

What the 2026/27 State Budget means for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Communities



05 June 2026

Last week, the South Australian Labor Government delivered its 2026-27 State Budget.

AHSCA has summarised what this budget likely means for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and community-controlled organisations in South Australia.

Overall, the budget primarily reflects ongoing funding for previously announced initiatives as opposed to new investments. There were very few commitments made for Aboriginal-specific policies and programs. Disappointingly, the budget does not well reflect the priorities put forward by the sector through AHCSA's 2026 Election Priorities.

Truth-Telling and Treaty

The most significant announcement from the 2026-27 budget for Aboriginal people in SA is a commitment of \$8.5 million over 4 years to establish a Commission to undertake Truth-Telling and Treaty activities in response to the [Uluru Statement from the Heart](#).

This Commission will be headed by Aboriginal leaders to provide cultural authority and independent oversight and will work to acknowledge the history and experiences of Aboriginal South Australians and lay the foundation for future Treaty activities.

- Whilst this represents an important step in the reconciliation process, further information is needed on the implementation of truth-telling and treaty activities, and what this practically means for Aboriginal people and communities across SA.
- AHCSA will continue to monitor this piece of work and keep Member Services updated as more information is released.

Fuel Security and Road Infrastructure

The SA Government has secured a strategic reserve of 20 million litres of diesel to boost SA fuel security and will be reviewing public transport fares in response to the current fuel prices.

- Concerns remain that increasing freight costs and high fuel pricing may limit any savings experienced by communities in rural and remote areas.

A total of \$29.1 billion has been allocated for public sector infrastructure spend over the next 4 years, including:

- \$90 million for safety upgrades on the South Eastern Freeway
- \$90 million for upgrades along the Horrocks Highway
- \$80 million for upgrades at the Adelaide and Hawthorn Road intersection
- \$19 million for upgrades at the Chandlers Hill Road and Happy Valley intersection

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Cost of Living

Education

The SA Government has committed \$174 million over 4 years to make public schools across the State fee-free from 2027.

Supported Accommodation

The SA Government has committed \$110 million over 4 years to build an additional 200 supported accommodation places to manage complex SA Housing tenants and those with specialised needs.

Public Housing Upgrades

The SA Government has committed \$36.1 million over 3 years to upgrade insulation and appliances in public and community housing, reducing energy costs for tenants.

- Notably, there was no commitment made to upgrading Aboriginal housing in rural and remote areas with appropriate temperature control and health hardware (e.g. taps, toilets, and showers). Inadequate housing in rural and remote areas remains an issue for Aboriginal communities and contributes to poor health and wellbeing outcomes.

Housing

The SA Government has committed \$12.2 million to deliver property and tenancy management services for select remote Aboriginal communities.

- It is unclear which remote communities will be impacted by this funding, and what 'property and tenancy management' practically means for Aboriginal people living in these properties.
- AHCSA will continue to monitor this piece of work and keep Member Services updated as more information is released.

Health and Aged Care

\$1.7 billion over 5 years will be invested in healthcare services across SA to address increasing levels of demand, including:

- \$22 million for a new Emergency Department at Clare Hospital
- \$15 million to upgrade infrastructure at Murray Bridge Hospital
- \$13.9 million for regional ambulance services including new paramedics at Ceduna and Yorketown, and station upgrades at Millicent, Yorketown and Barmera
- \$5.6 million for a permanent ambulance crew at Murray Bridge
- \$10 million to establish women's health clinics in 5 GPs across SA

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National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA)

The Commonwealth Government is providing an additional \$2 billion over the next five years to support South Australia's health system. This is projected to bring the Commonwealth's contribution to 37.5 per cent of hospital funding by 2030-31. This is below its commitment of 42.5 per cent made at National Cabinet.

- AHCSA will continue working closely with NACCHO and Affiliates on the NHRA, in which a dedicated Monitoring and Accountability Group (MAG) and framework has been developed to ensure the sector can independently monitor whether governments are delivering on commitments and achieving meaningful change for Aboriginal people and communities.

Expansion of Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS)

The SA Government has committed \$16 million over 4 years to expand the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme, including increased nightly accommodation subsidies for individuals and those travelling with a support person, and a cumulative travel subsidy for those travelling 300km or more for renal or oncology care.

- Disappointingly, no funding has been committed for culturally safe accommodation in Adelaide for Aboriginal people attending medical appointments, as per AHCSA's Election Priorities.

Seniors Card Scheme

The SA Government has committed \$8.4 million over 4 years for the expansion of the Seniors Card scheme for all Aboriginal South Australians aged 50 and over. Eligible recipients will be able to access free Adelaide Metro public transport, as well as a range of discounts on heating and cooling systems, home maintenance and pharmacies.

Children and Young People

Out of home care

The SA Government has committed \$350 million over 5 years to support children in out-of-home care, including supporting family-based carers and increasing the number of children and young people being cared for in family-based environments.

Thriving Kids Program

The SA Government has committed \$230 million over 5 years to deliver the Thriving Kids Program for children aged 8 and under. Thriving Kids supports children with developmental delay and/or autism who have low to moderate needs and represents a move away from the NDIS for this cohort.

- The SA Government is yet to provide information on how engagement regarding the development and implementation of Thriving Kids will occur.
- There are grave concerns for the impacts on Aboriginal children transitioning from the NDIS, particularly with progressive roll out slated to commence 1 October 2026 and full rollout to commence 1 January 2028.
- AHCSA, NACCHO and other state and territory Affiliates have written to the Federal Government expressing dissatisfaction with this model and requesting separate funding be distributed through NACCHO to the community-controlled sector to address significant unmet need. This request, to date, remains unanswered.

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Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence

\$673.6 million is being invested over 10 years (including \$231.6 million to 2029-30) to strengthen services and lay the foundations needed to build an effective and efficient domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) system, including:

- \$182 million to establish a dedicated DFSV service in SA Police.
- \$82 million to provide new services to children and families experiencing violence.
- \$43 million to expand prevention programs.
- \$36 million to improve access to forensic medical examinations.
- \$25 million to establish a 24/7 central telephone and digital support line.

Additional domestic, family and sexual violence commitments include:

- A scheme to enable eligible victim-survivors of domestic, family or sexual violence to access first home buyer benefits, including stamp duty relief and the First Home Owner Grant.
- Reforms to ban domestic violence and sexual offenders from using online dating platforms.

Overall, while the financial investments of the budget are valuable, there was a notable lack of commitments made to Aboriginal-specific policies and programs. AHCSA will continue to advocate for broad reforms to governance, program design and funding allocation to further strengthen the community-controlled sector, recognising the critically important role ACCHOs play in delivering culturally safe healthcare services for Aboriginal people.

- [State Budget 2026-27](#)
- [State Budget 2026-27 Overview](#)

Read AHCSA's State Election Priorities here:

- [AHCSA's State Election Priorities 2026](#)