

Population growth³

- ✓ Western Australia's population of 2.58 million in 2016-17 was 10% of Australia's population.
- ✓ Population growth of 0.8% or 21,403, in 2016-17 was below annual average growth of 2.1% over the past ten years.
- ✓ Natural increase of 20,024 and net overseas migration, up 13,101 offset falling net interstate migration, down 11,722 in 2016-17.
- ✓ Annual average population growth is forecast to rise to 1.0% in 2017-18 and 1.2% in 2018-19.
- The 2015 WA Tomorrow report forecasts a population of 3.27 million by 2026.

The labour market

Employment⁴

- ✓ Western Australia's employment fell by 8,900 to 1.323 million in January 2018.
 - Full-time employment fell by 2,100 to 899,200 in January 2018.
 - Part-time employment fell by 5,100 to 430,500 in January 2018.
 - Seasonally adjusted, total employment fell by 8,900 between December 2017 to January 2018.
- The 2017-18 Government Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement forecasts annual average employment growth of 2% in 2017-18 and 1.5% in 2018-19.

Unemployment rate

- ✓ Western Australia's unemployment rate has steadied at 5.7% in January, seasonally adjusted, despite a slight dip in the number of people employed. The number of jobs fell by around 9,000 to be more than 1.3 million, seasonally adjusted, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. About 12,000 fewer males were employed while 3,000 more females had jobs.²⁶
- ✓ The 2017-18 Government Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement forecasts an annual average unemployment rate of 5.75% in 2017-18 and 2018-19.⁴

Underutilisation rate (quarterly)⁴

- The underutilisation rate measures the proportion of the labour force that is unemployed or underemployed, workers wanting more hours.
- The underutilisation rate of 15.2% in the December quarter 2017 was above the 14.9% in the previous quarter and 15.0% a year ago.
- The underutilisation rate in the December quarter 2017 comprised an underemployment rate of 9.2% and an unemployment rate of 6.0%.
- The underemployment rate of 9.2% in the December quarter 2017 was above the 9.1% in the previous quarter and 9.0% a year ago.

Industry sector employment⁵

- The services industries accounted for 73% or 979,898 of total employment in the December quarter 2017 and goods producing industries accounted for 27% or 357,766.
- The largest increases in employment through the year to the December quarter 2017 were in education and training, up 23,727 and healthcare and social assistance, up 18,615.
- ✓ The largest falls in employment through the year to the December quarter 2017 were in manufacturing, down 15,978 and mining, down 8,729.

Participation rate and job vacancies (quarterly)⁶¹

- The participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian working age population that is employed or unemployed.
- The participation rate of 68.8% in the December quarter 2017 was above the 67.9% in the previous quarter and 67.6% a year ago.

- The 2017-18 Government Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement forecasts an annual average participation rate of 67.9% in 2017-18 and 68.2% in 2018-19.
- There were 19,300 job vacancies in the September quarter 2017, 200 more than in the previous quarter and 1,800 more than a year ago.

Commodity prices and exchange rate⁷

- The RBA's monthly \$A commodity price index rose 2% in November 2017.
- ✓ The monthly average price of iron ore rose 4% to US\$64 a tonne in November 2017.
- The annual average price of iron ore rose 35% to US\$70 a tonne in 2016-17 and is forecast to fall to US\$66 a tonne in 2017-18 and US\$62 a tonne in 2018-19.
- The monthly average \$A exchange rate fell 1% to US76 cents in November 2017.
- The annual average \$A exchange rate rose 4% to US75 cents in 2016-17 and is forecast to rise to US77 cents in 2017-18 and US76 cents in 2018-19.

Average annual earnings and wages growth⁸

- Average annual adult full-time total earnings rose 0.01% to \$93,366 in 2016-17.
- Western Australia's average annual adult full-time total earnings were 12% (\$9,875) above the Australian average of \$83,491 in 2016-17.
- Wages growth of 1.4% in 2016-17 was below annual average growth of 3.3% over the past 10 years, and below Australia's wages growth of 1.9% in 2016-17.
- The 2017-18 Government Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement forecasts wages growth of 1.5% in 2017-18 and 1.75% in 2018-19.

Consumption

Real household consumption (% change)⁹

- Western Australia accounted for **10% of Australia's household consumption** in 2016-17. Household consumption accounted for 42% of GSP in 2016-17 and contributed 0.2 percentage points to real GSP growth.
- **Real household consumption growth of 0.5%** in 2016-17 was below annual average growth of 2.9% over the past ten years.
- The 2017-18 Government Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement **forecasts real household consumption to rise 0.75%** in 2017-18 and 1.75% in 2018-19.

Household consumption by industry sector (nominal)⁹

- **Nominal household consumption fell 0.2%** to \$104.1 billion in 2016-17.
- The largest decreases in household consumption in 2016-17 were in **rent and other dwelling services, down \$642m** or 3% and net expenditure interstate, down \$355m or 110%
- The largest increases in household consumption in 2016-17 were in **insurance, finance and other, up \$587m** or 4% and health, up \$327m or 4%.

Gross household disposable income per capita²

- **Western Australia's gross household disposable income per capita of \$51,412** in 2016-17 was 8% or \$3,933 above Australia's gross household disposable income per capita of \$47,479.
- **Gross household disposable income per capita fell 3%** in 2016-17, compared with annual average growth of 4%

- over the past ten years.
- **Total gross household disposable income fell by \$2.9 billion** in 2016-17, due to changes in employee wages, down \$3.5b, social benefits and other secondary income, down \$139m, self-employed and property income, up \$411m and interest and tax paid on secondary income, down \$340m.

Investment

Investment (nominal)⁹

- ✓ Western Australia accounted for **19% of Australia's business investment** in 2016-17. Business investment accounted for 15% of GSP in 2016-17 but detracted 6.4 percentage points from real GSP growth.
- ✓ **Real business investment fell 29%** in 2016-17 and is forecast to fall 12% in 2017-18 and 8.5% in 2018-19.
- ✓ **Nominal business investment fell 28%** to \$38.2 billion in 2016-17.
- **Nominal dwelling investment fell 21%** to \$9.1 billion in 2016-17.
- **Nominal public investment rose 4%** to \$8.8 billion in 2016-17.

Private new capital expenditure¹⁰

- Western Australia accounted for **57% of Australia's mining new capital expenditure** in 2016-17.
- ✓ Mining accounted for **77% of Western Australia's private new capital expenditure** in 2016-17. Mining new capital expenditure fell 37% to \$22.2 billion in 2016-17.
- **New capital expenditure in other selected industries fell 14%** to \$6.8 billion in 2016-17. In September 2017, Western Australia had **\$98.9 billion of major resource projects under construction or committed** and \$49.2 billion under consideration.

Exploration expenditure¹¹

- Western Australia accounted for **66% of Australia's minerals exploration expenditure** and 47% of Australia's petroleum exploration expenditure in 2016-17.
- **Minerals exploration expenditure rose 18%** to \$1.0 billion in 2016-17, mainly due to increases in gold exploration.
- **Petroleum exploration expenditure fell 50%** to \$651 million in 2016-17.

Property market and construction activity

Median established house price and rents (quarterly)¹²

- ▲ Perth's preliminary median house price increased 1.2% to \$516,000 in the December quarter 2017. Perth's median unit price is \$405,000 for the December 2017 quarter which is a 1.3% increase on the September quarter.
- Regional WA's overall median house price increased 2.9% to \$350,000 during the December 2017 quarter, outperforming the Perth Metro region.
- Perth's overall median rent price remained at \$350 per week during the December 2017 quarter. This was the third consecutive quarter that Perth's median rent price had remained **steady**.

Building and engineering construction activity¹³

- **Residential building activity fell 26%** to \$6.6 billion in 2016-17.
- **Non-residential building activity fell 5%** to \$4.5 billion in 2016-17.
- **Heavy industry engineering construction activity fell 35%** to \$17.5 billion in 2016-17.
- **Other engineering construction activity fell 24%** to \$7.0 billion in 2016-17.

Building construction activity outlook (quarterly)¹⁴

- Western Australia had **\$6.5 billion of building activity** in the pipeline in the June quarter 2017, below the \$7.0 billion in the previous quarter.
- **Residential building approvals rose 1%** to \$1.5 billion in the September quarter 2017. Residential building approvals typically lead building activity by one to two quarters.
- **Non-residential building approvals fell 19%** to \$1.0 billion in the September quarter 2017.
- **Housing finance for the construction of new dwellings rose 0.5%** to \$1.0 billion in the September quarter 2017. Housing finance typically leads residential building activity by two to three quarters.

Merchandise exports

Merchandise exports (nominal)¹⁵

- Western Australia accounted for **43% of Australia's merchandise exports** in 2016-17. Merchandise exports accounted for 50% of GSP in 2016-17 and contributed 3.2 percentage points to real GSP growth.
- Real merchandise exports **growth of 7%** in 2016-17 was above annual average growth of 6% over the past ten years.
- The 2017-18 Government Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement **forecasts real merchandise exports growth of 7.5%** in 2017-18 and 5% in 2018-19.
- **Nominal merchandise exports rose 20%** to \$124.0 billion in 2016-17.

Major export markets¹⁶

- Western Australia's **largest export market in 2016-17 was China**, \$60.2b or 50%, followed by Japan, \$15.7b or 13% and Hong Kong, \$9.6b or 8%.
- Western Australia had **majority shares of Australian exports to Hong Kong 75%**, United

Kingdom 64% and China 63% in 2016-17.

- Minerals and petroleum accounted for 90% or \$108.2b of merchandise exports in 2016-17. Agriculture, food, fibre, fisheries and forestry exports accounted for 7% or \$8.5b of merchandise exports in 2016-17.

