

Q1. WA State Government Priorities for the NHIF Crisis and Transitional program

The State Government priorities for capital investment in the family and domestic violence, and youth homelessness portfolios are:

Key Priority 1 – Increasing crisis and transitional accommodation capacity

- Increase capacity (number of rooms/units) of Western Australia's crisis and transitional accommodation facilities to meet urgent accommodation demand for victim-survivors of family and domestic violence and young people experiencing homelessness.
- Preference for no less than 10 rooms/units per new site for crisis accommodation.
- Can include consideration of combined offering of crisis and transitional accommodation on a singular site (core and cluster).
- Increase capacity of transitional accommodation, to provide a safe through-put from crisis accommodation to safe and stable housing with in-reach support.

Key Priority 2 – Fit for purpose assets (Inclusive & culturally responsive)

Refurbishments, purchases, and new buildings:

- Must be fit for purpose including core and cluster models that enable and support independent living within a supported and safe environment.
- Must provide disability access to and within buildings, providing accessibility not just for people with mobility aids but also those with prams, other health conditions and other requirements.
- Design should be trauma-informed, with security and safety features that are not intrusive, including passive design features, and consideration of staffing quarters for 24/7 supported accommodation services.
- Design should be undertaken in consultation with service users, particularly Aboriginal people, to ensure asset designs (and by extension the service models) are informed by evidence and are suitable to the varying needs of young people and/or victim survivors. This should include consideration of holistic person-centred supports and the unique needs of children and young people.
- Location – Crisis and transitional accommodation should be accessible to mainstream and specialist services, close to public transport and sit within a community; it is desirable for building design to minimise stigma related to the service.

Key Priority 3 – Target areas of highest need and unmet demand

- Due to unmet demand across the State both regionally and across the metropolitan area, all locations may be considered if the proposal is in line with Key Priorities.
 - The Perth metropolitan area is in need of additional investment in assets to expand capacity in both family and domestic violence and youth homelessness service delivery.
 - Investment in regional areas is of great interest to increase substantive equality of access to services for both youth homelessness and family and domestic violence. For the family and domestic violence portfolio this includes but is not limited to the Kimberley (Broome in particular).

Key Priority 4 - Services led by organisations with demonstrated experience providing specialist family and domestic violence services or specialist youth homelessness services

- Family and domestic violence and youth homelessness service provision, and particularly supported accommodation, are specialist areas of practice. Demonstrated experience providing these critical services is a key priority for WA.
- Services that can demonstrate strong partnerships with government and non-government agencies are preferable to ensure service users have access to wrap around support services.

Key Priority 5 – Assets support valued service models

- Specific models and cohorts to be prioritised for family and domestic violence crisis and transitional accommodation includes:
 - Refuges and safe houses that provide 24/7 access, individualised case management, services for children and outreach to support access to and exit from the service.
 - Transitional housing that enables targeted in-reach support.
 - Services suitable for victim-survivors at very high risk of high harm, Aboriginal people, and victim-survivors with unique or complex support needs including but not limited to women and/or children with a disability and women aged over 55 years.
- Specific models and cohorts to be addressed for future youth homelessness accommodation, without strict timeframes for exit, include:
 - Initiatives directed at supporting young Aboriginal people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, with a focus on culturally responsive design and service models.
 - Low barrier crisis and transitional accommodation, ensuring that young people with complex support needs (including alcohol and other drug use, mental health) are prioritised
 - Initiatives directed at supporting LGBTIQ+ young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, with a focus on inclusive building design and service models.
 - Increased youth transitional accommodation options to support young people exiting residential care (18+)
 - Very robust short-term emergency and transitional housing for young people with disability who often present with complex support needs, including behaviours of concern.

Q2. Rationale for WA priorities

There is significant unmet demand for crisis and transitional accommodation in Western Australia for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, and for youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The WA Statement of Priorities reflects the importance of contemporary assets in providing quality services with person centred, place-based and regionally appropriate accommodation models that are able to support a range of complexity levels and service needs.

Supported accommodation is more than a bed or a house, it is place where people (adult, children, and youth) can receive the supports and services they need in an environment that supports safety, recovery, and re-establishment.

- The priorities for Youth Homelessness are aligned with a Housing First approach which means the first and primary goal is to the provision of safe and stable accommodation without preconditions or judgement, with wrap around support as required. Future capital investment for youth homelessness accommodation services will progress the implementation of a Housing First and No Wrong Door approach in line with the WA strategy.
- The priorities for family and domestic violence are aligned with a focus on a system of supports that respond to crisis and then support recovery and re-establishment (refer to Strategic Policy links below).

Across both portfolios there is a focus on supporting the health, safety, and wellbeing of Aboriginal people through Aboriginal led and designed responses. This is in recognition of the significant over-representation of Aboriginal people as victim-survivors of family and domestic violence and persons experiencing homelessness.

There is also a focus on assets that are built to be accessible, operated by services that are inclusive. Making sure that the services the State provides or funds are suitable, accessible, and inclusive for people with disability is a priority.

For young people with disability who present with complex support needs, including behaviours of concern, the lack of access to crisis and transitional accommodation in the form of very robust housing increases risk of homelessness and likely presentation to hospital emergency departments when no alternative is available. Currently the accommodation available in WA is ageing stock and not purpose built with very robust design features. The lack of access to very robust housing is a critical gap and leads to repeated cycles of inadequate response and increases the trauma experienced by the individual.

The WA Government response to the Disability Royal Commission accepted in-principle the recommendation in relation to preventing homelessness when people with disability transition from service or institutional settings. Access to very robust crisis and transitional housing will support mitigating this.

The WA Government recognises that the five priority investment areas noted above support several cross-Government initiatives:

- [*Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030*](#)
- [*All Paths Lead to a Home – Western Australia's 10-year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030*](#)
- [*Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy 2022-2032*](#)
- [*WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030*](#)
- [*State Disability Strategy – A Western Australia for Everyone 2020-2030*](#)

Q3. Proposed Jurisdictional Support

The Department of Communities would welcome a discussion with organisations considering a submission to the NHIF. Please contact andrea.knoxlyttle@communities.wa.gov.au

Family and Domestic Violence

In Western Australia, 45 refuges and safe houses provide supported accommodation for 315 women with or without accompanying children on any given night. The purpose of these services is to secure the immediate physical safety of women and children escaping family and domestic violence and provide 24/7 support and wrap-around services, to secure the longer-term safety, recovery, and re-establishment of victim-survivors.

Of the 45 refuges and safe houses, 23 are located in regional Western Australia and 22 are in the Perth metropolitan area.

Seven of these facilities are leased to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, to provide services to Aboriginal women and children. One of these buildings is in the metropolitan area, the remainder are in regional and remote locations.

Work is currently underway to expand crisis and transitional accommodation capacity through nine projects in seven locations across WA. Of the nine projects, six are in regional WA in Kalgoorlie x 2 projects (Goldfields), Laverton (Goldfields), Carnarvon (Mid-West), Albany (Great Southern) and Katanning (Great Southern).

Youth Homelessness

There are 24 youth homelessness crisis and transitional accommodation services across Western Australia. These services are 24/7 supported accommodation facilities (crisis) and in-reach supported accommodation houses (transitional). The purpose of these services is to provide immediate access to safety for young people with provision of support to commence a process of longer-term housing security and individualised case management so that young people can realise their goals and aspirations into adulthood.

Of the 24 distinct youth accommodation services, 7 are in regional Western Australia and 17 are based in the wider metropolitan area.