

**OFFICIAL****NATIONAL PLAN TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN 2022-2032****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing about the increasing rate of violence against women and children?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Ending gender-based violence is a national priority and an issue for all Australian governments, industry and the community.
- The number of women who have died as a result of men's violence has focussed an important national conversation on the unacceptable prevalence of violence in our communities and the need for urgent action.
- This is a national, whole-of-society issue that requires focussed effort from and contributions from all members of society.
- The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (the National Plan) has been agreed by all governments and sets the national policy agenda for addressing violence against women and children.
- The Government has invested over \$4 billion in women's safety since the launch of the National Plan in 2022.
- To eliminate violence against women and children, awareness of unacceptable and violent behaviours needs to be highlighted and responded to.
- In addition, without changing the behaviour of perpetrators, we won't be able to end violence against women and children across our communities.
- The Australian Government will continue to look for additional opportunities and new initiatives to stop the violence and keep women and children safe.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, how is the Government supporting family, domestic and sexual violence frontline services who are saying they are under resourced?***

- State and territory governments have primary responsibility for funding and delivering state-based frontline services to respond to family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV).
- The demand on frontline services will not end without a clear and sustained focus on perpetration. We must focus on perpetration to prevent violence and ensure we are intervening early before it escalates.
- A stronger focus on breaking the cycle of violence and stopping perpetration, whilst continuing to ensure appropriate support for victim-survivors at the earliest opportunity, will help reduce the rate of FDSV and its harmful consequences.
- There are a wide variety of measures employed to address violence against women and children across all levels of government.
- \$3.1 billion (or 78.4%) of the \$4 billion in funding to date to deliver the National Plan has been committed to initiatives that support frontline services.
- This includes the renewed five-year National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses which will deliver over \$700 million in new matched investments from the Commonwealth and states and territories. This is a critical partnership that provides focus on supporting frontline services. Funding in this agreement supports:
  - Specialist services for women.
  - Services to support children exposed to family, domestic and sexual violence to heal and recover.
  - Working with men, including men's behaviour change programs for perpetrators of gendered violence.
- \$262.6 million has been committed to support the dedicated *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* and early investment into a standalone First Nations National Family Safety Plan.
- There is also a wide variety of funding beyond the National Plan that is provided by the Commonwealth to address FDSV, such as access to affordable housing, social security payments, and greater access to legal support.

***If asked, are the Government initiatives actually making a difference?***

- Addressing family, domestic and sexual violence requires a long-term commitment and sustained effort.

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- There are a significant number of initiatives and activities in the early stages of implementation and need time to achieve change.
- The impact of change cannot be measured through one initiative or activity.
- There is a commitment to measuring change over time under the National Plan - through an Outcomes Framework and Performance Measurement Plan.

**If asked, what is the Government doing to hold perpetrators to account?**

- Holding perpetrators to account is a key focus, and one of the underpinning principles, of the National Plan.
- The Government is supporting a range of initiatives targeting people who use or are at risk of using violence as part of our goal of ending violence against women and children in one generation.
- Australian Government investments in perpetrator-focussed measures include:
- \$12.7 million to continue funding No to Violence for the National Perpetrator Intervention and Referral Service.
  - \$27 million to partner with states and territories to apply innovative approaches to address the behaviour of people who use family, domestic or sexual violence.
  - \$5.9 million for the MensLine Changing for Good Program. This is a free multi-session phone counselling service for men who want to develop healthy and respectful relationships with the people in their life.
  - \$25.5 million for MensLine Australia, which provides a national telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with concerns about mental health, anger management, family violence (using and experiencing), addiction, relationship, stress and wellbeing.
- Responding to family, domestic and sexual violence is a shared responsibility of all Australian governments, with states having primary responsibility for funding frontline services. This includes support for, and delivery of, Men's Behaviour Change Programs.

***If asked, what is the Government doing about the increasing rates of sexual violence?***

- In 2024, 40,087 victims of sexual assault were recorded in Australia. This was the highest number recorded in the time series and an increase of 10 per cent (3,735 victims) from the previous year.
- The sexual assault victimisation rate also increased from 136 to 147 victims per 100,000 persons; the highest rate recorded in the time series.

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- Around two in five (41 per cent) sexual assaults were FDV related (16,281 victims). FDV related sexual assaults increased by 16 per cent (2,212 victims) from the previous year.
- The Australian Government funds several prevention initiatives, focusing on young people, relationships and consent education including:
  - The national Consent Can't Wait campaign to educate the public on consent and respect for women.
  - Teach Us Consent to support development and distribution of social media resources on consent, and a youth-led expert advisory group.
  - Community-led sexual violence prevention pilots. This project has engaged La Trobe University to design, deliver, and evaluate multiple small-scale trials, examining up to 10 community projects, to improve evidence for sexual violence of primary prevention and early interventions.
- These programs complement broader prevention of gender-based violence initiatives as part of a multipronged approach under the National Plan.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- [Women and kids often pay a heavy price when men drink. Our gender violence plan should reflect this](#)
  - The Conversation, 9 October 2025
  - Article discusses recent research on the impacts of men's heavy drinking on women and children, and finds the link between alcohol and gender-based violence is missing from the National Plan.
  - The research supports the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches recommendations addressing the role of alcohol in contributing to violence and advocates for the integration of strategies to reduce harmful alcohol use with broader gender-based violence prevention.
- [Child parricide in Australia: New report insights from 35 years](#)
  - The Canberra Times, 8 October 2025
  - Article discusses the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) *Parricide in Australia* report.
  - AIC authors note in the article parricide and other forms of family homicide had been "largely not considered" in the National Plan and this needs to be considered in policy responses to FDSV.

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- [Michael Slater domestic violence charges: The issue too important for the Herald to ignore](#)
  - The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 October 2025
  - Article discussing serial domestic violence abusers and the impact of existing strategies to reduce domestic violence.
  - References NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data that between 2020 and 2023, 23 per cent of offenders reoffended within 12 months of their charges being finalised.
- [Two killed in alleged domestic violence](#)
  - The NT News, 4 October 2025
  - Includes comments from Northern Territory Minister Robyn Cahill regarding the development of a new Northern Territory roadmap to address domestic violence.
- [Recorded Crime - Victims, 2024 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)
  - ABS released the Recorded Crimes - Victims, 2024 publication on its website on Wednesday 3 September 2025.
  - There were 175 victims of family and domestic violence (FDV) homicide and related offences recorded nationally in 2024, an increase of 14 victims from the previous year.
  - FDV related homicide comprised nearly two-fifths (39 per cent) of all recorded homicides in 2024 and FDV related homicide victims were most commonly female.
- [Children share confronting domestic violence experiences with SA royal commission](#)
  - ABC News, 11 July 2025.
  - Submission to South Australia's Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, children's experience with FDSV and poor system responses.
- [Gender-based violence forum, families speak out on pain | The Australian](#)
  - The Australian, 2 July 2025.
  - A Current Affair gender-based violence panel featuring Minister Plibersek, highlighting key system failures and need for reform.
- [Reports of domestic abuse at hands of ex-partners surging](#)

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- The Age, 29 June 2025.
- The number of women reporting abuse by their former partners to Victoria Police has increased 30 per cent in the past five years.
- [Violent porn is poisoning our boys](#)
  - The Daily Telegraph, 21 June 2025.
  - Calling out the prominence of violent pornography and its influence on violence against women, includes comments from Minister Plibersek.
- [Domestic violence-related assaults on the rise in NSW](#)
  - Women's Agenda, 12 June 2025.
  - Data from NSW shows increase in domestic violence-related assaults and sexual assaults over the past two years, while specialist services face funding shortfalls.
- [One in three Australian men report using intimate partner violence, world-first research shows](#)
  - Women's Agenda, 3 June 2025.
  - Analysis of the Ten to Men survey by the Australian Institute of Family Studies highlights a nationwide increase of intimate partner violence as well as ways to tackle the problem.
- [Coercive control laws now in effect in Queensland](#)
  - Women's Agenda, 27 May 2025.
  - New criminal offence of coercive control introduced in Queensland.
- [Losing It, Jess Hill Quarterly Essay](#)
  - Quarterly Essay, March 2025.
  - Ms Hill analyses the National Plan and is critical of the current primary prevention focus.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan) was released in October 2022.
- In August 2023, the Australian Government released the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025*, the *First Action Plan 2023-2027* and the *Outcomes Framework 2023-2032*.

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- Implementation is shared across the Commonwealth and jurisdictions. Responsibility across the Commonwealth includes 13 agencies including the Attorney-General's Department and Department of Health and Aged Care.
- 6 national level targets and 6 long-term outcomes enable progress on the National Plan to be measured.
- Progress on the targets and outcomes is reported when data becomes available on the Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing's family, domestic and sexual violence website.
  - Baseline data is only available currently.
- There will be an evaluation of the National Plan in 2026.

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**OFFICIAL****FAMILY, DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST FIRST NATIONS WOMEN AND CHILDREN****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to address the alarmingly high rates of violence, including murder, against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children?

**KEY POINTS:**

- I wish to acknowledge and pay my respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children who have lost their lives to family violence or had their lives irreparably changed as a result.
- I extend my deepest condolences to those they have left behind.
- The Australian Government is committed to achieving Target 13 (family violence) of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and addressing the alarmingly high rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.
- We are listening to, and working in partnership with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities are safe.
- Through the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* (Action Plan) under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan), the Australian Government is investing \$262.6 million into the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The Action Plan was launched on 16 August 2023 and was developed in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.
- The Action Plan addresses current needs and sets the foundations for longer-term change while the Australian Government works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the states and territories to develop Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices, the first standalone plan for First Nations family safety.
- Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices will sit alongside the current National Plan and will guide a whole of society approach to reducing the unacceptable rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices has been developed jointly by a Steering Committee, supported by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secretariat, SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children (SNAICC), and the Department of Social Services.
- In January 2024, my predecessor appointed 24 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and government members to the Steering Committee to guide the development of the plan.
- The Steering Committee has met regularly since its establishment in January 2024.

***If asked, What will the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan deliver?***

- A range of initiatives are being delivered under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan including:
  - \$103.4 million for 4 Immediate Priority Grants for crisis accommodation services, FDSV programs in ACCOs, men's wellness centres, and community prevention programs and campaigns for children around Australia.
  - \$41.9 million over 2 years for the extension of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Escaping Violence Payment Place-based Trial (now Leaving Violence Payment (LVP) Regional Trial) in Cairns, and expansion of the LVP Regional Trials to 3 new sites – Broome, Darwin and Dubbo.
  - \$7.7 million over 3 years for the establishment of a national First Nations FDSV Peak Body.
  - \$15 million research investment to initiate a large-scale research project to measure progress on Closing the Gap Target 13.
  - \$68.6 million over 2 years to continue funding for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) initiative).
  - \$23.2 million over 4 years for place-based healing programs (NIAA initiative).
  - \$17.6 million to extend funding for one year for community-led First Nations family safety activities and to undertake service system mapping, community needs assessment and gap analysis in up to 5 regional and remote locations (NIAA initiative).

***If asked, What consultation is being undertaken to inform Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices?***

- Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices has been informed by extensive nationwide consultations and developed in genuine partnership and shared decision-making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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- \$4.1 million has been committed over 2 years to support the development of Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices, including engaging SNAICC as the Secretariat and to support the Steering Committee to undertake consultations and to develop the plan.
- Consultations for the development of Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices included a public submission process that ran from 5 September 2024 and extended to 4 November 2024, with other engagements occurring in parallel between September 2024 – March 2025. Consultations included dedicated PhotoYarn engagements with children and young people exploring what safety meant to them.

***If asked, When will Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices be finalised?***

- The Department of Social Services is currently working with the Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices Steering Committee to finalise the plan prior to seeking endorsement. Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices is expected to be finalised by December 2025.

**BACKGROUND:**

- National Cabinet, in September 2024, announced a \$4.7 billion package to tackle domestic violence and resolved that all government commitments on domestic violence must explicitly consider the needs and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and be delivered in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- The Government tabled the response to the Senate Inquiry into Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children (the Inquiry) on Monday 25 November 2024.
- Senator the Hon. Malarndirri McCarthy, Minister for Indigenous Australians, said the findings of the Inquiry would guide the Federal Government's response to domestic violence, including the inaugural National Plan - Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices.
- On 10 February 2025, the Prime Minister delivered the Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan. There is no update to progress on Target 13 as there is no new data since the baseline year of 2018-19.
- Target 13 from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is: By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.

**OFFICIAL****LEAVING VIOLENCE PROGRAM****ISSUE**

How has the commencement of the Leaving Violence Program on 1 July 2025 gone?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Government has invested \$925.2 million over 5 years to establish the Leaving Violence Program.
- The Leaving Violence Program commenced on 1 July 2025 as an ongoing program supporting eligible victim-survivors of intimate partner violence to make choices about leaving violent relationships through individualised financial support packages.
- From 1 July to 31 August 2025, the Leaving Violence Program supported over 3,000 victim-survivors with financial and other supports.
- The individualised packages provides victim-survivors up to \$5,000 in financial support, risk assessments, safety planning and referral services.
- The Leaving Violence Program is available across Australia for eligible victim-survivors regardless of visa status, gender or sexuality.
- The Program has 2 service delivery models, a National Program, delivered by Telstra Health and four Regional Trials, delivered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations.
- The Regional Trials are delivered in the Broome, Cairns, Darwin, and Dubbo regions and are focused on regional, rural and remote communities.
- The Regional Trials are available for anyone living in these areas but focuses on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors.
- The Program complements existing Government-funded nationally available support services for family, domestic and sexual violence, such as 1800RESPECT and Safe Places.
- The Program builds on other Commonwealth measures available to improve the financial security of women, including expansion of the single Parenting Payment, 10 days paid domestic violence leave and investment in crisis accommodation.
- My department has been working closely with the service providers and the broader FDSV and community sector on continuously improving the Program through feedback and evidence.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- The Leaving Violence Program builds on the successes and learnings from the Escaping Violence Payment trial and the Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot which closed on 30 June 2025. (Refer QB25-000057)

***If asked, Was there an issue with the webform that stopped victim-survivors from applying for support through the national program?***

- There have been some small issues with victim-survivors applying through the webform who were unable to finalise the application as there were no available appointment times to book. These have been resolved.
- The service model for the National Program, requires victim-survivors who submit an application through the webform to schedule when they would like to be contacted by Telstra Health. This ensures they select a time that is convenient and safe for them to receive a call.
- Due to the higher demand experienced by the Leaving Violence Program, all available times were taken resulting in victim-survivors not being able to submit a webform during this time.
- In response, Telstra Health has:
  - redistributed staff from other areas of the Program to intake to increase call answering capacity.
  - added further appointment times
  - recruited for more frontline positions to expand capacity.
- The national phone line was available at all times and experienced an increase in calls indicating victim-survivors called the service for support.
- Telstra Health is closely monitoring demand across the Program to ensure resources are at the appropriate level to maintain a timely, safe and quality service.

***If asked, Why can't FDSV services submit an application on behalf of a victim-survivor?***

- The current application process for the Leaving Violence Program does allow for victim-survivors to be supported to apply by organisations already supporting them, such as specialist services.
- The support organisation or case worker can help their client with the application either by phone or using the current online form. They can also be included in phone calls with Program support workers, if the victim-survivor consents for this to happen.

