This year’s State Budget reflects the Government’s ongoing commitment to expanding services to support Western Australians with mental health, alcohol and other drug problems.

Our priority is to further develop a well-integrated mix of accessible, contemporary inpatient and community-based services to meet the needs of the growing population.

Early intervention and the prevention of mental illness, alcohol and other drug related harm and suicide are a focus.

The 2015/16 Budget will deliver $836.8 million in funding, an additional $42.6 million or 5.4 per cent from the previous financial year.

This represents a 53 per cent or $290.5 million increase in investment since the first full year of operation of the Mental Health Commission.

In 2015/16 the total funding allocation will be:

• $749.9 million to support people with mental illness, their families and carers.
• $86.9 million to prevent and reduce the adverse impacts of alcohol and other drugs in the Western Australian community.

Funding in the 2015/16 Budget will enable approximately 56,000 Western Australians to receive the help they need for mental health problems, an increase of 2.1 per cent since 2014/15. It will also provide more than 40,000 treatment and support episodes for people with alcohol and other drug problems, an increase of four per cent since 2014/15.

Budget at a glance

• Expansion of subacute care in the community
• A new State-wide suicide prevention program
• Mental health court diversion and support
• A new specialised mental health community treatment service for youth
• Alcohol and other drug post treatment support services
• A 5.1 per cent growth in investment in public mental health community treatment services
• A 2.1 per cent activity growth for both public mental health community treatment and hospital admissions

The 2015/16 Budget will commit $836.9m to mental health, alcohol and other drug services
Future directions

While keenly focused on our reform agenda in 2015/16, the Government remains committed to providing high-quality care for people currently receiving services. Changes will be phased and structured to provide integrated treatment and support in consultation with consumers, families and carers.

This Budget brings us closer to realising our vision of a Western Australia where we minimise mental illness, suicide and drug and alcohol-related harm and where all people who experience mental illness, alcohol or other drug problems are supported to stay well, in the community, out of hospital and to live fulfilling lives.

Hon Helen Morton MLC
MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Expanding community treatment services for youth

Young people aged 16 to 24 experience the highest prevalence and incidence for mental illness across the lifespan with half of all mental illnesses occurring by the age of 14 and three quarters by the age of 24.

More than one in four young people in Western Australia experience a mental health problem each year, which can include depression, anxiety, eating disorders or self-harm.

Investment focused on improving youth mental health is therefore vital to ensure their future wellbeing and will have greater personal, social and economic benefits than intervention at any other time in their lifespan.

Highlighting its commitment to the development of youth-specific mental health services, the State Government has provided $2.5 million in 2015/16 for a youth community treatment service.

Focused on the continuum of care from prevention and early intervention, through to treatment and recovery, the service will support the 14 inpatient beds dedicated for youth at the newly opened Fiona Stanley Hospital.
Goal to halve suicide rates

The State Government renews its commitment to suicide prevention, allocating $25.9 million over the next four years to implement a new multi-year suicide prevention strategy that aims to halve the number of suicides in ten years.

The new strategy, Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can save lives, is informed through the National Living is for Everyone framework and takes a holistic, evidence-based approach to suicide prevention across the lifespan.

Suicide Prevention 2020 seeks to balance investment in community awareness and stigma reduction, mental health and suicide prevention training and coordinated services for high-risk groups.

Suicide Prevention 2020 builds on the outcomes of the previous Suicide Prevention Strategy 2009-2013 and provides for a range of new initiatives, including:

- $4.3 million to increase public awareness of suicide risk factors and appropriate responses as well as creating motivation for change through effective community engagement.
- $15.3 million for coordinated and targeted responses for high risk groups. This includes:
  - $9.5 million to continue and expand the Response to Self-Harm and Suicide in Schools program, in up to 60 high schools. This program is jointly delivered by the Department of Education and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.
  - $500,000 funding per year for the expansion of youth and family counselling services into all Curriculum and Re-engagement in Education (CARE) schools and regional schools that have a significant proportion of high-risk youth.
  - $1.3 million to procure an Aboriginal-specific family counselling program that will aim to break the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage and risk and educate parents about the importance of mental health and seeking help early.
  - $720,000 for long term support for children bereaved by suicide as part of a new initiative that aims to intervene early and help children and their families through their grief.
- $1.3 million for the continuation of suicide prevention training programs such as ASIST, Gatekeeper and Mental Health First Aid, for at least 600 people. Programs will be targeted in areas with known high risk of suicide, such as the Kimberley, South West, Wheatbelt and Perth outer-metropolitan region.
- $1.1 million to establish a coronial database that will provide early detection and communication of systemic trends and ‘hotspots’ for suicide in Western Australia. This accurate and timely data on suicide risk and protective factors, suicide attempts, deaths, means of harm, clusters and trends will inform planning, decision making and targeted responses.
Drug and alcohol residential support services

In 2011/12, the State Government allocated $8.5 million to purchase 15 houses throughout WA for the Transitional Housing and Support Program (THASP), with a further $1.5 million over four years to provide support services for people living in the houses.

The unique program supports alcohol and other drug recovery, and reduces relapse rates by providing people with support to live independently in community-based residential housing. Clients must have successfully completed a three to six month rehabilitation program. People who benefit from the program include those with severe and long-term problematic alcohol and other drug use, people with a history of unsuccessful treatment, or people at risk of homelessness.

This Budget provides the THASP additional funding of $2.5 million over the next four years, to continue providing support services for residents within the existing 15 houses.

Results from the first program evaluation released in 2014 showed it was having a positive impact with all of those interviewed who had been through the program, reporting significant reductions in alcohol and other drug use and related harm and improvements in emotional, mental and physical health.

Funding for country services - Royalties for Regions

Levels of alcohol consumption and related harm remain disproportionately high in the north west of Western Australia. Support from Royalties for Regions has enabled the Drug and Alcohol Office to focus on expanding counselling, treatment and support services and prevention activities in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne regions.

As part of this expansion this Budget will see a total of $11.26 million over two years provided for the continued delivery of the expanded alcohol and other drug treatment services in the Kimberley and Pilbara, and continued operational funding for the Carnarvon dual-purpose Alcohol and Drug Centre until 30 June 2017.

In addition to continued service provision, the two year extension of funding will allow for an evaluation of these services.

Capital funding of $10.7 million as well as $17.2 million operational funding over three years has been provided through the Royalties for Regions program in the 2015/16 Budget to develop subacute mental health step-up, step-down facilities in Karratha and Bunbury.
Amalgamation of the Mental Health Commission and the Drug and Alcohol Office

The Western Australian Government is committed to addressing the long-term needs of people with multiple, complex issues. To ensure better integration of the State’s network of mental health, alcohol and other drug services, the Government has committed to the amalgamation of the Mental Health Commission and the Drug and Alcohol Office. Legislation to allow for the amalgamation has passed through Parliament and the agencies will merge on 1 July 2015.

Preventing and reducing harmful alcohol and other drug use

State Government funding to reduce the adverse impacts of harmful alcohol and other drug use in the Western Australian community has increased from $50.6 million in 2008/09 to $86.9 million in 2015/16; an increase of 72 per cent.

With almost one in four Western Australians drinking at levels that place them at risk of alcohol related harm in their lifetime and one in six reporting use of any illicit drug in the past year, the 2015/16 budget continues to support programs to prevent and reduce harmful alcohol and other drug use.

Prevention programs include the Drug and Alcohol Office Alcohol:Think Again and Drug Aware prevention campaigns and intervention programs, which continue to raise awareness of the risks, including through focusing on the physical and mental health impacts of their use, and include intervention programs to try to influence behaviour.

Treatment and support programs are also essential for those who need them and the Budget supports a broad range of services across Western Australia.