Services exports

Service exports (nominal)¹⁷

- Western Australia accounted for **8% of Australia's services exports** in 2016-17, it was 9% in 2016.
- Services exports accounted for **3% of GSP** in 2016-17 and detracted 0.1 percentage points to real GSP growth.
- **Real services exports fell 2%** in 2016-17 compared with annual average growth of 1% over the past ten years.
- **Nominal services exports fell 1%** to **\$6.8 billion** in 2016-17.

Services exports by industry sector¹⁷

- Services exports in 2016-17 mainly comprised **personal travel at 34%** and **education-related travel 28%**.
- The largest increase in services exports in 2016-17 was in **education-related travel, up 12%**, while the largest decline was in personal travel, down 6%.
- **International student enrolments rose 10%** to 55,274 in 2016, above annual average growth of 5% over the past ten years.
- Western Australia accounted for **7.75% of Australia's international student enrolments** in 2016, below the 7.85% share in 2015.

Overnight domestic and international visitors¹⁸

- **Tourism accounted for 2%** or \$5.5 billion of GSP and 5% or 72,000 of total employment in 2015-16.

- Overnight visitors fell 4% to 10.4 million in 2016-17, compared with annual average growth of 4% over the past ten years.
- The fall in overnight visitors in 2016-17 was due to domestic visitors falling 5% to 9.5 million.
- International visitors rose 9% to 965,900 in 2016-17.
- Visitor spending rose 1% to \$10.1 billion in 2016-17 due to increases in spending by daytrip, up 9% to \$2.1 billion, and international, up 8% to \$2.5 billion, visitors.
- Domestic visitor spending fell 4% to \$5.5 billion in 2016-17.

Mining

Mining gross value added (nominal)²

- **Western Australia is the main minerals and petroleum exporting region of Australia** and produces a significant proportion of the world's minerals and petroleum commodities. Western Australia accounted for 56% of Australia's mining gross value added in 2016-17, below its 59% share in the previous year and 67% share in 2013-14.
- **Mining accounted for 29% of GSP** in 2016-17, above its 24% share in the previous year, but below its 37% share in 2010-11.
- **Nominal mining gross value-added rose 26%** to \$72.3 billion in 2016-17, above annual average growth of 7% over the past ten years.

Major minerals and petroleum sales¹⁹

- **Iron ore accounted for 61% of minerals and petroleum sales** in 2016-17, followed by: LNG (12%); Gold (10%); Alumina and bauxite (5%); Crude oil and condensate (4%); Nickel (2%); Base metals (1%); Mineral sands (1%)
- Minerals and petroleum sales rose 19% to \$105.0 billion in 2016-17, mainly due to increased sales of iron ore, LNG and gold.

Iron ore sales²⁰

- Western Australia accounted for **53% of world seaborne iron ore exports** in 2016.
- Iron ore sales rose 31%** to \$63.7 billion in 2016-17, due to rising sales volumes and average prices.
- The **volume of iron ore sales rose 6%** to 790 million tonnes in 2016-17, below annual average growth of 12% over the past ten years.
- The annual average \$A unit price (free on board) of **iron ore sales rose 24%** in 2016-17.
- The 2017-18 Government Mid-Year Financial Projections Statement **forecasts iron ore sales to rise** from 790 million tonnes in 2016-17 to 835 million tonnes in 2020-21.

LNG sales²⁰

- Western Australia accounted for **9% of world LNG exports** in 2016.
- LNG sales rose 18%** to \$12.7 billion in 2016-17, due to rising sales volumes offsetting falling average prices.
- The **volume of LNG sales rose 37%** to 29 million tonnes in 2016-17, above annual average growth of 9% over the past 10 years.
 - The annual average \$A unit price (free on board) of **LNG sales fell 14%** in 2016-17. Western Australia's LNG production capacity will grow to 50 million tonnes a year by mid-2018.

Gold sales²⁰

- Western Australia's **gold sales rose 7%** to \$10.8 billion in 2016-17, due to rising sales volumes and average prices.
- The **volume of gold sales rose 4%** to 205 tonnes in 2016-17, above annual average growth of 3% over the past ten years.
- The annual average \$A unit price (free on board) of **gold sales rose 3%** in 2016-17.

WA's construction industry²¹

Employment

- The industry employs more than **10.25% of the State's workforce** with 16.9% growth in August 2017 compared to August 2016. There was only one decrease in the previous four quarters.
 - Tradespeople: The industry employs more than **70,800 tradespeople**, this is the highest number since August 2014 and third highest on record.
 - Apprenticeships: The industry employs more than **45% of the State's apprentices**. Including electrical, there are currently 6,833 apprentices 'in training' which is a 6.2% decrease on the previous year but there has been a 75% reduction in apprenticeship cancellations. There has been an overall decrease in apprentice commencements of 18.6%, including electrical.
 - Traineeships: The industry employs **716 trainees**. Since 2009, there has been a 67% increase in traineeships especially in the civil construction sector.

Building Approvals and Commencements²¹

- Total Dwelling Units: There was a total of **19,928 approvals for all types of dwelling units** This was a reduction of 9.5% on the previous year to October. However, over the past three months approvals have remained stable demonstrating that the outlook could be improving into 2018.
- Total Houses: There was a total of **14,584 approvals for houses** This was a reduction of 9% in the year to October. The reduction was only 3.5% in the last quarter which shows a levelling of the decline.
- Dwelling Commencements: In the year to October, there was a total of **19,666 dwelling commencements**.

Value of Construction Work Done²¹

- Residential: **An increase of 4.8% in value in the last quarter to \$6.44 billion**. This shows a marked improvement in activity in the last quarter compared with a reduction of 22.7% on the previous twelve months.
- Non-Residential: **A decrease of 5.3% in value in the last quarter to \$4.49 billion**. This was against a decrease of 4.0% in the previous 12 months. This is a marked improvement on the year to September 2016 when there was a 10.5% decrease in work done. It demonstrates a stabilisation in the market.
- A shortage of bricklaying apprentices** has emerged as young people turn their back on the trade, with claims that some see the job as too much like hard work. There has been an 83% fall in the number of West Australians starting bricklaying apprenticeships in the past two years, from 432 to 74. It comes amid a drop in many other construction trades and a surge in training for less physically strenuous trades and jobs such as bakers, barbers and security personnel.²³

Economic News

- CommSec Research's '**State of the States**' publication reports that **employment growth in WA is just off its strongest levels in five years**. It also reports that Western Australia's population is growing at its fastest rate in two years, with four quarters of continuous growth. This is further to another CommSec report that showed that WA had the strongest rate of growth in job vacancies of all States in Territories in 2017.
- For the calendar year of 2017, **Western Australia recorded employment growth of 1.4%**, recovering sharply from a 0.8% fall in 2016-17; an unemployment rate of 5.9%, down from 6.2% in 2016-17 and the equal second lowest of all States, along with Tasmania; and the highest participation rate of all States, 67.8%, 2.7

percentage points above the national rate of 65.1%.²²

- **Western Australian small businesses are unhappy with the current state of the economy but are the most optimistic in the nation about its future**, a survey has found. However, that mostly applies to Perth business owners, with confidence falling in regional areas. According to the latest Sensis Business Index survey of 1,000 small and medium businesses nationwide, about 33% of WA businesses think the economy will be better off in the next year.²⁴
- The state's automotive industry got off to a positive start in 2018 with a **rise in new vehicle sales for January, compared to last year**, on the back of increased SUV and light commercial vehicle sales. The monthly figures, released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, show a 5.2% jump in sales for January, with 7,401 vehicles sold in the month. There was a 10.8% rise in SUV sales and a 21% increase in light commercial vehicles sold, while there was a drop of 9.4% in passenger vehicles in January.²⁴
- **Early signs of recovery are starting to emerge across Perth's CBD office market**, with vacancy rates falling below 20% for the first time in two years, according to the Property Council of Australia. Released in February, the Property Council's twice-yearly office market report shows a drop in Perth's CBD office vacancy rate, from 21.1% to 19.8% in the six months to January 2018. This followed 12 months of positive demand for CBD office space in Perth, including 22,178 square metres of net absorption over the second half of 2017. The West Perth office market tells a different story; the vacancy rate rose to 16.7%, from 15% in the six months to January 2018, which the report said was due to the addition of 4,803sqm of new office space coupled with weaker demand for existing space.²⁴
- **Foreign investors are making their mark on Perth, accounting for more than**

half of the purchases in the CBD office market in the past two years, according to Savills Australia. The group's latest 'Quarter Time National Office' report has revealed that about \$700 million worth of transactions were recorded during 2017 – up from \$691 million in 2016 and \$247 million in 2015. Transactions for 2017 were also above the 10-year average of \$614 million, with Savills' research showing foreign investment accounted for 55% of major Perth office acquisitions during 2016 and 2017. Sydney-based GDI Property's purchase of Westralia Square for \$216 million was the largest acquisition recorded in the past 12 months, followed by the sale of The Quadrant facing Elizabeth Quay for \$175 million to a Primewest Trust, backed by offshore equity including Singapore-based investment fund GIC Private.²⁴

- **Perth's housing prices are rated the 21st most expensive in the world**, with the cost 5.9 times higher than the median household income, according to international think-tank Demographia. Sydney was ranked second worst, with house prices almost 13 times higher than the median household income. The study found Melbourne's house prices were almost 10 times higher than the median household income. Adelaide and Brisbane came in at 16th, 18th place respectively.²⁹
- **A 40% rise in project applications with the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety** last year has provided another signal of a turnaround in the mining sector.
- The department recorded **2,575 'Program for Work' applications in 2017**, compared with 1,799 the previous year. The figures are in line with the Environmental Protection Authority's announcement in December that the number of significant projects needing assessment had risen 50% in 2017.²⁶
- **A report predicts good times ahead for mining but warns of a potential skills shortage**

in the sector's increasingly automated services industries.