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- A case worker with an existing client can also call the Leaving Violence Program phone line and use the menu to select that they are an organisation with a client. They can then speak with a Program support worker.
- Work on an online referral process is underway. The online referral process will be developed with sector representatives to ensure it meets the diverse needs.

***If asked, What is the eligibility criteria for the Leaving Violence Program?***

- The Leaving Violence Program supports people who are victim-survivors over 18 years of age, experiencing intimate partner violence, regardless of visa status, gender or sexuality.
- To be eligible, an individual must:
  - be a victim-survivor of intimate partner violence
  - have left or have a plan to leave an intimate partner violence relationship
  - be 18 years or older
  - be residing in Australia as an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or temporary visa holder
  - be experiencing financial stress
  - not have received the payment in the past 12 months through either the national program or the regional trials
- and have either:
  - experienced a change in living arrangements in the past 12 weeks as a result of the intimate partner violence, including leaving the residence or having the person using violence excluded from or left the residence, or
  - are planning to change their living arrangements and have a plan in place for when the change in living arrangements will occur.

***If asked, Why is the Program only available to victim-survivors of intimate partner violence?***

- Intimate partner violence is a problem of epidemic proportions in Australia with a quarter of women having experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime.
- Research shows that intimate partner violence is the most common form of family, domestic and sexual violence.
  - Since the age of 15, one in 4 women and one in 14 men in Australia have experienced intimate partner violence.

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- Economic insecurity is a key barrier for women seeking to leave a violent intimate partner.
  - According to the 2021-22 Personal Safety Survey of the 1.5 million women who have experienced violence by a previous partner, 43 per cent temporarily separated. Of those that separated, 21 per cent returned due to a lack of financial resources.

***If asked, Why are victim-survivors under 18 not eligible for the Program?***

- The Leaving Violence Program has been specifically designed for adult victim-survivors of intimate partner violence, and may not be appropriate for children victim-survivors.
- The Program is based on the Escaping Violence Payment trial evaluation, where the independent evaluation found it appropriate that the eligibility criterion require individuals to be 18 years old or over.
- The trial evaluation noted that allowing children to access the trial would be complex because of mandatory reporting and the differing child protection systems across the states and territories.

***If asked, How much of the \$925.2 million will be for payments and service delivery?***

- The detail of the Program funding is available in the 2023-24 Budget Statements.
- Details of the contract between Telstra Health and the Department have been listed on Austender.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- Escaping violence program set to become permanent – The Sunday Age – 29 June 2025 (article attached)
- Leaving violence gets solid support – The Sunday Times – 29 June 2025 (article attached)
- [Domestic violence: Leaving Violence Program offers up to \\$5000 and will be made permanent](#) – The Sydney Morning Herald – 29 June 2025
- Aid for fleeing violence to become permanent – The Sydney Morning Herald – 30 June 2025 (article attached)
- Support for those fleeing violence strengthened – Benalla Ensign – 2 July 2025 (article attached)

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The Leaving Violence Program provides a financial support package to eligible victim-survivors regardless of visa status, gender, or sexuality up to \$5,000 in financial support, including a cash payment of up to \$1,500 and the remaining funds in goods and services. The support package also includes mandatory risk assessments, and safety planning and referrals to other services as needed for a period of up to 12 weeks.
- An open competitive procurement process was undertaken to select the service provider for the National Program.
- The Regional Trial sites commenced service delivery from 1 July 2025, and work alongside the National Service Provider, Telstra Health, in 4 regions – Broome, Cairns, Darwin and Dubbo. The Regional Trial providers are:
  - Broome: Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (Aboriginal Corporation)
  - Cairns: Remote Area Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Care (RAATSICC)
  - Darwin: North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service – Aboriginal Corporation, and
  - Dubbo: Bunmabunmarra Service Pty Ltd.
- Since February 2023, Cairns has been the site of the Escaping Violence Payment place-based trial and has now transitioned to the Leaving Violence Program Regional Trials.
- A closed competitive grant process was undertaken to secure the remaining Aboriginal Community Organisations service providers for Broome, Darwin and Dubbo.

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**OFFICIAL****ESCAPING VIOLENCE PAYMENT TRIAL****ISSUE**

Why has the Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) National Trial ceased receiving applications?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The EVP National Trial commenced in October 2021 as a pilot program, aimed to reduce the financial insecurity individuals face when leaving a violent intimate partner relationship.
- Through the EVP National Trial, eligible victim-survivors were able to access financial assistance of up to \$5,000 (up to \$1,500 in cash) and safety supports for a period of up to 12 weeks to support them to set up a home free from violence.
- On 1 May 2024, the Australian Government announced \$925.2 million over 5 years in funding to permanently establish the Leaving Violence Program from 1 July 2025 to replace the EVP National Trial.
- Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) is the national service provider for the EVP National Trial.
- The EVP National Trial ceased receiving applications on 30 June 2025.
- Victim-survivors who applied for EVP National Trial on or prior to 30 June 2025, can be provided up to 12 weeks of support by the EVP National Trial Provider until 31 October 2025.
- Between October 2021 and 30 September 2025, the EVP National Trial has provided \$495.99 million in financial assistance to 100,852 eligible victim-survivors.
- Applications received up to 30 June 2025 have all been assessed, with a small number of applicants continuing to receive case work support. This will be completed by 31 October 2025.
- The Leaving Violence Program builds on the learnings from the EVP National Trial.
- See **QB25-000032** for more information on the Leaving Violence Program.
- The Department of Social Services (the department) is working closely with the Leaving Violence Program National Provider, Telstra Health and the EVP National Trial Provider to ensure the transition from the EVP National Trial to the Leaving Violence Program and ensure service quality for victim-survivors.



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked - How will the department ensure service continuity and quality is maintained in the transition to the Leaving Violence Program?***

- There are processes in place to ensure there is continuity of service and support from the transition from the EVP National Trial to the Leaving Violence Program.
- The department is working closely with the service providers across the EVP National Trial and the Leaving Violence Program to ensure no gaps in service delivery, timely support to victim-survivors, and the provision of quality support services across both programs during the transition.

***If asked - What will happen to the existing staff currently employed by Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) to deliver the EVP National Trial?***

- The department acknowledges the role of Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) in delivering the EVP National Trial.
- The department is working closely with Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) to retain the required number of appropriately skilled staff to maintain delivery of the program during transition, while final applications are processed until 31 October 2025.
- Existing staff currently employed by Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) and their partner network, have equal opportunity to apply for positions associated with the Leaving Violence National Program, as advertised by the Leaving Violence Program National Provider
- The department continues to work with Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) during the transition period to ensure transparency of processes and timeframes, facilitate sharing of information, along with appropriate support and options for staff.

***If asked – Was the EVP National Trial Successful?***

- There was high demand for the EVP National Trial, with over 100,000 eligible victim-survivors were supported since its commencement in 2021.
- The EVP National Trial reached a new cohort of victim-survivors who prefer to access payments independently. Many of the victim-survivors applying for the EVP National Trial were not receiving support from other services at the time of their application.

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- At the end of the EVP National Trial in June 2025 application rates were at an average of over 7,982<sup>1</sup> per month.
- This is a significant increase above the original estimate of 12,000 packages per year at the commencement of the trial.
- Since the initial investment of \$144 million in 2021-22, the Government has invested an additional \$535 million approximately to extend the EVP National Trial and increase resourcing, ensuring the program continues to meet demand for eligible victim-survivors.
- Even where an individual was not eligible for the EVP National Trial, part of the support received through the application process was referral to appropriate support services.

***If asked – Why would an application have been assessed as ineligible?***

- The primary reasons for an application being assessed as ineligible was because a victim-survivor;
  - had accessed the EVP National Trial in the last 12 months;
  - was not planning to change, or had not changed their living arrangements within required 12 weeks due to intimate partner violence; or
  - had not experienced intimate partner violence (may have experienced other family and domestic violence).
- The majority of applications that did not proceed were due to the service provider being unable to re-establish contact with the client.
- There can be many reasons why a victim-survivor may disengage and not re-establish contact after submitting an application.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- *Nil*

<sup>1</sup> This is based on a 6-month rolling average from 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025.

**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The EVP National Trial commenced in October 2021 through a competitive grant process.
- Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) is the provider funded to deliver the EVP National Trial through their uniting consortium partners.
- Demand for the EVP National Trial has grown exponentially since October 2021.

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**OFFICIAL****CONSENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to address the issue of sexual violence and consent?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (the National Plan)*, the Australian Government funds the initiatives that specifically address the issue of sexual violence and consent, including:
  - **\$40 million** for the *Consent Can't Wait Campaign* (the Campaign), launched on 26 May 2024, to improve community understanding and attitudes on consent and respectful relationships to reduce the incidence of sexual violence.
  - **\$11 million** for *The Line Campaign* for young people aged 14 years and above, covering sex, dating and relationships delivered by Our Watch.
  - **\$3.5 million** to support Teach Us Consent to develop and distribute social media resources for young people aged 16 years and above about sexual violence and consent.
  - **\$8.3 million** for the Partners in Prevention of Sexual Violence Project with La Trobe University, to build the evidence base on what works to prevent sexual violence.
  - **\$6.5 million** for a pilot of age assurance technologies to protect children from harmful content, like pornography and other age restricted online services (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts).
  - **\$21.4 million** to address barriers to access to justice for victims and survivors of sexual violence (Attorney General's Department).

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:***Prevalence of/increase in sexual violence*

- In Australia, an estimated 2.8 million people aged 18 years and over (14 per cent) have reported experiencing sexual violence since the age of 15. This includes around 22 per cent of women (2.2 million) and 6.1 per cent of men (582,400).
- The self-reported 12-month prevalence rate for sexual violence among women has increased from 1.6% to 1.9% over the past 20 years.
- Some commentators have pointed to an increase in sexual violence rates, citing recorded crime statistics. The rates of sexual assault recorded by police has risen to 40,000 nationwide in 2024, the highest rate in more than 20 years. While this still represents a very small proportion of overall prevalence in the community, the increase may reflect changes in reporting behaviours.
- Overall, data from the ABS shows 9 in 10 women (92 per cent) who experienced sexual assault by a male did not report the most recent incident to police.
- Regardless, the prevalence of sexual violence in Australia is unacceptably high.

*Teach Us Consent*

- In May 2025, **Teach Us Consent (TUC) launched the Promoting Consent Initiative (PCI)**, which has delivered over 100 trauma-informed and age-appropriate social media resources for young people aged 16 years and above on consent, sexual harm and healthy sexual relationships, with the overall objective to reduce sexual violence in Australia.
- Resources were released from 26 May 2025 until the end of September 2025. They are available via the TUC website and social media platforms popular with young people, including TikTok, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.
- The resources are informed and reviewed by a range of experts engaged by TUC as well as TUC's Youth Advisory Group.
- Across social media, the project has over 48 million impressions which is the total number of times a piece of content was displayed on a user's screen. On Facebook, men aged 21-25 have the highest number of video completions and First Nation Australians audience have the highest video completion rate. On TikTok and YouTube, men aged 18-24 have had the highest volume of video completions.
- Overall, the project has reached more than 5.8 million people and continues to receive positive engagements across social media. This exceeds original target reach and shows strong engagement from young men.

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*Consent Can't Wait*

- In May 2024, the Australian Government launched the **Consent Can't Wait Campaign**, which aims to improve community understanding and attitudes on consent and respectful relationships to reduce the incidence of sexual violence in Australia.
- The Campaign ran until 31 May 2025 across television, online video, cinema, social media, search and out-of-home channels and is supported by a campaign website.
- The Department is currently developing Phase 2 of the campaign.

*The Line, delivered by Our Watch*

- *The Line* is a national campaign promoting respectful relationships among young people aged 14 and over. It is delivered by Our Watch under the primary prevention activities grant program. The campaign provides evidence-based content on pornography, dating, consent, sex, emotions and masculinity, with tailored resources for young people, educators, practitioners, parents and carers.
- Targeted initiatives include Never Follow (challenging gender stereotypes), Asking for a Mate (open discussion on consent and relationships) and Comfort Zone (building awareness of healthy boundaries). *The Line* engages young people through TikTok, Snapchat, Reddit, YouTube, Twitch, Facebook and Instagram, directing them to a central website.
- Teach Us Consent, *Consent Can't Wait* and *The Line* are part of a suite of government initiatives that address sexual violence prevention and consent. They align with Recommendation 38 of the Australian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into justice responses to sexual violence which calls on government to support ongoing public education about consent (released March 2025).

*Partners in Prevention of Sexual Violence*

- In June 2025, **La Trobe University** launched the next stage of the **Partners in Prevention of Sexual Violence (PIPS)** project, there are 9 successful interventions which were selected for full implementation and evaluation over the next 2 years.
- The aim of PIPS is to build and improve the evidence base for sexual violence prevention in Australia by rigorously evaluating the impact of programs aimed at addressing the drivers and reinforcers of sexual violence.
- The selected interventions will be delivered by organisations in Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, in metropolitan and regional areas, across a range of settings, including schools, universities, sporting clubs, health care and juvenile detention.

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**OFFICIAL****RECENT MEDIA:**

- TUC's PCI has received significant media coverage since its launch on 26 May 2025, including by ABC's Afternoon Briefing, AAP media, Canberra Times, Missing Perspectives, National Indigenous Times and JOY FM.
- Chanel Contos, CEO and founder of TUC, has made several media appearances since the launch commenting on broader issues surrounding consent and sexual violence. This includes treatment of perpetrators, in relation to the release of a book by Dyson Heydon, a former judge and barrister who was found to have harassed 6 young female associates, as well as advocating for porn literacy informed by young people's experiences to be taught in schools.
- While the media response to Ms Contos' advocacy for pornography literacy has been largely positive, it has received negative commentary from One Nation, which published a response on their website on 6 August 2025, see [Extremism: Adult Materials Literacy for Kids Now on the Cards - Pauline Hanson's One Nation](#).
- On 3 June 2025, the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner, Micaela Cronin and President of the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC), the Hon. Justice Mordy Bromberg jointly addressed the National Press Club on the topic of sexual violence following the ALRC's 12-month Inquiry into Justice Responses to Sexual Violence and the tabling of the ALRC's Final Report on 6 March 2025.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- Actions 1 and 6 of the First Action Plan under the National Plan include a focus on preventing and addressing sexual violence and sexual harassment in all settings.
- Evidence shows that:
  - 1 in 12 18–19-year-olds had experienced sexual abuse by someone they were dating in the previous year. Sexual abuse is more prevalent among females (AIFS, 2023).
  - 1 in 2 women in their 20s has experienced sexual violence (ANROWS, Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, 2022).
  - Since starting university, 1 in 20 students have been sexually assaulted and 1 in 6 has been sexually harassed (National Student Safety Survey, 2021).
  - Women with disabilities are nearly twice as likely to experience sexual violence over their lifetime than women without disabilities (4.0% vs 2.5%) (Personal Safety Survey (PSS), 2021-22).
  - Women who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or who used a different term such as asexual, pansexual or queer were more likely to have experienced sexual violence (13%) than women who identified as heterosexual (2.4%) (PSS, 2021-22).
  - Perpetration of sexual assault within a domestic relationship increases the likelihood of intimate partner homicide by more than 5 times (ANROWS, 2022).
- Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows:
  - 1 in 5 women (22% or 2.2 million) and 1 in 16 men (6.1% or 582,400) have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15 (PSS, 2021-22).
  - In 2024, 40,087 victims of sexual assault were recorded in Australia. This was the highest number recorded in the time series and an increase of 10 per cent (3,735 victims) from the previous year. (Recorded Crime: Victims, 2024).
  - Young people aged between 10 and 17 years make up 39% of all victims of sexual assault, the majority of whom are female (81%) (ABS Recorded Crime: Victims, 2024).
  - For victims and offenders of sexual assault, the most common age for the incident to occur is between 10 and 17 years. (ABS Recorded Crime: Victims 2024; ABS Recorded Crime: Offenders, 2023).
  - In the most recent incident of sexual assault by a male, the perpetrator was more likely to be someone the woman knew (85%) than a stranger (16%) (PSS, 2021-22).
  - 97% of sexual assault offenders proceeded against by police were male (ABS Recorded Crime: Offenders, 2023).
  - Most (69%) sexual assaults occurred in a residential location. Around 2 in 5 (41%) sexual assaults were FDV related (ABS Recorded Crime: Victims 2024).
- Findings from the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (2021) shows a concerning persistence of attitudes that objectify women and disregard consent. For example:
  - 1 in 4 Australians (28%) believe that when a man is sexually aroused, he may not

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even realise that the woman does not want to have sex.