Fresh Start Recovery Program

The Fresh Start Recovery Program is a unique alcohol and other drug treatment service and treats more than 1,000 people each year. The State Government will provide $700,000 in addition to recurrent funding in 2015/16.

Legislative Reform

The passage of the new Mental Health Act 2014 through Parliament in 2014 that will replace the Mental Health Act 1996 was a significant milestone in the State’s mental health reform program.

The new Act provides for the treatment, care, support and protection of people experiencing mental illness. When it commences (expected in November 2015) it will increase safeguards for people experiencing mental illness, and also for families and carers. These safeguards reflect the critical role of families and carers in the support and recovery of their loved ones.

30-50 per cent of people with an alcohol or drug problem also have a mental illness
The Mental Health Court Diversion and Support pilot program diverts adults and children with mental illness who interact with the criminal justice system to clinical and community supports with a view to reducing reoffending and improving their quality of life.

Eligible participants are supervised by a court while receiving treatment and support that addresses underlying causes of offending behaviour.

The pilot program has been operating in the Perth Magistrates Court and Perth Children’s Court since 2013 and is made possible by extensive collaboration between five participating Government agencies and a non-Government service provider. Further funding of $4.7 million (including $3.5 million through the Mental Health Commission) for 2015/16 will extend the pilot for an additional year and enable further evaluation of its effectiveness.
Public mental health services

Recognising the demand for public mental health services in Western Australia is continuing to grow, the Government will spend $612 million in 2015/16 to ensure Western Australians continue to have access to safe, high quality public mental health services.

In 2014, more than 55,000 people received care from public mental health services, comprising more than 873,000 community-based clinical treatment sessions and more than 217,000 overnight stays in hospital.

The $30 million increase in funding in 2015/16 will provide an estimated additional 18,000 community-based clinical treatment sessions and an estimated additional 5,000 overnight stays in hospital for people with mental health problems — a 2.1 per cent increase.

People with mental illness also benefited from funding to community-managed organisations in 2014/15. This provided more than 259 places for an estimated 88,000 overnight stays, 230,000 hours of personalised, community-based support. It also provided 22 beds with almost 6,000 overnight stays in step-up, step-down services and 144 packages of care to individuals supported through the Individualised Community Living Strategy. This will increase to 148 packages of care in 2015/16.

Growth in hospital services

In 2015/16 new mental health services opening include:

- 30 mental health beds at the $2.0 billion Fiona Stanley Hospital, including a dedicated youth unit, a perinatal mother and baby unit and a short-stay mental health assessment unit. The opening of these beds commenced in February 2015 and will continue progressively throughout 2015.

- 30 mental health beds at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and 56 mental health beds at the Midland Health campus. Both are anticipated to become operational during 2015.

- 20 mental health beds at the $1.2 billion Perth Children’s Hospital which is expected to become operational in 2016.
Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025

On 3 December 2014, the State Government released the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025 (the Plan) for public comment and consultation.

This was a principal recommendation of Professor Bryant Stokes’ Review of the admission or referral to and the discharge and transfer practices of public mental health facilities/services in Western Australia.

The Plan provides guidance about the optimal mix and level of mental health, alcohol and other drug services required over the next ten years to meet the needs of the Western Australian population.

An extensive consultation process was undertaken with 19 forums held across the State (with over 670 attendees), 245 online survey participants, and over 60 written submission received. Consultation forums took place in both the metropolitan and regional areas and included:

- Nine regional forums (Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Karratha, Kununurra, Northam and Roebourne);
- One public forum (in the metropolitan area);
- One forum for consumers, carers and families (in the metropolitan area);
- One forum on alcohol and other drugs (in the metropolitan area); and
- Seven metropolitan forums focusing on specific service streams in the Plan (prevention and promotion, community support, community treatment, community beds, hospital based services, specialised state-wide services, and forensic services).

Minister Morton is currently reviewing all feedback and will release the final plan later this year.