

\$18.3 million to build new Aboriginal health hub in Bunbury

Friday, 12 May 2023

McGowan Government investing \$18.3 million in 2023-24 State Budget to help build a South West Aboriginal Health Hub in Bunbury

New health hub to provide culturally appropriate, comprehensive healthcare for Aboriginal people and communities

Expanded services to meet growing demand in the South-West

\$7.1 million Bunbury Infant, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service Hub pilot

\$9.6 million investment in Ronald McDonald House to provide free accommodation to regional families of children requiring extended medical care in Perth

\$8.2 million for staff accommodation in regional and remote areas

The McGowan Government will spend \$18.3 million to establish a new Aboriginal health hub in the South-West and improve access to services that best meet the needs of local Aboriginal people.

The funding, allocated in the 2023-24 State Budget, will support the development of the new South West Aboriginal Health Medical Service Hub in Bunbury.

The State Government's contribution matches an investment of \$18.3 million made by the Commonwealth to support construction of the hub, which will provide a permanent location for the South West Aboriginal Medical Services (SWAMS). Services will be run by SWAMS and delivered on site and via outreach to the broader southern and lower Wheatbelt areas.

The hub will feature co-located services including a primary health clinic, community health and wellbeing centre, maternal and child health, aged care and disability services, corporate services and medical research.

SWAMS is a community-controlled Aboriginal health organisation providing services to about 4,500 patients, of which 81 per cent are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Demand for its healthcare services has increased over the past decade and is expected to continue to grow.

Through the 2023-24 Budget, the McGowan Government will spend more than \$2.2 billion per annum on regional health and mental health services.

Funding of \$4.2 million will be invested in a new HECS-HELP initiative to incentivise newly qualified nurses and midwives to work in priority regional and remote hospitals, with grants of up to \$12,000 over three years on offer from 2023-24 to help pay off up to 350 graduates' HECS-HELP debts.

These grants are included in \$28.5 million of new initiatives funded in the Budget to bolster Western Australia's valued healthcare workforce.

To continue building strong and vibrant regions and liveable communities, the 2023-24 Budget includes:

- \$8.2 million of funding for staff accommodation in regional and remote areas;
- \$7.1 million for a Bunbury Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Hub pilot;
- \$5.8 million to bolster the Aboriginal mental health workforce;
- \$6.3 million for the delivery of specialist cancer services across country WA;
- \$6.7 million to support the continuation of key renal services, which includes early detection, prevention and management strategies for chronic kidney disease in rural and remote locations;
- \$24.4 million for emergency telehealth for mental health patients; and
- \$3.1 million to support the palliative care workforce and enhance end-of-life choices for terminally ill patients in the regions.

The McGowan Government is also continuing its redevelopment of health campuses in regional WA, including the \$277.9 million redevelopment of Bunbury Hospital, the \$122.7 million redevelopment of the Geraldton Health Campus, and \$2.1 million for the expansion of the Albany Health Campus carpark.

Through a \$9.6 million investment in Ronald McDonald House, the McGowan Government will more than double its accommodation capacity, which provides free accommodation to regional families of children with complex medical needs requiring extended medical care in Perth.

Comments attributed to Premier Mark McGowan:

"In my Government's 2023-24 State Budget we unveiled billions of additional investment in Western Australia's health system, including new funding for Aboriginal and youth mental health services.

"We are also committed to delivering health services near to where Western Australians live, and this year's Budget delivers for people in regional WA.

"The new South West Aboriginal Health Hub will improve access to healthcare services that provide the best chance of positive outcomes for local Aboriginal people."

Comments attributed to Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson:

"The new South West Aboriginal Health Hub is about supporting SWAMS to provide healthcare in a way that meets the needs of local Aboriginal people and communities.

"This includes providing a culturally safe environment, reducing pressure on mainstream healthcare and creating employment opportunities in the region.

"Our investment will help the service to deliver on its mission to provide high-quality, culturally appropriate and holistic healthcare which builds strong and healthy Aboriginal communities."

Comments attributed to Bunbury MLA Don Punch:

"This new health hub in Bunbury will provide culturally appropriate and comprehensive healthcare for local Aboriginal people.

"The regional health initiatives in this Budget will provide significant benefits for our South-West communities, and the new health hub in Bunbury will build on the success of SWAMS' well-established healthcare services."

Premier's office - 6552 5000

Health Minister's office - 6552 5900