- Nearly 1 in 5 Australians (18%) believe that if a woman sends a naked picture to her partner, then she is partly responsible if he shares it without her permission.
- According to research conducted for the national consent campaign, the majority of Australians (77%) feel that the topic of sexual consent is important to them, with almost 9 in 10 (86%) agreeing adults should talk to young people about it more (Kantar, 2022).
- The National Survey on LGBTIQA+SB Experiences of Sexual Violence gathered data on experiences of sexual violence among LGBTIQA+SB adults in Australia including on prevalence, social norms, attitudes, beliefs, bystander actions and help-seeking behaviours to inform LGBTIQA+SB sexual violence prevention and service delivery. Report one of the survey found:
  - More than three-quarters (76%) reported experiencing sexual victimisation at some point in their life.
  - More than half of respondents (52%) said they had experienced both child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault.
- Relevant Australian Government Funding Commitments:
  - \$1 billion (approximately) was committed in the 2024-25 Budget to accelerate efforts to end family, domestic and sexual violence. This includes \$6.5 million to conduct a pilot of age assurance technologies to protect children from harmful content, like pornography and other age-restricted online services.
  - \$18.7 million over four years from 2024-25 to establish a new National Code to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in higher education settings.
- This investment builds on \$2.3 billion in measures from the 2022-23 and 2023-24 Budgets. The 2023-24 Budget included:
  - \$8.3 million to design, deliver and evaluate multiple small-scale trials to prevent sexual harm and violence.
  - \$3.5 million to support Teach Us Consent to develop and distribute social media resources for young people aged 16 years and above about sexual violence and consent.
  - \$6.5 million to work with states and territories to strengthen and harmonise sexual assault and consent laws and improve criminal justice responses for victim-survivors (being delivered by the Attorney-General's Department).
- Other initiatives targeting sexual violence and consent include:
  - \$40 million for the National *Consent Can't Wait* campaign.
  - More than \$35 million to implement recommendations from the Respect@Work report.
  - \$10.1 million to continue training medical and non-medical frontline workers on how to respond appropriately to victim-survivors of sexual violence.
  - \$83.5 million for the Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE) measure which aims to ensure that students from Foundation to Year 10 receive age-appropriate education on positive, respectful relationships and consent (being

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delivered by the Department of Education). Of this, \$77.6 million will be provided to states and territories and non-government school sectors to support their investment in delivering expert developed CRRE that suits their jurisdictions.

- \$11 million over 5 years to 2026-27 for *The Line* campaign.
- \$3.5 million to help provide school-aged boys with greater understanding of ways to have healthy relationships with masculinity and to better equip this cohort to develop healthier and more satisfying relationships.
- \$12.1 million over 5 years to 2027-28 to establish the Forced Marriage Specialist Support Program, which will provide targeted, needs-based support to those at-risk of, or who have experienced, forced marriage.
- \$2.2 million over 4 years to extend Speak Now to 2027-28. Speak Now is delivered by Anti-Slavery Australia and is Australia's national forced marriage community education service.
- \$1.65 million over 4 years from 2021-22 to 2024-25 for the Primary prevention of sexual violence in LGBTIQ+ communities - pilot projects program, to trial 3 co-designed pilots to address sexual violence in intersectional LGBTIQ+ communities.
- \$5.068 million to Sexual Health Family Planning ACT from 2021-22 to 2025-26 to support development of the FDSV service sector to support and educate women with disability.

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**OFFICIAL****PREVENTION****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to prevent family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV)?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government is taking a system-wide approach to prevent FDSV with funding covering prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing initiatives.
- The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (the National Plan) drives and co-ordinates collective action by all governments and stakeholders to end FDSV.
- At a national level the Australian Government initiatives focus on:
  - shifting attitudes and behaviours in relation to gender inequality and disrespect
  - supporting services to hold perpetrators to account and to respond to risk factors, and
  - breaking the cycle of violence.
- The National Plan does not work in isolation – it sits alongside related plans and strategies that contribute to its goal, such as Safe and Supported, the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, and Australia's Disability Strategy.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- **Prevention** is critical and the Australian Government is providing funding for a range of complementary primary prevention activities. Some of these have a whole of community focus, and others provide a more tailored response to meet the needs of specific cohorts. Examples include:
  - \$100.4 million for Our Watch to provide leadership and drive national change in attitudes and behaviours, including \$34.48 million for primary prevention campaigns and community engagement and awareness activities to stop violence against women and children.
  - \$46 million to continue the *Stop it at the Start* campaign, to break the cycle of violence by encouraging adults to have conversations about respectful behaviours and relationships with young people aged 10-17.
  - \$40 million for the National *Consent Can't Wait* campaign, launched on 26 May 2024, to improve community understanding and attitudes on consent and respectful relationships to reduce the incidence of sexual violence.
  - \$8.3 million for the Partners in Prevention of Sexual Violence project with La Trobe University, to build the evidence base on what works to prevent sexual violence.
  - \$3.5 million for the Healthy Masculinities Trial and Evaluation, to trial, test and evaluate activities designed to encourage healthy expressions of masculinity and foster respectful relationships among school-aged young men and boys.
  - \$3.5 million to support Teach Us Consent to develop and distribute social media resources for young people aged 16 years and above about sexual violence and consent.
  - \$3.4 million to deliver National FDSV Training for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities and Faith Leaders so they can provide information, supports and referrals for individuals and families impacted by FDSV.
  - \$0.5 million to apply a disability lens to the First Action Plan 2023-27 to build understanding of what implementation and measurement looks like for women and girls with disability impacted by violence.
  - \$5.07 million to Sexual Health Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT) to support development of the FDSV service sector's ability to support and educate women with disabilities about violence.
  - \$12.7 million for community-led prevention services, programs and campaigns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.

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- The National Plan recognises the importance of **early intervention** to respond to known risk factors, stop violence from escalating, and protect victim-survivors from harm. Early intervention initiatives include:
  - \$3.6 million for the Helping Children Heal initiative pilot to support children aged 6 to 12 years who are struggling to reach developmental, social and educational milestones due to family and domestic violence.
  - \$2.8 million to conduct an independent review of crisis accommodation services across Australia and establish a national model of care to guide the enhancement of support for children and young people who are victim-survivors of FDSV.
  - \$34.8 million for a national early intervention trial for young men and adolescent boys (the Supporting Adolescent Boys Trial) who have experienced family and domestic violence and may be using or at risk of using violence in their relationships.
  - \$12.7 million to continue funding No to Violence for the National Perpetrator Intervention and Referral Service.
  - \$6.1 million from 2021-22 to 2025-26 for the MensLine Changing for Good Program for free multi-session phone counselling service for men who want to maintain respectful relationships without using violence.
  - \$26.990 million to partner with states and territories to trial innovative approaches to address perpetrator behaviour. A further \$8.6 million was committed in April 2025 to boost innovative perpetrator responses.
  - \$39.7 million to extend DV-alert training, to educate health, allied health and frontline workers to recognise and respond to signs of family and domestic violence, including against people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
  - \$10.1 million to extend Accredited Training for Sexual Violence Responses to deliver free accredited training for medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, and other health professionals on how to recognise and respond appropriately to disclosures of sexual violence.
- The **Response** domain of the National Plan aims to hold perpetrators to account, keep victim-survivors safe and reduce the reoccurrence of violence. Examples include:
  - \$925.2 million over five years to permanently establish the Leaving Violence Program.
  - \$100 million to extend the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation program.

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- \$57.9 million to continue the Keeping Women Safe in their Homes and Safe Connections programs.
- \$32.2 million for increasing capacity of crisis accommodation services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- \$17 million for FDSV programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations.
- The fourth domain under the National Plan is **recovery and healing**, which recognises that victim-survivors need additional, often life-long supports to recover and heal from trauma and the physical, mental, emotional and economic impacts of violence.
- A systems approach is being taken across the Government to recovery and healing with investments and my own department is delivering:
  - \$41.4 million to establish community-led men's wellness centres for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
  - \$23.2 million for the Healing for Families Cultural healing initiative which will support families impacted by violence and at risk of engaging in the child protection system, through delivery of 7 place-based, trauma-aware and culturally responsive healing programs.

#### **6 September 2024 National Cabinet**

- On 6 September 2024, following a meeting of National Cabinet, a \$4.7 billion package was announced to prevent gender-based violence and support legal services. My department is responsible for delivering several initiatives including:
  - a renewed 5-year FDSV Responses Schedule to the Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other Federation Funding Agreement to deliver over \$700 million in new matched investments from the Commonwealth and states and territories. All states have signed the renewed FDSV Responses 2021-30 Schedule which came into effect on 1 July 2025.
  - developing new national best-practice family and domestic violence (FDV) risk assessment principles and a model best-practice risk assessment framework (National Risk Assessment Framework). This initiative will improve victim safety and perpetrator accountability by supporting service systems, within and across jurisdictions, to consistently identify and assess risk to deliver the most appropriate response.
  - establishing national standards for men's behaviour change interventions, to improve quality and practice and deliver a consistent, evidence-based approach to addressing men's use of violence across all jurisdictions.

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- consultation with children, young people and sector experts, to identify gaps in supports for children and young people who have experienced or witnessed FDV.
- over \$80 million to enhance and expand child-centric trauma-informed supports for children and young people. (Note a portion of this funding is being delivered by the Attorney-General's Department).

**Our Watch – Change the Story**

- Our Watch is a national leader in primary prevention of violence against women and children, working to embed gender equality and prevent violence at a whole-of-community level.
- Our Watch's Change the Story primary prevention framework supports stakeholders in developing primary prevention initiatives and responses.
- Primary prevention activities are key components of the broader range of activities being delivered to support the goal of the National Plan to end gender-based violence in one generation.
- The National Plan takes a system wide view, recognising the many contributing factors along with gender inequality. It recognises the need for action across all 4 domains: prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing, to achieve our goal.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- On Monday 17 March 2025, Quarterly Essay journal released an issue titled *Losing It. Can we stop violence against women and children?*:
  - The essay is written by Jess Hill, investigative journalist, author and speaker on gender-based violence.
  - The essay contains more detail on critiques previously raised against Our Watch and their Change the Story framework through the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches in 2024.
  - These include stating there has been an under valuing of factors such as child maltreatment, alcohol abuse, and problem gambling.
- Our Watch has provided a statement to media addressing key misconceptions in the essay regarding Our Watch and Change the Story. It does not address comments regarding the department. The department has no concerns with the statement.

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- On 2 June 2025, the Quarterly Essay released responses to Jess Hill's essay, including from Our Watch CEO, Patty Kinnersley. The response aligns with Our Watch's previous statement.
- On 8 July 2025, Crikey released an article seeking an update on the Rapid Review into prevention, including the recommendation to independently review the Change the Story framework.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****Research**

- Data from the Australian Institute of Criminology indicates that in 2024-25 one woman was killed every 12 days by her current or former partner.<sup>1</sup>
  - Refer to QB25-000035 for further details on this data.
- The 2021-22 Personal Safety Survey<sup>2</sup> found:
  - 3.9 million women have experienced at least one form of violence in Australia since the age of 15.
    - Of these 2.2 million women reported experience sexual violence and 3.1 million women reported experiencing physical violence.
    - Women mostly experience violence perpetrated by men, and people who are known to them, while men mostly experience violence from other men.
  - The self-reported 12-month prevalence rate of sexual violence for women has shown an increase from 1.6% to 1.9% over the past 20 years (measured every 4 years)
  - Intimate partner violence:
    - 1 in 4 women have experienced this since the age of 15.
    - Almost 1 in 14 men have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15.
- There is some evidence which demonstrates improvements in attitudes and behaviours across the community.
  - The 2021-22 Personal Safety Survey showed that for women, the 12-month prevalence rate of intimate partner violence decreased from 2.3 per cent in 2016 to 1.5 per cent in 2021-22; sexual harassment decreased from 17 per cent in 2016 to 13 per cent in 2021-22.
  - The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey<sup>3</sup> shows that since 2013 Australians' understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender-inequality have improved significantly but slowly over time.

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<sup>1</sup> [Homicide in Australia | Australian Institute of Criminology](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Personal Safety, Australia, 2021-22 financial year | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey \(ncas.au\)](#)

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**OFFICIAL****500 WORKERS COMMITMENT****ISSUE**

How many workers have been recruited under the 500 new workers initiative.

**KEY POINTS:**

- As at 30 September 2025, 518 (459.3 FTE) new workers have commenced out of 500 new frontline and community sector workers.
- Victoria has an extension to meet their overall worker target (101 FTE) by the end of June 2026 and currently have 72 (66 FTE) workers commenced.
- The Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland have met their worker commenced targets.
- The Australian Government continues to work closely with all other states and territories on the ongoing delivery of this initiative.
- There continue to be some challenges with recruiting to the family, domestic and sexual violence workforce, particularly in some states.
- I have recently written to all State and Territory Women's Safety Ministers to commence negotiations for a renewed 500 workers agreement which will commence 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2030.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- The Australian Government committed \$169.4 million over 4 years from 2022-23 to 2025-26, to support 500 new frontline and community sector workers to support victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) across Australia.
- Funding is being delivered to state and territory governments (states) through the *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021-30 Schedule* under the Federation Funding Agreement - Affordable housing, community services and other.
  - States have not been asked to contribute matched funding to this initiative.
  - States are required to recruit set numbers of community sector workers to support priority groups experiencing violence.
- As at 30 September 2025, over \$141 million of the total administered funding of \$165 million, has been paid to states via four payments.
  - Monthly progress reports are published on the Department of Social Services' website on the first business day of each month.
  - The ACT has met its target of 7.6 FTE workers commenced.
  - Tasmania has met its target of 24.6 FTE workers commenced.
  - Queensland has met its target of 111.6 FTE and have onboarded an additional 0.4 FTE.
  - Western Australia has met its target of 50 FTE workers commenced.

