



Budget Bulletin 2015-16

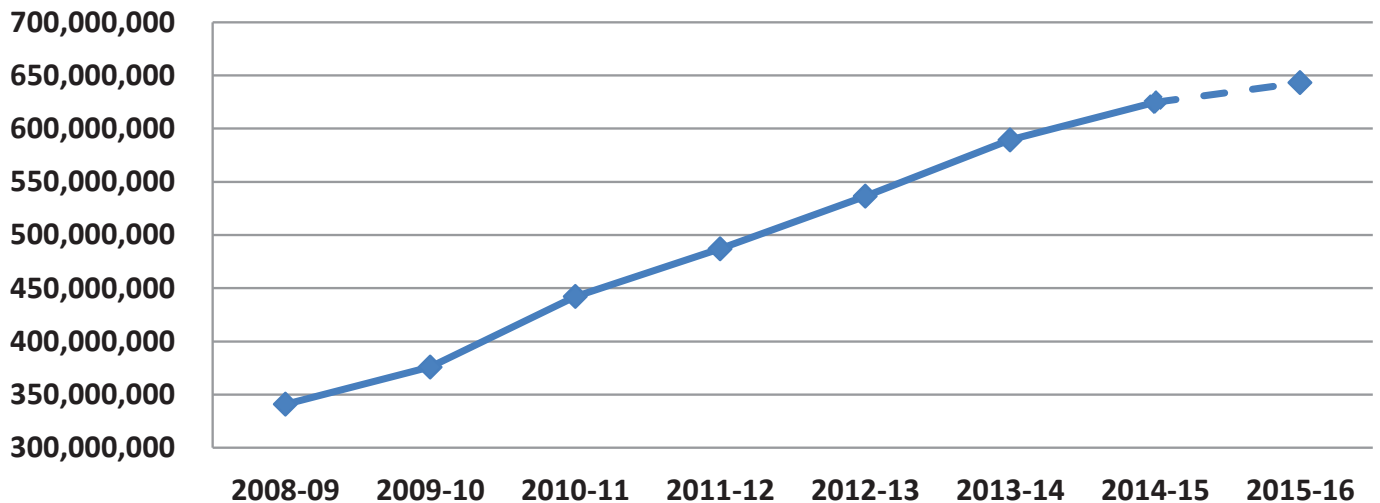
The Government is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of the children of Western Australia. The overall budget of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (the Department) will rise to \$643.2 million in 2015-16, representing a \$23.7 million or 3.8 per cent increase compared to the 2014-15 Estimated Actual.



The 2015-16 Budget at a glance:

- \$171.9 million over the next four years with an additional \$16.5 million in 2015-16 to address the anticipated increase in demand for child protection and family support services;
- \$21.0 million in 2015-16 for the continuation of joint State and Commonwealth funded specialist homelessness services;
- \$10.6 million for the continuation of Responsible Parenting Services funded through Royalties for Regions in six regional districts;
- \$8.2 million for the Hardship Utility Grant Scheme (HUGS), bringing the total budget for HUGS grants to \$9.7 million in 2015-16; and
- \$5.0 million provided by the Commonwealth Government to fund retrospective wages increases to the State's community sector organisations under the National Partnership Agreement on Pay Equity (NPAPE).

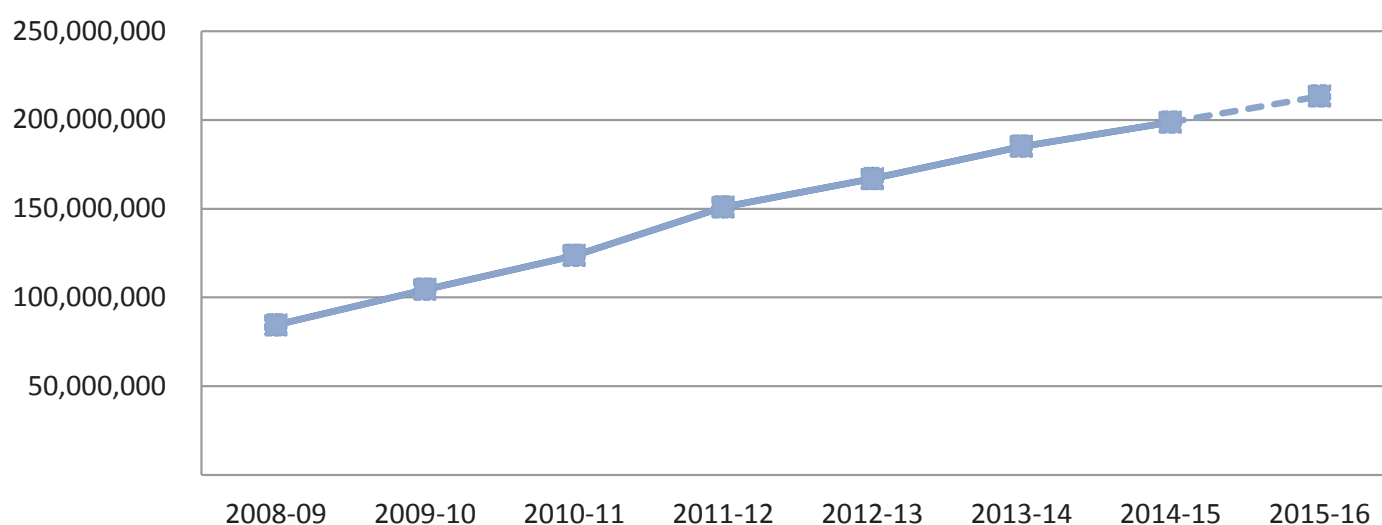
Total cost of services



The Department's budget has increased by \$302.2 million (88.6%) since the 2008-09 Budget.

