



Health, Mental Health and our COVID-19 response

The McGowan Labor Government is providing the biggest ever investment in the WA public health system, with a further record \$2.5 billion investment in health and mental health - towards significant targeted investments including measures to address emergency department pressures.

This brings the total new investment to \$5.7 billion since the last budget.

Under the McGowan Government, WA Health's annual budget has grown from \$8.8 billion in 2016-17 to \$11.6 billion in 2021-22, a 30.9 per cent increase.

The 2022-23 State Budget features \$1.6 billion for WA's COVID-19 response in this budget, bringing investment to date to more than \$11.2 billion since the start of the pandemic, including \$1.7 billion towards business support.

At a glance

- \$1.6 billion in new COVID-19 response and recovery measures to keep WA safe;
- \$630 million in additional hospital services spending;
- \$252 million Emergency Department Reform Package with a suite of 17 initiatives;
- \$223 million new health infrastructure investment bringing total to \$1.6 billion, in addition to the \$1.8 billion new Women and Babies Hospital;
- \$181 million additional investments in mental health including \$47 million towards an immediate response to the Infants, Children and Adolescents Taskforce Report;
- \$158 million for health and mental health initiatives in WA's regions;
- Delivered 342 new beds with a total of 530 beds to be delivered by the end of the year; and
- Over the past two years to March 2022, the WA Health workforce has increased by 15.6 per cent, including an additional 1,456 nursing and 512 medical FTE (principally doctors).

Boosting WA's COVID-19 response and recovery

WA's stable and responsible Budget management continues because of our safe handling of the pandemic, which has supported our strong economic and financial position, helping record another strong surplus.

While the global pandemic isn't over, WA secured a soft landing as planned, by putting the health and safety of the community first, with responsible border policies and achieving world-leading vaccination rates, allowing WA to transition safely, saving lives and jobs.

The McGowan Government is the only State Government that has delivered free Rapid Antigen Tests to households to help prevent further transmission and reduce the disruption to our economy and our daily lives.

Highlights:

- Massive boost with an additional \$1.6 billion for WA's pandemic response and recovery
- Initiatives in 2022-23 State Budget brings WA's investment in COVID-19 to more than \$11.2 billion since the start of the pandemic in March 2020

The almost \$1.6 billion in additional support provided in the 2022-23 State Budget comprises a suite of measures and initiatives:

- \$635 million to secure RATs and run the WA Free RAT Program;
- \$537 million in health services including for COVID-19 testing and monitoring, medical equipment, contact tracing, hotel quarantine and the vaccination roll out;
- \$61 million towards Western Australia Police Force State Emergency Management Response initiatives, including border controls, cleaning, PPE and the operation of the 13 COVID hotline; and
- \$42.5 million towards school COVID-19 measures – implementing schools ventilation strategy, enhanced school cleaning, administrative and contact tracing support, masks and distribution of RATs.

As part of a national agreement, some elements of the public health measures will receive a 50 per cent contribution from the Commonwealth Government.

Boosting health infrastructure for WA's future

The McGowan Government's investment into health and mental health prepares us for the future with additional \$223.4 million investment in health infrastructure, increasing investment in health infrastructure to \$1.6 billion over the next four years. This is on top of the \$1.8 billion set aside from the stronger than expected surplus for 2020-21 to construct the new Women and Babies Hospital.

The McGowan Government is undertaking the biggest infrastructure program in WA's history to boost jobs and the economy.

Highlights:

- \$44 million to increase the Medical Equipment and Imaging Replacement Program;
- \$38.1 million as part of Stage 1 of digital medical record keeping across the hospital system to modernise and enhance service delivery, including an initial roll out at five hospitals and regional sites;
- \$16.7 million to build a 10-bed pod to upgrade the intensive care unit (ICU) at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital;
- \$7.6 million for refurbishment works within the Neurological Intervention and Imaging Service of Western Australia unit at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital to house two new biplanar units; and
- \$5.9 million to commence site development and forward works for the Byford Health Hub.

Funding for the planning of new significant health infrastructure investments include:

- \$10 million to develop business cases for the State-wide reconfiguration of mental health services and Graylands Hospital redevelopment; and
- \$2.5 million towards the development of a business case to inform options for the proposed WA Comprehensive Cancer Centre.

This builds on the WA hospital redevelopments and expansions previously announced which include:

- \$200 million Bunbury Hospital redevelopment;
- \$14.74 million for Collie Hospital upgrades;
- \$8.6 million for Peel community alcohol and other drug integrated services;
- \$49 million for the construction of a new Meekatharra Hospital;
- \$61.6 million Newman Health Service Redevelopment; and
- \$32.8 million Tom Price Hospital Redevelopment.

Building bed capacity

Since the 2021-22 State Budget in September 2021, 342 new beds have been added to the WA hospital system, with the majority of the remaining beds to be open by the end of this year to provide a total of 530 beds committed by the Government.