***If asked, what is the Commonwealth doing to progress this initiative?***

- My department and I remain closely engaged with all states, to support their recruitment of frontline and community sector workers under the 500 workers initiative.
- To ensure transparency, my department is working with states to publish data on the first business day of each month on the department's website.
- The last monthly report was published on 1 October 2025.

***If asked, has the Government failed to meet its election commitment of delivering 500 new workers by 2024-25?***

- The timeframe for delivery of the full complement of 500 new workers has been extended, with Victoria to engage its final share of new workers in 2025-26.
- I acknowledge the challenges presented by the current labour market conditions.

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- My Department is working closely with states and territories to understand and, where possible, provide assistance to address these challenges.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The latest monthly report is at **Attachment A**.
- The Government's commitment includes set targets of new community sector workers to support priority groups experiencing violence.
  - 250 workers will be allocated to rural, regional and remote areas
  - 60 workers will support First Nations people
  - 60 workers will support the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community
  - 15 workers will support the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual (LGBTIQA+) community.
  - 15 workers will support women with disability.
- Funding for the remaining 100 worker positions may be allocated to other FDSV services where there is high demand, to be determined by the relevant jurisdiction.
- In addition to these groups, the Government announced 337 of the new workers will be allocated to specific regions across Australia (**Attachment B** refers).

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Australian Government

Department of Social Services

# 500 Workers Initiative

## Jurisdictional high-level status as at 30 September 2025

### Notes:

- Data is as at 30 September 2025 and is subject to regular changes.
- Due to individual jurisdictional contractual arrangements with service providers already in place, not all state and territory data is updated monthly.
- States and territories have requirements to receive Commonwealth funding including annual reporting obligations to the Commonwealth under the [Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021-30 Federation Funding Agreement](#).
- Use of the word 'commenced' in the below table means workers who have started in their roles and are working with victim-survivors.
- The 500 Workers Initiative has a phased approach, with 352.43 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers committed to by 30 June 2024, 462.61 FTE workers by 30 June 2025 and 500 FTE workers by 30 June 2026.

Jurisdiction	Commenced Workers	Commenced FTE	Next Steps
<b>New South Wales (NSW)</b>	159	146.4	<p>The recruitment of new workers is progressing in line with NSW's plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 159 workers (146.4 FTE) are now delivering domestic, family and sexual violence services (DFSV) across NSW.</li> <li>• The remaining 2024-25 quota have recruitment activity underway (2 FTE).</li> <li>• NSW has awarded contracts to 82 service providers to deliver 148.4 FTE.</li> <li>• NSW is working with service providers to support recruitment for the remaining 2 FTE.</li> </ul>
<b>Victoria</b>	72	66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recruitment of new workers for tranche 2 is progressing in line with Victoria's plan:<sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 7 workers (total 7 FTE) have commenced.</li> <li>– 2 positions are being interviewed.</li> <li>– 8 positions are being advertised.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The remaining 27 are in the planning phase.</li> <li>• From Tranche 1, 65 workers (total 59 FTE) are continuing working in this space. The filled roles include:</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Through revised modelling done for the second tranche of the 500 Workers initiative, Victoria was able to allocate two additional positions in the Family Violence sector, bringing the total to 44 FTE.

Jurisdiction	Commenced Workers	Commenced FTE	Next Steps
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 20 case managers at multicultural agencies. Collectively, they speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Tamil, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Ukrainian and Russian, as well as all speaking English.</li> <li>• 3 workers employed at an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Queensland</b>	131	112	Queensland has now allocated all funding and FTE and has over-delivered on its target of 111.6 FTE, with funding allocated for a total of 113 FTE workers.
<b>Western Australia (WA)</b>	50	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Australia has successfully completed its recruitment plan with 50 FTE employed across 13 organisations in metropolitan, regional and remote areas of the State.</li> </ul>
<b>South Australia</b>	46	34.1	<p>South Australia has fully achieved its target under the 500 Workers Initiative with all service agreements executed for the total allocation of 36.8 FTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2023–24, service agreements were finalised for 29.6 FTE.</li> <li>• An additional 7.2 FTE was allocated for 2024–25, with all corresponding service agreements now fully executed.</li> <li>• This completes the full allocation of 36.8 FTE for South Australia.</li> <li>• As of 30 June 2025, 34.1 FTE (equivalent to 46 workers) have been successfully recruited.</li> <li>• Service providers continue to work towards filling the remaining 2.7 FTE, subject to workforce availability.</li> </ul>
<b>Tasmania</b>	33	24.6	Tasmania has now met its total 500 Workers Initiative target of 24.6 FTE commenced workers across 13 services.
<b>Australian Capital Territory (ACT)</b>	8	7.6	<p>The ACT has delivered its total 500 Workers Initiative FTE target of 7.6 FTE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 workers (4.0 FTE) have commenced with Canberra Rape Crisis Centre.</li> <li>• 2 workers (2.0 FTE) have commenced with YWCA.</li> <li>• 1 worker (1.0 FTE) has commenced with Multicultural Hub.</li> <li>• 1 worker (0.6 FTE) has commenced with Domestic Violence Crisis Service.</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Territory</b>	19	18.6	<p>Recruitment has increased with 19 commenced workers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 FTE Children's safety workers.</li> <li>• 1 (.6 FTE) Children's safety worker.</li> <li>• 5 FTE non legal support workers, and</li> <li>• 2 FTE co-responder pilot victim-survivor case manager.</li> </ul> <p>The remaining 1 FTE role has been allocated with recruitment to commence once the program design phase concludes.</p>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>459.3</b>	

## Attachment B

Total funding					
	2022-2023 (\$m)	2023-2024 (\$m)	2024-2025 (\$m)	2025-2026 (\$m)	Total
Administered	18.195	39.899	52.428	54.460	164.982
Departmental	1.554	0.948	0.959	0.976	4.437
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.749</b>	<b>40.847</b>	<b>53.387</b>	<b>55.436</b>	<b>169.419</b>
Total workers					
	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	
<b>Total</b>	192.43	352.43	462.61	500	
Funding and expected commenced FTE workers per jurisdiction					
<b>New South Wales</b>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Funding (\$m)	\$5.349	\$11.769	\$15.556	\$16.164	<b>\$48.837*</b>
Total workers	58.8	118.0 <sup>1</sup>	148.4 <sup>2</sup>	148.4	<b>148.4</b>
<b>Victoria</b>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Funding (\$m)	\$3.312	\$7.608	\$10.559	\$11.001	<b>\$32.480*</b>
Total workers	28.83	28.83 <sup>1</sup>	63.61 <sup>2</sup>	101	<b>101</b>
<b>Queensland</b>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Funding (\$m)	\$4.203	\$9.082	\$11.714	\$12.156	<b>\$37.154*</b>
Total workers	46.2	91.0 <sup>1</sup>	111.6 <sup>2</sup>	111.6	<b>111.6</b>
<b>Western Australia</b>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Funding (\$m)	\$1.674	\$3.825	\$5.232	\$5.446	<b>\$16.176*</b>
Total workers	18.4	38.4 <sup>1</sup>	50.0 <sup>2</sup>	50.0	<b>50.0</b>
<b>South Australia</b>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Funding (\$m)	\$1.346	\$2.952	\$3.860	\$4.008	<b>\$12.167*</b>
Total workers	14.8	29.6 <sup>1</sup>	36.8 <sup>2</sup>	36.8	<b>36.8</b>
<b>Tasmania</b>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Funding (\$m)	\$1.128	\$2.243	\$2.599	\$2.679	<b>\$8.649*</b>
Total workers	12.4	22.4 <sup>1</sup>	24.6 <sup>2</sup>	24.6	<b>24.6</b>
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Funding (\$m)	\$0.273	\$0.598	\$0.796	\$0.828	<b>\$2.496*</b>
Total workers	3.0	6.0 <sup>1</sup>	7.6 <sup>2</sup>	7.6	<b>7.6</b>
<b>Northern Territory</b>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Funding (\$m)	\$0.910	\$1.822	\$2.113	\$2.178	<b>\$7.022*</b>
Total workers	10.0	18.2 <sup>1</sup>	20 <sup>2</sup>	20	<b>20</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes workers from 2022-23.<sup>2</sup>Includes workers from 2023-24.

\*Totals may not add due to rounding.

#Existing workers funded in 2024-25 will continue in 2025-26.

**OFFICIAL****1800RESPECT****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to make sure 1800RESPECT is delivering a quality service for people impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV)?

**KEY POINTS:**

- It is critical that 1800RESPECT delivers high-quality and free support to those affected by FDSV 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- People in need of support can choose to contact 1800RESPECT through any of its 4 service channels: voice, SMS, online chat and video call.
- This enables people affected by FDSV to seek support via a channel that best suits their needs and circumstances.
- Telstra Health is delivering 1800RESPECT with the support of specialist organisations: Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre (Safe Steps), 54 Reasons (part of Save the Children Australia Group), Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre and Lifeline Australia.
- An independent evaluation of 1800RESPECT was conducted in 2024-25 to ensure the service continues to deliver high-quality support for those who seek support.
- The findings and key recommendations of the evaluation will be delivered to Government shortly.



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked: What were the findings coming out of the 2024-25 independent evaluation of 1800RESPECT?***

- The evaluation considered the extent to which 1800RESPECT is achieving its strategic outcomes, with a focus on practical advice and recommendations that can be applied to improve the service.
- After conducting a number of research and consultation activities across 1800RESPECT and the wider FDSV system, the independent evaluator delivered its findings and recommendations to the Department of Social Services (the department) at the end of the 2024-25 financial year.
- The Government will consider the independent evaluation's findings and recommendations, to inform continuous service improvement activities so that 1800RESPECT can continue to provide high-quality support to people affected by FDSV.

***If asked: Why did 1800RESPECT change its subcontractor arrangements?***

- In 2024, Telstra Health advised the department it made changes to its subcontractor arrangements to ensure the sustainability of subcontracts and support long-term positive outcomes for 1800RESPECT.
- All subcontractors are now engaged directly to Telstra Health rather than through a primary and secondary subcontractor model.
- As part of this transition, DVConnect ceased service delivery of 1800RESPECT on 30 August 2024.
- Telstra Health engaged Safe Steps as the new FDSV specialist organisation, to support service delivery and ensure 1800RESPECT continues to be informed by specialist expertise.
  - On 13 February 2025, Telstra Health advised that Safe Steps was fully onboarded and delivering services.

***If asked: What information does 1800RESPECT release about victim-survivors after receiving a subpoena from the courts?***

- Infrequently, 1800RESPECT receives subpoenas requesting the service to produce personal information for use in civil or criminal court proceedings.
- By law, 1800RESPECT must comply with subpoena requests to provide case notes, transcripts, or copies of records unless a court or the opposing party set aside the subpoena.

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- In limited circumstances 1800RESPECT may also object to the disclosure of personal information in line with relevant legislation.
- If information requested through a subpoena is required to be provided, it is provided only directly to the courts.
- This process is managed by the service provider, Telstra Health.

***If asked: Have any service users been blocked from 1800RESPECT?***

- Service users who frequently and repeatedly contact 1800RESPECT that display abusive, harassing and threatening behaviours may be blocked from the service.
- Blocking a caller may occur when there is an immediate threat or risk to the welfare of counsellors and/or all other support options for the caller have been exhausted.
- This forms part of Telstra Health's escalation processes to manage abusive and threatening behaviour. The decision is clinically informed and follows specific assurance and governance processes.
- The department is aware that a small number of service users have been blocked from the service.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- 1800RESPECT has been referenced in recent media coverage (originating from the Courier Mail) following the tabling of a report in Queensland Parliament on 7 August 2025 that was commissioned by the Queensland state government into the operations of DVConnect.
- The media coverage highlights the findings from the report, including that DVConnect:
  - Had a 388 per cent increase in abandoned calls across its state-based FDSV support services between July 2023 to March 2025.
  - During its negotiations with the Queensland state government to extend existing arrangements to deliver state-based FDSV support services, DVConnect did not inform the government of its decision to cease its arrangement with Telstra Health to deliver 1800RESPECT.
- The media coverage references that Telstra Health's contract with DVConnect ceased in May 2024. It does not further explain that DVConnect was offered the opportunity to re-contract under new subcontractor arrangements and that DVConnect made the decision not to continue delivering 1800RESPECT services (effective from 30 August 2024).

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- On 24 January 2022, Telstra Health was announced as the successful tenderer to deliver the 1800RESPECT service for a period of 5 years, with the option for extension.
- In 2024-25, 1800RESPECT answered 335,254 contacts to the service.

Independent Evaluation of 1800RESPECT

- On 14 August 2024, the department entered into a contract with ARTD Consultants to conduct an independent evaluation of 1800RESPECT. The Contract value was \$545,395.40 (incl. GST) and is published on AusTender (CN4085439). The Contract ceased on 30 June 2025.

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**OFFICIAL****AIC INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE MONITORING DASHBOARD****ISSUE**

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (National Plan) includes a national target to reduce female intimate partner homicide by 25% each year. What is the Government doing to facilitate real time reporting?