The Newport Consulting survey involving in-depth interviews with 50 mining leaders shows 42% planned to increase spending in the 2017-18 financial year, up 23% from 2016. The survey showed 25% of those questioned, plan to increase hiring this financial year, up from 8% who were set to boost job numbers in 2015-16. But most employers, 54% claim there will be no change in job levels this year, up from 44% who anticipated steady workforces in 2015-16. About a fifth, 21% plan to cut staff numbers this financial year, compared with nearly half, 48%, in 2015-16.²³

- **The volume of freight through Fremantle Ports has remained static for the third year running**, raising further questions about when the proposed outer harbour development at Cockburn Sound will be needed. The government-owned facility posted a 1.1% increase in total port trade to 35.3 million mass tonnes for the year to June 2017, according to data in its newly released annual report. The higher FY17 result was just short of the port's FY15 result of 35.8 million mass tonnes.²⁶
- Despite the long-held perception that Greater Perth has a boom-bust economy that rises and falls on the back of the resources sector, a landmark report by the Committee for Perth has dispelled that myth. The report examined a number of key economic indicators and found that the **local economy was less volatile and more resilient than the Australian economy**. What the study found is that when you compare Western Australia's gross state product, unemployment rate and housing price volatility with the rest of the country, we outperformed them. It was only on inflation that WA measured poorly against Australia.³⁰
- Figures from the 2016 Census show that the **performing arts and sports sectors are the fastest growing providers of jobs in Western Australia**. The

figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate there has been a 25% increase in people employed in the arts and recreational services industry in WA, including fitness centres, sport and performing arts.²⁸

- **The total contribution of tourism to the Western Australian economy in 2016 was \$10.64 billion**, or 4.6% of the state's gross value-added (GVA) economy. It also directly and indirectly employed 109,000 people. By comparison, 23.8% of the State's GVA was generated by the mining industry, 13.6% by construction, 5.6% by health care and social assistance and 5.2% by professional and technical services.³⁰
- **The education, arts, accommodation and arts sectors were the state's biggest job creators in the five years to November 2017.** More than 124,000 people were employed in the education and training sector as of November, the ABS found an increase of 32.4% on the same time in 2012. The arts and recreation industry is one of the state's smaller employees, providing 27,000 jobs but that number grew by 19.1% over the past five years. Employment in agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors was up 16.2% to 43,100, while accommodation and food operators lifted employment 32.6% over the period to 99,300.²⁶
- **The number of workers on big projects in Western Australia is likely to stabilise at just one-quarter of the peak level of 35,000** recorded during the mining construction boom in 2012, and that's only if planned projects are approved.²⁶
- **Wesfarmers, with 24,963 staff, remains the biggest business employer in Western Australia**, followed by Woolworths 15,862, Rio Tinto 12,930 and BHP Billiton 10,000.²⁶
- **Out of a total of 539 directors in the WA ASX 100, 492 were men and just 47 were women.** Even when the calculations considered the number of men and women who sat on multiple WA ASX 100

boards, female representation marginally rose to 8.9%. When the sectors within the WA ASX 100 are broken down, the top 10 companies record 25% female representation, dropping to 6.7% for WA ASX 11-20, 9.1% for WA ASX 21-49, and 3.7% among WA ASX 50-100.³⁰

- Western Australia not only has the **highest gender pay gap in the country at 22.8% but only 9.5% of C-Suite positions on the WA ASX 100 are held by women.** When you analyse the number of women in the WA ASX C-Suite, there are 16.7% in the top 10 companies, only 3.8% in the 11-20, 12% in the 21-50 and 6.2% in the 51-100 companies. Of the 526-people appointed onto the WA ASX 100 C-Suites, only 50 are women.³⁰
- Perth companies Austal and Civmec will be working on the construction of **10 navy vessels at Henderson**, but the amount and type of work they will undertake is unclear after the federal government selected Germany's Luerssen as its preferred designer and builder. The offshore patrol vessel program will be worth \$4 billion, including sustainment, with the first two vessels to be assembled by ASC in Adelaide and the remaining 10 at Henderson. The federal government said Luerssen would use the capabilities of Austal and Civmec to build 10 vessels at Henderson, but provided no details, and added this was subject to the completion of commercial negotiations.²⁶
- **The State Government has selected investment bank Investec as its commercial adviser on land registry agency Landgate**, adding to speculation it is a likely privatisation target. Investec was the adviser to the South Australian government last year, when it privatised the state's land titles service in a bumper \$1.6 billion deal.
- The NSW government reaped an even larger price of \$2.6 billion when it sold its land titles office last year. The Western Australian government has not used the word privatisation,

instead saying Investec will assist the Treasury department and Landgate to prepare a scoping study to identify options for Landgate's future.²⁶

- The State Government introduced **amendments to the Payroll Tax Assessment Act** in State Parliament to introduce a temporary progressive payroll tax increase for the biggest companies in the State. From July 1, 2018 until June 30, 2023, Western Australian employers with an Australia-wide payroll exceeding \$100 million - but not exceeding \$1.5 billion - will have that part of their payroll taxed at a rate of six%, up from the current rate of 5.5%. Western Australian employers with an Australia-wide payroll exceeding \$1.5 billion will have that part of their payroll taxed at a rate of 6.5%. It is estimated that this measure will raise \$435 million over the forward estimates.²²
- The State Government moved **new laws to freeze the pay of Members of Parliament and the most senior bureaucrats for the next four years.** The Salaries and Allowances Amendment (Debt and Deficit Remediation) Bill 2017 was declared urgent and debated in State Parliament, in an effort to save \$16 million in the State Budget. The pay freeze will be applied to the most senior members of government, including the Governor; all Members of Parliament including the Premier and Ministers; clerks and deputy clerks of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly; judicial office holders, including masters of the Supreme Court and magistrates; the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission; and executive officers of Government Trading Enterprises.²⁴

Reforming and Reshaping

- **New capital works advisory body Infrastructure WA will help take the politics out of the State's major showpiece investments, according to Premier Mark McGowan.** Unveiling the new body in February, the Premier said it would be established in early 2019 after a year of consultation and enabling legislation. IWA's main functions are to be to develop a 20-year State infrastructure strategy, provide expert advice and support agencies on capital works plans. The independent statutory body will vet infrastructure proposals of state significance, for projects costing \$100 million plus, or smaller but high-risk projects.^{23&27}
- The State Government plans to deliver on its election commitment to **increase the total number of women appointed to Government boards and committees to 50% by 2019.** In September, the Premier launched OnBoardWA, a website and register encouraging diverse representation on State Government boards or committees. Women make up about half of the Western Australian workforce and more than 70% of the public sector yet are under-represented at the decision-making level. Women on boards lead to better informed decision-making, better performance and more effective governance while also creating stronger connections with the community.²⁴
- **The number of women elected to local government across Western Australia again increased,** despite the relatively small number of female candidates standing for the October 2017 council elections. Department of Local Government and Communities figures show the number of female candidates elected to council has increased more than 25% since 2013. 449 female candidates were elected, which is 51 more than in 2015 and 91 more than in 2013. WA Local Government Association president Lynne Craigie, said there needed to be more diversity generally in councils, not just in gender, saying one of the big hurdles women think they're going to face is childcare.²⁹
- **The State Government has signed the stage two agreement for Western Australia's new \$428 million museum with managing contractor Multiplex,** construction of which is scheduled for completion in mid-2019. The new facility includes seven major galleries, learning studios, a cafe, and will feature a display of a blue whale skeleton. Multiplex, in conjunction with HASSELL+OMA, was appointed as lead contractor in 2016. It's forecast that the new museum will attract about 800,000 visitors in the first year and contribute around \$31 million of tourism spending.²⁶
- **Better land use and development outcomes around transport corridors such as METRONET are the aim of a revised State policy covering road and rail noise.** The revised policy seeks to provide clearer guidance to minimise unreasonable levels of transport noise while protecting the State's major transport corridors. It also puts a greater focus on road and rail noise earlier in the planning process. The proposed changes seek to: Simplify the noise criteria and assessment process; Provide new noise exposure categories that correspond with quiet house design requirements such as building orientation, window glazing and insulation; provide standardised templates for noise management plans, local planning scheme provisions and notifications on titles.²²
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the State Government and the City of Subiaco allows for **future public access to Subiaco Oval and paves the way for master planning for the precinct.** The agreement allows for the revocation of the Management Order over Subiaco Oval and Kitchener Park. Site works for the new Inner City College on Kitchener Park commenced in February. The MOU confirms the retention of the Subiaco Oval playing surface and the inclusion of a 'green belt' to link Mueller Park to the Subiaco Oval playing surface. A shared user agreement will be developed to enable access to the oval for students, junior sport, the public and the West Australian Football Commission.²²
- Western Australia became the **first state in Australia to provide a funded vaccine against four strains of meningococcal disease in children aged under five.** Meningococcal disease is an uncommon, but sometimes life-threatening illness. At any one time, about 10% of healthy people carry meningococcal bacteria harmlessly in their nose or throat, and do not become ill.²²
- From July this year, **the State Government has banned lightweight, single-use plastic shopping bags in Western Australia.** The ban will bring Western Australia into line with South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory which already have plastic bag bans in place. Queensland has also vowed to ban the bag from July 1, 2018.²⁴
- **The State Government will introduce the most significant reforms to Western Australia's liquor laws in a decade** to support local businesses and create more jobs.
- Under the Liquor Control Amendment Bill 2018, the **Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Western Australia will be given equal consideration to that of the Chief Health Officer and Commissioner of Police when assessing liquor licensing applications.** Tourism WA will be able to put forward a submission regarding the tourism benefits of any application - creating more balance in the consideration of licences. In addition, a new category will be added to the public interest assessment to allow venues' tourism, community and cultural benefits to be considered as

part of a licence application. Licensed restaurants with a capacity of 120 people or less will be able to serve alcohol without a meal. Currently, restaurant licensees must lodge a separate application for a permit to allow this authority.²⁴

