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## **WA Budget Response from ConnectGroups**

The WA State Budget was announced in mid-October, heralding significant investments in large infrastructure projects, job creation, and servicing the regions.

“ConnectGroups appreciates the WA state government’s investment in Aboriginal communities and the allocation of funds to infrastructure and social programs in the regions” said Antonella Segre, Chief Executive Officer of ConnectGroups. “This is an important step to redress disadvantage among Aboriginal communities”. ConnectGroups asserts that decision-making, service design and implementation must occur in partnership with Aboriginal communities to ensure Aboriginal people have a sense of agency and control over local responses to social issues.

“We commend the government for making TAFE more affordable and investing in training for female-dominated industries, however this budget is more beneficial for men and male-dominated industries such as construction” said Ms Segre. Key construction projects such as Metronet and a small increase in social housing are welcome and necessary for servicing disadvantaged communities.

The number of police officers is set to drastically increase under this budget. ConnectGroups understands that policing in the absence of community development may exacerbate social tensions rather than breaking the cycle of crime. “We would like to see more funding for community-led projects that divert people away from the justice system and support communities experiencing high crime and disadvantage” said Ms Segre.

“ConnectGroups welcomes legislative changes to address family and domestic violence and the funding of this important sector to protect and heal survivors of violence” Ms Segre stated. “Despite an injection of funds in this budget, this sector is still under-resourced to meet demands for service and operational costs. More funding is needed to implement the government’s Family and Domestic Violence Strategy released earlier this year”.

Ms Segre commented that “ConnectGroups remains concerned as to the lack of early intervention and prevention mental health services with the surge of new vulnerable cohorts.

“We need to continue to advocate for people whose life circumstances place them at risk of social and economic exclusion, and ensure there are pathways to employment, education, and social inclusion for all”.

### **For further information contact:**

Renée Darbyshir      Senior Policy Officer      [Renee@connectgroups.org.au](mailto:Renee@connectgroups.org.au)