**KEY POINTS:**

- I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all the lives lost due to intimate partner homicide.
- This Government is committed to ending gender-based violence once and for all, and it is the responsibility of all of us to work together in saying this has to stop.
- On 26 June 2024, the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) publicly released the first quarterly intimate partner homicide dashboard.
- The dashboard presents a cumulative, national total of the number of females that were victims of murder or manslaughter by a current or former intimate partner.
- The dashboard is updated quarterly, providing more timely reporting on female victims of intimate partner homicide.
- There is an intention to move to real-time reporting in the future.
- The latest quarterly dashboard was released on 11 August 2025 - there were 5 female victims of intimate partner homicide between 1 April and 30 June 2025.
- In the same period in the 2024 (1 April and 30 June 2024), there were 10 female victims of intimate partner homicide.
- From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, there were 30 female victims of intimate partner homicide (this is a rate of 0.28 per 100,000). Note this is preliminary data and may be subject to revision.
- This is a 35% decrease in the number of female victims of intimate partner homicide from the previous financial year (July 2023 to June 2024) when there were 46 female victims (this is a rate of 0.43 per 100,000).
- The AIC continues to work with states and territories on the supply of data and, as such, are taking an incremental approach to reporting.
- The next update to the dashboard will be in November 2025 and will include data for Quarter 3 of 2025.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked, why is the government's tally of murdered women lower than that of other organisations – is it downplaying the figures?***

- The AIC's intimate partner homicide dashboard uses verified data provided by state and territory police to the National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP).
- The dashboard reports on cleared incidents of homicide perpetrated by a male or female, current or former intimate partner against a female victim.
- The data reported by the AIC reflects the consistent application of agreed processes and definitions, including verifying through police investigation the intent and the nature of the relationship between the victim and the primary offender.
- This approach enables comparisons between states and territories, noting the data published through the dashboard aligns with the AIC's annual Homicide in Australia report series.
- Other organisations who routinely report on female victims of homicide use different methods to define and count female victims of homicide, which can produce different results, and may not be as reliable.
- For example, they may count deaths from a broader range of perpetrators, such as strangers or acquaintances, and they may include in death counts unconfirmed reports, such as from the media, rather than cleared incidents of homicide.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The AIC's intimate partner homicide dashboard was released on 26 June 2024 and is at the following: [www.aic.gov.au/statistics/homicide-in-australia](http://www.aic.gov.au/statistics/homicide-in-australia)
- Recommendation 12 of the Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence recommended the Australian Government lead the development of a national family, domestic and sexual violence death toll.
- On 5 November 2023, the former Minister for Social Services, the former Attorney-General and the Minister for Women announced the development of the intimate partner homicide dashboard.
- The AIC has led this work and worked with state and territory police to secure agreement to the project.
- On 22 November 2023, the AIC received agreement from all Police Ministers at the Police Ministers Council meeting to progress this work.
- The AIC wrote to all Police Commissioners in December 2023 to seek support for the provision of data for the dashboard.
- The dashboard has been delivered within the AIC's existing resources.
- The administration of the dashboard is contingent on support from all state and territory police services to release key data (homicide victim and offender, sex and relationship between victim and offender) to the AIC on a 'real-time', or as soon-as-practicable basis.
- The data received by the AIC for the National Homicide Monitoring Program (NHMP) includes the age of the victim, gender of the victim, and the relationship between each victim and the primary offender. This can be found in the Homicides in Australia report published yearly.
- The timelines for determining an intimate partner homicide are often longer than the timelines for determining a road-related death.
- There are numerous factors, including intent, which must be properly investigated before charges can be brought against an individual.
- The dashboard includes homicides perpetrated by a male or female current or former intimate partner and includes *cleared incidents* only.
- Homicide is defined as the unlawful killing of a person and the NHMP collects data on all cases resulting in a person or persons being charged with murder or manslaughter; all murder-suicides classed as murder by police; and all driving causing death offences where the offender was charged with murder, manslaughter or equivalent offences.
- A cleared incident is where the offender has been charged with murder or manslaughter, the offender died prior to arrest but would have been charged with a homicide offence, or the incident was cleared otherwise (e.g. legal intervention).
- Unsubstantiated media reports could still continue to report different figures after the dashboard is implemented.

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**OFFICIAL****National Plan targets**

- The 6 targets introduced in the National Plan Outcomes Framework 2023-2032 are:
  - 25 per cent annual reduction in female intimate partner homicide
  - 2 point increase in the mean 'Understanding of Violence against Women Scale' score every 4 years
  - 2 point increase in the mean 'Attitudes towards of Violence against Women Scale' score every 4 years
  - 2 point increase in the mean 'Attitudes towards Gender Inequality Scale' score every 4 years
  - 2 point increase in the mean 'Sexual Violence Scale' score every 4 years
  - By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50 per cent, as progress towards zero.
- Data on the National Plan targets and outcomes is included on the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare's website at: [www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/resources/national-plan-outcomes](http://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/resources/national-plan-outcomes)

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPORT FOR MALE VICTIM SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to support male victim survivors of family, domestic or sexual violence?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government has zero tolerance for domestic, family and sexual violence (FDSV).
- Everyone, regardless of gender, has the right to live free from harm and without fear of violence or abuse.
- The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-32* (National Plan) acknowledges that boys and men can and do experience discrimination and violence, including family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The National Plan also acknowledges that gender stereotypes and harmful expectations of masculinity can mean that men experiencing mental and physical health issues sometimes do not seek help when they need it.
- It is important that all people experiencing FDSV including men, are able to access supports to leave violent relationships if and when they choose to do so.
- The Australian Government funds a range of national services and programs that support all victim survivors.
- National services available include 1800RESPECT, family and domestic violence paid leave, and the Leaving Violence Program.



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- Services that support male victim survivors of violence include:
  - 1800RESPECT is the national counselling, information, and support service for people affected by domestic, family, and sexual violence. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - All employees experiencing family and domestic violence can access 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave each year. This includes full-time, part-time and casual employees.
  - On 1 May 2024, the Australian Government announced \$925.2 million over 5 years to permanently establish the Leaving Violence Program to support victim survivors of intimate partner violence to make informed choices about leaving violent relationships.
    - Eligible victim survivors, regardless of visa status or gender, are able to access an individualised financial support package of up to \$5,000 as well as safety planning, risk assessment and referrals to other essential services for up to 12 weeks.
    - The Leaving Violence Program builds on the learnings from the Escaping Violence Payment trial and Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot.
    - The Leaving Violence Program commenced service delivery on 1 July 2025.
  - MensLine Australia provides a national telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with family and relationship concerns, including men experiencing domestic violence.

***If asked, why is the National Plan focused on ending violence against women and children?***

- The National Plan recognises the importance of all people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence, including men, being able to access support and services and to leave violent relationships if and when they choose to do so.
- However, the evidence is clear that most perpetrators of this violence are men and most victims are women.
- Men's violence against women, including intimate partner violence, is more prevalent, more often used repeatedly and more likely to lead to serious injury, disability or death.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* notes that:
  - 95% of people who have experienced physical or sexual violence name a man as the perpetrator of at least one incident of violence.
  - Around 4 in 5 family and domestic violence offenders are men.
  - While men can also be victim survivors of family, sexual and domestic violence, they are more likely to experience violence perpetrated by a male stranger.
  - In instances where women do use violent behaviours, research shows that it is usually motivated by fear, and used in self-defence to protect them against violence that their male partners are already perpetrating.
  - 84% of respondents in an Australian study of LGBTIQ+ people who had experienced sexual assault said their most recent experience of sexual assault was perpetrated by a cisgender man.
- The Personal Safety Survey (ABS, 2021-22) notes:
  - 43% of men aged 18 years and over have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15.
  - 12% of men (1.1 million) aged 18 years and over have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15.
  - Of men aged 18 years and over:
    - 7.3% (692,600) experienced violence by an intimate partner
    - 5.5% (526,600) experienced violence by a cohabiting partner
    - 5.9% (560,600) experienced violence by a family member
  - Women were more likely than men to experience violence by an intimate partner, cohabiting partner, and boyfriend/girlfriend or date.
- The Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) provided up to \$5,000 in support to all eligible victim survivors of intimate partner violence, regardless of gender or identity. The EVP National Trial ceased accepting applications on 30 June 2025, with application processing expected to be finalised by 31 October 2025.
- Similarly, through the Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot (TVP), victim survivors could receive support of up to \$5,000 to help them leave a violent situation. This payment was available and accessible to people regardless of gender or identity. The TVP ceased accepting applications on 30 June 2025, with application processing expected to be finalised by 31 October 2025.
- Due to sensitivities with men accessing Women's Legal Centres (which make up 6 of the 9 legal service providers), male clients accessing the Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot can generally only access the \$5,000 in financial support, not the free migration and family law advice.

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**OFFICIAL****ENGAGEMENT WITH MEN****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to engage men in ending violence against women?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government is taking a comprehensive approach to engaging with men and boys through prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing activities that focus on changing attitudes and behaviours to stop violence from occurring, re-occurring and escalating.
- Research shows there is a link between the perpetration of gender-based violence, and cultures of masculinity associated with rigid gender stereotypes involving dominance, control and aggression.
- Further research has found that despite men wanting to take action to change the rates of violence against women they didn't think they could personally do anything.
- We need to teach young people about healthy relationships and consent, recognise that gender stereotypes harm both men and women, and hold each other accountable when we witness disrespectful behaviour and attitudes.
- As part of its commitment under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*, the Australian Government is delivering programs to support men and boys to become more involved in ending gender-based violence, and to hold men who use violence accountable and support them to change their behaviours.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- Some of the key programs for men and boys include:
  - \$100.4 million funding for Our Watch to provide leadership and drive national change in attitudes and behaviours. This work includes exploring, designing and testing new approaches to working with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence
  - \$3.5 million for the Healthy Masculinities Trial and Evaluation (Healthy MaTE) to support school-aged boys and young men to have healthy relationships with masculinity
  - \$3.5 million for Teach Us Consent to develop and distribute social media resources for young people aged 16 years and above about sexual violence and consent
  - \$46 million to continue the *Stop it at the Start* campaign, which works to break the cycle of violence by encouraging adults to reflect on their attitudes and have conversations about respectful behaviours and relationships with young people aged 10-17.
  - \$40 million for two phases of the National *Consent Can't Wait* campaign, launched on 26 May 2024, to improve community understanding and attitudes on consent and respectful relationships to reduce the incidence of sexual violence.
  - \$6.1 million from 2021-22 to 2025-26 for the MensLine Changing for Good Program, a free multi-session phone counselling service for men who want to maintain respectful relationships without using violence with the people in their life
  - \$34.8 million for an early intervention trial for adolescent boys who have experienced family and domestic violence and may be using or at risk of using violence in their relationships
  - \$41.4 million to establish Community-led Men's Wellness Centres for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
    - This program supports 13 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Indigenous-led organisations in regional and remote locations to provide spaces for male domestic violence programs and activities such as prosocial interventions, cultural healing and education on respectful relationships, healthy parenting, mentoring, and understanding diverse experiences of abuse such as technology-facilitated abuse and coercive control

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- \$12.7 million to deliver Community-led Prevention Services, Programs and Campaigns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children
  - This program supports 9 ACCOs and Indigenous-led organisations to deliver activities including on-Country learning. Activities aim to prevent violence against women and children by challenging gender stereotypes and promoting healthy relationships from an early age
- \$12.7 million from 2022-23 to 2025-26 to continue funding No to Violence for the National Perpetrator Intervention and Referral service, which consists of 3 components
  - Men's Referral Service: a national men's family violence telephone and online counselling, information and referral service for men who use violence
  - Brief Intervention Service: provides multi-session telephone-based counselling and referral options to assist men to get further support. Supports men who are on a waiting list for family violence support such as a Men's Behaviour Change Program and men who live in remote or regional areas
  - Five Essential Discussion Tools: delivers training nationally to practitioners and counsellors working directly with men using family violence
- The Australian Government has committed \$26.9 million to partner with states and territories to trial innovative approaches to address perpetrator behaviour. A further \$8.6 million was committed in April 2025 to boost innovative perpetrator responses.
- The Australian Government has also committed \$4.3 million in 2024-25 for ANROWS to further build the evidence base on pathways into and out of perpetration of family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) which includes projects focusing on prevention, early intervention and healing programs for men and boys
- On 6 September, following a meeting of National Cabinet, a \$4.7 billion package was announced to prevent gender-based violence, including specific initiatives targeting people who use violence
- My department is responsible for delivering several initiatives including:
  - establish national standards for men's behaviour change interventions to improve quality and practice and deliver an effective, evidence-based and more consistent approach to addressing men's use of violence across all jurisdictions
  - a renewed, 5-year FDSV Responses Schedule to the Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other Federation Funding Agreement, to deliver over \$700 million in new matched investments from the Commonwealth and

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states and territories. All states have signed the renewed FDSV Responses 2021-30 Schedule which came into effect on 1 July 2025.

- The new agreement will include a focus on nationally coordinated approaches to support prevention activities through frontline services, including funding for services that work with men who use violence

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- On 3 June 2025, the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) released new findings from the Ten to Men study which found that 1 in 3 men report using some form of intimate partner violence (IPV), including physical and/or emotional abuse
  - In 2013-14 around 1 in 4 (22%) men reported ever having used IPV
  - By 2022, this increased to 1 in 3 (35%), from the same cohort of men
  - 32% of men reported using emotional abuse and 9% reported using physical abuse
  - Men who reported having high levels of social support were 26% less likely to use IPV
  - Men who felt they had a quality and affectionate relationship with a father or father figure during childhood were 48% less likely to have ever used IPV

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* notes that:
  - 95% of people who have experienced physical or sexual violence name a man as the perpetrator of at least one incident of violence
  - Around 4 in 5 family and domestic violence offenders are men
  - 84% of respondents in an Australian study of LGBTIQ+ people who had experienced sexual assault said their most recent experience of sexual assault was perpetrated by a cisgender man
- In 2024-25, one woman was killed every 12 days by their current or former intimate partner.
- On 17 September 2024, the Australian Institute of Criminology published the first estimate of recorded family and domestic violence offending in a population sample (from NSW) in Australia. The study estimated that:
  - 1 in 10 men in NSW had been proceeded against by police for a family and domestic violence offence by age 37
  - 1.2% of people born in NSW were responsible for more than 50% of recorded family and domestic offences in the state
- On 27 November 2024, Our Watch released the results of an online survey conducted in September 2024 with 1,001 Australians aged 18+ years. The survey found:
  - 43% of men surveyed say they personally can't do anything to change the rates of violence against women
  - 45% of men surveyed say they feel pressure to act 'stereotypically manly', with most reporting this pressure in the workplace (24%) and within a sporting club (19%)
  - Men in their 30s were far more likely (91%) than men in their 50s (68%) to want to take action to prevent violence against women and girls
  - Almost 4 in 5 men say they want to take action to change rates of violence against women
- New data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, analysed by the e61 Institute shows that Gen Z men are more likely to hold traditional gender beliefs than older men — and far more so than their female peers. It further notes that in 2023, on average, men aged 15-24 had higher belief in traditional gender norms than men aged 25-34 and 35-44

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- In September 2024, the Movember Institute for Men's Health entered a two-year partnership with the Department of Social Services and committed \$3.2 million towards research that will improve men's understanding of masculinity and support the development of healthier relationships.
- The 2025 *Young Men's Health in a Digital World* research by Movember Institute of Men's Health investigates the relationship between Australian young men engaging with men and masculinities influencers online, and young men's health outcomes and their attitudes towards gender roles and women
  - The report finds that men and masculinities influencers and content has gone mainstream, with 63% of participants reporting that they watch it
  - It also finds that these viewers are more likely to hold misogynistic beliefs, more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour, and more likely to report worse mental health outcomes than non-viewers
- Further research has found that
  - about 25% of young males are looking up to online influencers promoting disrespect and condoning violence against women (the Man Cave survey, January 2023)
  - almost 4 in 10 men feel pressure to conform to socially dominant forms of masculinity, i.e. the 'Man Box'. Men who most strongly endorse these 'Man Box' rules were found to be 17 times more likely to have hit a partner (The Man Box 2024, Jesuit Social Services)
- Research on *Being a young man online* conducted by the eSafety Commissioner (June 2024), found that young men:
  - Engage with influencers to shape their identities but there is a lack of diverse role models for them to look to for inspiration and guidance. Andrew Tate is a key social media figure
  - Access and navigate social connections online, including with friends and family. However, these spaces can be harmful

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# SAFE AND SUPPORTED – THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTING AUSTRALIA’S CHILDREN 2021-2031 – ADDRESSING THE OVER REPRESENTATION OF FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

## ISSUE

What is the Government doing to ensure Australia’s children are safe?

What is the Government doing to reduce the over-representation of First Nations children in out-of-home care (Target 12)?

### KEY POINTS:

- The Government is deeply committed to improving outcomes for children and young people.
- To achieve this, the government is working closely with community in partnership with First Nations leaders, state and territory governments and the non-government sector.
- First Nations children are 10.9 times more likely to enter the child protection system compared to non-Indigenous children. This overrepresentation is not acceptable.
- Statutory child protection remains a state and territory responsibility, but the Commonwealth plays a key role alongside states in preventing families from coming into contact with child protection systems.
- *Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2021-2031* (Safe and Supported) is a long-term national reform agenda aimed at reducing child abuse and neglect and improve outcomes for all children and families.
- Safe and Supported implementation is grounded in partnership, early intervention and systemic change, particularly for First Nations peoples and other priority groups.
- Government has committed **\$30 million** in the 2022-23 Budget for 5 initiatives under Safe and Supported.
- The Australian Government has also invested **\$98.5 million** over 5 years in four measures under the *2021 Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan* to improve achievement under **Targets 12 (out-of-home care)** and **13 (family violence)**.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked, what is the Commonwealth doing to address the over-representation of First Nations children in out-of-home care?***

- Drivers for the over-representation are multi-faceted and complex. The social and economic disadvantage experienced by First Nations peoples as a result of intergenerational and ongoing experiences of trauma, including racism and dispossession, have ongoing impacts on First Nations people, including family, domestic and sexual violence.
- A focus on prevention and early intervention will support First Nations children and young people to grow and live safely within their families and communities. The Australian Government remains committed to enhancing workforce capabilities within the child and family sector to achieve better outcomes for First Nations children and families.
- Under the Improving Multidisciplinary Responses (IMR) program, the Australian Government has committed \$49.0 million over 5 years (2021-22 to 2025-26) to enhance and support holistic responses to First Nations families with multiple and complex needs in culturally, geographically and socially diverse contexts to overcome risk factors that may lead to child abuse and neglect.
- In addition the Australian Government has committed \$9.850 million over 3 years (2024-25 to 2026-27) for an Innovation Fund to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations to prepare for the phased transfer of resources and funding for child and family service delivery, and to shift to earlier and tailored supports for children and families.
- The Australian Government has committed a further \$153.1 million over 5 years in the 2023-24 Budget, plus \$4 million in year 6 (2027-28), and an additional \$15 million in redirected funding over 5 years, to implement priority measures within the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* under the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032*.

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***If asked, what is the Commonwealth doing to support children and youth with disability coming out of out-of-home care who aren't already linked with the NDIS system?***

- The NDIA is committed to proactive efforts to identify and engage young people who are “hard to reach” (including those leaving out-of-home care) and not currently a participant under the NDIS, and linking them into supports or access pathways.
- NDIA’s Remote Community Connector Program is making progress across 244 communities by placing local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations at the heart of NDIS engagement. These community connectors are not only building trust but helping families navigate the NDIS pathway in culturally relevant ways.
- Beyond this, NDIA teams are working directly with schools, Early Learning Centres and local shires to raise awareness, identify potential participants and ensure early access to support.
- The National Out-of-Home Care Standards requires tracking of disability and developmental needs and ensures referral to appropriate supports laying the groundwork for later connection to NDIS or other services.

***If asked, what strategies and policy interventions are the Commonwealth implementing to reduce the criminalisation and justice system involvement of children and young people who have been in out-of-home care?***

- We know that children and young people in youth supervision and detentions are much more likely to have had a care experience. Almost two-thirds of young people under youth justice supervision during 2022–23 had an interaction with the child protection system in the last 10 years.
- The evidence is clear that it is better to intervene early to prevent problems from occurring, or escalating, than to try to address them once they have become entrenched.
- The Commonwealth’s family policies aim to work with similar state programs, to prevent adverse outcomes for children and young people. Investment through these programs are designed to build the capacity of families, by supporting confident and connected parenting, family relationship services, and connection to communities. To help strengthen parenting practices, the government are also developing new resources including a First Nations Cultural Parenting Practice Framework for use in parenting programs by the child and family sector workforce.

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**OFFICIAL*****If asked, about the progress of the establishment of National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People***

- The National Commission commenced operations on 13 January 2025 as an independent entity within the Social Services portfolio. On 4 August 2025 Adjunct Professor Sue-Anne Hunter, a Wurundjeri and Ngurai Illum Wurrung woman was announced as the first National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People.
- The Government has committed \$5.9 million over two years from 2024-25 to establish a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People (National Commission).
- Work is underway to develop the primary legislation to outline the powers and functions National Commission.

***If asked, about Bila Muuji ceasing operations and delivery of IMR program?***

- Bila Muuji Aboriginal Corporation Health Service (Bila Muuji) is one of 15 organisations funded to deliver the Improving Multidisciplinary Responses (IMR) program.
- Bila Muuji has informally advised the department in August 2025 that their Board of Directors plan to imminently close operations and deregister the organisation. We are still waiting formal notification.
- As a result, we expect Bila Muuji will stop delivering the IMR program.
- This is a disappointing result for Bila Muuji and the Dubbo community.
- Given Bila Muuji's role in coordinating multidisciplinary responses, its absence may leave families without the connected support they need. Without that linkage, families could face greater difficulty navigating child and family services, particularly when wraparound care is essential.
- The Department is working with the organisation to calculate and recover any unspent funds from the program to support other commitments under Safe and Supported where possible.
- The department was aware that Bila Muuji had been experiencing difficulties. In response, the department had taken steps seeking to mitigate this risk, while still supporting the organisation to weather a difficult period.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services (RoGS) released 30 January 2025 shows:

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- The rate of First Nations children in out-of-home care is not tracking towards achieving Closing the Gap Target 12 (reduce over-representation of First Nations children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent) and has worsened.
- To achieve this, the rate needs to reduce to 26.0 per 1,000 by 2031.
- As at 30 June 2024, the rate of First Nations children aged 0-17 years in out-of-home care was 50.3 per 1000 children (19,985 of the 44,866 [or 7.7 per 1000] children in out-of-home care).
- This is an increase from 47.3 per 1,000 children in 2019 (baseline year). In March 2025, the ratio was adjusted due to an estimated 25.2 per cent increase of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the 2021 census compared to 2016. Therefore comparisons to previous briefings can't be undertaken.
- Government has committed \$30 million in the 2022-23 Budget for 5 new initiatives under Safe and Supported:
  - \$10 million over five years for a National Child and Family Investment Strategy and Innovation Fund.
  - \$8 million over 5 years to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Support.
  - \$3 million over 5 years to support parents and non-parent carers with parenting practices.
  - \$2 million over 4 years for a National Advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People (noting this has been superseded with \$5.9 million funding re-allocated to support the establishment of the National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People).
  - \$7 million over 4 years to improve supports for non-parent carers through a nationally consistent Carer Register, carer standards, and cross jurisdictional recognition.
- A further \$2.6 million a year in administered funds has been allocated over the forward estimates to support the implementation of Safe and Supported and other related work.
- The Australian Government has also invested \$98.5 million under the *2021 Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan*, for 4 measures which includes 3 measures addressing Target 12 (out-of-home care), and one measure addressing Target 12 and Target 13 (family violence)
  - \$49.0 million over 5 years to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with multiple and complex needs (Target 12).
  - \$7.7 million over 3 years to develop the cultural competency and trauma responsiveness of the First Nations and non- First Nations child and family sector workforce funded by the department (Target 12).
  - \$3.2 million over 2 years in the *Stronger ACCOs Stronger Families* initiative to assess the needs and increase the involvement of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in the child and family sector (Target 12).

\$38.6 million over 2 years initially to support initiatives under the Outcomes and Evidence Fund (Target 12 and Target 13) - The Fund was extended by 2 years and 6 months to 31 December 2026, as part of the 2023-24 Budget.
- On 18 May 2025, the Queensland Government announced an independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland's child safety system.

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- A short opening hearing will commence on Wednesday 23 July 2025. A program of public hearings and consultations is yet to be scheduled.
- The Inquiry will review and investigate systemic issues within the child safety system in Queensland. It comes in response to growing concerns about the effectiveness of the current system, particularly following reports of abuse and neglect among children in care.
- The Inquiry is due to report to the Queensland Government by 30 November 2026 and may also make interim reports.
- Cairns Post also published an article on former departmental employees about failures of Queensland's child protection.
- The Commonwealth has not been called as a witness at this stage.

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**OFFICIAL****FFA****ISSUE**

What is different in the renewed 2025-30 Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses Federation Funding Agreement?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Under the *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Federation Funding Agreement* (FDSV FFA), the Australian Government has invested \$985.7 million since its establishment in 2021.
- The renewed 2025-30 FDSV FFA is a five-year agreement which commenced 1 July 2025 and supports states and territories (states) to deliver critical frontline services responding to family, domestic and sexual violence.
- This includes \$365.8 million from the Government, with new matched investments, commensurate 1:1, by state governments each year over the life of the agreement.
- Three key focus areas agreed by National Cabinet on 6 September 2024 are:
  - specialist services for women
  - supporting children exposed to family, domestic and sexual violence to heal and recover
  - working with men including men's behaviour change programs for perpetrators.
- Key differences between this renewed agreement and previous agreements include:
  - First Ministers sought a five-year agreement to provide funding certainty and stability to the frontline service sector. Previous agreements were only two years.
  - Increased transparency and accountability. States' project plans and elements of progress reports will be published on the Department of Social Services website from 2026.
  - Greater flexibility for states to direct funding to areas of need within the three focus areas agreed at National cabinet.
- With the introduction of the Innovative Perpetrator Responses initiative and 500 new frontline and community sector workers in 2022-23, the funding envelope peaked in 2022-23 with states and territories receiving approximately \$180 million.

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- This included a one-off payment of \$10.7 million in August 2022 to the Northern Territory in recognition of the disproportionately high rates of family, domestic and sexual violence experienced in the Northern Territory.
- From 2024-25 to 2029-30, the funding envelope remains similar year on year with states receiving approximately \$130 million.

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, how was funding distributed to states and territories?***

- The FDSV FFA funding is allocated on a per capita basis with a remoteness loading of 3:1 for remote and 4:1 for very remote locations.
- This model was agreed between the Government and all states at the time it was established, and renewed agreement for this funding model to continue for the FDSV FFA 2025-30 was agreed by First Ministers at the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet meeting.

***If asked, is funding going backwards for states and territories under the renewed FDSV FFA?***

- With the introduction of the Innovative Perpetrator Responses initiative and 500 new frontline and community sector workers in 2022-23, the funding envelope peaked in 2022-23 with states and territories receiving approximately \$180 million.
- This included a one off payment of \$10.7 million in August 2022 to the Northern Territory in recognition of the disproportionately high rates of family, domestic and sexual violence experienced in the Northern Territory.
- From 2024-25 to 2029-30, the funding envelope remains similar year on year with states receiving approximately \$130 million annually for the frontline services, 500 Workers and Innovative Perpetrator Responses initiatives.
- Over 2025 to 2030, the combined investment for all three initiatives under the agreement will equate to a similar amount of funding per year.
- For example, in 2025-26, combined total funding will be \$129.708 million, which is set to increase through indexation for each subsequent year of the 2025-30 FDSV FFA. In 2027-28 the funding provided to states will surpass 2024-25 funding.

***If asked, why has the Government increased reporting requirements under the FDSV FFA 2025-30?***

- National Cabinet agreed to increase the reporting requirements on 6 September 2024, based on the findings and recommendations from the May 2024 Rapid Review of Prevention approaches.
- Increase reporting will provide greater transparency and accountability of work being undertaken by states and territories.
- Data collection is also crucial for effective policy development and implementation as it provides the evidence needed to understand the impact of FDSV, design appropriate solutions and evaluate the impact of policies.

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**OFFICIAL*****If asked, what are the increased reporting requirements of the FDSV FFA 2025-30?***

- States will be required to report on progress of activities funded under the FDSV FFA more frequently (verbal check-ins and bi-annual progress reporting). This will support increased transparency of frontline funding.
- States will be required to undertake improved data collection in order to increase transparency on allocation of funding to frontline services under the FDSV FFA.

**BACKGROUND:**

The below table provides a breakdown of funding, for each state and territory, under the different components of the FDSV FFA from 2021-30.

	2021-23 FDSV FFA	2023-25 FSDV FFA	2025-30 FDSV FFA	500 workers	Innovative Perpetrat ors	Combined Schedule Totals	
	Total (\$m)	Total (\$m)	Total (\$m)	Total (\$m)	Total (\$m)	2021-30 (\$m)	Funding Split (%)
NSW	80.13	47.80	110.64	48.84	3.37	290.78	30.05
VIC	62.94	38.37	89.68	32.48	3.37	226.84	24.06
QLD	53.02	32.33	75.85	37.16	3.37	201.73	20.31
WA	30.14	18.30	42.98	16.18	3.37	110.97	11.52
SA	19.12	11.33	26.11	12.17	3.37	72.10	7.12
TAS	5.65	3.47	7.87	8.65	3.37	29.01	2.14
ACT	4.22	2.66	6.13	2.50	3.37	18.87	1.64
NT	15.51	2.93	6.64	7.02	3.37	35.47	3.16
<b>TOTAL (\$m)</b>	<b>270.73</b>	<b>157.17</b>	<b>365.88</b>	<b>164.98</b>	<b>26.99</b>	<b>985.76</b>	<b>100</b>

**Case Study****Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services (FWS) - Queensland**

To provide additional capacity in responding to demand pressures during COVID-19, under the *COVID-19 National Partnership Agreement*, FWS received \$2.7 million in Commonwealth funding. This funding supported the embedding of domestic and family violence (DFV) specialists in 28 FWS across Queensland.

The FDSV 2021-23 component of the FFA, committed \$4.35 million of Commonwealth funding to expand the number and location of embedded DFV workers in FWS across Queensland to:

- provide additional capacity to deliver culturally safe and appropriate DFV support
- provide professional development
- establish a community of practice to strengthen DFV practices in FWS.

From 2021-2024, 650 families accessed services delivered by FWS.

As at 30 June 2025, a total of 15 full-time equivalent specialist DFV positions have been embedded in 14 FWS across Queensland.

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**OFFICIAL****Northern Territory (NT) Funding**

- NT expended the remaining funds under the 2021-23 FDSV FFA at the beginning of 2025. Despite being given an additional \$10.7 million in August 2022, the NT have reported delays in expending the funds.
- No additional funding for the NT has been provided through the FDSV FFA since 2022.

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**OFFICIAL****LEAVING VIOLENCE PAYMENT PROGRAM ROLLOUT****ISSUE**

Sector concerns regarding the Leaving Violence Program service delivery.