- From September 2017, **changes to the Liquor Control Regulations 1989, allow tour operators, who gain accreditation, to supply alcohol on their tours.** This lets accredited tourism businesses to offer hospitality experiences such as providing self-serve beer and wine to guests at a barbecue dinner or creating a dining experience with alcohol while touring an attraction. The supply of alcohol must only be a secondary extra to the purpose of the tour and must not be provided at an additional cost.²²
- **Large compensation payouts for senior bureaucrats when a contract is brought to an early end have been reduced.** Currently, senior members of the public service may seek a compensation payment of up to 12 months' remuneration, which includes salary, motor vehicle allowances and superannuation. Under the new policy, which came into operation from September 2017, compensation payments will be applied, based on four months' remuneration for each full year of the contract remaining, up to a maximum of 12 months. Further legislative changes will also limit the maximum compensation payment, when officers' contracts are brought to an early end, to 12 months' salary, rather than remuneration.²⁴
- The State Government has approved the **drafting of a new workers' compensation statute.** The Bill will implement lifetime care and support arrangements for catastrophically injured workers, delivering on a commitment between the Commonwealth, and State and Territory governments. Public consultation will occur on a draft Bill before it is introduced into State

Parliament, continuing WorkCover WA's open and consultative approach on the legislative review. It is expected the new Bill will be introduced into Parliament by the end of 2018.²²

- Energy Minister Ben Wyatt hopes to introduce laws to **ease network access rules for new electricity generators** by mid-2018, saying he understood independent operators were unsettled about Synergy's share of the electricity generation market in the state's South West Interconnected System. About 50% of the system's generation capacity is in the hands of Synergy, while a further 20% or so is controlled by Synergy through long term contracts. The Treasurer's approach will be to introduce facility level bidding across Synergy's assets, which would require technological upgrades costing around \$40 million. The changes will complete a move of the network from an unconstrained to a constrained access regime, which would effectively make it cheaper for private generators to link into the system.²²
- A **Foreign Buyers Surcharge** has been introduced to pay for a freeze on TAFE fees and assist with Budget repair. The surcharge will apply from January 1, 2019 at the rate of 4% on all purchases of residential property in Western Australia by foreigners, including individuals, corporations and trusts. The surcharge is on top of the normal transfer duty payable on property purchases. The change is restricted to residential property. It will not apply to purchases of commercial or industrial property, nor will it apply to residential developments of 10 or more properties, commercial residential property such as hotels, student accommodation and retirement villages, or mixed-use properties that are used primarily for commercial purposes. It is estimated that revenue of \$21 million will be raised in its first full year and a total of \$49 million over the forward estimates period to

2020-21.²²

- An east coast energy retailer backed by French multinational will become the **fifth player selling to consumers in the local gas market**, after receiving approval by the Economic Regulation Authority in February. Melbourne-based Simply Energy is 72% owned by French business Engie, which was previously known as GDF Suez. The remaining 28% is held by Mitsui & Co. The company operates in the National Energy Market, retailing electricity and gas, with the business formed from after a buyout of EnergyAustralia's assets.²⁶
- **A Debt Repayment Account has been established** to support the repayment of central borrowings in an effort to improve the State's finances. The account will be utilised when the State receives unexpected revenue windfalls, such as any significant unbudgeted or unforeseen revenue gains. The Budget includes \$338 million in debt repayments to flow through the new account over the four years to 2020-21, commencing with a \$230 million repayment in 2017-18, with repayments scheduled to be made each year thereafter. The initial funds to flow through the account will be sourced from a one-off duty assessment worth \$169.4 million issued in May 2017, associated with a high value commercial property transaction. Debt repayment funded from this unexpected revenue will be supplemented by surplus funds to be paid into the Consolidated Account by RiskCover, totalling \$168.6 million over the forward estimates period, including \$60.3 million in 2017-18.²²
- **A new point of consumption (POC) wagering tax of 15% of net wagering revenue on online betting companies offering their product in Western Australia will be introduced by the State Government.** The tax will be introduced from January 1, 2019. The new arrangements will replace the current tax framework and apply to all forms of wagering, including fixed odds and totalisator for racing and sports. Under this new arrangement, all bets with registered wagering operators in Australia that are placed by customers within Western Australia will be subject to the POC tax regardless of the location in which the wagering operator is

- licenced.²²
- **Legislation has been introduced to improve animal welfare in Western Australia.** The amendments to the Animal Welfare Act 2002 will enable the State to legally enforce national welfare standards for livestock, bringing WA in line with most of the country. The amendments also include provisions for the appointment of a new class of animal welfare inspector with the power to enter any non-residential place or vehicle to check compliance with the Act and regulations, as well as official directions and court orders.²²
- As of December, **laws came into effect that make it an offence for any person to drive a motor vehicle fitted with any device that would disrupt the operation of a speed camera.** Anyone caught with such a device fitted to their vehicle or any physical barrier preventing detection now faces a \$1,200 fine and the loss of seven demerit points, doubling to 14 demerit points on a holiday weekend.²²
- In October changes to the provisional driver's licence process came into effect. **Under the changes, learner drivers must complete the Hazard Perception Test before the Practical Driving Assessment.** Applicants must be 17 years of age or older and have completed 50 hours of supervised driving, including five hours of supervised night-time driving, before being eligible to attempt the Practical Driving Assessment.²²
- **Cyclists have been provided greater protection with the introduction of minimum safe passing rules.** The new rules require drivers passing a cyclist travelling in the same direction on a road to do so at a minimum distance of one metre on a road with a posted speed limit not more than 60kmh; or 1.5 metres on a road with a posted speed limit of more than 60kmh. The penalty for drivers who break the new law is \$400 and four demerit points.²²
- Formal protocols have been established for government agencies to share vital information following a number of allegations about school-aged sex offenders. **There is now an obligation for the Western Australia Police Force and the departments of Education, Communities, and Justice to immediately work together to protect all students.** When made aware by WA Police, agencies will meet to examine all possible risk factors of the alleged offender attending a public school. The most appropriate education program, as well as clinical services, for the alleged offender would then be decided with the best interests of all students in mind. This could mean the student could be removed from a school temporarily or permanently while continuing their education.²²
- The State Government has raised a **possible ban on battery cage egg laying in WA** unless the industry puts forward changes to improve animal welfare conditions for laying hens.
- In a move that could push up prices for eggs, the **State Government is demanding producers give hens more room to move on factory farms as part of a wider national reform of the egg and chicken meat industry.** The State Agriculture Minister said she was unimpressed by plans put forward by the egg industry, which produces about 1.9 million eggs each day for WA consumers.²³
- **WA's recreational fishers will be able to pool their catches on boats if new regulations set to be drafted by the State Government are given the green light.** The move towards new regulations was in response to the complexity and confusion with the current bag limit legislation. Simply, the move in some respects would mean a change from "per boat" to "per licensed fisher".²⁷
- In 2016, **WA welcomed 22,693 residents who had the year before lived in another state,** however that figure was trumped by the nearly 33,000 people exiting the west to head east.²⁸
- Australian Bureau of Statistics data revealed **the state was home to 2.57 million people** and recorded an annual increase of 18,400 residents – less than half the national average.²⁸
- The Department of Health is conducting a review into the State's pharmacy ownership laws, as part of a push to support community pharmacies in delivering health services. The department will be consulting with the pharmacy industry and other stakeholders to consider whether the current regulations are sufficient to maintain the integrity of the sector and in keeping with current practices and emerging trends.²²
- As part of the State Government's Jobs Bill, prospective suppliers of government contracts will now be required to submit local participation plans as part of their tender. These plans will then be incorporated into the contracts of successful suppliers to ensure the promised local jobs are delivered.²²
- The State Government has introduced a Bill to ensure dependent family members of workers killed on the job receive fair, reasonable and timely compensation. **The Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981 will be amended** to significantly increase the lump sum payable to dependant partners and more than double the child's allowance payable to each dependent child. Other changes will see defacto partners of workers given the same access to compensation as married spouses. The lump sum will increase from \$308,339 to \$562,303 indexed annually, this new lump sum is 250% of the maximum compensation payable for a non-fatal injury.²²
- The State Government has created **The Volunteering Community Reference Group** which will work alongside peak body Volunteering WA to advise on issues and trends in the sector. The Group will work to advance volunteering in Western Australia and provide feedback on the implementation of a WA volunteering strategy.²²
- **The State Government's plan to improve WA's finances**

stalled after the Liberals blocked its gold tax in the Upper House. Labor was hoping to raise gold royalties from 2.5% to 3.75% in an attempt to raise close to \$400 million, to help rein in state debt which is expected to peak around \$43.8 billion by 2020. Based on the current gold price, the increased rate equates to an additional royalty of about \$20 per ounce.^{22&27}

