

The Liberals' Creating Better Communities Policy

*Investing in stronger, fairer and
more vibrant communities*

MAKING DECISIONS
GETTING THINGS DONE
SECURING WA'S FUTURE



Policy Summary

The Liberals believe that strong, fair and inclusive communities are at the heart of a compassionate and caring society. All sectors of our society have an important contribution to make, and these contributions need to be enabled, encouraged and valued.

The Liberal-led Government's commitment to communities has been epitomised by the reform of the not-for-profit sector undertaken over the last two and half years.

In 2011, the Liberal-led Government announced unprecedented additional funding of \$604million to the not-for-profit sector, which delivers flexible and responsive on the ground care to many Western Australians in need.

The first component of this funding has seen \$375million already provided to approximately 500 organisations across almost 1,000 contracts.

The Liberal-led Government has also focused on improving the lives of Western Australian seniors through increased cost of living support and security measures such as free off-peak public transport and the Safety and Security Rebate.

A re-elected Liberal Government will strengthen our communities by supporting those most in need and ensure continuity of care and services, reduce the stress on families and improving the quality of life for those receiving care.

If re-elected, a Liberal Government will continue to support and foster stronger communities by:

- Continuing its unprecedented funding for and reform of the not-for-profit sector with an additional \$117million over two years
- Retaining the Partnership Forum and commitment to a close and genuine dialogue between Government and the community sector
- Funding for the Social Innovation Grants Program to enable not-for-profit organisations to develop and trial new ways of delivering human services
- Addressing the needs of the homeless and improving home ownership opportunities for communities through the provision of shelters, low cost accommodation and more affordable housing

- Maintaining financial assistance measures for the most needy in our community, particularly those on fixed incomes, such as seniors
- Providing free off-peak public transport to carers at a cost of \$1.2million
- Abolishing the cost of disability parking (ACROD) permits to eligible people who require an accessible parking bay
- Indexing the popular Country Age Pension Fuel Card to CPI, taking the total value of the card to \$103million over the next four years
- Increasing funding for the Safety and Security Rebate to \$15million over four years to cover the purchase of personal safety alarms, and to provide further assistance for seniors whose homes have been burgled
- Introducing a \$5.3million Grandcarers Scheme and increase funding for grandcarer respite
- Allocating \$1.2million over four years for up to 100 scholarships a year of \$3,000 each to encourage women into non-traditional industries and trades
- Enhancing the role of the Women's Advisory Council, with regular meetings scheduled throughout each year between the council's chair and the Premier
- Providing increased support to women experiencing domestic violence, including \$4million for two new cluster-style refuges, improved access to Violence Restraining Orders for domestic violence victims with children and \$600,000 per year for a new family violence legal service in Perth for indigenous Western Australians
- Funding and support for Cadets WA and other youth organisations, and increasing support for National Youth Week
- Providing \$57.2million for 155 new school health nurses and \$48.7million for 16 new Child and Parent Centres to support families and ensuring children receive the best possible start in life.

Community Services

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Continue and build on its unprecedented support for and relationship with the community based not-for-profit sector, with a further \$117million to be distributed to not-for-profit organisations over the next two years.

The Liberals recognise that the many not-for-profit organisations delivering vital services to our community have a better understanding of what is needed 'on the ground', have a closer relationship with the people who require services and are more flexible in delivering these services.

The Liberal-led Government has been the first to truly recognise the challenges faced by these organisations, particularly their difficulties in attracting and retaining staff because they could only afford to offer relatively low salaries.

Additional funding of \$604million has been provided over four years to support and empower the not-for-profit sector. About \$375million has already been distributed to Activ Foundation; Autism Association of Western Australia; Brightwater Care Group; Nulsen Haven Association; Perth Home Care Services Inc; Rocky Bay; the Centre for Cerebral Palsy and many others to increase the salaries of their staff.

A further \$117million will be provided over two years to improve the financial viability of these not-for-profit service providers, to ensure they are being paid a fair price for the vital work they perform for the most needy among us.

