Secretary’s foreword

I am pleased to present the Department of Social Services Corporate Plan 2017–18 which has been prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013.

This is our third Corporate Plan and it outlines our role as a crucial source of policy advice for the Australian Government. Our mission is to improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the welfare system.

This Plan outlines our strategic priorities over the next four years and ensures we remain open and transparent including the proper use and management of public resources.

Our focus for 2017–18 includes:

• continuing to simplify the welfare system to ensure it is easy to navigate, well-targeted, sustainable, and designed to help people find employment
• expanding the Cashless Debit Card to two new locations and extending the Income Management Program for a further two years
• ensuring the quality and safety of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services through the establishment of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, and by building a capable workforce to service NDIS participants, as well as ensuring there are appropriate work opportunities for people with disability
• paying special attention to redress for victims of child sexual abuse in Commonwealth institutions through the establishment and implementation of the Commonwealth Redress Scheme
• developing a national approach to improve housing outcomes and reduce homelessness through reforms to the National Affordable Housing Agreement, the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, and the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment
• continuing to transition our Department and other government agencies to the Community Grants Hub; aiming to simplify and streamline grants for service providers, the community and government.

I am proud to lead our innovative Department and look forward to meeting the challenges of the future as we deliver the priorities outlined in this important document.

Finn Pratt
Secretary, Department of Social Services
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Statement of preparation

I, Finn Pratt, as the accountable authority of the Department of Social Services, present the 2017–18 Department of Social Services Corporate Plan (the Plan), as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013. The Plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

This Plan has been prepared for the 2017–18 financial year and covers the four financial periods 2017–18 to 2020–21.

Signed:

Dated: 20 July 2017
1 | About Us

Our vision
We aspire to be Australia’s pre-eminent social policy agency.

Our mission
Our mission is to improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia.

Our purposes
We work in partnership with government and non-government organisations to ensure the effective development, management, and delivery of payments, policies, programs, and services.

Our purposes reflect four core areas in which we seek to assist people.

1. Social Security
Encourage self-reliance and support people who cannot fully support themselves by providing sustainable social security payments and assistance.

2. Families and Communities
Contribute to stronger and more resilient individuals, families and communities by providing targeted services and initiatives.

3. Disability and Carers
Improved independence of, and participation by, people with disability, including improved support for carers, by providing targeted support and services.

4. Housing
Improved access to affordable housing, improved community housing and assisting individuals experiencing homelessness through targeted support and services.
Our policies and programs are designed around these purposes. We are responsible for approximately one-quarter of the Australian Government’s 2017–18 budgeted expenditure with the majority of this going towards social security as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: 2017–18 DSS Budget Allocation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Budget Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>$109.44 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families &amp; Communities</td>
<td>$3.55 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability &amp; Carers</td>
<td>$4.46 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>$0.11 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DSS Portfolio Budget Statements 2017–18

Our values reflect those of the broader Australian Public Service and are central to the way we work with our Ministers, Assistant Ministers, colleagues and stakeholders. This includes being impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful, and ethical.

[1] This figure excludes $4.5b for Rent Assistance as it is a supplementary payment included in the calculation of the primary income support payment and family tax benefit — see page 48 of the 2017–18 Social Services Portfolio Budget Statements for more information. This figure also excludes $1.4b for payments to the states and territories as set out in the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment (NAHSSPP) and $0.1b for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). These are appropriated to and administered by the Department of Treasury — see page 25 of the 2017–18 Department of Treasury Portfolio Budget Statements for more information.
Our portfolio

Our Department sits within the Social Services portfolio which works to develop, manage and deliver policies, programs, and payments that support and improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families by encouraging independence and participation.

The portfolio consists of the Department of Social Services and the Department of Human Services, each administered separately, and two portfolio bodies:

- Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)
- National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Our people

We value our staff for their contribution, diversity and expertise. We operate across Australia, with approximately 85 per cent of our staff based in Canberra, the remaining 15 per cent located in state, territory and regional offices.

We embrace the opportunities presented by the National Innovation and Science Agenda. Our Innovation Strategy shapes a culture where innovation is supported, and our approach encourages collaboration, both within our Department and with external stakeholders.

Our organisational priorities

Our organisational priorities focus on how we can achieve our purposes and outcomes to meet the expectations of ministers, government and the Australian community. We will:

- ensure government policies and programs operate effectively and efficiently and maximise their contribution to lifetime wellbeing for people and families
- ensure government priorities are implemented and monitored effectively and efficiently, maintained and evaluated
- provide evidence-based, whole-of-department, social policy advice to ministers and government focused on improving the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia (see Appendix A) in accordance with our approach to policy advice (see Appendix B)
- build productive and collaborative relationships with our stakeholders, including other departments, service providers, and the states and territories to achieve outcomes in respective areas of responsibility
- create a productive and supportive workplace, manage our financial and other resources effectively, and maintain the capability needed to deliver government priorities into the future.
Our governance

We are organised in four streams, each led by a Deputy Secretary as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: DSS Organisational Structure as at 30 June 2017**

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**Social Security Stream**

The Social Security Stream provides social policy advice, policy oversight of social security payments to individuals, as well as welfare reform across the whole social security system. It provides leadership of strategic, cross outcome policy, data and evidence that supports policy advice. The stream is also responsible for housing policy.

**Families & Communities Stream**

The Families & Communities Stream develops policy and delivers programs for families, children, family safety, homelessness, gambling, multicultural affairs and settlement services. The Stream also delivers housing programs.

**Corporate & Delivery Stream**

The Corporate & Delivery Stream supports our Department through fit-for-purpose corporate services. The Stream also comprises the delivery network and works closely with policy and program areas to reduce red tape through deregulation activities.

**Disability & Carers Stream**

The Disability & Carers Stream shapes policy and services relating to disability and carers (including disability employment services and community mental health) and provides transition oversight and policy direction for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

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Our governance structure is designed to ensure accountability, transparency and fairness. It includes internal boards and committees, business planning and risk management, operations, quality assurance, fraud control and compliance activities.

Several committees provide advice and support to the Secretary on the administration and overall operation of our Department (see Figure 3).
Figure 3: DSS Committee Structure

Our risk oversight and management

Risk management is an essential component of sound management and good corporate governance. Our Enterprise Risk Management Framework and Guidelines are reviewed annually, are based on the Australian/New Zealand International Standard on Risk Management (AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009), and align with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy.

We have identified nine enterprise risks which pose a threat to our organisational priorities, purposes, and mission (see Figure 4). These risks are identified, monitored, and treated by the Executive Management Group.

The nine identified enterprise risks are:

- significant program failure
- significant failure or delay in delivering a government priority
- significant fraud or non-compliance event
- failure to appropriately allocate resources to deliver priorities
- major implementation problem
- unpredicted or unmanaged harm to a worker or service recipient
- major service provider failure
- selected policy or program model does not deliver outcomes sought
- unanticipated fiscal outcome.
We undertake regular group, program, project, and operational level risk assessments, including fraud risk assessments.

Risk management at all levels is:

- undertaken within the parameters of our risk appetite and tolerance levels
- core business and the responsibility of all staff
- an essential component of all business activities and systems
- a continuous, developing and proactive process
- a process of understanding and proportionally controlling risk
- a management tool rather than an extra load on normal work practices.

Our risk and compliance functions establish policies, frameworks and processes which:

- support staff to take the right risks in pursuit of our priorities
- balance the tension between activities that create enterprise value, and activities that protect enterprise value
- ensure stakeholders understand and adhere to their obligations
- prevent, detect, and deal with fraud and corruption
- effectively identify and manage risks in relation to serious non-compliance, fraud, and corruption.

Our Internal Audit Practice is an operationally independent function which provides assurance to the Secretary that our financial and operational controls are operating in an efficient, effective, economical, and ethical manner.

The Chief Internal Auditor and the Internal Audit Practice also support the role and functions of the Audit and Assurance Committee, as required under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013.
Figure 4: DSS Enterprise Risks

Improving lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia

Our Organisational Priorities

- Ensure government policies and programs operate effectively and efficiently and maximise their contribution to lifetime wellbeing for people and families.
- Provide evidence-based, whole-of-department, social policy advice to ministers and government focused on improving the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia in accordance with our approach to policy advice.
- Ensure government priorities are implemented and monitored effectively and efficiently, maintained and evaluated.
- Build productive and collaborative relationships with our stakeholders, including other departments, service providers, and the states and territories to achieve outcomes in respective areas of responsibility.
- Create a productive and supportive workplace, manage our financial and other resources effectively, and maintain the capability needed to deliver government priorities into the future.

Our Enterprise Risks

- Significant program failure
- Significant failure or delay in delivering a government priority
- Failure to appropriately allocate resources to delivery priorities
- Major implementation problem
- Major service provider failure
- Selected policy or programme model does not deliver outcomes sought
- Significant fraud or non-compliance event
- Unpredicted or unmanaged harm to a worker or service recipient
- Unanticipated fiscal outcome
2 | Performance

Our non-financial performance framework (at Figure 5) is the basis for measuring and assessing department and program performance in contributing to government policy objectives.

Figure 5: DSS Non-Financial Performance Framework

Each year we will report performance criteria for key results areas using outcome, intermediate outcome, and output indicators at both program and cross-program levels for each Purpose Statement (see Figure 6). Further details of the program measurement information can be found on our website (www.dss.gov.au) under Department of Social Services corporate performance measurement detail. We will supplement our performance criteria by reporting on relevant evaluations, reviews, and additional analysis in our 2017–18 Annual Performance Statement.

We do not have targets as contributing payments and services are demand driven. We will report actual performance in our 2017–18 Annual Report.

Performance criteria and indicators should be read along with program financial, performance, and target information published in our 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) to provide our complete performance story. Both the Corporate Plan purpose performance criteria and PBS program performance criteria will be reported in our 2017–18 Annual Performance Statement.
Figure 6: DSS Performance Criteria

### DSS performance criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose 1</th>
<th>Purpose 2</th>
<th>Purpose 3</th>
<th>Purpose 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Security</strong></td>
<td><strong>Families &amp; Communities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disability &amp; Carers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage self-reliance and support people who cannot fully support themselves by providing sustainable social security payments and assistance.</td>
<td>Contribute to stronger and more resilient individuals, families and communities by providing targeted services and initiatives.</td>
<td>Improved independence of, and participation by, people with disability, including improved support for carers, by providing targeted support and services.</td>
<td>Improved access to affordable housing, improved community housing and assisting individuals experiencing homelessness through targeted support and services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcomes — What did we achieve?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability of the payments system</th>
<th>Extent to which payments are made to, or with respect to, people unable to fully support themselves</th>
<th>Extent of improved independence and participation</th>
<th>Extent of improvement in rental affordability for low and moderate income households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which payment recipients have improved financial self-reliance</td>
<td>Extent to which assisted individuals and families have improved individual and family functioning</td>
<td>Extent to which service provision meets program objective</td>
<td>Extent of contribution to creating and implementing national approaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Intermediate outcomes — How well did we do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent to which payments are made to, or with respect to, people unable to fully support themselves</th>
<th>Extent of contribution to implementing national initiatives</th>
<th>Extent of contribution to creating and implementing national initiatives</th>
<th>Extent to which payments are made to, or with respect to, people unable to fully support themselves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which delivery meets program objective</td>
<td>Extent to which payments and service provision meet program objective</td>
<td>Extent to which services provision meets program objective</td>
<td>Extent to which delivery meets program objective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outputs — How much did we do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery measures</th>
<th>Delivery measures</th>
<th>Delivery measures</th>
<th>Delivery measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Activities

We respond to need across people’s lives by administering a social security system that provides for a range of payments and access to concessions, including family payments, student payments, income support payments for people of workforce age, people with disability and carers, and for seniors. Additional payments and non-cash benefits include Commonwealth Rent Assistance and concession cards.

The social security system is targeted to provide support to those who are most in need and to assist people to become and remain financially self-reliant over the life course. Payments and financial assistance are delivered by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. The social security system is part of a broader suite of government welfare support provided by other Commonwealth agencies including health care, student loans, employment assistance, and tax concessions. State, territory, and local governments also contribute to the welfare safety net through financial and in-kind support, subsidies, and concessions.

Environment

The sustainability of the social security system and the capacity of people to achieve and maintain financial self-reliance over the life course are contingent primarily on broader economic performance and responding to demographic challenges. Factors such as labour market conditions, financial system stability, availability, and alignment of education and job opportunities, and increasing longevity all impact on people’s capacity to support themselves financially both in the short term and over the life course. These factors are outside our direct influence.

The performance of the social security system is contingent on structural elements such as incentives to break the cycle of long-term welfare dependence. Improvements in self-reliance are contingent on pathways to employment; the development, maintenance and renewal of skills.

Priorities

From 2017–21 we will:

- manage reform of the social security system to improve sustainability, coherence, and responsiveness to our changing socio-economic context, making work and individual responsibility more central, and minimising long-term welfare dependence
- develop and begin to implement an ‘investment approach’ to Australia’s social security system, detailing the lifetime liability of the social security system and informing our policy responses for those at risk of long-term welfare dependency
- develop and implement measures to ensure the pension system is targeted and sustainable into the future
- implement measures to encourage and support working age Australians into work
- improve the assessment process for carer payments.
Performance

Performance against Purpose 1 Social Security will be reported in each of the four years of the Corporate Plan by five collective performance criteria described below, comprising indicators at cross program and program levels.

Performance reporting will be supported over the period of the Corporate Plan by relevant findings from the Try, Test and Learn fund and analysis drawing on actuarial and administrative data.

### Table 1: Performance Criteria for Purpose 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose: Encourage self-reliance and support people who cannot fully support themselves by providing sustainable social security payments and assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Family Tax Benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Child Payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Income Support for Vulnerable People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Income Support for People in Special Circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Supplementary Payments and Support for Income Support Recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Income Support for Seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Allowances and Concessions for Seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Income Support for People with Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Income Support for Carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 Working Age Payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11 Student Payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP (Cross Program)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcomes – What did we achieve?

#### Programs

#### Performance criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome indicators</th>
<th>1.1</th>
<th>1.2</th>
<th>1.3</th>
<th>1.4</th>
<th>1.5</th>
<th>1.6</th>
<th>1.7</th>
<th>1.8</th>
<th>1.9</th>
<th>1.10</th>
<th>1.11</th>
<th>XP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Sustainability of the payments system**

- Average future lifetime cost (in current year dollars) of total welfare payments to individuals

**Extent to which payment recipients have improved financial self-reliance**

- Expected average proportion of future years not receiving payments
- Percentage of recipients who are not receiving income support 3/6/12 months after exiting student payments
- Percentage of recipients who exit income support within 3/6/12 months
- Percentage of recipients reporting employment income
- Percentage of recipients receiving a part rate of payment due to income or assets tests

### Intermediate outcomes – How well did we do?

#### Programs

#### Performance criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intermediate outcome indicators</th>
<th>1.1</th>
<th>1.2</th>
<th>1.3</th>
<th>1.4</th>
<th>1.5</th>
<th>1.6</th>
<th>1.7</th>
<th>1.8</th>
<th>1.9</th>
<th>1.10</th>
<th>1.11</th>
<th>XP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Extent to which payments are made to, or with respect to, people unable to fully support themselves**

- Percentage of targeted population who receive payment
- Percentage of recipients aligned to specific policy objectives or payment conditions

**Extent to which delivery meets program objective**

- Program performance criteria and associated milestones/standards (PBS)
- Payment accuracy (PBS)
- Percentage of recipients with debts by type and status

### Outputs – How much did we do?

#### Programs

#### Performance criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output indicators</th>
<th>1.1</th>
<th>1.2</th>
<th>1.3</th>
<th>1.4</th>
<th>1.5</th>
<th>1.6</th>
<th>1.7</th>
<th>1.8</th>
<th>1.9</th>
<th>1.10</th>
<th>1.11</th>
<th>XP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Delivery measures**

- Number of recipients (PBS)
- Number of children (PBS)
- Administered outlays (PBS)
Activities

We support families, children and youth, as well as migrants and humanitarian entrants settling in Australia to improve their lifetime wellbeing by building on their strengths and addressing barriers to independence and participation in the community. Assistance is provided through Paid Parental Leave and a program of grants, administered procurements, and subsidies to organisations to support individual, family, and community functioning. Funding is targeted to assist people and families, and strengthening community capacity to provide support and meet local needs.

The aim of the payment and concessions system is to provide support to those who are most in need and to assist people and families to become more self reliant over the life course. The Commonwealth leads national policy initiatives of mutual interest at all levels of government. Initiatives for which the states and territories have significant responsibility include child protection services, gambling regulation, early childhood services, family services and place based community initiatives.

We work across the Commonwealth and with state and territory governments to foster inclusive social norms that strengthen social cohesion - such as mutual respect, trust and belonging while addressing threats to family and community harmony such as domestic and family violence and sexual assault, child abuse and neglect, and racism and discrimination.

Environment

A complex array of circumstances, social norms as well as personal aspirations and motivations influence individual, family, and community functioning, and the capacity of individuals to improve their circumstances. Parenting, relationship, and financial management skills also contribute to positive outcomes for families and children across the life course.

Priorities

From 2017–21 we will:

- provide redress to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in Commonwealth institutional settings in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission and engage with state and territory government and non-government institutions to encourage them to opt-in to the Scheme
- reduce rates of domestic and family violence and sexual assault against women and their children through the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022 and the Women’s Safety Package
- expand the Cashless Debit Card and develop future policy options for welfare quarantining
- develop the Government’s gambling policy and implement the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering aimed at limiting the harm caused by online gambling
• identify and promote evidence-informed prevention and early intervention approaches to engage individuals and families at points of vulnerability over their lifetime
• deliver settlement support for humanitarian entrants and other eligible migrants in their first five years of life in Australia to enable them to be fully contributing members of the community and reduce welfare dependency
• contribute to maintaining Australia’s social cohesion by ensuring relevant programs help build capacity to support and strengthen communities.

Performance

Performance against Purpose 2 Families and Communities will be reported in each of the four years of the Corporate Plan by four collective performance criteria described below, comprising quantitative and qualitative indicators at cross program and program levels.

Performance reporting will be supported over the period of the Corporate Plan by relevant findings and analyses as they become available from the Cashless Debit Card Trial evaluation and analysis of actuarial, administrative and client survey data.

Table 2: Performance Criteria for Purpose 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose: Contribute to stronger and more resilient individuals, families and communities by providing targeted services and initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Families and Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Paid Parental Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Social and Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP Cross Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes — What did we achieve?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intermediate outcomes — How well did we do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate outcome indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs — How much did we do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities

Under the auspices of the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 we deliver a number of targeted programs — and also work across the Commonwealth, with the National Disability Insurance Agency, and with state and territory governments and sector stakeholders — to support people with disability, carers, and people with or at risk of mental illness. The focus is on early intervention and prevention, client choice and control, and the effective and efficient delivery of community supports and services.

As the overarching policy framework for disability reform in Australia, the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 aims to improve lifetime outcomes for the 4.3 million Australians with disability and seeks to drive a more inclusive approach across mainstream policies, programs and infrastructure.

Environment

Market dynamics, as well as social norms and workplace cultures, impact on the range of opportunities available for people with disability, their families, and carers to improve their lifetime outcomes. In addition, many mainstream policies and programs are run by state jurisdictions and by other Commonwealth agencies. Improving access to jobs and the opportunity to participate in the social life of community, their families, and carers - and improving their access to support — is highly contingent on the policy tools and programs run by other Commonwealth agencies and tiers of government, and on influencing other jurisdictions, agencies and employers.

Priorities

In 2017–18 we will:

• implement measures, which encourage and support employers to employ people with disability.

From 2017–19 we will:

• develop a policy framework for supported employment which addresses challenges to wage setting arrangements for the sector.

From 2017–20 we will:

• establish a national Quality and Safeguards system for the NDIS.

From 2017–21 we will:

• develop and implement activities to reinvigorate the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020

• ensure a smooth transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) through: agreeing full scheme policy parameters with the states and providing oversight of NDIS performance and scheme sustainability
• provide oversight of the developing NDIS market through analysis and strategies to support market, workforce, and sector development
• continue delivering Disability Employment Services (DES) while working to implement new arrangements from 1 July 2018
• progress development of the Australian Government’s Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services.

Performance

Performance against Purpose 3 Disability and Carers will be reported in each of the four years of the Corporate Plan by four collective performance criteria described below, comprising quantitative and qualitative indicators at cross program and program levels.

Performance reporting will be supported over the period of the Corporate Plan by relevant findings from the NDIS evaluation as they become available.

Table 3: Performance Criteria for Purpose 3

| Purpose: Improved independence of, and participation by, people with disability, including improved support for carers, by providing targeted support and services |
| Programs |
| 3.1 Disability, Mental Health and Carers |
| 3.2 National Disability Insurance Scheme |
| XP Cross Program |
| Outcomes — What did we achieve? | Programs |
| Performance criteria | 3.1 | 3.2 | XP |
| Extent of improved independence and participation |  |
| Percentage of assisted job seekers in employment three months following participation in Disability Employment Services |  |
| Percentage of assisted people with disability, mental illness and carers with improved knowledge, skills, behaviours and engagement with services |  |
| Intermediate outcomes — How well did we do? | Programs |
| Performance criteria | 3.1 | 3.2 | XP |
| Extent of contribution to creating and implementing national approaches |  |
| Progress in implementing the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 |  |
| Extent of contribution to create an effective and sustainable National Disability Insurance Scheme |  |
| Extent to which service provision meets program objective |  |
| Program performance criteria and associated milestones/standards (PBS) |  |
| Extent of satisfaction with services |  |
| Percentage of assisted individuals who are from priority groups |  |
| Outputs — How much did we do? | Programs |
| Performance criteria | 3.1 | 3.2 | XP |
| Delivery measures |  |
| Number of individuals assisted (PBS) |  |
| Number of organisations contracted or receiving grant funding to deliver services (PBS) |  |
| Value of Commonwealth program funding transitioned to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (PBS) |  |
| Value and number of Sector Development Fund projects supporting the market, sector and workforce to transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (PBS) |  |
| Administered outlays (PBS) |  |
Activities
We administer Commonwealth Rent Assistance, provide incentives to non-government housing providers to deliver affordable housing to low and moderate income households, and work with other Commonwealth agencies, states and territories to develop policy options to improve the supply of social and affordable housing, and reduce the level of homelessness and housing instability.

Environment
Availability of affordable and stable housing for low and moderate income households is highly contingent on policy tools under the control of other Commonwealth agencies and tiers of government, including housing market performance, financial, regulatory and tax settings, planning and zoning policy, and the availability of stable employment for low and medium income households.

Priorities
In 2017–18 we will:

• work with states and territories to implement the 2017–18 Transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness with funding priority given to services for people who are affected by domestic and family violence, and youth homelessness
• review community housing regulations
• work with states and territories to negotiate and implement a new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement to commence 1 July 2018
• through the Affordable Housing Working Group, address recommendations 3 and 4 of the 2016 report ‘Innovative Financing Models to Improve the Supply of Affordable Housing’ to support the Affordable Housing Implementation Taskforce (which is addressing recommendation 1 and 2).

From 2017–21 we will:

• negotiate a new funding agreement and monitor the implementation of the Homes For Homes Initiative
• work with state and territories to implement an automatic rent deduction scheme for welfare recipients in social housing to help tenants sustain their tenancies and reduce the risk of eviction and homelessness
• continue to streamline the legislative and administrative framework for the National Rental Affordability Scheme to simplify its operation and reduce regulatory burdens.
Performance

Performance against Purpose 4 Housing will be reported in each of the four years of the Corporate Plan by five performance criteria described below, comprising quantitative and qualitative indicators at cross program and program levels.

Table 4: Performance Criteria for Purpose 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose: Improved access to affordable housing, improved community housing and assisting individuals experiencing homelessness through targeted support and services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Housing and Homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Affordable Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XP (Cross Program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XPRA (Cross Program) Rent Assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes — What did we achieve?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of improvement in rental affordability for low and moderate income households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Commonwealth Rent Assistance income units in rental stress before and after receiving Commonwealth Rent Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) households in rental stress before and after NRAS discounted rent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intermediate outcomes — How well did we do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of contribution to national initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which payments are made to, or with respect to, people unable to fully support themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Commonwealth Rent Assistance income units paying enough rent to receive the maximum rate of assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent to which delivery meets program objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program performance criteria and associated milestones/standards (PBS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of dwellings that were paid an incentive for the relevant NRAS year (PBS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs — How much did we do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Commonwealth Rent Assistance income units (PBS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of NRAS incentives issued for the relevant NRAS year (Cash and Refundable Tax Offsets (RTO)) (PBS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 | Capability

We will continue to build organisational capability and provide high quality and innovative advice to government.

Policy

Our vision is to be Australia’s pre-eminent social policy agency. To achieve this, we must have a strong policy capability within the Department.

Long-term policy planning

Analysis of longer term policy trends related to wellbeing using our wellbeing planning frame (at Appendix A) has identified five areas of policy focus:

- **greater welfare independence and improved social mobility** so people and families, particularly the most vulnerable, access developmental, educational, and work opportunities to improve their lifetime outcomes
- **greater self-provision and intergenerational equity** so people have the personal, social, and economic means to self-provide over the life course
- **improved quality of family functioning** so families function to support the welfare of family members
- **strengthened social cohesion for communities at risk** so our society is cohesive and supports the social and economic connectedness of people, families, and communities
- **better service delivery models for the future** so our service models are responsive, sustainable, evidence-based, and leverage whole of system resources.

We will continue to align our policy planning, priorities, and performance measurement frameworks to address these longer term challenges (at Figure 7).

To support this work, we develop a series of policy approaches to improve the understanding of emerging and enduring cross-cutting social policy issues. These are designed to support us so we can provide consistent and high-quality policy advice to ministers. Policy approaches are informed by comprehensive evidence analysis and consultation with relevant stakeholders and experts.

Policy approaches form part of our overarching Approach to Policy Advice which represents a clear and transparent statement to ministers, other agencies, and external stakeholders about our approach to developing policy advice.

Performance data development

We will continue program performance reporting for grant agreements through the Data Exchange. The Data Exchange reflects the focus on both smarter and more efficient ways of collecting data from service providers and more useful reporting of data about the outcomes achieved for individuals, families, and communities. The Data Exchange applies to the majority of our client-based programs as well as programs from other Commonwealth agencies such as the Department of Health and the Attorney-General’s Department.

The Data Exchange provides a better understanding of the collective impact of departmental and client-based programs, including client pathways within and across a broad range of government services such as Families and Children, Settlement Services, Mental Health, Family Law, and Commonwealth Home Support.
Evaluation

Our focus is to ensure our investment in evaluation activity is of strategic value to our Department and the Government. We have centralised all evaluation activities into our policy office to provide this strategic oversight and implemented a new service, ‘evaluation readiness’ to help us evaluate more effectively. ‘Evaluation readiness’ prepares programs to successfully collect and use monitoring and performance data to meet reporting accountabilities. It also supports a logical sequence of review and evaluation activities required for successful achievement of outcomes.

We are implementing a four year rolling Evaluation Plan, updated annually, which provides greater clarity about how our evaluation investment contributes to measuring our performance.
We aspire to be Australia’s pre-eminent social policy agency

Improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia

Figure 7: DSS Policy Planning and Performance Framework

Our long term policy planning framework

Individual risk factors

Access to opportunity

Life readiness

Strong communities

Family functioning

Purpose 1 Purpose 2 Purpose 3 Purpose 4

Social Security

Families & Communities

Disability & Carers

Housing

Our non-financial performance framework

Inputs

Our capability and resources

Actions

What did we do?

Outputs

How much did we do?

Intermediate outcomes

How well did we do?

Outcomes

What did we achieve?

Our risk management

Our governance
Research and data development

Our research capability supports strong evidence-based policy advice. One of our priorities is to implement a coordinated approach to research being undertaken, with a focus on what works and the utilisation of evidenced-based change theories that aim to improve lifetime wellbeing. These findings will be framed within our long-term policy priorities, challenges, and responses. They will support identifiable evidence-based advice that can be implemented through various service delivery models.

The National Centre for Longitudinal Data (NCLD) will develop new strengths and capabilities. Following the NCLD’s successful delivery of the inaugural Longitudinal Data Conference, and the completion of the Review of Australia’s Longitudinal Data System in 2016, the NCLD is developing a program of work based on the recommendations of the Review to ensure the value in Australia’s longitudinal data assets are realised, especially through accessibility and articulation of findings to inform policy development.

To achieve this work, the NCLD will drive strategic engagement and collaboration across the research, academic, government, and not-for-profit sectors and will establish new systems and processes to improve data availability, custodianship, and use. This work is commencing in early 2017 and will continue through 2018.

Priorities

From 2017–19 we will:

• implement an overarching policy capability development strategy to ensure we have a robust framework for understanding and assessing our policy work and capabilities.

From 2017–21 we will:

• establish strong social policy development and evaluation practices, focusing on policy performance and external collaboration
• continue to improve and develop our performance data infrastructure and holdings, including the Data Exchange and longitudinal data assets, ensuring we have a strong policy performance regime
• provide a key leadership role across the Australian Government in longitudinal data collaboration, accessibility, use and development to support the policy evidence base.

Workforce

The critical capabilities crucial to achieving both current and future outcomes addressing present or emerging gaps in our workforce are:

• data reporting, modelling and analysis
• policy development and analysis
• project and program management
• stakeholder engagement
• risk management.

We have developed a catalogue of training to address the majority of critical capability needs. Data analytics skills are being strengthened via targeted training and strategic recruitment and graduate recruitment processes, to mitigate identified gaps.
We are developing a structured SES Leadership Strategy to support the capability development of our senior staff and to assist us in achieving our departmental and APS outcomes.

Workforce planning is part of our annual business planning and risk management framework. This provides a platform to identify critical capability gaps for current and emerging organisational priorities.

A Workforce Capability Strategy that aligns with organisational, performance and workforce planning frameworks has been completed. This Strategy identifies skills we need now and for the future and is designed to ensure these skills are used effectively and efficiently to deliver on the current and emerging work program. It will support the delivery of learning and development programs in 2017–18 and beyond.

Diversity and inclusion is a high priority for us. We will continue to strive to be an employer of choice for Indigenous Australians and people with disability, and ensure that gender equality remains integrated in our people, policy and culture.

**Priorities**

From 2017–19 we will:

- develop capability profiles for all departmental job roles (mapped to the APS job family model) to ascertain the capability requirements and expectations.

From 2017–21 we will:

- continue to align our training programs to the 70:20:10 framework of experiential, social and formal learning in the workplace
- target learning and development opportunities to enable an agile workforce able to be deployed to higher priority work across our Department.

**Technology**

In line with our Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2016–2018 and our Innovation Strategy, our priority is to enable us to provide enhanced support to Australians through the delivery of services tailored to their needs. This will be supported through timely, quality data and evidence-based approaches.

We are developing innovative ICT solutions using user-centred design, with a focus on online services, mobile capability, and the provision of data and analytic technologies together with modernised reports. We will continue to build systems in line with the objectives of the Digital Transformation Agency and the Commonwealth’s Cyber Security Agenda.

**Priorities**

From 2017–21 we will:

- continue to better understand our data through a pervasive analytics data platform and processes to support evidence-based policy and program outcomes
- continue to establish and embed the Community Grants Hub as one of two Australian Government grants administration hubs through a fit for purpose, scalable, and robust grant platform
- prepare our corporate platforms and processes to participate in the Commonwealth’s corporate shared services agenda.
Regulatory reform

Our regulatory capability will continue to reduce regulation where appropriate, with a key focus over the next four years to embed regulatory improvements to support productivity and innovation in the business and community sectors.

Priorities

From 2017–19 we will:

• review our stock of portfolio legislation to ensure it is fit for purpose, internally coherent, flexible, and resilient.

From 2017–21 we will:

• continue to embed best practice regulation across our policies and programs and the Australian Government’s Regulator Performance Framework in the practice of portfolio regulators
• continue to improve the quality of regulatory impact analysis and Regulator Performance Framework reporting undertaken by our Department and portfolio regulators.

Program design

Our program design and delivery drives consistency in grant administration by developing and maintaining standardised processes and tools to support best practice in grants management. Support is offered through all stages of the process, making the most of intelligence, aiming to reduce duplication, and ensure the most effective approaches are used to identify and respond to community needs in line with government expectations.

Priorities

From 2017–19 we will:

• build the maturity and consolidate the Community Grants Hub to, deliver simpler and consistent grants administration. This includes transitioning 52 programs from five agencies into the Community Grants Hub for end to end grants administration.

From 2017–20 we will:

• make enhancements to the Data Exchange, as part of the Data Integration Partnership of Australia, whole-of-government data sharing initiative, to improve government data sets, including linking and analysing of data across the APS.

From 2017–21 we will:

• facilitate strategic engagement between our Department and the social services sectors, leveraging opportunities, evidence, and engagement to target programs more effectively and maximise outcomes.
Delivery

Our delivery arm implements Australian Government programs and services at a local level. Our focus is on:

- working to ensure quality program management and delivery service for government
- contributing local knowledge and intelligence to inform national policy and program development and investment decisions
- building assurance mechanisms and strong working relationships with policy office, program office and corporate areas
- strengthening partnerships to drive innovation in program delivery, integration of services, community cohesion and improved wellbeing outcomes for individuals and families.

A number of initiatives will influence the future direction of our delivery including the Investment Approach, the tight fiscal environment, and the immediate expectation of managing grants on behalf of other Commonwealth agencies. In response our delivery operating model has been redesigned to deliver better practice and a scalable, proportional, risk-based approach to managing Commonwealth funding arrangements.

Priorities

From 2017–19 we will:

- establish and transition staff within the new delivery operating model and business practices.

From 2017–20 we will:

- embed processes for transitioning staff, from client agencies, and contractors into delivery to support the management of grants on behalf of other Commonwealth agencies.

From 2017–21 we will:

- review and strengthen the lead State approach, fostering stronger relationships with policy areas through enhanced local intelligence, insights, and early engagement in policy and program design
- invest in learning and development that grows core capabilities and extends expertise in the areas of partnerships, intelligence capability, financial analysis, and the embedding of risk training in practise
- continue to grow the ability of our leaders to support the strategic work of delivery and facilitate innovation and change
- implement a targeted Indigenous Service Delivery Model to test place-based tailored service and identify potentials for success.
Financial management and capital intentions

In terms of major capital projects, we will continue the delivery of the Government’s Streamlining Grants Administration initiative and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Accommodation Project (see Table 5). We are also responsible for assisting with the establishment of the new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission to be the dedicated regulator of quality and safeguards for the NDIS. The Commission will have powers to regulate NDIS providers, oversee quality and safety of their services and supports, investigate and determine complaints, and uphold the rights of people with disability.

Digital Transformation Agenda

As part of the 2015–16 Federal Budget, the Australian Government committed to support the Digital Transformation Agenda and is investing in activities to drive innovation and make it easier for individuals and businesses to access government services.

The Streamlining Grants Administration (SGA) initiative is aimed at delivering a better user experience for grant applicants and recipients enabling government to deliver grants more efficiently and effectively. As part of this initiative, two administrative hubs will be established, one for individuals and community organisation grants in our Department and the other for business grants in the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

ACT Accommodation Project

The new national office for DSS is on track for handover in early 2017–18. The new building has been designed to deliver greater flexibility and lower cost accommodation into the future.

Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare

We are currently implementing the Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare. This is designed to improve lifetime wellbeing by increasing the capacity of people to live independently of welfare, decreasing the Commonwealth’s long-term social security costs and addressing the risks of intergenerational welfare dependency.

The Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare involves actuarial analysis of Commonwealth social security data to forecast the future lifetime social security cost of the Australian population, and to identify groups at risk of long-term welfare dependency.

Each year, expert actuaries will assess changes in social security costs and assist us in determining which policies work for whom. The Government will then be able to invest in evidence-based policy interventions to improve the outcomes of those identified groups, particularly groups most likely to benefit from being supported into stable, sustainable employment. The Try, Test and Learn Fund is the Government’s first response to the Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare.
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

From 1 July 2018, the Commission will become a separate non-corporate entity in the Social Services portfolio under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013. Over the coming years the Commission will roll out to regulate NDIS services across Australia, with New South Wales (NSW) and South Australia (SA), from 1 July 2018, being the first jurisdictions in which the Commission’s powers will apply.

In 2017–18, we will establish the Commission’s essential corporate functions including property, staffing, and enabling services such as telephony and financial systems. We will work with the Commissioner (once appointed) to ensure corporate functions are in place for the Commission to commence operations in NSW and SA from 1 July 2018.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission — ICT Build

The timeframe to deliver the key business system solution is April 2018. This will enable the commencement of registration processes for new service providers seeking to provide services from 1 July 2018 and the transfer of information from the National Disability Insurance Agency of existing registered service providers in NSW and SA. A website is expected to be delivered in January 2018 to provide relevant information on the new Commission to service providers.

Departmental Capital Budget

The Departmental Capital Budget is set aside to fund the replacement and sustainment of minor capital assets as they reach end of serviceable life. This ongoing program ensures our property, plant and equipment, including IT infrastructure and desktop equipment, is performing at acceptable standards to enable business outcomes, minimise work health and safety risks, and ensure IT security capability remains current.
### Financial management

We are responsible for over one-quarter of the Australian Government’s 2017–18 budgeted expenditure. To demonstrate our commitment to budget and financial management we will continue to:

- promote and support existing governance structures that have been designed to ensure accountability, transparency, and fairness
- deliver positive financial operating results within the Australian Public Service financial framework
- undertake regular internal budget reviews so that we allocate resources to the highest priority areas
- focus on workforce management and ensuring there is capability and expertise to meet the delivery of the Government’s priorities
- provide efficient, value for money services to partner agencies that are fairly priced, and share the risks and rewards of scale equitably
- focus on capital management planning to ensure capital investments are aligned with our strategic direction, government policy directives and are financially sustainable.

#### Table 5: Forecast Capital Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital item(s)</th>
<th>Forecast 2017-18 $’000</th>
<th>Forecast 2018-19 $’000</th>
<th>Forecast 2019-20 $’000</th>
<th>Forecast 2020-21 $’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streamlining Grants Administration</td>
<td>8,221</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Approach to Welfare</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Childcare IT Systems</td>
<td>14,533</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Exchange Enhancements (Modernisation Fund)</td>
<td>4,320</td>
<td>9,941</td>
<td>8,530</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDIS Quality &amp; Safeguards Commission – ICT Build</td>
<td>8,387</td>
<td>3,509</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDIS Quality &amp; Safeguards Commission – Corporate</td>
<td>4,485</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Capital Budget (for fit-out and ICT asset replacement)</td>
<td>16,614</td>
<td>16,533</td>
<td>16,580</td>
<td>16,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57,026</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,859</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,849</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,942</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A — DSS Wellbeing Planning Frame

Our Wellbeing Planning Frame is intended to promote evidence based discussions within our Department and with our partners about long-term policy challenges and opportunities for improving lifetime wellbeing of people and families. A range of key policy questions intended to guide our policy focus are presented in four domains that address individual, family and community functioning, and readiness for people and families to transition across significant life events. Two cross cutting domains address broad socio-economic and individual risk factors that have potential to impact these four domains.

The Frame assists us to identify and monitor long-term social, economic, and fiscal trends that impact on our operating context and lifetime wellbeing. We do this by developing key measures that shed light on Australia’s progress and any emerging challenges we face. Together, the domains and measures will help us to plan for the future and strengthen our capability to provide relevant evidence-based policy advice to the Government.

These domains and questions are intended to guide our policy focus and are not indicators of our performance. Trends in these domains may be influenced by the action of a range of Commonwealth agencies, state/territory governments, non-government organisations, and broader economic and social dynamics.
Figure A1: DSS Wellbeing Planning Frame

Wellbeing Planning Frame

Access to opportunity

Are the external conditions right so people and families can access opportunities to control their own wellbeing?

- Job vacancy and employment rate
  Do people and families have access to jobs to generate employment income to control their wellbeing?

- Long-term job seekers
  Are there sufficient job opportunities to ensure people are not unemployed for long periods?

- People experiencing long-term income deprivation
  Do people and families have adequate income over the long-term to control their wellbeing?

- Housing stability
  Do people and families have access to stable housing to control their wellbeing?

- Adequacy of care and support arrangements
  Do people and families have access to specialist care and support to control their wellbeing?

Cross-cutting domains

Individual risk factors

What individual risk factors have the potential to negatively impact lifetime wellbeing?

- Alcohol and drug dependence
  Is there a reduction in the incidence and impact of drug and alcohol misuse on people and families?

- Violence rates
  Is there a reduction in the incidence and impact of domestic and community violence on people and families?

- Chronic gambling rates
  Is there a reduction in the incidence and impact of chronic gambling on people and families?

- Physical and mental health status
  Do people and families have adequate health to pursue opportunities?

- Contact with criminal justice system/incarceration rate
  Is there a reduction in the incidence and impact of incarceration and contact with the criminal justice system on people and families?

- School attendance
  Is there an increase in the school attendance rate of children and young people?

- Adult obesity rates
  Is there a reduction in the incidence and impact of adult obesity on people and families?
Are families functioning to support the wellbeing of family members over all life stages?

» Growing up in well-functioning families
  Are children and young people growing up in well-functioning families?

» Children on care and protection orders
  Is there a reduction in the number of children at risk of serious harm?

» Access to ongoing family support
  Do people have family networks to support their independence?

Are people and families able to make successful transitions across significant life stages and events?

» Age-appropriate development
  Are children developmentally on track to start/complete school?

» Youth participation in education and employment
  Are school leavers and young people engaged in either education or work?

» Post-school qualifications
  Are more working age people attaining a post-school qualification?

» Readiness for retirement and ageing
  Are people ready for retirement and ageing transitions as financial, care and support needs change?

» Carers
  Are carers able to successfully transition into and out of carer responsibilities?

Are people and families living in environments and communities that support lifetime wellbeing?

» Participation in community activities and volunteering
  Are people and families involved in community activities and volunteering?

» Supportive environments
  Do people and families feel safe in their community and have a positive sense of belonging?

» Support networks
  Do people and families have support networks to support their independence?
Appendix B — DSS Approach to Policy Advice

This appendix represents a statement to ministers, other agencies and external stakeholders on our approach to developing our policy advice. It is designed in the context of Australia’s existing social support system and is intended to set a high benchmark for the quality of our policy advice. This document provides a consistent, rigorous, and systematic basis for policy development, and articulates our role, focus, and approach to advising government action.

Our role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Our Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting ministers</td>
<td>We support the role of our ministers as decision makers. We understand the economic, social and fiscal environment in which the Government operates. We understand the Government’s objectives, and respond diligently and in a timely manner to requests for policy advice. We work hard to implement the Government’s decisions efficiently and effectively. Subsequent policy advice reflects decisions already taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy development</td>
<td>We develop evidence-based innovative policy advice that is practical, timely, and apolitical. We recognise our role in ensuring the long-term integrity of policy development within our areas of responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based and whole-of-department</td>
<td>Our advice reflects a thorough understanding of the issues and evidence, and carefully considers the views of experts, stakeholders, and other agencies. We are forward-looking and provide considered advice on future issues, opportunities and challenges. We explain and test assumptions that underpin our policy advice and carefully explain our reasoning where a view is not backed by robust evidence. We consult internally and work hard to develop and promulgate a robust departmental view.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Our Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving lifetime wellbeing</td>
<td>Our policy advice is focused on improving the lifetime wellbeing of people and families within a frame of encouraging independence and economic and social participation. We understand people’s needs and circumstances change across their lives and are influenced by the broader social and economic context. We give policy priority to those people and families who are most likely to have poor lifetime outcomes. We understand the role education, employment and well-functioning families play in promoting lifetime wellbeing, and that acting early can prevent poor lifetime outcomes. We recognise the role community behaviours, civil society, and economic opportunity play in promoting wellbeing. Our focus on lifetime wellbeing occurs in the context of promoting Australia’s diverse multicultural society. Our focus on lifetime wellbeing recognises the importance of ensuring sustainability and equity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Domain Our Approach

#### National significance
Our advice focuses on issues of national significance. These are issues that affect people across the country or, where localised, are of such intensity and significance as to be of national concern.

Our advice recognises the roles of the states, territories, local government, civil society, and the private sector and considers the contribution they do or could make.

#### Role of government
Our advice recognises governments have a role to play in creating the environment in which people have access to the resources and opportunities needed to live a reasonable life.

We recognise governments play a role in encouraging norms and behaviours that maximise wellbeing across the community.

Our advice recognises governments cannot address all harm or risk, and individuals and families are primarily responsible for their own lifetime wellbeing.

Our advice recognises that not intervening can be a valid government response.

### Proposing action

#### Domain Our Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action will help, and is cost effective</th>
<th>Our advice carefully considers the likely impact of government action or inaction, including the potential for unintended negative consequences. We advise government action where it has a good chance of improving lifetime outcomes for those affected and where the likely benefits to society justify costs. We carefully consider the equity of access, sustainability and precedent set by our proposed government action.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action is connected and practical</td>
<td>Our advice considers all relevant mechanisms to address an issue, not just those administered by our Department. We recognise that sometimes the best solution will be the responsibility of others. We design solutions that connect to, and utilise, the policies and services of other agencies, levels of government, civil society, and the private sector. Our advice carefully considers cost, implementation and timing issues, recommends a course of action and includes practical, achievable plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success and failure</td>
<td>We define success in terms of achieving expected improvements in lifetime wellbeing and encouraging greater independence for individuals and families. Our advice recognises social policy outcomes can take time to deliver and can be difficult to measure. We propose well-considered strategies for evaluation, including interim and proxy measures of progress. We provide honest advice on when and why a policy should be changed or terminated. Such advice might be needed, for example, when policy is: not achieving its intended effect; not cost-effective; or no longer appropriate for the prevailing social or economic circumstances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>