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Government has invested \$925.2 million over 5 years to establish the Leaving Violence Program to support over 36,000 victim-survivors each year.
- The ongoing Leaving Violence Program commenced delivering financial support and practical help to victim-survivors of intimate partner violence on 1 July 2025.
- This important service is part of the broader support system available for victim-survivors of family and domestic violence.
- I am grateful to the family and domestic violence sector who support vulnerable and fearful victims everyday.
- Their feedback on this Program will help to continuously improve the service provided to victim-survivors.
- My department and Telstra Health, the provider of the Leaving Violence Program, have been meeting with sector stakeholders, including the state and territory family and domestic violence peak bodies.
- These meetings have heard from the peak bodies about their members experiences of the early delivery of the service and where there have been challenges.
- Addressing concerns and challenges about the Program is a priority.
- My department is working closely with Telstra Health to implement efficiencies and streamline the application process for victim-survivors.
- I understand the frustrations of some of the sector about not being able to submit an online application for their clients.
- This function is coming and is being designed with members of the sector, particularly the peak bodies, so we can ensure the referral function is flexible and meets the needs of a diverse sector.
- Examples of additional improvements that Telstra Health have made include updating the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) message at the beginning of a call with more options to make sure a victim-survivor is helped by the right worker, and updating functionality of the application form.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- Telstra Health is working on a continuous improvement plan that includes the referral pathway for sector including for those wanting to undertake the full application process for their client or those only wanting to provide a support letter.
- It also includes streamlining the application form for victim-survivors, and recruiting more support workers.
- I understand that timeframes have been longer than what I want to see, due to higher than expected demand for the Program.
- The changes Telstra Health are making are seeing a positive impact on the timeliness of support but there is more to do and as more updates are made, there will be more improvements to timeframes.

***If asked, Why are there men answering the calls for the Leaving Violence Program?***

- Telstra Health has recruited staff that reflects the diversity of the victim-survivors that will be supported.
- This includes support workers from culturally and diverse backgrounds, those part of the LGBTIQ+ community and different genders including men.
- The Program accepts applications from all genders and backgrounds, so a diverse staffing profile is important.
- All staff engaging with victim-survivors are qualified and experienced in working with vulnerable people who have experienced violence.

***If asked, Why are the calls from the Leaving Violence Program made with no caller ID numbers?***

- This is a normal sector wide practice.
- The intent is to protect victim-survivors who are reaching out for support by ensuring the person using violence cannot identify the call is from a support service.
- This is particularly important for those victim-survivors who are intending to leave but have not yet left the violent relationship.

***If asked, Is there a way that a victim-survivor can schedule a call with the Program?***

- When a victim-survivor completes the online application form, they are asked to schedule an appointment for a call before finalising their application.
- The appointment time can be made at a time safe and appropriate for them.

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- Further calls can be scheduled (if needed) when talking with the support worker.

***If asked, Is the Leaving Violence Program trauma-informed? How does it avoid double handling of cases or victim-survivors recounting their story multiple times to different people?***

- The aim of the Program is to deliver trauma-informed, person-centred service.
- Each of the support workers are experienced and qualified to work with those who have experienced trauma and violence. The needs of the victim-survivor are central to all interactions.
- The Program model tries to have the same support worker working with a victim-survivor throughout their individual support period.
- The Program's priority is to ensure victim-survivors do not face unnecessary repetition and re-traumatisation when interacting with case workers.
- Case notes are captured for all engagement with the Program so in the event that a different support worker needs to engage with a victim-survivor, they will not need to ask for stories to be retold.

***If asked, Can only victim-survivors make a claim through the Program? Can their existing providers refer them or support them through the process?***

- The current application process does allow for victim-survivors to be supported to apply by organisations already supporting them, such as specialist services.
- The support organisation can help their client with the online form or be included in phone calls with Program support workers, with the victim-survivor's consent.
- A support organisation with an existing client can call the national phone line and use the menu to select that they are an organisation with a client.
- Work on an online referral model is underway and is a priority to be in place in the coming months.

***If asked, How are accessibility needs of victim-survivors being met in the Program?***

- The Program can support those with disability or those from non-English speaking backgrounds to apply through the use of the National Relay Service and the Translating and Interpreting Service.
- The website includes Program resources in other languages, including First Nations languages, and Easy Read versions of fact sheets.
- Telstra Health and the department are working on how to increase accessibility for the Program, including considering application videos.

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**OFFICIAL*****If asked, How is Privacy and Consent handled in the Program?***

- Privacy and consent are essential elements of the Program.
- The department and Telstra Health have both undertaken Privacy Impact Assessments and implemented the recommendations.
- The Program will always seek the informed consent of the victim-survivor before speaking with or releasing information about them.
- Some examples of privacy and consent in action in the Program are:
  - When calling the national phone line, the Interactive Voice Response informs callers that calls will be recorded for quality and training purposes and refers people to the website for the privacy statement.
  - The application form includes links to the privacy and terms and conditions for the Program.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- s 22, s 47F  
s 22, s 47F about the delivery of the Leaving Violence Program national program.
- In their letter, s 22, s 47F  
s 22, s 47F  
s 22, s 47F
- The department has developed a response to the letter for you (refer to MC25-006788).
- The department has heard the feedback about the challenges with the Program being raised by some of the sector, mainly those in NSW. All of the feedback is being taken seriously and actioned with Telstra Health.
- Telstra Health has been open and collaborative with the department in finding solutions to the challenges being raised and are working on developing the IT solutions, as well as looking at non IT solutions such as increasing the frontline workforce, restructuring teams, and reviewing procedures.
- Many of the challenges identified are normal embedding issues experienced in large, complex programs such as this one.
- While the frontline staff are all qualified and experienced in this space, and they spent over a month training before the commencement of the Program, undertaking the role in real life is different and takes time to feel comfortable and confident.
- This is also true for the IT system. The system was built and tested in the 5 month implementation phase of the Program. The use of the Program in real life has found the need for some improvements to make it easier to use for the frontline staff and for victim-survivors.
- The department is working closely with Telstra Health to make the needed improvements quickly, prioritising the victim-survivor experience.
- The department has and will continue to meet with stakeholders, including state and territory peak bodies and the national peak body and alliance, to engage on the Program and ensure communications on changes or improvements are clearly provided.

**Attachment A** – Letter from s 22, s 47F**OFFICIAL**



**OFFICIAL****SA ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE****ISSUE**

The South Australian Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Report, *With Courage* was released on 19 August 2025. What is the Australian's Governments initial response to the key recommendations?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The South Australian Royal Commission Report into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence was publicly released on 19 August 2025.
- The 667-page report made 136 recommendations which the South Australian Government will consider and respond to in due course.
- The Australian Government welcomes this report and the insights it presents. The Royal Commission, led by Commissioner, Natasha Stott Despoja, received over 380 written submissions and engaged with 5,000 people including 1,300 people with lived experience.
- Key principles of the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-32* (National Plan) include centring the voices of people with lived experience, providing person-centred coordination and integration and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions. All things mentioned in this report.
- The National Plan sets the policy framework which guides the work of governments, policy makers, businesses and workplaces, specialist organisation and workers in addressing, preventing and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia over 10 years.
- The Government works closely with the South Australian Government on the implementation of the National Plan including the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses Federation Funding Agreement (FDSV FFA),
- Through the FDSV FFA, South Australia will receive \$26.109 million in Commonwealth funding from 2025-30. The recommendations of this Royal Commission report will inform their 5-year project plan.
- The Commonwealth will review the findings in full and, in particular, any recommendations that align with our responsibilities under the National Plan.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS*****What is the role of the Commonwealth in relation to the report and recommendations?***

- I acknowledge the ongoing efforts by all state and territory governments and thank them for their support to drive meaningful change to improve the safety of women and children.
- Partnerships are key to ending family, domestic and sexual violence. It requires strong cooperation across Commonwealth, state and territory governments, frontline services, and communities.
- The Department will review the South Australian Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence's Report and will work with the South Australian Government to understand how the funding provided through the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses Federation Funding Agreement 2025-30 will support South Australia in addressing the findings and recommendations.

***If asked, what are the Australian Government's key initiatives to address family, domestic and sexual violence in SA?***

- The Department supports several ongoing national initiatives in SA, including but not limited to Our Watch, Supporting Adolescent Boys Trial and Keeping Women Safe in their Homes.
- Through the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses Federation Funding Agreement, SA will receive a total of \$26.109 million in Commonwealth funding from 2025-30.
- The Commonwealth approved the SA project plan for 2025-2027, committing \$20.657 million in matched funding across all three National Cabinet focus areas:
  - Specialist Services for Women: \$15.15 million
  - Services for Children: \$3.13 million
  - Working with men: \$2.37 million
  - Six out of seven projects will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and will contribute to Closing the Gap Target 13. The 7<sup>th</sup> project is supporting CALD communities in SA.
- Payment 1 of \$2.497 million was released on 7 July 2025.
- SA were awaiting the Royal Commission recommendations before finalising their five-year project plan.

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**OFFICIAL****RECENT MEDIA:**

- [Findings of SA royal commission welcomed by advocates and people with lived experience of domestic violence - ABC News](#)
  - ABC News, 20 August 2025 - Findings of SA royal commission welcomed by advocates and people with lived experience of domestic violence
- [When Alice reported her husband to SA police, they said 'people fight'. But it was far more than fighting | Domestic violence | The Guardian](#)
  - The Guardian, 19 August 2025 - When Alice reported her husband to SA police, they said 'people fight'. But it was far more than fighting
- [SA royal commission findings into domestic, family and sexual violence released - ABC News](#)
  - ABC News, 19 August 2025. - SA royal commission findings into domestic, family and sexual violence released
  - "There's no single point of leadership within the government for the domestic and family violence system, and without government stewardship or an accountability mechanism, no-one is held responsible for when services fail people or fail to support victim-survivors." Commissioner Natasha Stott Despoja.
- [Children share confronting domestic violence experiences with SA royal commission](#)
  - ABC News, 11 July 2025.
  - Submission to South Australia's Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, children's experience with FDSV and poor system responses.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Background to the South Australian (SA) Royal Commission in Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (the Commission)**

- The Commission commenced on 1 July 2024 and conclude 14 August 2025.
- The Commission was a result of the death of four women in one week in November 2023. It galvanised the domestic, family and sexual violence sector to call for this inquiry.

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- The consultations included:
  - 170 listening sessions in metropolitan, remote and regional South Australia.
  - Survey tool 'Share With Us' was used with more than 800 people that participated
  - 380 written submissions were received
  - 10 days of public hearings with 48 sessions and 64 witnesses.
- This is in addition to desktop reviews and research, which built on the work of previous inquiries and commissions in this space
- The Commission were asked to inquire into 5 areas, aligned with the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* (National Plan):
  - **Prevention** - How SA can facilitate widespread change in the underlying social drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence.
  - **Early intervention** - How SA can improve effective early intervention through identification and support of individuals who are at high risk of experiencing or perpetrating domestic, family and sexual violence.
  - **Response** - How SA can ensure best practice responses to family, domestic and sexual violence through the provision of services and supports.
  - **Recovery and healing** - How SA can embed an approach that supports recovery and healing through reducing the risk of re-traumatisation and supporting victim-survivors to be safe and healthy.
  - **Coordination** - How government agencies, non-government organisations and communities can better integrate and coordinate efforts across the spectrum of prevention, intervention, response and recovery.
- The overarching focus was to examine existing policies, legislation, administrative arrangements, system structure and funding levers in SA so recommendations can be developed about what needs to change.
- Recommendations directed at designing a domestic, family and sexual violence system to better meet the needs of those who interact with it, and which can deliver the generational change required to bring an end to domestic, family and sexual violence.
- In March 2025, the Department provided the Commission with information and data relating to the national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service 1800RESPECT.

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**OFFICIAL****NT'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE****ISSUE**

Do you have a comment on the Northern Territory (NT) Government's response to the Coroner's report?

**KEY POINTS:**

- On 25 November 2024, the NT Government tabled its response in the NT Parliament to the Coroner's recommendations, which have arisen from the inquest into the tragic deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurk, Kumarn Rubuntja, and Kumanjayi Haywood.
- These were precious lives lost too soon.
- I thank the Coroner, Judge Elisabeth Armitage, for her detailed report, and for the respectful and culturally sensitive way in which she conducted the inquest.
- The Australian Government is committed to ending violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.
- That is why we are co-designing Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Safety Plan (Our Ways) with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Not for them, but with them.
- Our Ways will build on the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* (Action Plan), and will support structural reform by embedding cultural authority, leadership, and community voices at its core.
- Through Our Ways and the establishment of the National Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Safety (National Peak Body), we are ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership is central to system change and accountability.
- The Government works closely with states and territories to deliver improved safety outcomes for families, and we will continue to work with the NT Government on this important work.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked, how is the Australian Government addressing the concerns raised by frontline services – including workforce shortages, lack of core funding and the need for Aboriginal-led governance?***

- We are developing the First Nations' Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Sector Strengthening Plan, which responds directly to sector calls for long-term workforce development, supporting the growth of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) workers on the ground.
- The Government has committed \$7.7 million to establish the National Peak Body. The National Peak Body is being established by the Coalition of Peaks, and its role will be to provide cultural leadership and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance in family safety reform.
- Work is underway to develop Our Ways, the first long-term dedicated national plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.
- To respond to urgent needs while this long-term plan is developed, we released the Action Plan under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*.
- In 2024, under the Action Plan, we began directly funding 8 ACCOs to deliver services under 4 Immediate Priority Grant programs. This included funding for men's wellness centres, existing FDSV programs delivered by ACCOs, increasing the capacity of crisis accommodation, and prevention programs for children.
- This complements our work on Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, which brings together governments and community to reduce child abuse and intergenerational trauma.
- We are also providing frontline funding through the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses Federation Funding 2021-30 (FDSV FFA), including \$7.023 million for 20 new frontline workers under the 500 Workers initiative.

***If asked, does the Commonwealth provide funding directly to frontline organisations?***

- Under the FDSV FFA, the NT will receive \$35.47 million for frontline services.
- This funding is provided to the NT government to use flexibly based on local needs.
- In addition, my department is directly funding a number of community-led organisations to deliver trauma-informed, place-based responses in the NT.

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- Under the Improving Multidisciplinary Responses program, 3 organisations will receive total funding of \$9.1 million.
  - *Yalu Aboriginal Corporation will receive \$5 million, over 4 years (2023-24 to 2026-27), to deliver Gamurr Dhangimur, a program that helps kinship carers and extended families raise children with complex needs in Galiwin'ku.*
  - *Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjar Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council will receive \$1.5 million, over 4 years (2023-24 to 2026-27), to deliver integrated, trauma-informed support services across Central Australian Communities.*
  - *Danila Dilba Health Service will receive \$2.6 million over 4 years (2023-24 to 2026-27), to provide wrap around support for families experiencing FDSV.*
- In addition, under the 4 Immediate Priority Grants under the Action Plan, 8 ACCOs in the NT will receive \$15.513 million to deliver:
  - *Community-led Men's Wellness Centres for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Men's Wellness Centres)*
  - *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisation (FDSV ACCO)*
  - *Increasing Capacity of Crisis Accommodation Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Crisis Accommodation)*
  - *Community-led Prevention Services, Programs and Campaigns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children (Children's).*
- **Bagala Aboriginal Corporation** will receive \$4.473 million, over 3 years (2024-25 to 2026-27), under Men's Wellness Centres.
- **Children's Ground Limited** will receive \$1.579 million, over 2 years (2024-25 to 2025-26), under Children's.
- **Darwin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Shelter Indigenous Corporation** will receive \$0.999 million, over 3 years (2023-24 to 2025-26), under Crisis Accommodation.
- **Galiwin'ku Women's Space Aboriginal Corporation** will receive \$0.507 million over 3 years (2023-24 to 2025-26), under Crisis Accommodation, and a further \$0.512 million, over 3 years (2024-25 to 2026-27), under FDSV in ACCOs.
- **Katherine West Health Board Aboriginal Corporation** will receive \$1.155 million, over 2 years (2024-25 to 2025-26), under Children's.
- **Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation** will receive \$0.493 million, over 3 years (2024-25 to 2026-27), under FDSV in ACCOs.