The Department's overall operating budget has increased significantly in each of the past seven years, and will rise to \$643.2 million in 2015-16.

Community Sector Funding Growth



The community sector budget has grown by 153% over the last seven years. Community sector funding has increased as a proportion of the Department's budget, in each year of the last seven years.

The following information provides further detail on the Department's 2015-16.

Cost and demand

\$16.5 million has been allocated in 2015-16 to address the anticipated demand and cost increases in the Department's core services. Key allocations include:

- \$5.5 million for increases in foster carer subsidies and case support to meet the projected cost and demand increases associated with increasing numbers of children and young people in care.
- \$3.0 million for the costs associated with providing individualised care arrangements for children and young people who have highly complex needs and challenging behaviours and who cannot be catered in other care arrangements.
- \$2.5 million in 2015-16 to fund additional care arrangements provided by the community services sector.

The remainder of demand funding will be allocated across critical services to meet outstanding costs and non-discretionary budget increases such as salary and contractual increases.

Following the release of the Department's Out-of-Home Care Strategic Directions in Western Australia 2015-2020 Discussion Paper, the Department will be embarking on a period of reform to refocus the Department's out-of-home care system and aligning it to the five key out-of-home care strategic directions:

1. An out-of-home care system that is driven by the needs of the child.
2. An out-of-home care system that values and promotes stability for children in care.
3. A responsive and sustainable out-of-home care system with capacity.
4. An out-of-home care system that is accountable.
5. An out-of-home care system that is consistent.

Although safety, certainty and stability for children – with a particular emphasis on Aboriginal children, will remain the core focus of the Department's out-of-home care system, the reform will also identify strategies to minimise the increasing demand in the number of children entering and remaining in care and address the escalating costs arising from the provision of safe and stable care arrangements for children and young people in care.

Family Support Networks

- As part of the Department's development of Family Support Networks (FSNs) across the State, a further \$0.25 million has been allocated to establish the Fremantle FSN, bringing the total budget allocation to \$0.5 million for the Fremantle service.
- FSNs provide vulnerable families in local communities a single entry point to access both government and community sector agency family support services. These services work with vulnerable people to address issues within their family, preventing these issues from escalating to serious child safety concerns.

Homelessness services

- The State Government has renewed its commitment to addressing homelessness in the Western Australian community, with the continuation of the joint State and Commonwealth funded National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) for a further two years (2015-16 to 2016-17) which includes a fixed Commonwealth funding commitment of \$14.97 million per annum.
- To support the sustainability of Specialist Homelessness Services, the State Government has also allocated \$9.5 million over the next two years to continue the commensurate Sustainable Funding and Contracting with the Not-for-Profit Sector – Component I funding for eligible services.
- The State Government has also continued funding for the Mobile Clinical Outreach Team (MCOT) and four Domestic Violence Outreach services, with the following allocations:
 - \$1.4 million over two years to continue MCOT, a clinical assessment and treatment service provided to rough sleepers with serious mental illness in the inner city Perth and Fremantle areas; and
 - \$1.3 million across 2015-16 and 2016-17 to continue Domestic Violence Outreach services in the Murchison, Goldfields, Peel and Pilbara regions. These services provide support and outreach services to women and children experiencing domestic violence and include a 'Safe at Home' element to the service to assist women and children to remain in their homes when it is safe to do so to prevent homelessness.
- The Commonwealth Government will provide funding of \$5.0 million in 2015-16 for the Commonwealth's share of retrospective wage increases for eligible social and community service sectors under the National Partnership Agreement on Pay Equity (NPAPE).

Hardship Utility Grant Scheme (HUGS)

- An additional \$8.2 million has been allocated in 2015-16 for the Hardship Utility Grants Scheme (HUGS). This will be used to provide a total of \$9.7 million in grants to assist households in financial hardship to pay their utility bills and maintain connection to essential services including electricity, water and gas services, thereby avoiding eviction.

Responsible Parenting Services

- Royalties for Regions funding of \$10.6 million has been allocated in 2015 16 to continue providing these services in six regional locations (Goldfields, Great Southern, Murchison, Pilbara, South West and Wheatbelt).
- Responsible Parenting Services are aimed at increasing families' capacity to care for children and young people whose safety and wellbeing are at risk.

Capital – Office Accommodation

- Construction of the new Pilbara district office will be completed in 2015-16 with relocation to the new South Hedland premises to occur in early 2016.



Hon Helen Morton MLC
MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION