	Helping Minds	Money Mentors
Carers WA	Holyoake Northam and Wheatbelt	Neami National Geraldton
Carnarvon Family Support Services Inc.	Indigo Junction	Neami National Mandurah
Centacare Geraldton		Newman Women's Shelter
Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing		Ngala
Child Australia		Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation
City of Fremantle		Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service
City of Karratha		

Palmerston Albany	Regional Alliance West	The Salvation Army Karratha
Parkerville Children and Youth Care	Relationships WA	Town of Port Hedland
Passages Youth Engagement Hub	Rise	Unions WA
PCYC Northam and Wheatbelt	Safe at Home	Uniting WA
Pathways Southwest	Share and Care	Valuing Children Initiative
Peel Community Development Group	Share and Care Northam	WA Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies
Peel Development Commission	Shelter WA	Wanslea
Peel Volunteer Resource Centre	SHINE	Wanslea Goldfields
People with Disabilities WA	Social Reinvestment WA	Wanslea Mandurah
PeopleKind Group	South West Counselling	Wanslea Northam
Phoenix Support & Advocacy Service Inc.	St Patricks Community Support Centre	Women's Legal Service WA
Pilbara Community Legal Services	St Vincent de Paul Society	Wunan
Pivot	St Vincent de Paul Society Mandurah	Yaandina
Playgroup WA	Stopping Family Violence	YMCA WA
Rainbow Futures WA	Swan City Youth Service	Youth Affairs Council of WA
	Tenacious House	Youth Involvement Council
	The Salvation Army Kalgoorlie and Esperance	Youth Futures

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We drive social change to improve the wellbeing  
of Western Australians and to strengthen the  
community services sector that supports them.

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