A Liberal Government will continue funding for the Social Innovation Grants Program, which enables not-for-profit organisations to develop and trial new ways of delivering human services that produce better outcomes for Western Australians in need. Over the past two years, 25 such projects have been funded with \$7.6million.

The Partnership Forum, established by the Liberal-led Government to bring together senior representatives from the not-for-profit sector and Government, will be retained. The forum affords the community sector a strong voice and establishes a genuine partnership between it and the Government.



A Liberal Government will retain the \$10million Social Enterprise Fund which provides grants and support for not-for-profit organisations to establish social enterprises.



Homelessness

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Continue to work in partnership with the not-for-profit sector to address homelessness and expand the services available to the homeless
- In partnership with Anglicare, complete the building of the Oxford Foyer to house up to 98 at-risk young people
- Allocate \$5.4million to build an overnight homeless shelter for men in central Perth
- Implement the following additional measures to address housing affordability:
 - Establish the Housing Stock Redevelopment Strategy in order to provide a minimum of 500 new affordable homes within three years
 - Commit to changing the residential design codes to allow non-relatives to occupy granny flats and increase the allowable floor space from 60sqm to 70sqm
 - Create a one-stop web portal for advice on affordable housing.

In Government, we have a track record of recognising and addressing the growing incidence of homelessness and the complex range of causal factors including mental and other illness, substance abuse and addiction; housing affordability and relationship breakdown.

This track record includes working with the Commonwealth to implement the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, allocation of \$68million to provide a comprehensive range of facilities and services to address homelessness in partnership with not-for-profit organisations and church groups and \$23million towards the new 148-bed St Bartholomew's House ('St Bart's') in East Perth.

A Liberal-led Government will continue to support a range of new services and facilities to address homelessness in Western Australia.

A Liberal Government will continue to support the provision of accommodation and access to training for up to 98 young disadvantaged and homeless Western Australians by completing the Oxford Foyer in Leederville, a partnership between Anglicare and the Western Australian



Government. More than \$24million has been contributed to this important initiative.

Arising from the regular meetings between the Liberal-led Government and the Western Australian Heads of Churches, the Liberals are supporting the new \$5.4million 10-bed overnight homeless shelter for men in Perth, which will open in 2013.

A Liberal Government will also continue support for the Lentara and Tanderra Hostel crisis and transitional accommodation services. The current redevelopment of these hostels will see an additional 24 beds for single homeless men.

Housing affordability and home ownership challenges are also a major consideration for Western Australian families.

Affordable housing is fundamental to the continued growth of our State, and with more than 1,000 people moving to Western Australia per week, there has been unavoidable pressure put on our existing housing supply.

A Liberal Government will continue its commitment to the Affordable Housing Strategy, with a target to provide 20,000 new affordable dwellings by 2020. More than 7,600 homes have already been delivered, including the hugely successful One on Aberdeen development, which saw a partnership between the Government and private industry deliver 161 G

Land held by the Department of Housing will be put to better use by a Liberal Government through the establishment of the Housing Stock Redevelopment Strategy that will provide a minimum of 500 new affordable homes within three years. This policy will see vacant lots and a number of existing single dwelling blocks that are more than 1,000sqm, redeveloped to yield a higher number of properties.

A Liberal Government will also amend the residential design codes to allow non-relatives to occupy granny flats and increase the allowable floor space from 60sqm to 70sqm. This will allow families looking to invest in, and rent out a granny flat to do so and will be beneficial for many students and seniors looking for small, safe and affordable places to live.

Support for the Most Needy

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Maintain the suite of financial assistance measures implemented by the Liberal-led Government
- Extend the Cost of Living Assistance payment to include people living in retirement villages and group homes that are on-sold electricity
- Introduce free off-peak public transport for carers
- Abolish the cost of disability parking (ACROD) permits to eligible people who require an accessible parking bay
- Index the popular Country Age Pension Fuel Card to CPI, taking the total value of the card to \$103million over the next four years
- Increase funding for the Safety and Security Rebate to \$15million over four years to cover the purchase of personal safety alarms, and to provide further assistance for seniors whose homes have been burgled
- Introduce a \$5.3million Grandcarers Scheme and increase funding for grandcarer respite

While Western Australia is the powerhouse of the Australian economy and creates two-thirds of every new job nationally, the Liberals are acutely aware that not every member of the community shares equally in the State's success. This is particularly so for those on fixed incomes.