- Thousands of small business owners who do not pursue legal matters because they believe it will be too expensive and time-consuming will be helped by a State Government initiative, operated by the Small Business Development Corporation. Under the initiative, eligible clients will be referred to the John Curtin Law Clinic for pro bono legal services. Final year Curtin University Law School students, supervised by qualified practicing lawyers, gain practical legal skills and specialist knowledge, while small business clients get access to legal advice and remedies they could not otherwise afford.²²
- More than 12,400 people attended the State's first Ultimate Fighting Championship in February at Perth Arena after the McGowan Government lifted a ban on combat sports such as mixed martial arts (MMA) being held in purpose-built, fenced-in enclosures such as the UFC's Octagon.^{22&23}
- In November, the State Government introduced legislation into parliament to implement a scheme for the expungement of historical convictions against LGBTIQ people for consensual conduct that would not be illegal today. Consensual homosexual activity was for many years a criminal offence in Western Australia under various provisions of the Criminal Code Act 1913. These provisions have since been repealed. But the repeal did not address the ongoing implications for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community

with existing criminal records.²⁴

- In November, Youth Minister Peter Tinley announced the appointment of Western Australia's inaugural Ministerial Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) - a group of 16 young people chosen for their talents and ability to represent the State's youth. The MYAC is the first group of its type in WA and delivers on the Youth Minister's pledge to give youth a direct voice in informing government policy direction and outcomes. The group's members, chosen from a field of 15-25-year olds across WA, are all volunteers appointed for a three-year term.²²
- Legislation enabling Western Australia to participate in the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme successfully passed through both houses of State Parliament. The passage of the Domestic Violence Orders (National Recognition) Bill 2017 means that WA joined the national scheme, on November 25, 2017. The purpose of the scheme is to enhance victim safety and perpetrator accountability by making family and domestic violence restraining orders enforceable across State and Territories boundaries. From November 25, all new orders made in one State or Territory automatically operated across Australia.²²
- The McGowan Government sought the views of Western Australians on the future of local government, as public consultation for phase one of the review of the Local Government Act 1995. The review canvases options for major reforms to modernise WA's local government sector, including ensuring laws around disclosing gifts are simplified and match public expectations, councillor conduct, local government transparency and accountability, and accessibility of public information using technology.²⁴
- The State Government has introduced new legislation to help improve the safety of electricians and other workers. Under the new rules, electrical work on or near live electrical installations and equipment will be prohibited, except for

rare circumstances where it is impossible to work without the electrical installation being energised, such as testing. Even in these cases, strict control measures will be implemented to ensure the work can be done safely.²²

- Puppy farming could soon end in Western Australia after the State Government announced reform plans aimed at reducing the number of unwanted dogs in the State. An implementation group is considering developing a centralised dog-registration system, compulsory dog sterilisation for non-breeding dogs, and the transitioning of pet shops to adoption centres. Dog breeding is currently unregulated, but the Government said its proposed changes would reduce the number of dogs needing rehoming, cut the euthanasia rate of abandoned dogs, and stop dogs suffering neglect due to puppy farms.²³
- Western Australia's two land development agencies, LandCorp and the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, will be merged progressively as part of the State Government's ongoing bid to drive efficiencies and improve outcomes for land development and housing affordability. The reform follows the first stage of changes to the public sector announced in April, which reduced the number of government departments by 40%.²²
- A planning reform team, led by experienced town planner Evan Jones, has been appointed to deliver improvements to Western Australia's planning system.
- Parliamentary Secretary John Carey will work with the reform team to ensure key objectives align with policies such as METRONET. These overarching policies will be to strengthen suburbs by increasing housing choice, boosting public transport and enhancing the built and natural environment.²²
- Hon. John Kobelke was appointed by the State Government to conduct a review of the Swan Valley planning framework, which incorporates the Swan Valley Protection Bill and associated

development plan. The review provides the Swan Valley community with an opportunity to contribute to the future development of the region, with views being sought on: The role and responsibility of a statutory board for the Swan Valley; Establishing a right to farm in the region; Possible new tourism initiatives; and the current limits to subdivision in the area.²²

- Western Australia has joined a national scheme which will see **victims of family and domestic violence, who have a domestic violence order in place, better protected if they choose to travel or move interstate**. A person who breaches a recognised order will now be penalised under the law of the State or Territory in which the breach occurred. Family violence restraining orders made on or after November 25, 2017 are automatically nationally recognised under the NDVOS. Family violence restraining orders made before that date can be brought within the scheme via an application to a court.²²
- **Attorney General John Quigley has flagged further legal reform to bring Western Australia's laws, relating to gender identity and same-sex marriage, in line with national and international standards**. The Attorney General has asked the Law Reform Commission to review particular aspects of WA's gender reassignment laws, as they relate to people who identify as intersex, or who do not identify as male or female. Under current WA laws, intersex people wanting to change their gender identity and have the change officially recognised by the Gender Reassignment Board must be single. The Attorney General will not wait for the Commission's report before closing this legal loophole, so intersex couples will not have to divorce their partners to have their gender identity changed and officially recognised.²²
- In December, **Australia's toughest dangerous sexual**

offender legislation successfully passed through both houses of State Parliament. The new laws seek to protect Western

Australians from dangerous sexual offenders through a number of key changes to the Dangerous Sexual Offenders Act 2006 (WA) and the Bail Act 1982 (WA), including: A reversal of the onus of proof so that offenders bear the burden of satisfying the court, on a balance of probabilities, that they will substantially comply with the standard conditions placed on them when they are under supervision in the community; A presumption against bail for dangerous sexual offenders who are charged with breaching a supervision order; and a new section to provide for an interim supervision order.²²

- In September, **Perth Airport unveiled a \$2.5 billion infrastructure expansion program that will allow it to keep pace with passenger demands**. The plan includes the expansion of the international terminal, the consolidation of all terminals to the eastern side of the airport, additional taxiways and a new parallel runway. Analysis by the airport showed some areas of international passenger service would come under serious strain by 2020 if no expansion was undertaken, there would be insufficient gates for international aircraft, reduced levels of service in departures, and outbound baggage facilities would be under strain. The \$2.5 billion will be spent over the next seven to 10 years.²³
- In October, **a second tunnel boring machine began tunnelling at Forrestfield, as part of the \$1.86 billion METRONET Forrestfield-Airport Link project**. The two TBMs will each tunnel eight kilometres under Perth Airport and the Swan River, linking new stations at Forrestfield, Airport Central and Belmont.²²
- The State Government has committed to investing **\$425 million, over five years, towards destination marketing and event tourism**. In the 2017-18 State Budget, an additional \$36.5 million over four years has

been allocated to establish a destination marketing baseline budget of \$45 million per annum to grow the tourism industry with a stronger focus on bringing more visitors to WA. An additional \$50.5 million, over four years, has also been invested to establish a baseline budget of \$40 million per annum for event tourism, including events arising from opportunities presented by the new Optus Stadium.²²

- Brookfield Property Partners unveiled the design blueprint for its **\$1.1 billion twin tower development at Elizabeth Quay**, following its entry into project delivery agreements. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority has granted the group principal planning approval for the mixed-use project, which will be built on lots 5 and 6 at Elizabeth Quay, and will comprise two towers. Upon completion, the tower proposed for lot 5 is expected to be one of the tallest towers in Perth at 53 storeys, offering 15,000 square metres of commercial office space, 220 luxury apartments, 1,300sqm of retail and a five-star hotel. Associated amenities include restaurants, bars and conference facilities contained within the cantilevered section of the building, known as 'Plus'.²⁶
- Property developer **Sirona Capital has unveiled plans for the 5,500m² -plus retail component of its \$270 million Kings Square project in Fremantle**. Kings Square's retail concept called 'FOMO', will offer a mix of food and dining, arts, apparel, homewares and a marketplace. The revitalisation of Kings Square is a joint project between Sirona Capital and the City of Fremantle, which will create new commercial retail and office spaces, as well as a new administration and civic centre for the City of Fremantle. Probuilt started construction in September, with finalisation of the build expected in late 2019.²⁶
- The 2017-18 State Budget included more than **\$138 million in funding for important capital works as part of the**

State Government's Plan for Peel, with a focus on projects that will assist in diversifying the economy and creating jobs, including: \$10 million for the eastern foreshore redevelopment to develop an iconic Mandurah foreshore precinct, supporting local tourism and local jobs; and \$45 million for Nambeelup to ensure future development and growth of the Peel Business Park.²⁴

- **\$129 million will be invested by the State Government over the next four years to improve and expand the State's cycling network.** The money will allow at least 95 kilometres of cycling path to be added to the network - as well as a range of community cycling initiatives. The funding includes \$55 million towards filling gaps on the current principal shared path network around Perth and \$29 million in grants for local governments.²⁴
- **A 'world-class waterfront precinct' will be the result of a \$120m upgrade of Ocean Reef boat harbour** announced by the State Government in September. The Ocean Reef Marina project would transform existing facilities into a world-class tourism and recreational facility. The new precinct will also have about 1,000 new dwellings, including apartments, retail and commercial developments.²⁷
- In October, site work began on the **first stage of the Murdoch Health and Knowledge Precinct (MHKP) which will include aged care beds, affordable housing and Western Australia's first Medihotel.** The 9.6-hectare site adjacent to Fiona Stanley Hospital will be developed in two stages over 10 to 15 years to become a major hub delivering jobs, new homes, and leading health and research facilities. The Fini Group's plans for the first stage of the MHKP include 175 apartments, a 150-bed aged care facility, a 6,480m² super medical clinic, the Medihotel, short-stay accommodation, and 6,080m² of commercial, retail and amenity space.

It is envisaged the broader Murdoch Activity Centre will eventually be home to 22,000 residents and up to 44,000 students. Completion of stage one civil works is anticipated in mid-2018, while the Medihotel facility is expected to open its doors in 2021.²²

- In October, the first sod was turned at the **\$9.19 million Peel Youth Medical Services Health Hub**, which will support vulnerable residents in the Canning region. The hub's focus will be on drug and alcohol, mental health and homeless services, and early intervention.²²
- **Perth's hotel construction boom continued in 2017, with Jaxon commencing work on a 27-storey Mantra hotel that will be a stone's throw from three recently completed hospitality projects at the western end of the city.** The \$80 million project is backed by WA developer George Atzemis, who purchased the former Musgrove Music site at 900 Hay Street in 2013. What's being proposed is 4.5 star, 250-room hotel. The new development follows last year's \$25 million refurbishment of the nearby Holiday Inn on Hay St.²⁶
- The City of Perth appears ready to throw its weight behind the long-awaited **\$70 million Forrest Chase overhaul.** It is to start almost two years later than originally hoped but is expected to include a yet-to-be-disclosed, double-level flagship tenancy on the corner of Murray Street mall and Forrest Place. The revamp, to involve Myer and the surrounding tenancies on the ground and first floors (many now closed in anticipation of the building work) getting a fresh new look, will also involve a change to the ground floor tenancies with potential for a small bar, and dining and entertainment venues, as well as more general retail shopping associated with the centre.²³
- **The new owner of 335 Wellington Street, home to the Wellington Surplus Stores for 75 years, has lodged an application with the City of Perth to build \$70 million student accommodation.** Lease Equity announced the sale of 317-335 Wellington

Street and the adjacent 105-107 Pier Street in an off-market deal worth \$8.4 million, the first transfer of the properties in more than 40 years.

