

Figure 0.1: Outcome and program structure as at 30 June 2018



3

Disability and Carers

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

Programs

- » Disability Mental Health and Carers
- » National Disability Insurance Scheme
- » Program Support for Outcome 3

4

Housing

Increased housing supply, improved community housing and assisting individuals experiencing homelessness through targeted support and services.

Programs

- » Housing and Homelessness
- » Affordable Housing
- » Program Support for Outcome 4



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Kathryn Campbell CSC
Secretary

The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Families and Social Services
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I am pleased to submit the Department of Social Services (the department) Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2018, as required by section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). The report has been prepared in accordance with the *Resource Management Guide No. 135 – Annual reports for non-corporate Commonwealth entities* issued by the Department of Finance.

The Annual Report includes the department's audited financial statements as required by section 43(4) of the PGPA Act. The report meets the reporting requirements under the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999*, the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*, the *Child Support (Assessment) Act 1989*, and the *Child Support (Registration and Collection) Act 1988*.

In accordance with section 10 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*, I certify that the department has prepared fraud risk assessments and fraud control plans, and has in place appropriate fraud prevention, detection, investigation and reporting mechanisms that meet its specific needs. Reasonable measures have also been taken to appropriately deal with fraud relating to the department.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'K Campbell'.

Kathryn Campbell

25 September 2018

Secretary's review



The Department of Social Services (the department), through our policies and programs, provides assistance to individuals and families in Australian communities. A fair and sustainable welfare system is central to supporting Australians to have the opportunity to get ahead and build a better life for themselves and their families. In 2017–18 our main focus has been to ensure the welfare system is well targeted and designed to help people find employment, progressing the implementation of a quality National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and standing up a National Redress Scheme for the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

The department worked with Treasury on a \$260 million Budget measure to improve the incomes of pensioners in retirement through the introduction of new means test rules, which will enable eligible social security pensioners to earn more money through employment without being counted under the income test.

The Welfare Reform Bill passed through the Parliament, establishing the new Jobseeker Payment, a step towards reducing the complexity of welfare payment arrangements.

Building on the success of the original No Jab, No Pay policy, from 1 July 2018 parents who do not immunise their children will have their Family Tax Benefit payments reduced each fortnight, rather than losing entitlement to the end of year supplement. The original measure resulted in the families of more than 246,000 children taking action to meet immunisation requirements.

The department is also investing in data analytics by building internal capability, seeking collaboration opportunities and ensuring strong links between policy and analytics projects.

By 30 June 2018, there were 183,965 Australians being supported by the NDIS. A total of 54,802 participants, or almost one in three had not received state, territory or Commonwealth disability support before the NDIS. The department has finalised full scheme agreements with the New South Wales and South Australian governments and is negotiating full scheme agreements with other states while continuing to work closely with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on scheme implementation.

The department also worked with the states and territories to establish the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. As responsibility for specialist disability services shifts from the states and territories to a national system through the NDIS, the Australian Government has established new, significant and comprehensive safeguards designed to prevent abuse and protect the rights of people with disability under the NDIS.

The introduction of Disability Employment Services reforms will give people with disability greater choice and flexibility in finding work.

The National Redress Scheme for the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse was developed and implemented on 1 July 2018. The department played a key role in negotiations to get the states and territories and major institutions to opt-in to the scheme. The department worked closely with the Department of Human Services to deliver a survivor focused scheme. The scheme will make a difference to the lives of many Australians who have been traumatised by abuse.

The Cashless Debit Card was introduced to a third trial site in the Goldfields region of Western Australia. This expansion provides the opportunity to continue to evaluate the benefits and test the implementation of a new way of delivering welfare payments with the aim of reducing welfare cash in communities that are facing challenges from alcohol and drug abuse and unacceptable levels of violence.

The new Humanitarian Settlement Program was developed in collaboration with five other departments with the aim of increasing employment outcomes for refugees. The department also worked with all levels of government and service providers to establish the first new regional settlement location for many years in Armidale. At 30 June 2018, 312 humanitarian entrants from Syria and Iraq have now settled there.

Significant reforms to the 1800RESPECT service model were also implemented. These changes have meant that over 98,500 people in 2017–18 received the family, domestic violence and sexual assault support they needed. Amongst other work the department undertook to reduce violence against women and their children was the ‘Stop it at the Start’ campaign. These television commercials for phase one attracted more than 43 million views. The department has commenced work on phase two of the campaign.

The department supported the commencement of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement on 1 July 2018. It provides ongoing funding to states and territories totalling \$1.5 billion each year to improve housing outcomes and reduce the incidence of homelessness.

The department coordinated the Commonwealth’s response to the Northern Territory Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, including establishing a tripartite forum between the Commonwealth, Northern Territory Government and the community sector.

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub), a key contributor to the Government’s commitment to streamline and improve grants administration, substantially increased the number of agreements it manages with more than 3,000 organisations. The Hub now supports the delivery of more than three million services to around five million Australians.

Looking forward

The department will continue to focus on sustainability of the welfare system and to encourage people to be socially and economically independent.

Negotiating full scheme agreements for the NDIS with the remaining states will be a key priority. Growing the disability workforce to support NDIS participants is also critical. The department will work closely with the NDIA and states and territories to support the development of a robust and responsive disability support services sector.

People with disability and their carers will also remain an important focus. There will be ongoing development of the Integrated Carer Support Service, with an expansion of the Carer Gateway to provide carers with access to new online counselling and peer support.

We will continue to deliver on the National Redress Scheme. The National Office for Child Safety will continue to provide national leadership to enhance children's safety and reduce future harm to children across Australia.

An important part of the family safety agenda will be to develop, in consultation with stakeholders, the *Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*. This is due to commence in 2019.

The department will evaluate and monitor the Cashless Debit Card trials and work on the future of income management.

Improving the collection and use of performance data will continue to be a priority and the department will build on the success of the Data Exchange, which measures the effectiveness of client-based grant programs. The Hub will also increase its activities with work expected to more than double to about 15,000 funding arrangements with the transition of Department of Health grant activities.

The department is committed to providing quality policy advice, and effective program design and management, through our people, culture and performance.

I would like to thank all staff for their dedication and commitment to our mission to improve the wellbeing of individuals and families in Australian communities. Each day, I am inspired by their commitment and passion for public service.



Kathryn Campbell
Secretary

Help at hand for teens



Sophia is a young parent who had her son when she was 16 years old. She now divides her time between raising Spencer and studying for a Certificate III in Health Service Assistance at Hobart College.

“When I became pregnant I remember frantically looking for someone to help me and talk to me. It was really hard to find somewhere with information specifically for young parents.”

That’s why Sophia jumped at the chance to work with the Brave Foundation to come up with new ways to help young parents. She participated in a group of young parents who looked at different ideas that might help expecting and parenting teens, and she was able to give her views as a young working parent on how some of these new ideas could work.

It was through this process that the Brave Foundation developed the Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens (SEPT) initiative.

SEPT is one of 14 initiatives being trialled under the first tranche of the \$96 million Try, Test and Learn Fund administered by the Department of Social Services. The department is funding organisations such as the Brave Foundation to develop new and innovative policy responses to assist groups of people, such as young parents, at risk of long-term welfare dependency move into stable, sustainable employment.

This initiative will provide up to 350 young parents with access to a mentor, and connects expecting and parenting teens across Australia with health, housing, education, childcare and employment support before and after the birth of their baby. The initiative is

being trialled over two years across 11 hubs in Darwin, Melbourne, Geelong, Wyong, Newcastle, greater Hobart, and greater Brisbane.

“You see, it is one thing to go through your life one day at a time and a very different thing to have a pathway. Having the support to get onto a pathway means your life can be more than just a hamster wheel.”

All Try, Test and Learn Fund initiatives will be evaluated by the department to obtain new insights into what increases the likelihood of stable employment for vulnerable people, and to help even more people at risk of being trapped in the welfare cycle.

ABOVE: Young parent, Sophia.

See part 2 chapter 2.1 for more information.