A Liberal Government will retain the numerous forms of assistance it has introduced to assist those doing it tough to pay their bills, including the Hardship Utility Grants Scheme, the Cost of Living Assistance payment, the Seniors Cost of Living Rebate, the Country Age Pension Fuel Card Scheme and free public transport for seniors.

Currently, people living in retirement villages and group homes that are on-sold electricity (with the exception of permanent caravan park owners) have not been eligible for the supply charge rebate.

The Liberal-led Government believed that these people should also receive the payment and made the decision to extend the Cost of Living Payment to these people. If re-elected, the Liberals will ensure the full \$200



payment is made for the financial year. This is expected to benefit more than 25,000 households.

Early in its term, the Liberal-led Government introduced free public transport for all seniors and Aged and Disability Support pensioners from 9am-3.30pm on week days and all day Saturday, Sunday and public holidays. The popularity of the scheme has surpassed all expectations and more than 21 million free trips have been taken by seniors since April 2009.

In part recognition of the tireless and often unpaid work undertaken by carers, a Liberal-led Government will extend free public transport to those with a Carers Health Care Card and receiving Commonwealth carer or child disability payments.

A Liberal Government will make life easier for the approximately 67,000 people with mobility restrictions who are eligible for an ACROD parking permit by providing these permits free of charge. This forms part of the Liberals' long term strategy to facilitate the participation of people with disability in every aspect of community life.

The Liberal-led Government introduced the Country Age Pension Fuel Card, benefiting 45,000 country pensioners with \$500 a year for fuel. A Liberal Government is committed to continuing this valuable assistance and will ensure it is indexed to keep pace with inflation.

More than 36,000 seniors have benefited from the Liberal-led Government's Seniors Safety and Security Rebate. This provides up to \$400 to seniors for the purchase of a specified range of security and safety devices, including home intruder alarms, deadlocks, security door screens and fire extinguishers.

A Liberal Government will increase funding for the scheme to \$15million over four years. This will provide an additional \$200 for seniors if they have been broken into after already accessing the rebate, and will allow it to be used to purchase personal security devices.

Many grandparents selflessly take on the full time role of caring for their grandchildren. The Liberals recognise the valuable role these grandparents play and will introduce a \$5.3million grants scheme to provide \$400 a year for the first grandchild aged under 16 years and \$250 for every other child to go towards education expenses and activities such as entrance fees to events. This commitment follows the one-off \$1000 Establishment Payment announced in February 2011, awarded to relatives who care for children who otherwise might have been placed in State care.



The Liberals' also recognise the importance of time out for these grandcarers and if re-elected, will provide an additional \$600,000 over four years to Wanslea for its Grandcare program. This will fund respite camps, farm stays, retreats or opportunities for grandparent carers to network with other grandparents in the same situation.



Women

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Allocate \$1.2million over four years for up to 100 scholarships a year of \$3,000 each to encourage women into non-traditional industries and trades
- Enhance the role of the Women's Advisory Council, with regular meetings scheduled throughout each year between the council's chair and the Premier
- Provide additional crisis accommodation for women and children fleeing violence, including \$4million for two new refuges for larger families in Perth
- Introduce strict controls and GPS tracking of serious violent domestic violence offenders
- Improve access to Violence Restraining Orders for domestic violence victims with children
- Provide \$600,000 per year for a new family violence legal service in Perth for indigenous Western Australians.

In understanding the ongoing contributions women make to our communities, we need to work to ensure that barriers to their full participation in society are eliminated.

The Liberal-led Government has implemented *Women's Interests Strategic Directions 2011-2014*. This document outlines four priority areas:

- Health and well-being
- Safety and justice
- Economic independence
- Women in leadership

A Liberal Government will continue to support efforts to achieve positive outcomes in these priority areas.