According to realestate.com.au, the 333-335 Wellington Street site last sold for \$30,000 in 1971. The site comprises five contiguous allotments totalling approximately 1,400 square metres. The proposed \$70 million development joins three other planned student accommodation projects in Perth city. Cedar Pacific is planning to develop a 3,000sqm lot behind Perth Arena, which is part of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority's Perth City Link project, into a 550-bed student housing facility. Devwest Group will repurpose the former Telstra headquarters on Stirling Street in Northbridge into a 500-bed student accommodation facility, and Stirling Capital has plans to build a 24-storey, 571-bed tower in collaboration with international student accommodation provider GSA, also on Stirling Street.²⁶

- **A contribution of \$60 million to extend Stephenson Avenue to Mitchell Freeway was included 2017-18 State Budget.** The funding will go towards creating a one-kilometre link between the growing Stirling city centre precinct and the Mitchell Freeway. At least 30,000 people are employed within the Stirling city centre, Osborne Park and the neighbouring Herdsman-Glendalough area, making it one of the biggest business precincts outside the Perth central business district.²²
- **Master planning is underway for the flagship new Inner-City College, to be built in Subiaco.** Lead architect, Bateman T&Z Architects Joint Venture, has been appointed to produce a design for the school to match the modern education needs of today's secondary students. To be built alongside Subiaco Oval at Kitchener Park, the school will ease demand for places at existing inner suburban public secondary schools. The State Government has allocated \$68 million for stage one of the school, which is expected to open to Year 7 students in 2020, expanding to

- cater for 2,000 students from Years 7 to 12 by 2025.²²

 - In October, **Housing Minister Peter Tinley launched property developer Blackburne's \$30 million mixed use development in the heart of LandCorp's Rockingham Waterfront Village urban regeneration project.** Blackburne's Azure Rockingham development represents the last stage of a 17-year transformation of 16.8 hectares of underutilised Crown land. Rockingham Waterfront Village, a partnership between LandCorp and the City of Rockingham, is an urban renewal project that has created a high-class tourist, cultural and commercial precinct that includes high rise apartments and a café strip.²²
 - In September, **the first sod was turned on a project to provide greater flexibility and more design choices for those looking to buy in Ellenbrook.** The eight 80sqm lots in the new Reveley Terrace project, built by Now Living, are the first green-titled lots under 100sqm. It is anticipated that their affordability will encourage first and low-income homebuyers, and those seeking to downsize, by helping them to secure funding more easily. The lots are in the heart of the Ellenbrook town centre within easy reach of open space and parks, office and retail facilities, public transport and schools.²²
 - A map of Perth's new home builds has revealed **owners continue to favour detached houses on the urban fringe despite warnings it could lead to a disconnected city and extreme infrastructure costs.** Housing approval data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in January details where Perth's 20,000 new residential home approvals were in 2016-17, with the cities of Swan, Wanneroo, Stirling and Cockburn being the most popular locations. Detached housing accounted for around two thirds of building approvals across 150 kilometres of urban sprawl. Sustainability researcher James Eggleston said while building on the urban fringes was more affordable, there were hidden risks for homeowners and the state government.²⁷
 - Truck congestion to Fremantle Port is expected to be reduced** following the State Government's increase to the freight on rail subsidy in the 2017-18 State Budget. An allocation of \$19.4 million over four years - equating to an additional \$9.8 million - will enable the container rail subsidy to increase from \$30 to \$50 per Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit. The higher subsidy provides a financial incentive to put more container movements on the port rail service, thereby reducing truck movements on roads leading to Fremantle. It's predicted the subsidy increase will assist in growing the rail mode share towards 20% - an increase of about 5%. The rail strategy currently removes 70,000 to 100,000 one-way truck movements from metropolitan roads every year.²²
 - Club Capricorn Resort, which closed in 2015, will become a 12ha residential housing estate with recreation, tourism, cafe and restaurants under a long-term master plan to transform the northern beaches precinct.** The redevelopment of the old Club Capricorn Resort was in addition to a massive amount of public and private spending in the Yanchep area, with a \$12 million neighbourhood shopping centre under construction and a new high school to open in 2018.²³
 - In September, **the Kings Square renewal project officially began.** Once complete, about 1,500 public servants will occupy 17,200 square metres of the 20,000-square metre office development component of the precinct. Public servants from the departments of Communities and Transport are scheduled to relocate to the Kings Square office accommodation in 2020.²²
 - More than **\$7 million will be invested into revitalising vacant or underutilised government-owned heritage properties,** thanks to the successful sale of two major conservation projects under the Heritage Works Program: the Fremantle Warders' Cottages and the Coogee Hotel and Post Office. The three sets of terrace cottages have sold or are under settlement after \$3.4 million was spent on urgent conservation works, service upgrades, subdivision and pre-sale planning. Originally valued at \$730,000 for the entire group, the once derelict cottages generated considerable market interest and achieved total sales of \$8.2 million. The 1901 former Coogee Hotel and Post Office will net an 88% return on investment following conservation works and feasibility planning.²²
 - Two Rocks Marina will receive a \$6 million revamp over the next two years to improve ageing infrastructure and prepare the facility for future needs.** The works will include: Demolition of condemned maritime structures, including the original fuel jetty; Construction of relocated boat pens; Upgrading and maintenance of existing jetties; Reclamation within the harbour for future buildings, boat pens and car parking; Priority repairs to the existing breakwater; and priority maintenance to existing buildings.²²
 - The restoration of century-old cottages within two historic adjacent Perth streets has won a prestigious UNESCO conservation award - the only Australian project to be honoured in 2017. **The Brookman and Moir Streets Precinct won the Award of Distinction in this year's UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.** The precinct consists of 58 semi-detached workers' cottages, built as a residential estate for working class families between 1897 and 1898. The precinct was included in the State Register of Heritage Places in 2006. The UNESCO Asia Pacific Awards recognise the efforts of private individuals and organisations, which have successfully restored and conserved significant heritage structures.²²

Lifestyle

- **Optus Stadium was officially opened on January 21, with almost 70,000 people touring the \$1.46 billion facility as part of a Community Open Day.** Premier Mark McGowan, Sport and Recreation Minister Mick Murray and former Premier Colin Barnett opened the gates for the first time alongside juniors representing a range of sports. Attendees had the opportunity to roam the general admission areas, try the different food and beverage offerings, sit in the seats for the first time, and experience the stadium's state-of-the-art lighting, video and audio systems. In the surrounding Stadium Park, children were able to play on the six nature playgrounds located in the Chevron Parkland for the first time. The playgrounds cater for a range of ages and will be available to families free of charge on event and non-event days.²⁴
- A new record was set for the number of people attending a sporting event in Perth with **53,781 people watching the one day international between Australia and England at Optus Stadium.** The previous record was the 1979 grand final between South Fremantle and East Fremantle, with 52,781 going to Subiaco Oval.²³
- **About 30 small Western Australian food and beverage businesses have made the big leagues, winning contracts that contribute to \$150 million committed to suppliers across five years at Optus Stadium.** Larger food and beverage suppliers include Gage Roads Brewing Company, Mrs Mac's Pies and Australian wine specialist Treasury Wine Estates. New West Foods will supply more than 200 tonnes of frozen potato chips, 800,000 portions of MasterFoods condiments and 10 tonnes of seafood to the stadium annually. Other small produce suppliers to secure deals include Little Home Bakery (bread), Morley Growers (fruit and vegetables), Total Food Distributors (meat), Mahogany Creek Distributors (poultry and game), Mondo Meats (meat), and Oil 2 U (oil) Food Packaging Australia will provided more than 500,000 hot chip containers, 200,000 burger boxes and 1.5 million beer cups annually, all of which will be made from recyclable material.²⁶
- **Tourism operators will compete for the rights to take thrill seekers up the 65-metre-high Matagarup Bridge after the Government confirmed the experience would be green-lit upon completion.** In late January a major milestone was reached in the \$91.5 million Swan River Pedestrian Bridge construction as the first major segments arrived at Burswood from Civmec's steel fabrication yards in Henderson. About 50 similar components will arrive over coming weeks, with the project on track to meet its revised completion date in May. The first steel component weighed 30 tonnes and was 19 metres long, giving an indication of the scale of the footbridge linking East Perth with Optus Stadium and the wider Burswood Peninsula.²³
- **The Fremantle Dockers Women's team made history when they played against Collingwood at Optus Stadium on February 10.** With almost 42,000 people attending, the match was the biggest standalone women's sport event ever held in Australia, breaking the attendance record for an AFLW match and easily eclipsing the 10,000 who watched Fremantle's AFLW debut at Fremantle Oval. Tickets were only \$2 with all proceeds going to charity.^{22&25}
- **Perth will host the first ever T20 World Cup in Australia, with 11 International Cricket Council (ICC) World T20 (WT20) matches in Perth in 2020.** Six men's matches will be played at Perth Stadium and five women's matches will be hosted at the WACA Ground, with fixtures to be announced in early 2019.²⁴
- International football superstar and Young Australian of the Year, **Sam Kerr will join the Matildas for their first-ever Western Australian game when they play Thailand at nib Stadium in March 26.** The match will be the Matildas' farewell friendly before jetting off to Jordan for the 2018 Asian Cup. The State Government has also secured a week-long Matildas training camp following the friendly, where local junior players will have the chance to meet and rub shoulders with their heroes.²²
- A record **106,424 fans attended the 2018 Hopman Cup, the largest tournament attendance in the event's history.** An additional 5,688 fans visited Perth Arena to see Roger Federer's open practice session. The night session between Switzerland and USA saw the event's largest session attendance in the Hopman Cup's 30-year history with 14,029 attendees packing into Perth Arena to watch Belinda Bencic and Roger Federer defeat Coco Vandeweghe and Jack Sock. The 2018 tournament saw the three highest attended sessions in the history of the Hopman Cup – 13,943 (Tues 2 January), 14,029 (Wed 4 January) plus the largest Hopman Cup final attendance of 14,008 (Sat 6 January).
- A world-first exhibition about the life, work and extraordinary talent of Perth-born actor turned international movie star **Heath Ledger** opened at the Art Gallery of Western Australia in October. **Heath Ledger: A Life in Pictures** featured objects and photographs from international collections and Ledger's personal archives that revealed not only a charismatic star who played iconic movie roles, but a multi-talented individual who was driven to push creative boundaries. For the first-time visitors saw the Joker and Nurse Hemming costumes from The Dark Knight, the iconic shirts of Ennis del Mar and Jack Twist from Brokeback Mountain, and Ledger's Best Supporting Actor Oscar, BAFTA and other awards.²²
- In February, **the Art Gallery of Western Australia became home to works from the private art collection of eminent Italian family, the Corsinis.** In its only Australian showing, the Art Gallery hosted A Window on Italy - The Corsini Collection: Masterpieces from Florence exhibition. The exhibition featured Renaissance and Baroque paintings by renowned Italian artists including Botticelli, Caravaggio, and Pontormo. Also, on display were decorative items and objects from the Corsini family's home, the Palazzo Corsini, on the banks of the Arno River, Florence.²²

