

YACWA PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2022-23

Overview

Introduction to the Document

The Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA) is the peak body for young people and the youth sector that supports them in Western Australia. YACWA operates primarily as a human rights organisation that seeks to address the exclusion of young people in a rapidly changing society. We represent over 100 youth service provider organisations, and many more individual members, including both young people and compassionate community members.

This document has been developed in anticipation of the Western Australia 2022-23 State Budget. We wish for this document to provide guidance to the State Government in using its enviable economic position to truly improve the lives of vulnerable young Western Australians, and create a sustainable system of care.

This document was developed between October and November 2021. To develop this document, YACWA has spoken with hundreds of young people, youth sector workers, and relevant stakeholders to listen to their needs, their ideas for change, and their views.

We wish to thank every young person and youth worker who has generously given their time to YACWA to inform this document and to inform these messages. It is your expertise and your passion for a better Western Australia that drives our communities forward to a kinder future.



DECEMBER 2021

Summary of Key Recommendations

Pillar One - *Building Community Capacity to Care*

Addressing the Financial Sustainability of the Youth Sector

1. Review existing service agreements and ensure financial sustainability. This should:
 - Examine current and true operating costs in line with the Equal Remuneration Order.
 - Ensure there is no downscaling of service provision due to pricing increases.
 - Provide avenues for funded services to renegotiate service delivery terms in current contexts.

Strengthening Community Partnerships

1. Create frameworks to support joint-funding approaches to support appropriate investment in prevention and early intervention approaches.
2. Invest in collective impact approaches to supporting vulnerable young people in areas of need.
3. Invest in co-design with young people and communities across youth services commissioning approaches.

Supporting LGBTIQA+ Young People through a Human Rights Approach

1. Fund LGBTIQA+ inclusive education policy such as through refunding the Inclusive Education WA initiative.
2. Invest in dedicated LGBTIQA+ health initiatives across Western Australia, with a particular focus on the needs of trans and gender diverse young people.
3. Ban conversion practices across Western Australia in all forms and implement supports for survivors.
4. Implement the recommendations outlined in the Youth Pride Network's State of Play Report.

Improving Services for Young People on Christmas Island

1. Renegotiate existing Service Delivery Agreements with the Federal Government in partnership with the local community to address service gaps for young people on the Island.
2. Explore options for the Western Australian Government to play a more active role in directly engaging with young people on the island.

Supporting Refugee and Migrant Young People in Our Communities

1. Invest in dedicated pathways to improve representation of multicultural communities among the community services workforce.
2. Develop youth-friendly information to support young people to participate in Local Government election processes, including specific information for multicultural young people to get involved.
3. Invest in multicultural community cultural competency training for education and community services workers as well as in school curriculums.

Pillar Two - *Reimagining our Core Institutions*

Improving the Sustainability of Youth Homelessness Services

1. Pilot the implementation of the service system alignment roadmap with a specific focus on building the capacity of services to address youth homelessness.
2. Implement a co-design process with young people and youth services to develop a Western Australian Housing First for Youth model.

Turning Youth Justice Responses into Health and Wellbeing Responses

1. Raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 years old to a minimum of 14 years old, with no carve-outs or exceptions.
2. Amend the Youth Offenders Act to set 16 years old as the minimum age of detention, with detention as the option of last resort, prioritising diversion and community-based supports.
3. Invest in an Embedded Youth Outreach Program; supporting youth workers to act as primary responders to youth offending behaviours.
4. Develop a Youth Justice Reform Strategy, reshaping the nature of Western Australia's approach to youth justice through a whole-of-government approach, including an overhaul of Banksia Hill Detention Centre, and increased investment in community-based solutions and supports.

Transforming Leaving Care Support to Ensure Stable Independent Living

1. Resource recommendations from the Home Stretch Trial Report, prioritising cross-sector capacity building.
2. Ensure commissioning processes are committed to proportionally funding Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to care supports for Aboriginal young people.
3. Develop a simple and clear outcomes measurement framework for the Leaving Care Continuum.

Creating Collaboration Across Sexual Health and Youth Services

1. Increase funding to the youth sexual health services sector to meet increased demand under the syphilis outbreak.
2. Fund healthy relationships and consent youth peer education programs with a specific focus on older young people transitioning into adult services.
3. Fund place-based regional sexual health campaigns that are co-designed with local communities and service providers, particularly focusing on supporting regional services in areas experiencing syphilis outbreaks.
4. Further invest in workforce development for paraprofessionals involved in sexual health and respectful relationships education, including sexual health training for community service workers, GPs and integration into the school curriculum.

Supporting Young People to Stay Well Through Prevention

1. Increase investment in mental health prevention, in line with the Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025.
2. Invest in services to support families and young people to stay connected and avoid entering out-of-home care, such as through the EIFS program.
3. Increase investment and support for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to support community-based care for Aboriginal young people.

Pillar Three - *Creating Infrastructure for a Sustainable Future*

Addressing the Affordability and Accessibility of the Housing Market for Young People

1. Identify young people as a priority cohort in all current and future investments in social and affordable housing.
2. Adopt inclusionary zoning in all new social housing development with a specific allocation for young people under 25.
3. Provide an update on the current progress of the Residential Tenancies Act Review and fast track reforms guided by the Make Renting Fair Alliance's Tenancy Ten,.

Ensuring Jobs are Accessible, Sustainable and Secure for Western Australian Young People

- Develop a ten-year Western Australian Youth Jobs Strategy with the end goal of full youth employment in Western Australia, including investment to grow industries and employment opportunities.
- Initiate a Secure Work Pilot Scheme which provides up to five days of sick and carer's paid leave matched to existing salary for casual or insecure workers in priority industries such as retail and hospitality.

Investing in our Regional Futures

- Embed youth and family mental health support within emergency response planning and disaster resilience strategies.
- Create employment opportunities for young people in regional areas through integrating life skills education into employment supports and improved supports for young people to access TAFE whilst still at school.
- Improve access to specialist supports for regional young people in need, including:
 - Alcohol and other drug education and awareness within schools.
 - A youth alcohol and other drug rehabilitation support service in the Mid West.
 - Appropriate education supports in schools for young people who are neuro-diverse.
 - A dedicated youth residential alcohol and other drug service in the Great Southern.