With Western Australia also facing shortages of skilled workers – including in non-traditional sectors - it is important that efforts are made to encourage more women to participate in training and gain qualifications in male-dominated industry areas.

Non-traditional trades and industries where there are skills shortages include:

- Aviation and aircraft maintenance engineering
- Construction trades and technicians
- Mining operators and technicians
- Marine trades such as ship's master, ship's engineer, ship's officer, boat builder and repairer
- Train drivers.

As part of efforts to tackle skills shortages and gender pay gaps, a Liberal Government will establish a scholarship program to encourage women into non-traditional trades.

Criteria for scholarship applications and a finite list of trades and industry sectors will be developed with the Department of Training and Workforce Development.

Up to 100 scholarships of \$3,000 each will be offered each year. The scholarship funds will be able to be used towards any costs associated with course training - including training fees, learning resources and accommodation and transport.

The Women's Advisory Council fulfils an important role in providing advice to Government on issues affecting women. This role will be enhanced under a Liberal Government with the chair and the Minister for Women's Interests meet regularly with the Premier.

The Liberals are committed to supporting children and women at risk of, or experiencing, domestic violence. Front line service providers are critically important in the lives of women and children living with family and domestic violence.

To support women at this most vulnerable time a Liberal Government will establish two new family refuges in the metropolitan area, at a cost of \$2million each, with additional funding for support and outreach services and complete a new 12-room crisis accommodation service offering specialist accommodation and support services in Busselton.

Domestic violence victims will be better protected by a Liberal Government, with amendments to Western Australia's sentencing laws to allow for the courts to impose conditions on serious repeat domestic violence offenders when they have completed their sentence. These conditions will allow for the restriction of an offender's movements and activities, improving the safety of persons at risk and the broader community. In particular, it would allow for the use of GPS tracking.

The Liberals will amend the State's Violence Restraining Order legislation to ensure that victims of domestic violence need only attend court once to



gain protection for themselves and their children, meaning they can access protection without delay.

A new family violence legal service will be created in Perth for indigenous Western Australians, with funding of \$600,000 a year to assist in closing the gap and provide legal support and counselling to Perth's indigenous population, particularly indigenous women and children victims of domestic violence.



Youth

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Continue to generously fund programs and organisations that seek to give Western Australia's young people the best possible opportunities to reach their full potential as respected and contributing members of the community and that encourage young people to engage positively with the community
- Maintain the Kidsport Program and introduce a new \$3.4million KidsCulture Program targeting children in need between the age of 5 and 18, with \$200 per year towards participation in music, dance, visual arts and theatre in their local area.
- Expand funding for the School Cadet program to enable the creation of an additional 6 units in areas identified as having a real need for this valuable type of youth support.

Cadets WA is a highly successful program. It encourages young people to join community-based organisations where structured leadership and teamwork training is provided. It enhances and promotes the positive image of youth in the community and provides opportunities for young people to develop physically, intellectually and socially.

7,000 young people are already involved with almost 200 cadet units located as far north as Kununurra, as far south as Albany and east to Kalgoorlie-Boulder, with funding under the Liberal-led increased to \$3million per year. A further \$648,000 will be provided over four years by a re-elected Liberal Government to create an additional six cadet units in identified areas of need.

The \$20million Sport 4All program, which includes the KidSport and NaturePlay initiatives, will be retained. Through the 'Kids Sport' program, the Liberal-led Government has paid the fees or paid for equipment for those children who would not otherwise be able to join a club to play sport. The program has assisted 13,000 children so far, almost half of whom had never previously been a member of a sporting club.

A re-elected Liberal Government will maintain the \$200,000 per annum funding through the *Youth Activities Grants* program to non-government organisations for projects which encourage young people to get involved in positive activities in our local communities.

Child Health

If re-elected the Liberals will:

- Invest \$57.2million to appoint more than 155 full-time equivalent additional school nurses to provide health care to WA's school-aged children
- Employ an additional 100 child health nurses to enhance the early identification of health problems and conditions in young children
- Establish 16 new Child and Parent Centres at a cost of \$48.7million

Many childhood health problems are curable and manageable when they are identified early. Intervention from a health professional during early years means better educational and social outcomes for WA children.

School nurses provide ongoing support through school years for children who need it. In older children and adolescents, school nurses often provide health care to those experiencing mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and body and weight issues.

Nurses also provide schools and communities with health education and promotion strategies to ensure parents take up the opportunity for free, public health care for their children.

A Liberal-led Government will invest a further \$57.2million to improve access to health care for children who need it most, and guarantee all children access to an entry health assessment upon starting school.

This is another major investment into the health of our children, adding to \$49.7million to employ more child health specialists such as speech pathologists in 2010, a \$58.5million boost to the State's community health nurse workforce last year, and a \$48.7million investment in 16 new Child and Parent Centres.

The Child and Parent Centres will be located on school sites in areas of need providing a 'one stop shop' for a range of services and support including, child health nurses, GP services, therapy services and parenting programs.

Centre locations 2014 -2015:

- Challis Early Childhood Education Centre, Armadale
- Neerabup Primary School, Banksia Grove
- Roseworth Primary School, Girrawheen
- Westminster Junior Primary School

- Dudley Park Primary School, Mandurah
- Carey Park Primary School
- South Hedland Primary School
- Brookman Primary School, Langford
- Calista Primary School
- Warriapendi Primary School, Balga

Centre locations 2014-2016:

- East Maddington Primary School
- East Waikiki Primary School
- Gosnells Primary School
- Mt Lockyer Primary School, Albany
- Rangeway Primary School, Geraldton
- Wilson Park Primary School, Collie

With these commitments, Liberal-led Government has invested more than \$214million securing the future health of Western Australian children.

Of the new nurses, 110.6 FTE will be located in local metropolitan areas, and 45 will be based in regional WA, bringing the total to 332.6, an increase of 87 per cent.

This investment in nurses for regional schools will particularly help address the high rate of glue ear throughout the State, which is causing hearing loss to a great many WA children.

The number of specialised nurses who assist children with intensive health needs such as tube feeding, special medications and airway maintenance during school will also be increased.

In the 2012-13 Budget the Liberal-led Government announced an investment of \$58.5million over four years for community child health services. Under the program, about 100 child health nurses are currently being recruited to bolster services in health across Western Australia, with a target of increasing the number of children having all six health checks prior to the start of school.

Under the program \$18million will be allocated for additional Department of Health child health nurses and \$40.5million for the procurement of services from the not-for-profit sector.

The child health nurse funding is a component of the Liberal-led Government's investment in child health services, and will ensure areas of need have better access to child health nurses, and, in particular, early childhood health checks.

Many childhood health problems are curable and more manageable when they are identified during early childhood health checks. The provision of



additional child health nurses will improve access to important screening and assessment services.



Our Record

The Liberals have a strong record in Government of supporting and building communities. These achievements include:

- Establishment of a strong relationship with the not-for-profit community sector based on trust and genuine collaboration
- \$604million to help sustain large and small organisations providing vital services to the most needy in our community
- Important and significant measures to ease the financial pressures being experienced by those on fixed incomes, such as the introduction the Cost of Living Assistance payment, the Seniors Cost of Living Rebate, the Country Age Pension Fuel Card Scheme, substantial increases in funding for the Hardship Utility Grants Scheme and increasing access to free public transport for seniors.
- Recognition of the plight of the homeless with new shelters and support. Facilities completed or under construction include the 148-bed St Bartholomew's House in East Perth; the Oxford Foyer in Leederville that will provide accommodation and access to training for up to 98 young disadvantaged and homeless Western Australians; and a 12-bed overnight homeless shelter for men in Perth.
- WA's first ever Affordable Housing Strategy, which has seen more than 7,600 affordable dwellings delivered, including the hugely successful One on Aberdeen development, a partnership between the Government and private industry that established 161 affordable apartments in the CBD
- A strong record of commitment to and support for programs and organisations that support those in need, especially the elderly, those with disability, disengaged youth, the homeless, and carers.