



Western Australian Network of
Alcohol & other Drug Agencies

WANADA 2016 Western Australian Budget Summary

On 12 May 2016 the Western Australian Government released the 2016 State Budget.

This budget follows the December 2015 release of the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025: *Better Choices. Better Lives* (*Better Choices. Better Lives* plan). It is also the last budget prior to the state election in March 2017.

Key Initiatives for Alcohol and Other Drug Sector

As part of the State Budget, the Government announced:

- \$14.9 million over two years (\$7.4 million in 2016-17 and \$7.5 million in 2017-18) for the Mental Health Commission Budget, as part of the **Western Australian Meth Strategy**. Funded activities include:
 - o \$9.8 million for **60 beds dedicated to methamphetamine users** and **expanded community-based prevention and treatment services**:
 - eight low-medical withdrawal beds in North Metropolitan and South Metropolitan areas;
 - 52 residential rehabilitation beds in the South Metropolitan and Northern and remote regions; and
 - 13 additional fixed term full-time employees for the Community Alcohol and Drug Service.
 - o \$2.29 million for additional **frontline drug support nurses in emergency departments**.
 - o \$533,000 towards a **pilot specialist methamphetamine clinic** to provide “rapid assessment, early intervention and treatment, including outpatient withdrawal” located within the Next Step Drug and Alcohol Service in East Perth.
 - o \$1.65 million to **expand prevention initiatives**, including \$304,000 for a **dedicated WA Ice Helpline** providing free counselling and referral services.

In addition to the above, the Budget contained the following funding initiatives of relevance:

- \$5.5 million for **roadside alcohol and drug testing**.
- \$1.1 million for the **Alcohol Interlock Scheme Implementation** and \$600,000 for the **Alcohol Interlocks Assessment and Treatment Service** in 2016-17.
- \$250,000 to **School Drug Education and Road Aware** to develop more methamphetamine-specific education resources and programs for school children.
- Over \$11.6 million across two years for the Department of Corrective Services, for a range of **drug and alcohol intervention and treatment services** to help rehabilitate prisoners with methamphetamine and other drug addictions.
- \$5.1 million for the construction of the State’s second **Mental Health Observation Area at Joondalup Health Campus**. An additional \$2 million will be invested in the project by Ramsay Health Care.
- Royalties for Regions funding of \$19.2 million for the expansion of service provision through the **North West Drug and Alcohol Support Program** from 2017-18 to 30 June 2020.

Mental Health Commission Budget

The Mental Health Commission will receive an appropriation (i.e. funds allocated from State tax revenue, royalties and 'untied' Commonwealth grants) of \$669.5 million, an increase of \$16.6 million (2.5 per cent) from the previous year.

Agency Expenditure Review

The Mental Health Commission is subject to an Agency Expenditure Review (AER), requiring the agency to reduce its expenditure by \$28.5 million between 2016-17 and 2019-20.

The stated purpose of the AER is to ensure that the programs and activities being delivered by the Mental Health Commission are consistent with the priorities articulated in the *Better Choices. Better Lives* plan, and are being delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The Budget papers state that as a result of the AER, the following sections of the Mental Health Commission budget will be reduced over the next four years (2016-17 to 2019-20):

- **Services purchased from Non-Government Organisations** will be reduced by \$13.3 million (over 4 years)
- **Internal resourcing** will be reduced by \$10.9 million.
- **Grants and subsidies** will be reduced by \$4.3 million.

Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025: *Better Choices. Better Lives.*

The *Better Choices. Better Lives* plan outlines the Governments commitments for the mental health, alcohol and other drug services sectors over the coming years, including commitments across the 2016-2017 and 2018-2020 time periods.

The residential bed funding under the Western Australian Methamphetamine Strategy contributes significantly to addressing this relevant commitment made within the *Better Choices. Better Lives* plan. The Budget does not, however, fully address all alcohol and other drug actions contained within the *Better Choices. Better Lives* plan identified as needed by end of year 2017.

WANADA's Position

In a budget broadly typified by spending restraint, WANADA welcomes the WA Meth Strategy funding of \$14.9 million over two years. WANADA will seek information from the Mental Health Commission regarding its implementation and management across the forward estimates.

The Mental Health Commission Budget papers now combine the reporting of appropriations for the alcohol and other drug services, non-government and government alcohol and other drug and mental health services. As a result, WANADA is unable at this time to determine the exact nature of the State Budget for the non-government alcohol and other drug sector.

WANADA is seeking clarification from the Mental Health Commission. Following this, WANADA will provide members with additional information.

For more information, or if you any specific enquiries, please contact Ethan James at ethan.james@wanada.org.au.

