

Figure 0.1: Outcome and program structure as at 30 June 2019



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 AO CSC
Secretary

Senator the Hon Anne Ruston
Minister for Families and Social Services
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ministers

I am pleased to submit the Department of Social Services ('the department') Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2019 under section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). The report has been prepared in accordance with *Resource Management Guide No. 135—Annual reports for non-corporate Commonwealth entities*, issued by the Department of Finance.

This annual report includes the department's audited financial statements, as required by section 43(4) of the PGPA Act. The report meets the department's 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*. The report also includes the first annual report of the National Redress Scheme Operator on the operation of the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, under section 187 of the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018*.

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 black ink that reads 'K Campbell'.

Kathryn Campbell

30 September 2019

Secretary's review



The Department of Social Services (the department) is committed to improving the social and economic wellbeing of individuals and families in Australian communities. We do this through the administration of a diverse range of policies, payments, programs and services.

We aim to support Australians through the welfare system and into jobs so they have the opportunity to get ahead and build better lives for themselves and their families.

In 2018–19 the department continued to draw on the actuarial data analysis from the Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare to identify groups of people who would benefit from innovative projects to provide them with pathways to work.

Projects under the Try, Test and Learn Fund, which is based on insights from the data, were extended to at-risk youth, refugees and other groups at risk of joblessness.

A major reform during the year was the redesign of Disability Employment Services to help people with disability get and keep a job. Changes were made to improve employment outcomes and give participants more choice over the services they receive.

Through these, and other initiatives, the department is helping reduce barriers to employment for people on income support.

The key focus is to support those who can work into jobs while maintaining Australia's social safety net for those who cannot support themselves.

In 2018–19, the department continued to focus on keeping Australians safe and contributing to a cohesive society.

We launched the Fourth Action Plan 2018–2020 under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*. The plan is an important step towards improving the safety and wellbeing of Australia's children, with a strong focus on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

The department's work to combat family violence through the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children* remained an important priority in advance of the development of the National Plan's next Action Plan.

We also worked closely with states and territories to implement the National Redress Scheme in its first year of operation. The first annual report on the operations of the scheme is included in Part 3 and sets out the work to encourage institutions to join the scheme and the redress provided to applicants.

The Cashless Debit Card program was extended this year to the Bundaberg and Hervey Bay regions of Queensland. This expansion provides an opportunity to test the card's flexibility as a tool to support people in non-remote locations and to help address social problems. We worked closely with the community to design tailored eligibility criteria for the trial site.

We continued the implementation of a quality National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for Australians, with full scheme agreements for New South Wales and South Australia coming into effect on 1 July 2018. Full scheme agreements were also finalised with Tasmania, the Northern Territory, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria by 30 June 2019, noting the Queensland agreement was finalised shortly thereafter.

We also progressed the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, with the NDIS beginning work in New South Wales and South Australia on 1 July 2018.

With the National Disability Insurance Agency, we developed a *Younger People in Residential Aged Care Action Plan* to reduce the number of younger people with disability in residential aged care and to help them access more age appropriate housing and supported living options.

Ten demonstration communities were announced as part of the \$35 million initiative Stronger Places, Stronger People. This practical initiative involves collaboration between communities, governments, service providers and investors to deliver on a locally designed vision and plans of action to create better outcomes for children, families and communities.

Working closely with state and territory governments we gained formal agreement on a *National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering* to reduce the harm of online gambling.

We signed Memoranda of Understanding with the New South Wales and Tasmanian governments to bring additional program data into the Data Exchange, the department's platform for program performance reporting. As more states share program data the visibility and understanding of client pathways and outcomes across services improve and policy development is better informed.

The department is leading a working group with states and territories to develop a housing and homelessness data improvement plan.

We also supported the Hobart City Deal through a grant to four organisations to deliver 100 social housing dwellings in Hobart by 30 June 2021.

With 2019 marking the 50th anniversary of ABSTUDY, we implemented key changes to the ABSTUDY program announced in the 2018–19 Budget. Commencing from 1 January 2019, these changes include strengthening support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boarding students, by giving students more flexibility over their travel arrangements and extending travel provisions to helping families attend school events.

Looking forward

In 2019–20, we will continue to provide support to those who need it most. Recognising the benefits of work, we will continue to assist Australians through the welfare system and into jobs.

We will lead the implementation of the Fourth Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022*. We will continue to work closely and collaboratively with other Commonwealth agencies and state and territory governments to develop a plan that makes a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children.

Implementing a new exit pathway for Cashless Debit Card participants from 1 July 2019 and transitioning people on income management in the Northern Territory to the Cashless Debit Card are priorities. We will continue to evaluate and monitor the Cashless Debit Card trials including through a second impact evaluation, and we will consult with communities and stakeholders on the future of income management.

We will work with our state and territory colleagues and the National Disability Insurance Agency to improve the experiences people have with the NDIS and to make sure it reaches and supports the people who need it. This will include implementing a Participant Service Guarantee.

We will provide funding for advocacy support services to help people engage with the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, and for counselling support services for people who may experience distress in relation to the Royal Commission.

We will continue to support people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to redress. We recognise the suffering they endured because of the abuse.

The implementation of the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative will be another area of focus. We will continue to work with state and territory governments and communities to build strong partnerships in the ten locations across the country to gain better outcomes for children, families and communities.

We will continue to manage the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, which provides over \$1.5 billion annually to state and territory governments to support housing and homelessness services. This includes working with the Commonwealth Treasury and state and territory housing departments to progress a data improvement plan to better measure housing and homelessness outcomes.

We are focusing on improving the department's grant processes to ensure integrated service delivery. This builds on the whole-of-government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.



Kathryn Campbell AO CSC

Capable. Sociable. Employable.

“It’s very important for people with Down syndrome to have a job. Just like anyone else,” says Claire. “Being a part of the team, meeting new people and being helpful makes me excited to get up each day.”



Claire is an Office Administration Assistant at Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital School in Brisbane, and she has Down syndrome. She is capable. She is sociable. And she is employable.

Jane is the school’s Deputy Principal, and she says Claire is a ray of sunshine in the office every day.

“Claire brings a different perspective to work. Her enthusiasm when she comes in each day is like no other. She has a point of view that I know has been of great benefit to the other staff here,” Jane says.

She says that working with Claire and getting to know her has made her confident to employ other staff with disability.

“I haven’t used Job Access before, but being able to describe exactly what the role is and what would be required, and then being linked with a suitable person, would be invaluable in this process,” she says.

Job Access is the national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers and service providers. Created by the Australian Government, it brings together the information and resources that can ‘drive disability employment’.

“I love my job. It’s very important to enjoy what you’re doing and love what you’re doing, so I feel very lucky,” Claire says.

ABOVE: Claire, who loves her job at the local hospital school.

See Part 2, Chapter 2.3 for more information.