Improving emergency care

A key component of the McGowan Government's health focus in the 2022-23 State Budget is a new \$252 million major reform package. Comprising 17 initiatives, it will improve access to emergency care and help address the systemic causes of ambulance ramping by enhancing system-wide coordination in the short and long term

Highlights:

- Ministerial Taskforce led by the Health Minister to oversee implementation of the reforms;
- \$18.2 million investment in real-time data capability to manage system pressures and improve the flow of patients through emergency departments;
- \$55.8 million to embed 24/7 registered nurses across 15 metropolitan and regional Emergency Department waiting rooms;
- \$74.1 million for innovative measures by securing more appropriate forms of care for long stay patients, who often have complex care needs and require suitable supports and residential accommodation;
- \$55.2 million for telehealth services which provide patient care for people who do not need emergency department support and reduces emergency department presentations;
- An additional \$5.5 million injection to extend the Virtual Emergency Medicine pilot program in the South Metropolitan Health Service and an additional \$5 million to expand the program across the other metropolitan health services – to better triage incoming patients in ambulances to appropriate services;
- \$10.8 million to continue the Active Recovery Teams Pilot Program for another year;
- A further \$10.1 million to expand the capacity of the Complex Needs Coordination Team;
- \$7.3 million to continue the Perth Sobering Up Centre and Low Medical Withdrawal Service; and
- \$3 million to prepare a business case for a State Health Operations Centre, which would seek to deliver better patient outcomes by ensuring better coordination for those people in need of emergency care.

Staffing and recruitment

In the past two years to March 2022, the WA Health workforce has increased by 15.6 per cent, including an additional 1,456 nursing and 512 medical full-time equivalents (principally doctors).

The McGowan Government is continuing to invest heavily in initiatives to build our health care workforce, which has already grown by 1,101 FTE since the WA Health Belong recruitment campaign was launched in October 2021.

The health workforce will be further bolstered with initiatives in the 2022-23 State Budget including:

- \$8.1 million for the International Medical Graduates registration project;
- \$7 million to deliver Aboriginal midwifery services, delivering on an election commitment;
- \$3.5 million to establish the final year of neurology training in WA to help retain neurologists locally; and
- \$3.7 million pilot program to establish and commence the Aboriginal Health Practitioners profession in WA.

Health and mental health investments in the regions

WA's regions will benefit from a \$158.3 million health boost in the 2022-23 State Budget.

There are wide-ranging initiatives and major investments over the next four years which highlights how big Western Australia's footprint is and reflects the far-reaching health care and services delivered to Western Australians each and every day.

- An additional \$49.4 million towards the Geraldton Health Campus Redevelopment to bring total investment to \$122.7 million;
- \$30.1 million for 18 additional paid paramedics and six additional ambulances in regional WA, delivering on an election commitment;

- \$18.5 million to expand the WA Country Health Service Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service frontline workforce across seven regions by 11.6 FTE;
- \$14.1 million towards newborn emergency transport services;
- \$13 million to build and operate a new Albany General Dental Clinic;
- \$10 million to expand Pilbara Health Initiatives to deliver specialist paediatric, cancer, haematology, stroke and neurology services at the Karratha Health Campus and surrounding sites;
- \$11 million, of a total \$55.8 million investment, to ensure there is a registered nurse 24/7 at major regional Emergency Departments;
- \$5.1 million to continue the WACHS Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service;
- \$5 million in additional funding to address the most urgent critical staff accommodation issues;
- An additional \$2.3 million for the Broome Step Up/Step Down facility and an additional \$1.6 million for the Karratha Step Up/Step Down facility to address construction cost pressures; and
- \$920,000 for the planning and design of a new renal dialysis centre in Halls Creek.

Significant mental health investment and priorities

Highlights:

- \$1.3 billion, allocated for Western Australia's mental health, alcohol and other drug services in 2022-23;
- Almost 13 per cent increase in funding on the 2021-22 State Budget; and
- An additional \$181 million to fund new and expanded mental health services, includes \$47.3 million to support immediate Infants, Children and Adolescent Taskforce recommendations.

The McGowan Government's continued increased investment to mental health, alcohol and other drug services in WA prioritises initiatives for people to receive the mental health care they need as demand for services across the country continues to increase.

As part of this new bolstered investment, the Mental Health Commission will be allocated an additional \$181 million for new and expanded mental health, alcohol and other drug services.

This increase includes a dedicated \$47.3 million allocation to respond to recommendations of the Taskforce into Infants, Children and Adolescent (ICA) mental health including:

- \$18.5 million to expand the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service frontline workforce across seven regions by 11.6 FTE;
- \$12.9 million for additional Peer Support Workers;
- \$10.5 million to deliver a two-year virtual support service for at risk children;
- \$4 million to establish an interagency program office, undertake service model design and develop an implementation plan; and
- \$1.3 million for mental health workforce development initiatives.

Other initiatives in the 2022-23 State Budget which will prioritises mental health, alcohol and other drug support includes:

- \$10.8 million to extend the Active Recovery Teams pilot which aims to reduce unplanned hospital readmission and emergency department presentations;
- \$5.1 million towards Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service operated by the WA Country Health Service;
- \$6.1 million to continue a range of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder prevention initiatives;
- \$3.5 million for suicide prevention services; and
- \$3.5 million to support the development of a pilot alcohol-related violence prevention program at Royal Perth Hospital Emergency Department.

The State Government will spend an additional \$16 million and provide \$10.5 million of in-kind contributions to support the WA Bilateral Schedule to the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, which is a \$61.5 million joint investment into mental health and suicide prevention.