



FACTSheet

#14, February 2019

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Key

—	Indicates no change from previous FACTSheet
▲	Indicates an increase from previous FACTSheet
▼	Indicates a decrease from previous FACTSheet
●	Indicates newly released or incomparable data

Introduction

This latest FACTSheet produced by the Committee for Perth contains a snapshot of key facts and figures relating to the current performance of Perth and Western Australia. It draws on data from a range of sources including FACTBase reports, Committee for Perth research, government departments and media sources.

The economy¹

Real Gross State Product (% change)

- Western Australia's gross state product (GSP) of \$247.7 billion in 2016-17 was 14% of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP).
- GSP per capita of \$96,466 in 2016-17 was 34% above Australia's GDP per capita of \$71,971.
- Real GSP fell 2.7% in 2016-17, compared with annual average growth of 3.9% over the past 10 years.
- The 2018-19 Western Australian Government Budget forecasts real GSP growth of 2.5% in 2017-18 and 3.25% in 2018-19.
- Australia's real GDP rose 2.0% in 2016-17. The Australian Government forecasts GDP growth of 2.75% in 2017-18 and 3% in 2018-19.

Industry sectors (nominal gross value added)²

- Goods producing industries accounted for 47% (\$115.8b) of GSP in 2016-17, followed by services industries (43% or \$105.5b) and dwelling ownership and other items (11% or \$26.4b).

- Mining accounted for 29% of GSP in 2016-17, followed by business and property services (10%) and construction (8%).
- Manufacturing accounted for 5% of GSP in 2016-17.
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing accounted for 3% of GSP in 2016-17.

Industry sectors contribution to real GSP growth: 2016-17²

- An industry's contribution to real GSP growth depends on real changes to its gross value added and its share of GSP.
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing gross value added rose 24% in 2016-17, contributing 0.5 percentage points to real GSP growth.
 - Mining gross value added rose 2% in 2016-17, and with its large share of GSP, contributed 0.5 percentage points to real GSP growth.
 - Construction gross value added fell 26% in 2016-17, detracting 2.8 percentage points from real GSP growth.

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Gross state income and terms of trade (% change)²

Changes in export prices relative to import prices – terms of trade, affects gross state income (GSI) and accounts for the difference between changes in GSI and GSP.

- Western Australia's terms of trade rose 13% in 2016-17. This meant that despite a decline in real GSP, Western Australia's GSI rose 3.6% in 2016-17, below annual average growth of 4.3% over the past 10 years.
- ▼ The Reserve Bank of Australia's (RBA) \$A commodity price index for Australia rose 21% in 2016-17.

Commodity prices and exchange rate (monthly)³

- ▼ The RBA's monthly \$A commodity price index rose 2% in August 2018. It rose 6% in 2017-18.
- ▼ The monthly average price of iron ore rose 4% to US\$67 a tonne in August 2018.
- ▼ The annual average price of iron ore fell 0.2% to US\$70 a tonne in 2017-18 and is forecast to be US\$62 a tonne in 2018-19 and US\$61 a tonne in 2019-20.
- ▼ The monthly average \$A exchange rate fell 2% to US73 cents in August 2018. The annual average \$A exchange rate rose 3% to US77 cents in 2017-18 and is forecast to be US77 cents in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Population growth⁴

- Western Australia's population of 2.58 million in 2017 was 10% of Australia's population.
- Population growth of 0.8% or 21,395, in 2017 was below annual average growth of 1.9% over the past 10 years.
- Natural increase of 20,004, and net overseas migration increase of 14,209, offset falling net interstate migration which was down 12,818 in 2017.

- 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.

Labour market

Employment monthly⁵

- ▲ Western Australia's total employment rose by 4,229 to 1.35 million in August 2018, with an increase in both full-time employment – up 828 to 914,507, and part-time employment up 3,401 to 430,530.
- Total employment rose 2% or 20,000 through the year to August 2018, with an increase in both full-time employment – up 1% or 9,519, and part-time employment up 2% or 10,481. The 2018-19 Western Australian Government Budget forecasts annual average employment growth of 1.5% in 2018-19 and 2% in 2019-20.

Industry sector employment (quarterly)⁶

- Services industries accounted for 72% or 965,602 of total employment in the September quarter 2018 and goods-producing industries accounted for 28% or 370,055.
- The largest increases in employment through the year to the September quarter 2018 were in public administration and safety up 22,190, and mining up 20,471.
- The largest falls in employment through the year to the September quarter 2018 were in construction, down 19,915, and education and training, down 10,321.

Participation rate and job vacancies (quarterly)⁷

The participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian working age population aged 15 and older in the labour force people who are either employed or unemployed.

- ▲ The participation rate of 68.8% in the September quarter 2018 was above the 68.6% in the previous quarter and 67.8% a year ago.
- ▲ The 2018-19 Western Australian Government Budget forecasts an annual average participation rate of 68.4% in 2018-19 and 68.6% in 2019-20.
- ▲ There were 27,600 job vacancies in the September quarter 2018, 3,500 more than in the previous quarter and 8,300 more than a year ago.

Unemployment rate (monthly)^{5&31}

The unemployment rate measures the proportion of the labour force that is unemployed (people without a job who are actively looking for work).

- Western Australia's unemployment rate remains the worst in the country, despite a slight fall in the jobless rate in December on a seasonally adjusted basis. The unemployment rate fell slightly in December, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in January, dropping 0.2% to 6.3%. That compares with a national jobless rate of 5%, down slightly from November. But while the figures suggest WA is still lagging the rest of the country, WA's participation rate – the portion of people looking for work – remains at far higher levels than in other states, at 68%. The national participation rate is 65.6%.

— The 2018-19 Western Australian Government Budget forecasts an annual average unemployment rate of 5.75% in 2018-19 and 5.5% in 2019-20.

Underutilisation rate (quarterly)⁵

The underutilisation rate measures the proportion of the labour force that is unemployed or underemployed workers wanting more hours.

- ▲ The underutilisation rate of 16.9% in the September quarter 2018 was above the 15.7% in the previous quarter and the 15.2% a year ago.
- ▲ The underutilisation rate in the September quarter 2018 comprised an underemployment rate of 10.6% and an unemployment rate of 6.3%.
- ▲ The underemployment rate of 10.6% in the September quarter 2018 was above the 9.4% in the previous quarter and the 9.6% a year ago.

Average annual earnings and wages growth⁸

- ▼ Average annual adult full-time total earnings rose 1.4% to \$94,687 in 2017-18.
- ▼ Western Australia's average annual adult full-time total earnings were 10% or \$8,856 above the Australian average of \$85,831 in 2017-18.
- Western Australia's wage price index rose 1.5% in 2017-18, below annual average growth of 2.9% over the past 10 years, and below Australia's wages growth of 2.1% in 2017-18.
- ▲ The 2018-19 Western Australian Government Budget forecasts wages growth of 1.75% in 2018-19 and 2.75% in 2019-20.

Economy

\$247.7b gross state product in Western Australia for 2016-17

29%



10%

8%



\$96,466 gross state product per capita in Western Australia for 2016-17



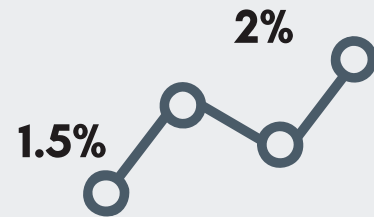
mining, business and property services and construction contributed the most to gross state product in 2016-17

Employment



↑ 20,000

increase in total employment through the year to August 2018



The 2018-19 Western Australian government budget forecasts annual average employment growth in 2018-19 and 2019-20

Unemployment

6.3%

WA's unemployment rate remains the worst in the country in January 2018



5%

national jobless rate in January 2018

Population



2.58 million

people living in WA



10%

of Australia's population in 2017 was from WA

Consumption

Real household consumption (% change)⁹

- Western Australia accounted for 10% of Australia's household consumption in 2017-18. 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 1.5% in 2017-18 was below annual average growth of 2.7% over the past 10 years.
- ▲ The 2018-19 Western Australian Government Budget forecasts real household consumption to rise 2.25% in 2018-19 and 3.25% in 2019-20.

Household consumption by industry sector (nominal)⁹

- ▲ Nominal household consumption rose 1.7% to \$107.9 billion in 2017-18.
- ▲ The largest increases in household consumption in 2017-18 were in insurance, finance and other – up \$781m or 5%, health up \$492m or 6%, and transport up \$374m or 3%.
- The largest decreases in household consumption in 2017-18 were in rent and other dwelling services, down \$424m or 2%, and furnishings and household equipment down \$330m or 6%.

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 10 years.
- Total gross household disposable income fell by \$2.9 billion in 2016-17, due to

changes in employee wages, down \$3.5 billion, social benefits and other secondary income, down \$139 million, self-employed and property income up \$411 million, and interest and tax paid on secondary income, down \$340 million.