- **High Tide 17, part of the inaugural Fremantle Biennale transformed the city's West End precinct into a massive, outside art gallery late last year.** The event featured local and international artists such as Switzerland's Felice Varini, whose massive Arc d'Éllyps installation stretched some 800 metres along High Street and took in 25 heritage-listed buildings. Buildings and streets that were transformed by the artists include the historic Round House; High, Cliff and Mouat streets; the Port Authority Building; Bathers Bay; the University of Notre Dame; the WA Maritime Museum and J Shed.²²
- A vacant lot adjacent to Yagan Square was used for markets, local music and community events. The events space has been created within the Perth City Link project and hosted the **WAMFest Live Lot Party** - a free concert celebrating Western Australian music across two stages, the Perth Makers Christmas Markets and the official Pride Parade After Party.²²
- Nearly **650,000 people visited Perth's iconic tourist destination Rottneest Island in the 2017 financial year**, with about a third coming from either interstate or overseas. The number of visitors to the island climbed 5.9% in FY17 to 647,524 visitors, with about half of those being day visitors. Of those visitors, about 420,000 took the ferry to reach the island, while about 214,000 were boating visitors. About 67% of visitors were Western Australians, whilst interstate visitors made up just slightly more of the total demographic than international visitors - 17% versus 16%.²⁶
- Glamorous camping, otherwise known as 'glamping', **accommodation will be available at Rottneest Island from the summer of 2018-19, after plans to build a beachfront eco-resort were conditionally approved.** The 2.8-hectare development, known as Pinky Beach Eco Retreat and Beach Club, will be an ecologically sensitive, world-class eco retreat built as part of the Rottneest Island Authority's vision for revitalising the Island's accommodation offerings. The Eco Retreat will provide different levels of accommodation to suit various budgets, available from about \$100 up to \$350 per night.²²
- **Rottneest Island's waterfront restaurant was revamped for the opening of the 2017 Christmas holiday season.** The first ever pizza delivery service, Frankie's on Rotto Pizzeria opened in time for the summer season. While the newly refurbished hostel accommodation at Kingstown with family rooms and buffet-style breakfasts and dinners opened in early December. The State Government and Rottneest Island Authority hope the changes will boost visitor numbers from around 650,000 a year to 900,000 by 2019.²²
- **Perth's transport network was ranked 87th out of 100 cities globally and fared the worst out of the five Australian cities featured in the 2017 Sustainable Cities Mobility Index by Arcadis.** The report found Australian cities lacked comprehensive underground metro systems and relied too heavily on private vehicles which deterred mobility. "All have less travel made by foot, bike and public transport than their peer cities," the report found.²⁷
- Perth's daily traffic congestion battle has pushed nearly two thirds of residents to rethink their commute, a survey released in February has found. **Traffic congestion heading into Perth's metropolitan area during morning peak hour reduces a vehicle's average travel speed to 52.5 kilometres an hour - 10 kilometres slower than five years ago.** The city has one of the highest car use rates in Australia with four in every five workers choosing to drive to work, but according to a survey conducted by HERE Technologies, two thirds of those people were starting to reconsider their daily commute. Tonkin Highway North was the busiest road during morning and afternoon peak hours, with an average speed of 40.6km/h and 36.6km/h respectively.²⁷
- A study by realestate.com.au claims **the best suburban lifestyle in WA can be found between the CBD and the Swan River in East Perth.** The results are based on lifestyle rankings on proximity to parks, waterways, educational institutions and the city. What East Perth lacked in schools and universities, it more than made up for with green spaces, riverbanks and inner-city convenience. Neighbouring suburb Highgate was next on the list, followed by Ashfield in the town of Bassendean. Ashfield recorded scores equal to or better than East Perth in every category except proximity to the CBD. Crawley, Rossmoyne, Burswood, North Fremantle, Maylands, Woodbridge and Leederville rounded out WA's top 10.²⁵
- **The highest proportion of people aged over 65 are living in the Town of Claremont and the City of Mandurah, where over 65's makes up more than 20% of the population.** The highest densities of people aged 65 or over are in the Town of Claremont and City of Subiaco, where in 2016, there were more than 400 people aged over 65 per square kilometre. The most significant growth in the number and proportion of people aged over 65 between 2011-16 are in the Peel region and Joondalup. Joondalup experienced a 33% increase, while the Perth-Peel average was 16.39%.³⁰
- **By 2060, it is predicted that 1 in 4 West Australians will be aged over 65.** There is also expected to be very high growth rates among our 'oldest old' and by 2060 there will be 25 centenarians for every 100 children aged under one. By 2100, the total number of dependents in the population is projected to increase from 49 per 100 people of working age to 79.5 per 100 people of working age. This will put a lot of pressure on government revenue, services, families and the community. We'll also have fewer people working and paying taxes and a greater number of people relying on the pension.³⁰
- A Committee for Perth survey has found almost **40% of people experienced some form of career disruption**, whether it was being made redundant, or a change in career or industry because of the end of the boom or the GFC. Another 72% are predicting no real wages growth and 45% of people can't see any improvement in their quality of life. The survey found that 60% of household finances are so fragile they would struggle if living costs went up by just 5% and only 38% of the

people thought they were better off than they were five years ago. A significant number of people still think they're stuck in financial rut with 26% of them saying their current income is insufficient for their needs.³⁰

- Tourism Western Australia has signed a deal to fund the **2018 Australasian Police and Emergency Games**, to be held in Mandurah from October 28 to November 3, 2018. The biennial Australasian Police and Emergency Games is a seven-day, multi-discipline sporting event for serving, retired and volunteer members of eligible police and emergency service agencies. It is anticipated the event, which involves more than 50 individual and team sports, will attract about 2,000 visitors from outside the Peel region and generate about \$2.5 million in visitor expenditure. The event is open to competitors from Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. Due to its proximity to WA, competitors from Singapore will once again be invited to participate, along with those from Indonesia, Malaysia and Hong Kong who will be invited to compete for the first time.²²
- Conde Nast readers voted **Perth's COMO The Treasury hotel the best in Australasia and 12th in the world**. It was the only hotel in Australia to make the top 50 in the 2017 Conde Nast Traveller readers' choice awards, considered to be the world's longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry. More than 300,000 travellers took part in the awards, voting for their favourite hotel based on criteria including excellent service, design and dining. In its citation, Conde Nast Traveller said COMO The Treasury was "a fitting emblem of the new Perth" and "a \$580 million reinvention of a cluster of 19th century State treasury buildings, which sat empty for more than 20 years Almost every detail in the hotel has been returned to its original state, from the reinstalled dormer windows to the roof-line's copper trim."²³
- Perth has lifted its restaurant game receiving **two mentions in the 2017 TripAdvisor Choice Awards for best fine dining**. While Muse Restaurant in New South Wales was named number one in Australia for the second year in a row – Perth

came in second with Friends Restaurant. Friends Restaurant was lauded as the "benchmark of fine dining in Perth". The restaurant was said to offer high quality dishes, along with an award-winning wine list and warm hospitality. While Nobu restaurant at Crown came sixth for its traditional Japanese cuisine with a twist of American flavours which create "an out-of-this world" unique dining experience.²⁵