Investment

Investment (nominal)¹⁰

- ▲ Western Australia accounted for 19% of Australia's business investment in 2017-18. Business investment accounted for 15% of GSP in 2016-17 but detracted 6.4% from real GSP growth.
- ▲ Real business investment rose 0.1% in 2017-18 and is forecast to fall 14% in 2018-19 and rise 6% in 2019-20.
- ▲ Nominal business investment rose 1% to \$38.2 billion in 2017-18.
- ▲ Nominal dwelling investment fell 6% to \$8.5 billion in 2017-18.
- ▼ Nominal public investment rose 3% to \$9.2 billion in 2017-18.

Private new capital expenditure¹¹

- ▼ Western Australia accounted for 53% of Australia's mining new capital expenditure in 2017-18.
- ▼ Mining accounted for 71% of Western Australia's private new capital expenditure in 2017-18.
- ▲ Mining new capital expenditure fell 14% to \$19.1 billion in 2017-18.
- ▲ New capital expenditure in other selected industries rose 17% to \$8.0 billion in 2017-18.
- ▼ In September 2018, Western Australia had \$36.4 billion of major resource projects under construction or committed and \$71.8 billion under consideration.

Exploration expenditure¹²

- ▼ Western Australia accounted for 61% of Australia's minerals exploration expenditure in 2017-18.
- ▲ Western Australia accounted for 55% of Australia's petroleum exploration expenditure in 2017-18.
- ▼ Minerals exploration expenditure rose 16% to \$1.2 billion in 2017-18, mainly due to increases in gold and nickel/cobalt exploration.
- ▲ Petroleum exploration expenditure fell 14% to \$562 million in 2017-18.

Property market and construction activity

Median established house prices and rents¹³

- ▲ Perth's median house price has stabilised, showing it held at \$510,000 in December 2018. While the December median house price for the Greater Perth area was unchanged compared to November 2018, it had increased 2.6% compared to September 2018.
- Perth's overall median rent price remained at \$350 per week in December 2018.

Building and engineering construction¹⁴

- ▼ Residential building activity fell 21% to \$6.1 billion in 2017.
- ▲ Non-residential building activity rose 4% to \$4.7 billion in 2017.
- ▲ Heavy industry engineering construction activity rose 54% to \$29.6 billion in 2017, largely due to increased work on the Prelude and Ichthys LNG projects.
- ▲ Other engineering construction activity rose 7% to \$7.2 billion in 2017, mainly due to an increase in the construction of telecommunications infrastructure.

Building construction activity outlook (quarterly)¹⁵

- ▼ Western Australia had \$6.4 billion of building activity in the pipeline in the March quarter 2018, below the \$7 billion in the same quarter of 2017.
- ▲ Residential building approvals rose 23% to \$1.6 billion in the June quarter 2018. Residential building approvals typically lead building activity by one to two quarters.
- ▼ Non-residential building approvals fell 20% to \$875 million in the June quarter 2018.
- ▲ Housing finance for the construction of new dwellings rose 14% to \$809 million in the June quarter 2018. Housing finance typically leads residential building activity by two to three quarters.

Merchandise exports

Merchandise exports nominal¹⁶

- Western Australia accounted for 41% of Australia's merchandise exports in 2017-18.
- 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 5% in 2017-18 was below annual average growth of 6% over the past five years.
- The 2018-19 Western Australian Government Budget forecasts real merchandise exports growth of 7.5% in 2018-19 and 3.5% in 2019-20.
- ▲ Nominal merchandise exports rose 8% to \$129.7 billion in 2017-18.

Major export markets (top 10)¹⁷

- Western Australia's largest export market in 2017-18 was China at \$61.5b or 47%, followed by Japan with \$18.9b

or 15% and Hong Kong at \$8.1b or 6%.

- Western Australia had majority shares of Australia's exports to Hong Kong at 71%, China with 58%, United Kingdom and Singapore both at 60% in 2017-18.
- ▼ Minerals and petroleum accounted for 85% or \$109.6b of merchandise exports in 2017-18.
- Agriculture, food, fibre, fisheries and forestry exports accounted for 7% or \$8.5b of merchandise exports in 2016-17.

Service exports

Service exports (nominal)¹⁸

- Western Australia accounted for 8% of Australia's services exports in 2017. It was 8% in 2016-17. Services exports accounted for 3% of GSP in 2016-17 and detracted 0.1 percentage points from real GSP growth.
- ▼ Real services exports fell 5% in 2017-18 compared with annual average growth of 0.3% over the past five years.
- ▼ Nominal services exports fell 3% to \$6.8 billion in 2017.

Services exports by industry sector¹⁸

- Services exports in 2017 mainly comprised personal travel (34%) and education-related travel (28%).
- The largest increase in 2017 was in telecommunications, computer and information services which were up 178%, while the largest decline was in personal travel services, down 10%.
- ▼ International student enrolments fell 5% to 52,337 in 2017-18, compared with annual average growth of 3% over the past 10 years.
- ▼ Western Australia accounted for 6.1% of Australia's international student enrolments in 2017-18, below the 7.1% share in 2016-17.

Property Market



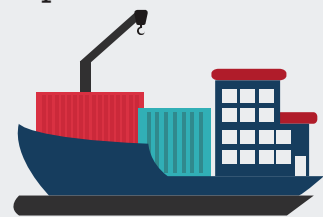
\$510,000

Perth's median house prices stabilised in December 2018



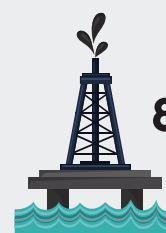
per week median rent in December 2018

Exports



41%

of Australia's merchandise exports were from WA in 2017-18.



85%

of WA's merchandise exports were minerals and petroleum



7%

of WA's merchandise exports were from agriculture, food, fibre, fisheries and forestry

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Overnight visitors¹⁹

- ▲ Tourism accounted for 2.5% or \$6.1 billion of GSP and 5% or 71,100 of total employment in 2016-17.
- Overnight visitors fell 1% to 10.6 million in 2017, compared with annual average growth of 4% over the past 10 years.
- The fall in overnight visitors in 2017 was due to a fall in domestic visitors, down 1% to 9.6 million, and international visitors down 1% to 946,100.
- Visitor spending fell 5% to \$9.6 billion in 2017 due to decreases in spending by domestic visitors, down 7% to \$5.3b and international visitors down 6% to \$2.2b.
- Day trip visitor spending rose 1% to \$2.0 billion in 2017.

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 10 years.

Major minerals and petroleum sales²⁰

- ▼ Iron ore accounted for 54% of minerals and petroleum sales in 2017-18, followed by:
 - ▲ LNG 17%
 - Gold 10%
 - ▲ Alumina and bauxite 6%
 - ▲ Crude oil and condensate 5%
 - Nickel 2%
 - Base metals 1%
 - ▼ Natural gas 1%
 - Tin, tantalum and lithium 1%
 - Cobalt 0.4%
 - ▼ Mineral sands 0.3%
- Minerals and petroleum sales rose 9% to \$115.0 billion in 2017-18, mainly due to increased sales of LNG.

Tourism



↓ 5%

International student enrollments fell in 2017-18



2.5% or \$6.1b

of GSP from tourism in 2016-17

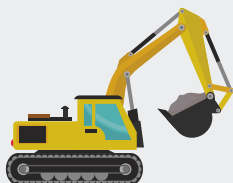


↓ 1%



decrease in domestic and international visitors in 2017

Mining



56%

of Australia's mining gross value added was from WA in 2016-17

29%

of WA's gross state product was from mining in 2016-17



minerals and petroleum sales were highest for

54% iron ore

17% LNG

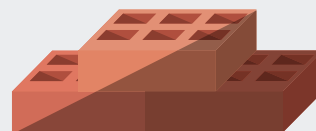


10% gold

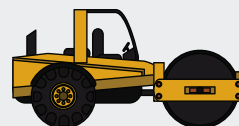


Construction

↓ 21% residential building construction fell in 2017



↑ 4% non-residential building construction rose in 2017



10.2%

of the State's workforce is employed by the construction industry



Iron ore sales²¹

- ▲ Western Australia accounted for 57% of world seaborne iron ore exports in 2017.
- ▼ Iron ore sales fell 3% to \$61.7 billion in 2017-18, due to falling average prices offsetting rising sales volumes.
- ▲ The volume of iron ore sales rose 4% to 826 million tonnes in 2017-18, below annual average growth of 11% over the past 10 years.
- ▼ The annual average \$A unit price (free on board) of iron ore sales fell 7% in 2017-18.
- ▲ The 2018-19 Western Australian Government Budget forecasts iron ore sales to rise to 839 million tonnes by 2021-22.

LNG sales²¹

- Western Australia accounted for 12% of world LNG exports in 2017.
- ▲ LNG sales rose 50% to \$19.1 billion in 2017-18, due to rising sales volumes and average prices.
- ▲ The volume of LNG sales rose 32% to 38 million tonnes in 2017-18, above annual average growth of 12% over the past 10 years.
- ▲ The annual average \$A unit price (free on board) of LNG sales rose 13% in 2017-18.
- Western Australia's LNG production capacity is predicted to have grown to 50 million tonnes a year by the end of 2018.

Gold sales²¹

- ▲ Western Australia's gold sales rose 5% to \$11.4 billion in 2017-18, due to rising sales volumes and average prices.
- The volume of gold sales rose 4% to 212 tonnes in 2017-18, in line with annual average growth of 4% over the past 10 years.
- ▲ The annual average \$A unit price (free on board) of gold sales rose 1% in 2017-18.

WA's construction industry²²

Employment

- The Industry employs 10.2% of the State's workforce.
- It experienced 4.6% growth in May 2018 compared to May 2017.

Tradespeople

- ▼ The industry employs more than 65,400 tradespeople.
- ▼ The industry employs 10.8% less workers than it did 12 months ago.

Apprenticeships

- ▼ The construction industry employers 42.4% of the State's apprentices.
- ▼ Including electrical, there are currently 6,456 apprentices 'in training' which is a 1.7% decrease on the previous year. There has been a 23.8% reduction in apprenticeship overall attrition. There has been a 2.5% decrease in construction apprenticeship commencements and an increase in electrical apprentice commencements of 5.1%.

Traineeships

- ▼ The industry employs 689 trainees.
- ▼ Since 2016 there has been a 5.7% increase in traineeships, especially in the civil construction sector.

Building approvals and commencements

- ▼ There was a total of 18,076 approvals for all types of dwelling units.
- ▼ There was a reduction of 9.0% on the previous year to July 2018. However, between June and July 2018, approvals decreased by 14.7%.

Total houses

- ▼ There was a total of 13,480 approvals for houses.
- ▼ There was a reduction of 9.5% in the year to July 2018 and a reduction of 1.0% in the last quarter. However, there was a 3.3% increase between June and July 2018.

Dwelling commencements

- ▼ In the year to March 2018, there was a total of 18,897 dwelling commencements, which is a 10.0% reduction over the year (annualised).

Construction work done Residential

- ▼ There was a decrease of 1.3% in the value of residential work in the last quarter to \$6.14 billion.
- ▲ There was a decrease in the value of residential work done of 8.8% on the previous 12 months to June 2018.

Non-Residential

- ▼ There was a decrease of 2.3% in non-residential work in the last quarter to \$4.67 billion.
- There was an increase of 2.1% in the value of non-residential work done over the previous year. This is an improvement on the year to June 2017 when there was a 4.9% decrease.

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Photo by Sue Quinn, 2018 Passion for Perth Photographic Competition.

Economic news

- In October, S&P Global upgraded Western Australia's credit rating from AA+ negative outlook to AA+ stable. This improvement stops the run of negative credit ratings assessments stretching from October 2012. The State had been placed on AA+ negative outlook by S&P Global since July 2015.²³
- The State budget will be in surplus in 2019/20, according to Premier Mark McGowan. The budget improvement comes after increases in revenue, estimated to be rising at 3.2% annually in the May budget, and continued low spending growth, about 2% per annum after adjustments. For the 2019 financial year, spending growth was to be 0.9%. One big win for the State Government was when changes to the GST distribution system were legislated, which will be worth about \$1.7 billion across the next three years.²⁵
- Western Australian businesses will hire more staff and spend more on wages as 2019 shapes up as a bonanza year for the State's economy – with workers to be the big winners, according to the latest WA Super-CCI Business Confidence Survey, released in January. The CCI says a record number of the State's businesses are preparing to expand, hire more people and boost wages. That means, after years of flat wages, more West Australians will be asking for a rise. More than 10 times the number of business owners said they were optimistic about the future, compared with June 2015, when only 5% of businesses expected conditions to improve. And 35% of businesses expect to increase their workforce in the next three months, while 43% expect labour costs, including wages, to increase. The survey also revealed 85% of firms expect to increase or keep their production levels steady in the short-term and one-third plan to increase their business investment in the current and next quarter.³³
- The Housing Industry Forecasting Group's (HIFG) 2018-19 report has predicted that Western Australia's housing construction activity will remain flat in 2018-19, with a subdued recovery expected to continue this year and into 2020-21. According to the HIFG report, the property market has continued its cyclical downswing of the past few years, with 18,000 dwellings forecast for 2018-19. An increase to 19,000 is expected in 2019-20 on the back of a strengthening economy and a further pick-up of 20,000-22,000 in 2020-21.²³
- The total number of home loans rose by 2.4% in Western Australia last November, against a 0.9% fall nationally, according to the Australian

Bureau of Statistics. In November, the number of home loan approvals for all owner-occupiers decreased by 0.9% countrywide, ahead of market expectations of a 1.5% reduction. The proportion of first-time buyers in the home loan market rose from 18.1% in October to a six-year high of 18.3% in November. However, the latest ABS Housing Finance figures show that lending for new homes in WA suffered the third sharpest drop in the country, only behind Victoria and Queensland, which recorded falls of 12.2% and 22.1%, respectively.²⁵

- The Perth property market is at its most affordable in more than two decades, as falling prices and wage growth make entry into the housing market easier for Perth families. Housing Industry Association (HIA) figures released in January show that Perth remains the most affordable market of any of Australia's capital cities for average families. The HIA's quarterly housing affordability report shows that an average wage earner would have to pay 26.5% of their monthly pay to meet the repayments on a median-priced dwelling. Its index of housing affordability shows Perth has improved 5.7% over the past year. An average Sydney worker would have to pay more than half of their monthly income to the bank to get into a housing market which is, despite recent falls, still the most expensive in the country. Melbourne mortgages would consume 44.2% of an average wage. HIA analysts said Perth prospects were even better for first-homebuyers looking for units or cheaper freestanding houses. Compared with the peak of the pre-global financial crisis property boom, houses in Perth are more than twice as affordable.³³

- Following a year of ups and downs, Perth's median house price rose 5.2% to \$510,000 during the December quarter 2018, putting it on par with the same period in 2017. REIWA said while activity in the overall Perth market had remained subdued during the final quarter of 2018, the improvement in the median house price was a good sign going into the new year. Data showed 69 Perth suburbs experienced an increase in median price during the December quarter. Cannington, Coodanup, Karrinyup, Beaconsfield and Hillarys recorded the biggest improvements.²⁶
- Western Australia has the worst residential building conditions in the country, according to a report from the HIA in December. WA has moved into last place on the HIA housing scorecard, which provides a half-yearly review of each State's housing market based on a range of indicators, due to a big fall in new dwelling commencements and first homebuyer loans. The State's score of 24 means it has fallen behind the Northern Territory on 29. Of the 12 factors, WA ranked last for six, including overseas and interstate migration, along with new home approvals and new home commencements for detached dwellings.²⁵
- Perth's headline office vacancy rate could fall below 19% for the first time since 2015, as companies hunt for larger spaces, Savills Australia said in December. The agency predicts that the city's two-tier office market is likely to remain in 2019, with tenants continuing to take advantage of favourable leasing conditions. Firms such as the ABN Group, the WA Police Force and FMG, are all on the hunt for bigger office spaces. Savills

Australia said it was becoming difficult for firms coming to market and seeking spaces of 5000 to 10,000 square metres, with only a handful of properties able to cater to this demand. Meanwhile, Domain Group data shows there were 322 commercial transactions across Perth in the year to October. This was up from 311 transactions during the same period in 2017. The 322 sales include 150 commercial, 165 industrial sales and seven retail transactions.³⁰

- Foreign buyers of residential property in Western Australia will pay a 7% surcharge from January 1, 2019 after legislation passed through the Legislative Council. The surcharge will raise about \$120 million over the next four years. The surcharge brings Western Australia in line with every other State in Australia, all of which already have a Foreign Buyers Surcharge in place. The State Government said it will use the surcharge to fund its freeze in TAFE fees and also assist in Budget repair.²³
- In the December quarter 2018, bankruptcies fell to their lowest level since March 1995, according to the latest personal insolvency statistics released by the Australian Financial Security Authority (AFSA). There were 3,788 bankruptcies in the December quarter of 2018 across Australia, a 6% fall compared to the December quarter of 2017. While total personal insolvencies fell 10.9% nationally in the December quarter, Western Australia experienced a 9.6% rise in bankruptcies.
- The Sensis Business Index released in November indicates that WA's small and medium businesses are in the grip of a crisis of confidence, and the sector is the second most negative in the nation.

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Photo by Ali Moawiz, 2018 Passion for Perth Photographic Competition.



Perth Airport T1, image supplied by Perth Airport.

Confidence crashed by seven points between July and September and is 20 points under the national average. The most positive businesses pointed to having an established and solid business and healthy sales, while those most worried highlighted lower sales followed by cost pressures. The index also reported an increase in support for the State

Government, although its net rating remained negative at -4. The main criticisms related to payroll tax, a focus on big business and excessive bureaucracy.²⁴

- In October, Western Australia ranked last in CommSec's State of the States report, and last or second last in every single economic indicator. The report looks at the latest readings for indicators such as

unemployment, the housing sector, construction activity, retail spending and economic growth and compares them with decade averages. WA ranked last in economic growth, unemployment and construction and seventh for the other five categories. The report noted the WA jobless rate of 6.1% was more than 20% above the 5.1% decade-average. Even on a 20-year average, CommSec said the State would still have the weakest job market of all States and Territories.²⁴

- Independent research has revealed the State Government's dedicated east coast tourism campaigns, combined with the AFL tourism strategy, have delivered results for Western Australia's economy. Figures from research undertaken by Metrix Consulting show AFL tourism attracted 31,059 interstate visitors who specifically travelled to WA for a match at Optus Stadium, and spent about \$34 million. A further 34,665 visitors from regional WA spent more than \$32 million.²³
- The tourism industry has called for the establishment of a growth fund following the release of data in January showing a 7% fall in spending by international tourists in Western Australia during the past year. The latest tourism data by Austrade showed spending by international visitors in WA for the year ending September 2018 was \$2.2 billion, \$166 million less than for the previous corresponding period. The Austrade figures showed 955,000 international visitors travelled to WA in the year ending September 2018, up 1% on the previous period. Tasmania recorded the best figures, with a 13% increase in international visitor spend, while Queensland rose

12% and NSW grew 9%. The Tourism Council of WA called on the State Government to compete with other states by establishing a tourism jobs growth fund.²⁵

- In October, the Committee for Perth released *Perth's Pathway to Prosperity* report, the result of the Committee's two-year *Bigger & Better Beyond the Boom* research project. The report found that a crisis of complacency is holding Perth and Peel back and that we're lagging behind other cities around the world when it comes to being competitive in the key areas of the economy and investment, infrastructure, innovation, technology, engagement and branding. The seven recommendations from the final report were:
 1. Develop an inaugural investment, engagement and attraction strategy and associated brand to promote Perth as a place to invest, work and learn.
 2. Create the inaugural long-term economic growth and competitiveness strategy.
 3. Develop the inaugural long-term infrastructure strategy.
 4. Focus on sectors where Perth has a competitive advantage, opportunity or increasing demand in order to grow the economy.
 5. Protect and nurture Perth's ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship.
 6. Implement 'smart city' initiatives for infrastructure efficiency and improved liveability and urban competitiveness.
 7. Increase Perth's human capital and foster lifelong learning.³⁴

Reforming and reshaping

- State Parliament passed legislation in December giving the Attorney General the power to keep the worst mass murderers and serial killers behind bars. Under the new laws, the Attorney General can suspend any moves to parole the worst killers for up to six years at a time. Mass murderers and serial killers will be defined as those who commit three or more murders on the same day or two or more murders on separate days.²⁴
- Historic reforms to Western Australia's on-demand transport and taxi industry passed the Legislative Council in October. The reforms, to be rolled out from early 2019, will enable a range of improvements to how the taxi and on-demand transport services operate. The legislation will also end restrictions that have made it difficult for taxis to compete and give the industry greater certainty. In particular, all booking services will now be required to be authorised and will be responsible for making sure the vehicles and drivers they dispatch are also authorised and safe. The legislation will also enable the McGowan Government to deliver its election commitment to implement a voluntary industry funded taxi plate buyback scheme. Plate owners will receive between \$100,000 and \$250,000, less any hardship payments already received, and depending on how long they owned the plate.²³
- Tougher penalties for workplace safety offences came into effect in October. The new laws increase penalties for workplace safety offences under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* and the *Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994*. Harsher penalties for offenders include increasing the maximum term of imprisonment from two years to five years, and increased fines for body corporates: Level 4 offences now attract a maximum \$2.7 million penalty for first offenders and \$3.5 million for subsequent offenders, up from \$500,000 and \$625,000 respectively and Level 1 penalties have increased from \$50,000 to \$450,000 for first offenders and from \$62,500 to \$570,000 for subsequent offences.²³
- Western Australia's former Chief Justice, the Hon Wayne Martin AC QC, has been appointed to conduct a review of the *Criminal Property Confiscation Act 2000*. The Act, which came into effect in 2001, enables the State to, amongst other things, seize and confiscate property or assets acquired as a result of criminal activity, or used for criminal activity, including drug trafficking. Since that time, there have been a number of reviews and recommendations from several parties, including the Law Society of WA and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, to amend the Act. A review of the Act will address the various recommendations made since its enactment, including improving protections for innocent third parties. The review is expected to be completed in early 2019.²³
- Legislation to implement a scheme for the expungement of historical homosexual convictions related to consensual homosexual activity that would not be

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illegal passed through State Parliament in September. 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. However, the repeal of historical same-sex offence provisions did not address the ongoing implications of people with existing criminal records. While people affected were able to obtain some relief to have the convictions deemed spent under certain circumstances, this did not provide for a complete removal of the offence from a person's criminal record.²³

- Male same-sex couples and single men would have access to altruistic surrogacy arrangements under proposed amendments to Western Australia's surrogacy and human reproductive technology laws. The proposed changes, introduced into State Parliament in August, add to the family formation options of adoption and fostering that are already available to male same-sex couples and single men in WA. The Human Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 is set to remove restrictions to surrogacy for men and will bring WA into line with the majority of jurisdictions in Australia. If the legislation passes, men will have the same access to surrogacy that women and heterosexual couples have had since 2009.²³
- Legislation seeking to remove the requirement of a person to be single in order to be eligible for a gender recognition certificate, which is required to alter the record of their sex on their birth

certificate, was introduced into State Parliament in August. The State Government will repeal section 15(3) of the *Gender Reassignment Act 2000 (WA)* so that a married person is no longer forced to choose between a birth certificate that reflects their reassigned gender, and the maintenance of the legal relationship with their spouse. The provision was originally intended to prevent an inconsistency from arising whereby two people of the same sex become married, which was not permitted under the Commonwealth Marriage Act prior to the commencement of the *Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act 2017 (Cth)*. The Gender Reassignment Amendment Bill 2018 (WA) fixes an anomaly in the existing law, which is technical in nature, and ensures consistency with national same sex marriage laws. It also aims to facilitate and empower people to re-assign to their correct gender with as much ease and dignity as possible.²³

- The State Government has introduced new legislation into Parliament which criminalises the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, known as 'revenge porn'. Intimate images are commonly distributed via the electronic posting of images on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter, sharing via a text message or email, or by uploading to dedicated pornography websites. The Criminal Law Amendment (Intimate Images) Bill 2018 amends the Criminal Code (WA) to create a new offence relating to the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, with

perpetrators facing jail time of either 18 months or three years and/or a fine of up to \$18,000.²³

- There will be a presumption against bail for people who have demonstrated support for, or have links to, terrorist activity under proposed amendments to the *Bail Act 1982 (WA)* introduced into State Parliament last November. The Bail Amendment (Persons Linked to Terrorism) Bill 2018 (WA) implements the 2017 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement in relation to a presumption against bail applying to persons with links to terrorism. The amendments form part of a range of practical and legislative measures agreed by COAG to strengthen the nationally consistent approach to countering the evolving threat of terrorism in Australia.²⁸
- In October, the State Government announced a historic reform package for the racing industry to end uncertainty and secure its long-term sustainability. Following extensive consultation with the racing industry and other stakeholders, the State Government will move forward with the sale of the WA TAB and also introduce a 15% 'point of consumption tax' which streamlines taxes for the industry, while also ensuring that foreign-owned corporate bookmakers pay their fair share. The 'point of consumption tax' will be levied on the profits made by all betting operators from bets placed by Western Australians, irrespective of where the operator taking the bet is licensed. Under current arrangements, wagering taxes in WA are levied on the basis of where the betting operator is licensed.

Importantly, by streamlining wagering taxes, the new 'point of consumption tax' will mean for the first time, online and foreign-owned corporate bookmakers will have to pay tax in WA, with the WA racing industry to receive 30% of total revenue collected.²³

- The WA Government will increase protections for subcontractors on government projects, by placing payments in secure bank accounts to ensure they flow down the subcontracting chain. It says this would help ensure subcontractors were paid and would improve the speed and transparency of payments, after a year where thousands of subcontractors were left exposed in company collapses. The WA Government is the biggest construction client in the State, and the new measure would cover all government projects worth more than \$1.5 million by July 1 this year, including schools, roads and the METRONET rail project in Perth.²⁹
- In December, the State Government released John Fiocco's final report on Security of Payment Reform in the WA Building and Construction Industry. Developed over a six-month period, the report involved extensive stakeholder consultation with 19 industry organisations and seven State Government agencies. The report includes 44 recommendations, which identify reforms to better protect security of payments for Western Australian subcontractors in the building and construction industry.²³
- Western Australian public schools have been empowered to take a stand against violence, with the State Government introducing a raft of new measures to address violent behaviour

against students and staff. From this year, new rules will apply where any student who intentionally instigates violence – or films attacks or fights – will be suspended automatically.²³

- In November, the State Government tabled a statutory review of the *Adoption Act 1994 (WA)* in State Parliament. The review was undertaken by the Department of Communities with the support of a reference group made up of key stakeholders from government, the Aboriginal community and the community services sector. The reference group met with stakeholders and considered public and stakeholder contributions to the review. The review made 31 recommendations to strengthen the adoption process and make the best interests and wellbeing of the child, the sole paramount consideration in adoption.²³
- In November, the State Government announced plans to develop a State Disability Plan that will underpin all State Government activities and initiatives that support and empower people with a disability over the coming decade. The plan will drive more inclusive communities and improve the accessibility of State Government services, systems and infrastructure for all Western Australians with a disability. Development of the State Disability Plan is part of the State Government's strategy to listen, engage and hear the needs of the disability community. Submissions closed in February.²³
- The State Government will introduce a Bill into State Parliament to legalise voluntary assisted dying in Western Australia this year. This decision was made following the recommendations from the Joint Select Committee on

End of Life Choices, outlined in its August report 'My Life, My Choice'. Labor Members of Parliament will be offered a conscience vote on the Government introduced bill. The Joint Select Committee found that a protracted death from a terminal, chronic or neurological condition can have a devastating effect on patients and their families. It also reasoned that for people with grievous and irremediable suffering, where death is a foreseeable outcome of the condition, voluntary assisted dying should be an option. The Bill will be drafted in consultation with a panel of experts to provide advice to government on a safe and compassionate framework for voluntary assisted dying in Western Australia.²³

- The most historic reforms to Western Australia's strata legislation in more than 20 years provide strata owners, occupiers and developers with a simpler, more transparent and accountable framework for owning, living in, or building strata and survey-strata schemes in WA. The reforms will enable a range of improvements to the management of strata schemes and offer fairer, simpler and cheaper dispute resolution, with the State Administrative Tribunal as the one-stop-shop for strata disputes. The dispute resolution processes under the former legislation made it difficult and, in many cases, costly for people in strata to resolve their disputes. The amended legislation provides clear pathways through which matters can be heard and resolved.²³
- A Bill was introduced into State Parliament in October to provide greater protections for long-stay tenants at residential parks in Western

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Australia. The Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Bill 2018 is aimed at ensuring fairer dealings and security of contract between park operators and their long-stay tenants. Key reforms include: Limiting the termination of fixed-term agreements on the sale of a park or if the owner's financier takes possession of the park; No longer allowing 'without grounds' terminations of long-stay agreements, instead setting out specific grounds that will provide greater certainty in relation to termination rights. The amendments aim to strike a fair balance between protecting the rights of tenants and ensuring the viability of the residential parks sector is maintained. Additionally, the reforms give the State Administrative Tribunal extra powers and remedies to deal with disputes arising under long-stay agreements.²³

- Streamline WA was launched in December, to encourage more investment in Western Australia by changing the way government interacts with private and community sectors and creating better ways of applying regulation. It will be a one-stop-shop for business, industry and the community to refer regulatory issues, and will also be provided with advice from independent bodies including the Office of the Auditor General and the Economic Regulation Authority.²⁸
- The State Government is set to revive the Midland area's rich railway history, with Bellevue announced as the preferred site for the new METRONET railcar manufacturing facility. The proposed manufacturing facility will also be co-located with the Public Transport Authority's next railcar depot, where Transperth will carry out maintenance of the

broader train fleet. Over the next decade, the facility will be used to assemble much of the extra 246 railcars required to service METRONET projects and replace ageing trains on the Transperth network.²³

- Commuters travelling from Ellenbrook to Morley will have journey times slashed by half when NorthLink WA opens in 2019. Residents in Ellenbrook and the rapidly growing north-eastern corridor will be among the big winners when the project becomes a reality, delivering a 42 kilometre freeway-to-freeway link between Morley and Muchea. The 25-minute journey from Ellenbrook to Morley will halve, while pedestrians and cyclists will have an uninterrupted shared path linking to Guildford Road, Bayswater for the first time. NorthLink WA will provide an efficient alternative freight route, taking about 80% of trucks off Great Northern Highway, managing expected traffic growth and freeing up local and tourist roads through the Swan Valley.²⁸
- The Bayswater community has helped choose the concept plan for the State Government's major METRONET upgrade of Bayswater Station, the first stage of the Morley- Ellenbrook Line. Close to 1,000 people were surveyed on their vision for the station and precinct in recent months, while about 300 locals attended community drop-in sessions. The design reflects the feedback received, with more public space underneath the rail line, more town centre connectivity and improved station aesthetics.²⁸
- The State Government's Westport Taskforce has served up eight options for the future of WA's container shipping trade in its long

awaited progress report, released in December. Westport Taskforce was asked to plan for the new harbour's location, size, operating model and timing, associated road and rail links, and what roles Fremantle and Bunbury ports would play. The report, *What we have found so far*, said WA could handle growth for the next 100 years if Kwinana, Bunbury and Fremantle ports were properly developed, seemingly justifying the government's determination to proceed with the Kwinana harbour. The options include completely de-industrialising Fremantle and removing container trade to Bunbury or Kwinana; keeping Fremantle as the only container port; or Fremantle sharing container trade with either Bunbury or Kwinana. There was no option for containers to be shared between all three ports, given the expense of infrastructure required and competition for international trade routes. The Taskforce will release a final strategy in late 2019 with precise location, sizes, timing and operations for the Government to consider.²⁴

- The McGowan Government is conducting a review into Transperth's Perth Central Area Transit (CAT) bus service to gauge demand for new or expanded routes. This will be the first major review since the Green CAT service was introduced in 2013, and will seek input from the public, CAT bus users and key stakeholders including the City of Perth. Part of the research will include investigating demand for a night-time 'Black' CAT, which, subject to funding, could link residential developments, hotels and entertainment areas in East and West Perth with the city centre's main entertainment districts.²³

- Council members who are failing to appropriately perform their duties and are affecting the local government's ability to function effectively will face tougher consequences under legislation passed in State Parliament in November. The McGowan Government's Local Government Amendment (Suspension and Dismissal) Bill 2018 enables the Minister for Local Government to suspend or dismiss an individual council member, resulting in suspension of their pay. Previously, the Minister could only take action against an entire council, which has impeded the local government's ability to get on with the job of providing good governance to their community due to the actions of an individual. The new laws will also enable a local government to recover any fees or allowances paid in advance to the member, for the period of suspension, ensuring they are held accountable for their actions.²³
- Mandatory social media policies, online voting and penalties for breaching tendering rules are some of the possibilities for a new Local Government Act that is open for public comment until the end of March. The Local Government Minister has called on Western Australians to help shape the future of local government in their community by having a say on the proposals. Ideas for change on matters including local government elections, community engagement, rates, fees and charges and financial management, among other areas are now being considered.²³
- Reforms aimed at protecting Northbridge's vibrant nightlife culture for the long-term were released for public comment in September. Growing infill development in the central suburbs means premises such as pubs and live music venues are finding it increasingly difficult to comply with noise regulations. This has been the case even if they have been operating in that location far longer than the surrounding development. Proposed amendments to the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 and establishment of a Special Control Area under the City of Perth's City Planning Scheme No 2 will provide greater protection for venues, and clear and consistent development guidelines for new developments in the precinct. Part of the proposal includes removing existing 'outdoor amenity protections' – which would allow higher levels of noise in residential outdoor areas such as balconies or patios.²³
- Western Australia's gambling regulator will be given sweeping new powers to ban future competitors to Lotterywest, under legislation which will also include provisions to fine members of the public who use synthetic lotteries. The WA Government's "ban" on Lottoland and other synthetic lotteries, which allow people to place bets on lottery outcomes without purchasing a ticket in the contest itself, follows a similar move by the Commonwealth earlier this year. But WA said its laws would go further, by preventing Lottoland from advertising its services and also including provisions to fine punters \$2,500 for using synthetic lotteries.²⁹
- In November, legislation to establish a container deposit scheme was introduced into State Parliament. Western Australia's scheme is expected to start in early 2020, aiming to reduce littering and boost recycling throughout the State. The new scheme will be aligned with those in other Australian jurisdictions – providing a 10 cent refund for all eligible beverage containers including soft drink cans and bottles, bottled water containers and flavoured milk cartons. The returned containers must be recycled or reused.²⁸
- The State Government has lifted the fracking moratorium on existing onshore petroleum titles following an independent scientific inquiry finding the risk to people and the environment is low. And, for the first time, traditional owners and farmers will have the right to say no to oil and gas production from fracking on their land. Fracking will continue to be banned in Perth, Peel and the South-West. Existing and proposed national parks, the Dampier Peninsula in the Kimberley and Public Drinking Water Source Areas will also be declared off limits.²⁸
- Extensive community consultation has revealed that 77% of Western Australians are supportive of the State Government's proposal to introduce mandatory dog de-sexing for non-breeding dogs, to reduce the impact of puppy farms in WA. The results follow a three-month consultation period in which 4,754 submissions were received on the proposed laws to address puppy farming. Proposed laws to address puppy farming in WA include the introduction of mandatory dog de-sexing and breeding standards, a centralised registration system to track dogs, and transitioning pet shops into adoption centres.²³
- Ticket scalping legislation to restrict the resale of event tickets was introduced into State Parliament in November. The new laws apply to all

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ticketed events in Western Australia and will; Allow consumers to resell tickets as long as the ticket is not sold for more than 10% of the original sale price; and Prohibit the use of software designed to dodge security measures on ticket selling websites. The introduction of these laws will give the Commissioner for Consumer Protection the power to enforce anti-ticket scalping measures, which up until now have been difficult to police.²³

- The reforms build upon the State's existing tobacco laws, and now gives WA some of the toughest tobacco laws in the country. Under the new laws, WA will become the first State in Australia to make it illegal for employees under the age of 18 to sell tobacco products in retail outlets. Other changes in the approved legislation include: banning the sale of fruit and confectionery-flavoured, and split-pack cigarettes – bringing WA in line with the rest of Australia; stopping tobacco sales at events such as music festivals or other public events; preventing the inclusion of tobacco purchases in shopping reward schemes; requiring graphic health warnings to be displayed beside price signage for tobacco products; further restricting the public display of tobacco products or smoking implements – except cigars and cigar cutters, inside specialist tobacco stores; and streamlining the administrative functions related to the licensing of tobacco retailers and appointment of authorised officers under the Act.²³
- Stronger protections for Western Australia's heritage places will be in place with the passing of the Heritage

Bill 2017. The new legislation will replace the outdated *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990* and bring Western Australia in line with other States to ensure better protections for important heritage places, in particular, those left to 'demolition by neglect'. Key changes include a streamlined process for entering a place in the State Register; certainty for owners wishing to develop their heritage places; and increased transparency by publishing the Heritage Council's advice to the Minister for Heritage on the inclusion of a place in the State Register.²³

- Terrace and townhouses on micro-lots in North Coogee and Fremantle are among \$1.3 billion worth of West Australian development opportunities LandCorp released in one hit in October. More than 150 lots, worth \$290 million, of development-ready commercial, residential and industrial land has been made available across WA. The 57 residential and mixed-use lots include a mixture of medium-density infill projects and urban regeneration developments that will deliver more than 824 infill homes. LandCorp wants to deliver Perth's 'missing middle' – the name given to the type of homes that are neither low-density suburbia nor high-density towers.²⁴
- The State Government has given the final tick of approval for Chevron Australia's 30-storey office high-rise to be built at Elizabeth Quay. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority gave the green light for the tower to be built during a meeting in December, with details of the \$360 million development publicly released in January. The development will feature

the main office tower, along with an adjoining ground-level restaurant and dining/retail area at the southern side of the building. The retail and dining section will include three cafes and two unnamed shops. One level above the restaurant and retail/dining areas will be a gym and childcare centre. Chevron, which purchased the lot for \$64 million in 2013, will be the anchor tenant for the building, with Brookfield selected as its development partner.²⁴

- Lendlease has submitted two versions of its The Campus at Waterbank – a "new office environment" planned for its precinct on the Swan River foreshore – both with kayak storage as part of its extensive end-of-trip facilities. The development applications, lodged with the City of Perth, include an \$85 million six-storey building, including office, commercial carparking and restaurant/cafe plus a \$69 million, five-storey version. Lendlease wants to start building The Campus at Waterbank in the second half of next year and finish it by 2021.³¹
- The former site of the Joondalup Basketball Stadium is set to be transformed into a new multigenerational development with homes, aged care, childcare, leisure and medical facilities. Carmel Group and Aegis Aged Care Group are the successful proponents for Lot 701 Collier Pass and will build a \$100 million development on the 1.69 hectare site. Formerly home to the Joondalup Wolves basketball team - which relocated to the nearby HBF Arena, the land will be subdivided into three lots to facilitate an integrated development linked by a shared public open space with tree-lined walkways,

children's play areas and a community garden. It is anticipated that the development will commence in 2020 with an estimated completion date in 2024.²³

- In January, work started on started on the extension of one of Perth's most highly anticipated sections of Principal Shared Path (PSP) along the Fremantle railway line. The construction of the 2.8 kilometre section of PSP will be part of a completely off-road continuous connection from the Perth central business district to Fremantle, catering to not only Town of Cottesloe residents but the wider Perth community and visitors to the State. The project will also feature a bicycle counter, new lighting, wayfinding signs, pavement markings and landscaping to complement the four-metre-wide PSP, which will provide ample space for all path users to enjoy a safe and comfortable journey.²³
- After months of consultation, two more METRONET projects passed the thorough Infrastructure Australia process in November, giving the two projects the green light. The Yanchep Rail Extension and Thornlie-Cockburn Link will be delivered under a single alliance contract, with a shortlist for tenderers to be announced in early 2019. The projects are backed by a joint funding arrangement between the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments. Both METRONET rail extensions are now enshrined in law after State Parliament passed enabling legislation for the Yanchep Rail Extension and Thornlie-Cockburn Link projects.²³
- The State Government is partnering with Peet to develop a \$45 million affordable housing development that will deliver 146 apartments and supply

new commercial space in the heart of Perth. The 20-storey development, located on the government-owned site at Lot 52 Pier Street, will feature a mix of quality apartments. Approximately 70% of apartments will be available for private sale, 15% for sale through the State Government's shared equity program and the remaining 15% allocated for social housing. Pier Street is part of the State Government's \$394 million METRONET Social and Affordable Housing and Jobs Package announced in May this year – a major investment in housing aimed at building liveable and connected communities close to transport infrastructure.²³

- A \$3.25 million refurbishment of Fremantle Passenger Terminal, Australia's largest cruise terminal was completed in January, as part of the State Government's commitment to boosting cruise ship tourism in Western Australia. The refurbishments include the ground floor foyer, new decorative glass panelling dividing the escalators and within the Customs Hall, and modern furniture for the transit area in the first floor function hall. A new steel and glass central canopy, repainted façade, updated signage and new banners greet passengers entering the iconic building.²³
- Alfresco dining areas will now be fee-free for restaurant and cafe owners in Perth. In a bid to compete with neighbouring hotspots like Leederville, Mt Lawley and Subiaco, the City of Perth's commissioners voted in January to remove all fees for local businesses bringing patrons on to the streets. An independent review had recommended the \$98 application fee and \$40 per square metre annual permit fee stay in place. The alfresco dining debate has been

underway at the City of Perth for some years, with the lower \$40 per square metre rate introduced in November 2017 and previous moves to abolish fees rejected. Neighbouring councils City of Subiaco and City of Vincent do not charge per square metre fees, with Vincent also waiving the application fee. The City's updated outdoor dining policy and guidelines will also now allow patrons to consume alcohol in alfresco areas while standing, where the business has the appropriate liquor license.^{26&24}

- In January, the State Government started the process of securing a private operator, through an EOI, to provide certain automated services to Landgate. Having previously rejected the full sale of Landgate, the government will proceed with plans to commercialise a restricted part of Landgate's automated land titling transactions. The decision will see the State realise a return on Landgate's innovation and investment, while retaining ownership of the land titles register. It is expected a service provider will be appointed in late 2019.²³
- The first day of January 2019 saw retailers who supply banned lightweight plastic bags risk potential prosecution and fines of up to \$5,000. Plastic bag suppliers and manufacturers who provide misleading information when selling bags to retailers can also be prosecuted and fined. The State-wide plastic bag ban applies to all retailers – not just supermarkets. It includes lightweight bags made of plastic – including bags that are biodegradable, degradable or compostable – with handles and a thickness of 35 microns or less.²³
- Following the removal of a long-standing exemption in October, the resource

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industry now contributes to the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund (BCITF) levy. The policy change will ensure all industries undertaking construction work contribute to the training and development of the State's construction workforce. The BCITF levy is invested in training incentives and support for employers of apprentices and trainees in the construction industry. Removing the exemption will improve the resource industry's ability to access the skilled workforce it has identified it needs. The levy has previously applied to all residential, commercial and civil engineering projects undertaken in Western Australia where the total value of construction is estimated to be more than \$20,000.²³

- Medically retired police officers can now apply for tailored, ex gratia-type payments to recognise the service and acknowledge the circumstances and treatment of some ill or injured officers. The \$16 million scheme announced in October, provides for a maximum payment of \$150,000, and is designed to offer some recognition of the indignity and treatment of some medically retired officers. Police officers forced to retire due to medical grounds will no longer have to leave under Section 8 of the Police Act, the same section used to remove officers associated with misconduct or impropriety. The new amendments will apply to an officer who is retiring, where it is found that they are permanently incapable of, or unfit to perform the duties of their office for medical reasons.²³

- The best and brightest international graduates from Western Australian universities can now submit an expression of interest under the State Government's new Graduate Occupation List. Candidates who wish to be considered for State nomination under the graduate stream of the State Nominated Migration Program will need to submit an expression of interest using the Federal Department of Home Affairs' SkillSelect database. Best and brightest graduates will be invited to apply each month. It is expected the new Graduate Occupation List will attract an increased number of high-quality international graduates – with PhD, Masters, Honours, Bachelors and other higher degrees – to help grow WA's share of the international education market and create jobs for Western Australians.²⁸
- Property owners using websites such as Airbnb to rent out their homes share similar concerns to their neighbours over short-stay users, with a new survey indicating both groups support tighter regulation of the industry. The survey, undertaken by Western Australian Apartment Advocacy in collaboration with the Australian Hotels Association, indicated 42% of short-stay property owners and 70% of their neighbours supported the introduction of criteria to rate properties and users of short-stay accommodation. Concerns raised by owners and neighbours included Airbnb users hosting parties, security issues, loud noises, disrespectful guests, and parking problems. The survey release comes at a time of increased scrutiny of the short-stay accommodation sector in WA. A parliamentary

inquiry into the industry was opened in November last year to ascertain the current form and regulatory status of accommodation providers, the evolving market and issues stemming from emerging business models that utilise online booking platforms.²⁵

- Environmental protection for the Beeliam wetlands moved one step closer in November after the introduction of a Bill into Parliament to rezone 34 hectares of wetland from Primary Regional Roads to Parks and Recreation, preserving it for future generations. The land, part of a larger reservation through which the previous government planned to build the Perth Freight Link, is proposed to be rezoned under the Metropolitan Region Scheme so it can no longer be used to construct a road.²³

Lifestyle

- For the first time in more than 40 years, one of the most successful and famous football clubs in the world will head to Perth in July to play two matches at Optus Stadium. Manchester United Football Club will bring their entire squad to Western Australia in July 2019 and train in the State, as part of the team's preparation for the 2019-20 season. The team will play two friendly matches and host training clinics. There will also be a program of activities for fans, including an open training session and functions with club legends, as well as a day out in the Swan Valley, dinner and a corporate golf day.²⁸
- The 2019 Hopman Cup featured a never-before-seen mixed doubles match featuring Roger Federer and Serena Williams. Before a record crowd of 14,064, the Swiss team defeated the USA, but the game ended with a selfie that went around the world, of Federer and Williams, arguably two of the greatest players of all time. The 31st Hopman Cup attracted a record 110,364 people. More than 80 print, radio and broadcast media provided extensive media coverage of the event to media outlets around Australia and internationally including Switzerland, Germany, France, United Kingdom and the United States.³²
- Western Australia will again play host to one of the world's largest ocean sports events when the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships ('Aussies') returns in 2022. Sponsored by the State Government, through Tourism WA, the Aussies is an annual event which sees Australia's 311 surf clubs come together to compete in more than 400



Perth Arena, image supplied by VenuesWest.

- beach and ocean events. The 2018 event attracted 8,578 visitors to Scarborough – more than 5,000 of which were competitors – who spent \$15.8 million during the event.²³
- The Australian Masters Rowing Championships will be held at the Champion Lakes Regatta Centre in Perth in May. The 2019 championships are expected to attract more than 1,000 out-of-State competitors and visitors, providing a boost to the local economy. The championships will run over four days.²³
- The State Government has secured a significant tourism business event for Western Australia in 2019. Dreamtime, which is Tourism Australia's signature event for promoting Australia as a world-class incentive destination, will be held in Perth for the first time in December 2019. The Dreamtime program will give the local tourism industry the chance to meet and do business with buyers from key markets including Greater China, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, New Zealand, USA and the United Kingdom to secure future incentive business.²³
- New figures reveal West Australians spent an average \$114 a year on live performances last year, more than the national average of \$76 and the biggest spend in the nation ahead of Victoria (\$100), NSW (\$78), Tasmania (\$66), Queensland (\$53), South Australia (\$48) and the Northern Territory (\$8). In total, WA show-goers spent \$196 million to buy more than 2.6 million tickets last year at an average price of about \$75 a gig or show, according to Live Performance Australia (LPA) data. Spending on tickets was up by a third compared with the previous year, while ticket sales jumped 12%.
- Fourteen new food and wine trails across Perth and Western Australia were launched in Perth, with the aim of helping to cement the State as a gourmet gastronomic destination. Trails include Swan Valley Sweet Temptations, Fremantle Gusto Italiano Trail, Peel Craft Beer and Wine Trail, as well as in Margaret River, Denmark and Bunbury.²³
- Figures released in January show that Rottnest Island continues to attract record numbers of visitors to its shores,



Photo by Faith Clarke, 2018 Passion for Perth Photographic Competition.

with 769,000 people arriving via ferry, boat or aircraft in 2018. The 15% record increase in visitor numbers can be attributed to extra ferry services, marketing campaigns, celebrity visitors and quokka selfies.²³

- Kings Park and Botanic Garden has invited local businesses employing, owned or run by Aboriginal people to provide a range of new commercial visitor experiences in the park. The initiative has been prompted by demands from domestic and international visitors for authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences. According to recent Tourism WA data, 78% of visitors to Western Australia seek an Aboriginal cultural experience. Expressions of interest closed in January.²³
- Western Australia has taken the title of the State with the largest newly-built houses and apartments in Australia. A 2017/2018 CommSec report indicated WA had the biggest average floor area of 211.5 square metres out of all new homes built during this period.

Victoria and New South Wales' averages loom behind at 201.8 and 162.8 square metres respectively. WA remained the only State not following a severe downward swing in national average home sizes at 186.3 square metres, the lowest level in 22 years. New apartments in the State also followed a similar pattern, increasing in size to 133.8 square metres with an 8.7% increase in the past year. It stands well above the national average of 124.8 square metres.²⁴

- A tiny home will hit the road in November as part of a public campaign to raise awareness of housing choice in Western Australia. The Housing Minister officially launched the not-for-profit group WA Apartment Advocacy's (WAAA) Tiny Home education program. The public can now view the tiny home at shows, expos and fairs across Perth and visitors can offer feedback on the alternative accommodation option via a survey provided to relevant local government

councils and design groups. In partnership with WAAA, the Department of Communities will run an apartment living trial at the Arbor North development in Rivervale. The three-month trial, starting in February 2019, will involve three candidates – each living in the apartment for a month. Each candidate will provide feedback on their experience which will help inform the development of future designs.²³

- Japan and Western Australia will once again be connected by a direct air service, with All Nippon Airways announcing it will commence a Tokyo-Perth service from September 1, 2019. ANA will operate the Boeing Dreamliner 787 service seven times a week between Perth Airport and Narita International Airport, Tokyo. Japan is currently WA's ninth biggest market in terms of visitors, with the State attracting 28,700 Japanese visitors in 2017-18. Those visitors spent \$60 million during their stay in WA, making Japan the

11th largest market in terms of spend. Over three years, it is estimated the flights will bring about 76,000 new visitors from Japan to Perth, providing a \$175 million boost to the State's economy and creating hundreds of new jobs.²³

- Tourism WA has committed funds to market Western Australia in India for the first time and will appoint a dedicated marketing representative based in Mumbai. The Tourism Minister also held key meetings with, and delivering business cases to, six Indian airlines in a bid to attract a direct service between India and Perth. India is currently WA's 10th biggest market in terms of visitors, with the State attracting 28,200 Indians in the year ending March 2018. Those visitors spent \$68 million during their stay in WA, making India the ninth largest market in terms of spend.²³
- In January, the State Government secured a marketing partnership with Virgin Australia to attract more tourists from the East Coast to Western Australia. The two-year co-operative marketing agreement is the first extended agreement between the airline and Tourism Western Australia, with each party committing \$600,000 to the deal. The current agreement will see Virgin Australia use its substantial marketing assets to increase awareness of WA as a holiday destination.²³
- The Matagarup Bridge could soon host climbing and zip-line experiences for thrill seekers, with the State Government seeking proposals from the market to provide the tourism offerings. The Government, through Main Roads Western Australia and VenuesWest, is calling on tourism operators to put forward their proposals for the stadium precinct to

leverage its tourism potential, including a potential roof climb on Optus Stadium. The bridge climb would potentially allow locals and visitors to ascend to the highest point of the Matagarup Bridge, 65 metres above the Swan River, then take a zip-line back to shore. Alternatively, they could scale the roof of the 60,000-capacity Optus Stadium. The procurement process is targeted to finish in mid-2019, with the possibility of an operator starting in late 2019.²³

- Optus Stadium has won the Project of the Year at the world's leading stadium industry awards, beating out international competition from the United States of America and Malaysia in the category, including Kuala Lumpur Sports City; Fiserv Forum (Milwaukee); Little Caesars Arena (Detroit); Louis Armstrong Arena (New York); Audi Field (Washington DC); and SunTrust Park (Atlanta). The award presented at TheStadiumBusiness Awards in London in November recognised Optus Stadium for excellence in a new stadium build or expansion which has delivered on all its goals and more. The award is Optus Stadium's 27th for the year, having previously won State, national and international awards for tourism, architecture, catering, landscaping, design, building and construction including the National Award for Public Architecture and the Award for Steel Architecture at the National Architecture Awards.²³
- BGC Development's Westin Hotel and Hibernian Place development was picked as the top project in Western Australia in the 2018 Urban Development Institute Australia WA awards. The project, which opened in

late April, was picked for the Russel Perry award for urban development excellence, and for excellence in retail, commercial or mixed use development.²⁵

- Yagan Square has won the Western Australian Urban Development Industry Association WA Award for Excellence in Urban Renewal. The square won the award for transforming the previously unused desolate land into a unique, transit-oriented community hub that celebrates the site's rich history and cultural significance. Collaboration with the Noongar community through the Whadjuk Working Party was central to the project to ensure the cultural authenticity of the square extends far beyond its name, infused throughout the design, public artworks and landscaping in the space. Yagan Square has helped reconnect the Perth central business district with Northbridge as part of Perth City Link.²³
- Wildflower at COMO The Treasury has been recognised as Western Australia's finest eating establishment by Australia's Good Food Guide, receiving a 16 out of 20 in the guide's Chef Hat Awards. Overall, 32 WA restaurants were recognised by AGFG, among the 375 around the country.³³
- A location eight to 10 kilometres off Ocean Reef Marina has been chosen as the preferred site for Perth's new artificial reef. The location was chosen because it is the most easily accessible from Hillarys, Ocean Reef and Mindarie marinas. The exact positioning, size and design of the reef will be determined after the completion of an in-water survey and further consultation with Recfishwest.²³

Knowledge and innovation

- The world's first state-of-the-art Zephyr Solar High Altitude Pseudo-Satellite (HAPS) operating base has been officially established at Wyndham Airfield in Western Australia's north. The Zephyr HAPS is a solar-powered unmanned aircraft that flies at more than 65,000 feet and provides a range of earth observation and communications services including environmental management, mineral exploration and bushfire management.²³
- About 40 homes in Fremantle are taking part in a trial which will enable households with rooftop solar panels to trade their excess solar energy with their neighbours. The trial gives households the flexibility to determine how much they are willing to buy and sell solar energy for, and then make the purchase via a blockchain-enabled platform. A fixed-use residential tariff and a new billing system has also been developed for the trial, allowing households to engage in discrete, time-based energy transactions.²³
- The PowerBank trial by Western Power and Synergy will be the first time in Australia that a utility-scale battery is integrated into an already-established major metropolitan network, to allow a shared storage service to meet an individual customer's needs. A 105kW (420kWh) Tesla battery will be owned and operated by Western Power and Synergy and connected to the grid in Meadow Springs, allowing households with solar panels to maximise their existing grid connection. Customers participating in

the 24-month trial will be able to virtually store excess power they generate during the day from their solar PV systems in the battery, and then draw down on that power during the peak evening period. These customers will be able to use 8kWhs of the PowerBank battery storage without having to outlay upfront costs for a behind the meter battery storage system. 8kWhs is enough to power the average suburban home for over one hour during peak time.²³

- Construction of Australia's first large-scale waste-to-energy facility started in October in Kwinana after investment groups Macquarie Capital and DIF bought the Phoenix Energy project. Once completed at a cost of \$668 million, the Kwinana facility will transform waste treatment in Perth. It will process about 400,000 tonnes of waste annually – primarily household waste, though it may also process commercial and industrial waste – and produce 36 megawatts of electricity for the grid. The waste it processes is equivalent to one quarter of all the waste that goes to landfill in Perth each year.²⁵
- An innovative new Western Australian product is set to reduce the amount of plastics required for recreational fishing bait, significantly reducing the potential impact on the environment. Recfishwest, in partnership with Mendolia Seafoods, has developed biodegradable bait boxes that are filled with fish waste that can be used as fish burley or lobster baits. The new bait boxes do not have plastic lining, or any internal plastic bag to contain the frozen bait, like other bait boxes do. The bait product itself is made from local fish waste, like sardine by-

products, and will result in less fish waste heading to landfill and the new packaging means there is no need to take plastic bags out when fishing. Research from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation released in 2016 predicted that by 2050 there would be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans.²³

- Researchers from Murdoch University have been granted \$1.9 million, in an effort to demystify tick-related diseases in Australia. The team is leading a national initiative to help the thousands of Australians suffering from a poorly defined illness contracted from tick bites. The four-year project, funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, will be based at Murdoch University and carried out in collaboration with the Australian Rickettsial Reference Laboratory in Geelong, the University of Queensland, Monash University, several hospitals in Sydney's north, and the Australian Red Cross Blood Service. The research team at Murdoch's Vector and Waterborne Pathogens Research Group will aim to identify the causes of an illness currently known as DSCATT (Debilitating Symptom Complexes Attributed to Ticks).²⁵
- Western Australian researchers believe they have identified a compound that could protect the brain cells of newborns who have had a stroke-like event around the time of birth. Their confidence stems from results achieved with a peptide dubbed 'R18'. R18 has been used in trials with brain cell cultures and pre-clinical models that mimic the stroke-like condition, known as hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy (HIE). HIE affects three in every 1,000

live births, with up to 15 to 25% of affected babies dying and an additional 25 to 60% sustaining permanent brain damage, resulting in cerebral palsy, epilepsy or learning disabilities.²³

- Techboard's 2017-18 report found that, nationally, there were 736 funding events by Australian startups and young tech companies totalling just over \$3.5 billion. Of this, Western Australian companies raised \$295 million or 8.3% of the national total.²⁵
- Western Australian university graduates are lagging behind their eastern states counterparts in securing full-time jobs. The Australian Education Department's 2018 Graduate Outcome Survey results saw the national average for graduates obtaining full-time employment within four months of graduation at 72.9%. But, with the exception of the University of Notre Dame at 78.7%, all WA universities scored lower. The University of Western Australia had the lowest rate at 55.4% of graduates immediately securing full-time employment. Next was ECU which stood at 57.8%. Murdoch University came in with 62.3% and Curtin inched close to the national average at 71.4%.²⁴
- A new app to digitally record learner driver logbook hours and trips has been developed to simplify the process of getting a driver's licence in Western Australia. The new improvements include the development of a Learner Log Book application – Learn&Log will enable learner drivers to transition from paper to digital and provides a faster, more convenient way to record and submit supervised driving hours. Learn&Log's public release is planned for early 2019, following the successful completion of a trial with selected learner drivers.²³
- The innovators of an online tool that allows homeowners and contractors to instantly design, engineer and approve their own building projects, won top honours at the WA Innovator of the Year awards in November. The online system, called Udrew, is synced directly with local government authorities and national building regulators, providing instant fully certified council and engineering approvals. A team of students from Sacred Heart College, called AusTrailia, was crowned WA Young Innovator of the Year for an app which gamifies online trail maps.²³
- Western Australians working in games were last year encouraged to apply for a \$5,000 travel grant through the State Government's Games Industry Growth Pilot program. The International Access Pass creates opportunities for WA industry to connect with key players and build business networks. People who work in games can apply for a grant in five award categories: Superstar – the main award, for talented Western Australians who have a great product that they are ready to take to the world and who can deliver business results; Bright Spark – for high potential individuals who have graduated within the last two years from a WA university or VET institution/organisation; Trailblazer – recognising women who inspire other women and girls to develop their science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills and act as leaders in their chosen field; New Horizons – for individuals who use games technology, theory or skills in other sectors such as education and training, health, mining or finance; and Teamed Up – two awards available for one team who need to travel together to make their mission succeed.²³
- A new high-tech Main Roads operations centre – capable of managing traffic flow across the entire metropolitan area, opened in October. The Road Network Operations Centre (RNOC) is a purpose-built, world-class facility designed to optimise road network safety, performance and congestion management. It enables close collaboration with critical first responders to manage real-time operations, emergency incidents and events on the road network. RNOC provides Main Roads with a new and enhanced capability to manage traffic and congestion through: using big data to understand traffic performance, including where excessive or abnormal delays exist; enabling management of emergency incidents and major events in real time; and providing real-time information to motorists through multiple channels. The new centre will also have the capacity to manage Perth's first Smart Freeway, which will be operational by 2020 on Kwinana Freeway northbound between the Canning Highway and Narrows Bridge.²³
- Startup businesses in Perth have access to a new source of funding after the Royal Automobile Club of WA launched a \$3 million investment fund last night, while also disclosing it is a substantial shareholder in fast growing blockchain business Power Ledger. The BetterLabs Venture Fund will be run by Derek Gerrard, who has recently been engaged as the RAC's entrepreneur-in-residence. The new fund will initially build a portfolio of around 10 companies and is likely to invest between \$100,000 and \$500,000 in each business.²⁵

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