- One of the busiest areas at **Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour has been transformed with the construction of a new \$1 million multipurpose piazza** in the heart of the popular restaurant precinct. The Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour Piazza provides a new gathering space for the 1.5 million visitors each year and additional alfresco dining areas that link surrounding restaurants. In 2017, the was named Australia's best public boat harbour at a national award ceremony.²²
- The State Government launched a **major digital strategy designed to promote Perth as a study destination in China** to help boost the State's share of Chinese enrolments and Western Australia's economy. The strategy includes a website hosted in China and a social media campaign, which aims to increase the profile of Western Australia in China as a study and lifestyle destination to both students and parents. The website includes student testimonials, WA's research strengths and achievements, and university profiles, as well as providing potential students with an insight into life in Perth.²⁴
- A trial of **direct flights between Shanghai and Perth** is a possibility following a successful meeting between Premier Mark McGowan and the Chairman of China Eastern Airlines in November. The meeting resulted in China Eastern Airlines indicating a trial of direct flights could begin as early as October this year. Currently China Eastern only flies to Eastern States cities.²⁴
- A Committee for Perth report found that **Perth is not attracting enough students from overseas to study and**

is missing out on a significant opportunity to diversify its economy. The FACTBase Bulletin revealed that while Australia's share of the international higher education student market has increased over the past 15 years, WA's share has been in decline. Despite being geographically closer to China, 14% of WA's international students were from China compared to an average of 26% nationally.³⁰

Knowledge and Innovation

- **Robotic technology and the internet-of-things will dramatically change employment patterns, accident rates and digging costs in the mining industry over just the next three years**, business advisory firm BDO has boldly predicted. BDO's Energy 2020 Vision report has predicted that robots will replace more than 50% of miners by the year 2020. Half of the affected miners will be retrained to run the technology controlling the robots. The new jobs will increasingly be in fields like remote operations, maintenance, software development, data processing and data analytics.²⁶
- **Western Australian startups and young technology companies attracted about \$109 million in funding** in the December quarter, according to the latest report from tech sector analysts Techboard. About 73% of the funding was raised by ASX-listed companies, including Fastbrick Robotics, Livehire, and Parkd Group. Fastbrick Robotics, which is developing an automated bricklaying machine, raised \$35 million through a share placement. Livehire contributed \$20 million to WA's result through a placement backed by Telstra Super and other investors.²⁶
- The State Government is investing **\$33.8 million as part of the 2017-18 State Budget to modernise SmartRider, Transperth's cashless ticketing system**. A new system will be introduced to cater for future patronage growth expected as part of METRONET and to accommodate advances in technology. All SmartRider

readers across the network will be replaced during the system overhaul, as well as upgrading back-end technology. More sophisticated card encryption technologies will be developed, while flexible payment options such as smartphone or debit or credit card tag-on capabilities are being investigated. The contactless card and mobile phone pay-as-you-go system could be similar to the system that has been successfully implemented by Transport for London.²²

- **Homegrown technology to track meteorites has caught the eye of a global aerospace contractor**, highlighting Western Australia's growing capability in the sector at a time when the federal government is pushing the creation of an oversight agency. US-based defence and aerospace giant Lockheed Martin signed a partnership with Curtin University in September to support the development of the Desert Fireball Network. The network was developed by Curtin professor Phil Bland and consists of a series of mini observatories set up cheaply across the outback to follow meteorite movements. The observatories include a camera lens, software, a mobile phone, solar panel and a protective outer casing.²⁶
- **Carnegie Clean Energy has been awarded \$15.75 million grant for wave energy technology development**. The grant will be used to install a large-scale wave energy converter device off the coast of Albany capable of producing about one megawatt of electrical power for export into the South West Interconnected System. The University of Western Australia has been awarded a \$3.75 million grant to develop a world-class Wave Energy Research Centre in Albany, building on expertise already developed at the UWA Oceans Institute.²²
- A **\$5 million state-of-the-art robotic system used to treat prostate cancer was funded by the State Government**. Known as the da Vinci system, the robot was the first of its kind in a WA public hospital and brought the State in line with other health jurisdictions which have a similar metropolitan population. Established at Fiona Stanley Hospital, the da Vinci system will

provide urological procedures, focused on robotic-assisted prostatectomies, partial nephrectomies and radical nephrectomies. It will also allow for 3D vision, magnification capabilities, and enhanced dexterity, so surgeons are able to manipulate and dissect areas where access is challenging or limited with the human hand. Compared to traditional techniques, the da Vinci system will result in patients having faster recovery, reduced length of stay in hospital, and faster return to normal day activities.²²

- Dunsborough-based company **Nauti-Craft was named a winner in the prestigious 2017 Maritime Australia Industry Innovation Awards**. The company was awarded the Civil SME Innovation Grant of \$10,000 for its patented marine suspension system, which provides increased levels of ride comfort, control and stability through an interlinked hydraulic system.²²
- Malaga company Galvin Engineering has developed **Australia's first lead-free drinking tap** as the State Government deals with new revelations of lead contamination in taps at a number of Western Australian schools and the ongoing issue at the Perth Children's Hospital. The company said it has developed the GalvinClear stainless steel range of Ezy-Drink taps in response to demand for lead-free alternatives. Ezy-Drink push button taps are ready for installation in schools and public places including parks, recreation centres, concert venues and hospitals.²⁶
- **Curtin University opened its new Dubai campus in the United Arab Emirates** in September, with degree programs launching this year. The campus will initially offer business, media, project management, education, and information technology courses, and is looking to expand its course offerings in the coming years.²⁴
- A **landmark partnership between TAFE WA and Rio Tinto** will ensure Western Australians are skilled to take up the jobs that automation and future

advances in technology will create. New TAFE WA curriculum for post-secondary courses and industry traineeships, to be developed over the coming year, will help ensure the current and future workforce has the qualifications, skills and competencies required by industry in changing workplaces. The curriculum will be the first of its kind in Australia.²²

- Curtin University won the **WA Innovator of the Year Award** for ethylene blocking compounds that extend the life of fruit, vegetables and flowers. In nature, ethylene triggers ripening but also hastens ageing, shortening storage life. It is responsible for up to 50% of post-harvest losses in fresh horticultural produce.²⁶
- The **Water Corporation is using virtual reality technology to simulate how water and wastewater infrastructure will function - before being built**. Usually, design drawings are reviewed in a two-dimensional format, however the Water Corporation now converts designs into three-dimensional virtual reality. The corporation used virtual reality to allow operators at its Northam office to experience in 3D the design of wastewater recycling plants at Kellerberin and Wyalkatchem. The operators were able to provide feedback to improve the design from an occupational health and safety perspective.²²
- **Six projects designed to make Perth a smarter city, ranging from a driverless electric bus in South Perth to management of wetlands in Joondalup received \$15 million in funding**. The projects also include renewable energy generation in Fremantle and an irrigation trial in the City of Perth. The funding for the projects includes \$6 million from the federal government's inaugural Smart Cities and Suburbs Program. A further \$9 million will be contributed by local councils, universities and business groups participating in the projects.²⁶
- Western Australian **game developers received a major shot in the arm with two locally made games awarded at Melbourne International Games Week**. Blacklab Games' 'Battlestar Galactica: Deadlock' and Jacob Janerka's 'Paradigm' were among the top 13 games chosen from a shortlist of 34 from around Australia as winners of the 2017 Game

- Development Awards. Both games have also received international attention.²⁶
- The first 100 public primary schools have been selected to have existing classrooms converted into science laboratories to prepare student for jobs of the future. The State Government's \$17 million election commitment included \$12 million to transform 200 existing primary school classrooms into science laboratories by 2021, with an additional \$5 million for resources. In addition, each school will receive \$25,000 from the \$5 million allocation, to purchase laboratory equipment and resources such as 3D models of the solar system and human anatomy, digital microscopes, 3D printers, virtual reality headsets, robotics kits and renewable energy kits.²²
- Synergy intends to develop up to 280 megawatts of renewable energy projects in Western Australia by 2020 after the State Government approved plans for a private investor to acquire a majority stake in its existing wind farm and solar farm, and in two new projects. The private investor will buy an unspecified equity stake in Synergy's Grasmere wind farm at Albany and its Greenough River solar farm near Geraldton. More significantly, it will also be a part owner of the planned Warradarge wind farm near Eneabba, which will be up to 250MW, making it the largest renewable energy asset in the state.²⁶

¹ ABS 5220.0 State Accounts and 5204.0 National Accounts; WA 2017-18 Government Mid-Year Financial Projection Statements and Australian 2017-18 Mid-Year Fiscal and Economic Outlook

² ABS 5220.0 State Accounts

ABS 5220.0 State Accounts; 5206.0 Quarterly National Accounts; and 5302.0 Balance of Payments; and WA 2016-17 Pre-election Projections Statement

³ ABS 3101.0 Australian Demographic Statistics

⁴ ABS 6202.0 Monthly Labour Force

⁵ ABS 6291.0.55.003 Quarterly Labour Force

⁶ ABS 6202 Monthly Labour Force and 6354 Job Vacancies

⁷ Reserve Bank of Australia Statistical Tables

⁸ ABS 6302 Average Weekly Earnings and 6345 Wage Price Index

⁹ ABS 5220 State Accounts and 5206 Quarterly National Accounts

¹⁰ ABS 5625 Private New Capital Expenditure

¹¹ ABS 8412 Mineral and Petroleum Exploration

¹² reiwa.com.au

¹³ ABS 8752 Building Activity and 8762 Engineering Construction Activity

¹⁴ ABS 8731 Building Approvals and 5609 Housing Finance

¹⁵ ABS International Trade in Goods and Services; 5220 State Accounts and 5206 Quarterly National Accounts

¹⁶ ABS 5368 International Trade in Goods and Services

¹⁷ ABS 5386.0.55.004 International Trade in Services by State

¹⁸ Tourism Research Australia, International and National Visitor Survey

¹⁹ WA Department of Mines and Petroleum, Resource Data Files.

²⁰ Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Resources Data Files

²¹ Construction Training Fund, Construction Industry Snapshot, December 2017

²² Ministerial media statement

²³ The West Australian

²⁴ Premier's media statement

²⁵ Perth Now

²⁶ Business News

²⁷ WA Today

²⁸ Census

²⁹ ABC online

³⁰ FACTBase report

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