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- **Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation** will receive \$1.868 million, over 3 years (2024-25 to 2026-27), under FDSV in ACCOs.
- **Thamarrurr Development Corporation Limited** will receive \$3.927 million, over 3 years (2024-25 to 2026-27), under Men's Wellness Centres.
- In addition, **North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service** will receive \$9.025 million in 2025-2026 to deliver the Leaving Violence Program Regional Trial in Darwin and surrounding areas

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- Following the NT Government tabling its response to the inquest, there has been multiple media articles discussing the response from the NT.
- Media reports are suggesting that the Northern Territory government has labelled findings into a high-profile domestic violence coronial inquest "uninspiring", and accused the NT Coroner of "lacking humility" in the way she carried out the landmark probe.
- Domestic Violence Prevention Minister Robyn Cahill levelled pointed criticism at the Coroner, saying while she never expected a "panacea", she found the "long anticipated report failed so dismally to hit the mark".
- Domestic violence prevention advocates have described the NT government's criticism of a landmark coronial report into the deaths of four Indigenous women as hurtful, disappointing and distressing.
- Domestic violence researcher Chay Brown, who was friends with one of the victims, said she was saddened by Minister Cahill's comments and that the Ministers response had caused harm to the families of the four women.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- On 25 November 2024, the NT Coroner Elisabeth Armitage handed down the findings from the inquest into the deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood. Coroner Armitage held public inquests into the death, the inquests heard from 95 witnesses, and received many written statements.
- The NT Coroner made 35 recommendations including:
  - broad changes to government coordination mechanism to lead consistent and evidence-based DFSV policy and practice.
  - the NT Government should establish and adequately fund a peak body for DFSV in the NT.
  - the NT Government should develop and enforce an evidence-based strategy to reduce alcohol availability.
  - The NT Government should increase investment in specialist alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation services.
  - The Family Harm Coordination Project daily auditing program should receive continued funding and be expanded across the Territory.
  - The NT Government should fund, and DCF should develop and implement, timely and intensive early interventions for young people who are reported as being involved in DFSV.
  - The NT Government should provide additional funding for existing and developing community-based approaches to child welfare and for research into how community models may be expanded to increase the safety and wellbeing of children in remote NT communities.
  - The NT Government should ensure increased and long term funding is allocated for behavioural change programs and counselling in prisons, inclusive of independent evaluation of the effectiveness of those programs.
- The Action Plan recommended establishing future trials to build on learnings from the Escaping Violence Payment place-based trial in Cairns, Queensland, that commenced in February 2023. This recommendation has resulted in four Regional Trials being delivered under the Leaving Violence Program which commenced on 1 July 2025 as an ongoing financial support program for victim-survivors leaving a violent intimate partner relationship.
  - The Leaving Violence Program provides a financial support package to eligible victim-survivors regardless of visa status, gender, or sexuality up to \$5,000 in financial support, including a cash payment of up to \$1,500 and the remaining funds in goods and services. The support package also includes mandatory risk assessments, and safety planning and referrals to other services as needed for a period of up to 12 weeks.
  - The Leaving Violence Program has two delivery models, a National Program delivered by Telstra Health and four Regional Trials, delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations. The Regional Trials are delivered in the Darwin, Broome, Cairns, and Dubbo regions with a focus on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors.

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**OFFICIAL****UPDATE ON NT FUNDING****ISSUE**

What are the Australian Government's key investments to address family, domestic and sexual violence in the Northern Territory (NT)?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government is committed to investment in the Northern Territory (NT) to address family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV).
- The scale of the Australian Government's investment in the NT is significant and unprecedented.
- As at September 2025, investment addressing FDSV in the NT by the Department of Social Services is **\$140.931 million\*** from 2022 to 2030.
- This includes **\$35.47 million** through the FDSV Federation Funding Agreement (FDSV FFA) to support the NT Government in delivering critical frontline services, the recruitment of 20 frontline workers and innovative approaches to address perpetrator behaviour.
- Under the FDSV FFA, the NT receives \$135.28 per capita<sup>^</sup>, which on average is \$75 more per capita than other states and territories.
- In addition to the FDSV FFA, the Government is directly funding a number of community-led organisations to deliver trauma-informed, place-based responses.

\*Includes Housing initiatives funding of \$24.872 million implemented while in the Department of Social Services. From July 2025, these initiatives sit within The Treasury following machinery of government changes.

<sup>^</sup>NT population data of 262,200, as at 31 December 2024.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked, the NT has said there should be needs-based funding - why don't we have it?***

- Currently, we do not have an agreed way of measuring need across the different jurisdictions.
- Any needs-based funding model would need to be carefully developed in collaboration with all state and territory governments.
- The FDSV FFA funding is allocated on a per capita basis with a remoteness loading of 3:1 for remote and 4:1 for very remote locations.
- This model was agreed between the Government and all states at the time it was established, and renewed agreement for this funding model to continue for the FDSV FFA 2025-30 was agreed by First Ministers at the 6 September 2024 National Cabinet meeting.

***If asked, what funding NT has received from the Australian Government under the FDSV FFA?***

- To support frontline services, from 2021-22 to 2029-30, the NT has been allocated \$35.47 million under the FDSV FFA, which includes:
  - \$7.023 million for 20 new frontline workers under the 500 Workers Initiative
  - \$3.374 million for the Innovative Perpetrator Responses Initiative
  - \$25.073 million to support FDSV services under the 2021-30 FDSV FFA

***If asked, is funding going backwards for the NT under the new 2025-30 FDSV FFA?***

- This agreement will be implemented over five years and provides long-term funding certainty for frontline services.
- National Cabinet committed to new matched funding with the Commonwealth contributing \$365.8 million.
- From 2023 to 2025, states received approximately \$130 million annually for the FDSV FFA, 500 Workers and Innovative Perpetrator Responses initiatives.
- Over 2025 to 2030, the combined investment for all states and territories equates to a similar amount of funding per year. For example, in 2025-26, combined total funding will be \$129.708 million, which is set to increase through indexation for each subsequent year of the 2025-30 FDSV FFA.
- In addition:

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- The NT has received over \$80 million since 2022 for programs such as Keeping Women Safe in Their Homes, Community-led Men's Wellness Centres for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Strengthening Family and Community Partnership program.
- the Government has also committed over \$840 million over five years through the NT Remote Aboriginal Investment Fund which will include funding of essential services for remote communities including women's safety.
- Funding under the NT Remote Aboriginal Investment Fund will also establish up to 12 Aboriginal community-controlled children and family centres to provide solutions for issues related to family safety and child development.

**BACKGROUND:**NT requests for increased investment to address FDSV

- In July 2023, the former NT Minister for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, the Hon Kate Worden MLA, advocated for a needs-based allocation of funding in the face of rising FDSV rates. In 2021, rates of violence increased by 12 per cent in the NT.
- In recognition of the NT's circumstances and the complexities of remote service delivery, the NT was allocated an additional \$10.73 million for 2022-23 in August 2022.
- On 28 November 2024, the NT Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Hon Robyn Cahill OAM wrote to the former Minister for Social Services, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, requesting \$8.8 million per annum for five years under the FDSV FFA.
- Minister Rishworth declined the request for additional funding noting that support for frontline FDSV services is primarily the responsibility of states and outlining the Commonwealth's significant investments to support frontline services in the NT.

Funding to the NT – FDSV FFA figures and caveats for noting

- Due to the intersectional nature of FDSV, it is not possible to provide a definitive overall figure of the Commonwealth's investment towards FDSV. For this analysis, FDSV funding is defined as funding specifically allocated to FDSV programs and initiatives only.
- Funding listed within the Question Time Brief includes funding for organisations based in the NT, however, may not include funding to other organisations based outside of the NT that would also provide services in the NT.

**Table 1 provides a breakdown of Commonwealth funding to the NT under the various schedules of the FDSV FFA.**

NT Non-Grant Initiatives Funded – Department of Social Services	
Initiatives Funded 2021-2030	Amount (\$m)
FDSV FFA 2021-23	15.510

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<i>*This is inclusive of the \$10.73mil one-off payment to the NT in 2022-23</i>	
FDSV FFA 2023-25	2.928
FDSV FFA 2025-30 (indexed)	6.635
500 Workers 2022-2026 (indexed)	7.023
Innovative Perpetrator Responses 2022-2027	3.374
<b>NT Non-Grant Initiatives Funded Total (\$m) =</b>	<b>35.470</b>

Table 2 is a breakdown of funding provided by the Department of Social Services to the Northern Territory to directly address FDSV, as at September 2025.

<b>NT Funding Directly to Organisations – Department of Social Services</b>	
<b>Initiatives Funded from 2022</b>	<b>Amount (\$m)</b>
Specialised Family Violence Services (indexed)	9.899
4AP Men as Role Models (NPYWC) (indexed)	0.836
4AP1 Community led prevention (indexed)	0.987
Keeping Women Safe in their Homes (indexed)	2.113
Local Support Coordinator	0.350
Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot (TVP) – Legal component (indexed)	0.845
Leaving Violence Program Regional Trial – Darwin Trial only	9.025
Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations (indexed)	2.800
Strengthening Family and Community Partnership	30.000
Community-led Men's Wellness Centres for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (indexed)	12.260
Increasing Capacity of Crisis Accommodation Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (indexed)	1.480
Community-led Prevention Services, Programs and Campaigns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children (indexed)	2.733
Supporting Adolescent Boys Trial	1.961
Closing the Gap Outcomes and Evidence Fund	5.300
<b>Total NT Funding Directly to Organisations (\$m) =</b>	<b>80.589</b>

<b>NT Funding Directly to Organisations – Treasury</b>	
<b>Housing Initiatives funded from 2022*</b>	<b>Amount (\$m)</b>
Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program	5.660
Safe Places Inclusion Round	10.611

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Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program (CTAP)	8.601
<b>Total NT Funding (\$m) =</b>	<b>24.872</b>
<b>Overall total NT funding (\$m) =</b>	<b>140.931*</b>

\*Housing initiatives were moved from the Department of Social Services Portfolio in July 2025 through a Machinery of Government process.

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**OFFICIAL****NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to address the overrepresentation of First Nations children in out-of-home care and youth detention?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People became operational on 13 January 2025.
- Its purpose is to protect the rights and interests of First Nations children and young people, including reducing overrepresentation in out-of-home care and detention.
- First Nations children are 10.8 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-First Nations children<sup>i</sup> and 27 times more likely to be in youth detention.<sup>ii</sup>
- The National Commission will hear from First Nations children and young people on matters important to them and embed their perspectives in advice to Government.
- It will also collaborate with national and jurisdictional stakeholders and participate in domestic and international processes to enhance coordination on relevant matters.
- On 3 August 2025, Adjunct Professor Sue-Anne Hunter, a Wurundjeri and Ngurai Illum Wurrung woman, was announced as the ongoing National Commissioner.
- Commissioner Hunter commences on 1 September 2025, replacing Ms Lil Gordon, a Ngemba woman, who was the Acting National Commissioner since January 2025.
- Establishing the National Commission via an executive order was the first step towards setting up an ongoing, fully legislated and resourced National Commission.
- It is the result of longstanding calls from First Nations leaders and peak bodies, who had extensive discussions with Government to inform the establishment of the role.
- Work towards developing primary legislation will be led by the Department of Social Services, in consultation with the National Commission.
- The budget to establish the National Commission is \$5.9 million over two years from 2024–25.
- The Acting National Commissioner has met with key stakeholders, including state and territory children's commissioners, guardians and advocates.
- Discussions have focused on the functions of the National Commission and opportunities for future collaboration and engagement.

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**Responsible Group:** National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People  
QB25-000028

**Date updated:**

20 August 2025

**Date reviewed:**

20 August 2025



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, what are the National Commission's priorities?***

- The National Commission's current priorities include informing the approach to developing primary legislation, collaborating on engagement models and building key stakeholder relationships and shared goals to lay the groundwork for culturally safe, trauma informed, rights based, accessible, and inclusive collaboration with children and young people to facilitate meaningful, long-term impact.

***If asked, the Acting National Commissioner recently joined the Children's Commissioner's call to establish a federal Minister for Children. Will the Government listen to this advice?***

- The Government acknowledges the importance of national coordination as highlighted in the Children's Commissioner's *Help Way Earlier!* report. The report makes a number of recommendations that are being considered across relevant portfolios.
- The Government will continue to consider the National Commissioner's advice on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people as part of ongoing engagement to improve outcomes and strengthen coordination.

***If asked, could the National Commissioner oversee independent investigations into the deaths of young people in custody?***

- The National Commissioner is not legislated to oversee investigations, which are within the jurisdiction of states and territories.

***If asked, will the National Commissioner support calls for independent investigations into deaths in custody?***

- The Acting National Commissioner has been listening to community and key stakeholders on this issue and supports independent investigations into deaths in custody as compatible with international human rights standards.
- The voices of children, young people and their communities will inform how the National Commissioner works with key stakeholders to provide advice to government on this and other issues.

***If asked, how will the National Commissioner contribute to reducing overrepresentation in out-of-home care and youth detention?***

- While state and territory governments manage child protection and youth justice systems, Closing the Gap requires all governments to work together.
- The Acting National Commissioner has been working closely with state and territory commissioners, guardians and advocates, along with other key stakeholders, to gain insights on challenges and opportunities.

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- These insights will help to inform the future work of the National Commission.

***If asked, will the National Commissioner oversee the implementation of recommendations made by *Bringing them Home* and/or other reports?***

- The National Commission will provide advice to Government on these matters, ensuring it reflects the voices of First Nations children and young people, families, communities and key stakeholders.

***If asked, how will the National Commission work in collaboration with the National Children's Commissioner and the Social Justice Commissioner?***

- The incoming National Commissioner will meet with the National Children's Commissioner and the Social Justice Commissioner to discuss how they will collaborate on their work.

***If asked, when will the National Commission be fully legislated?***

- The National Commission is currently undertaking consultation on the roles, powers and functions required to fulfil the National Commission's purpose. The Department of Social Services will lead the development of primary legislation in consultation with the National Commission and other key stakeholders.

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**OFFICIAL****RECENT MEDIA:****Announcement of ongoing National Commissioner**

- On 3 August 2025, Adjunct Professor Sue-Anne Hunter, a Wurundjeri and Ngurai Illum Wurrung woman, was announced as the ongoing National Commissioner.
- Commissioner Hunter commences on 1 September 2025, replacing Ms Lil Gordon, a Ngemba woman, who was the Acting National Commissioner since January 2025.
- Commissioner Hunter brings more than 20 years of experience in the family services sector, including senior roles at SNAICC, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, and as a social worker.
- She was a Commissioner and Deputy Chair of Victoria's Yoorrook Justice Commission; Australia's first truth-telling commission.

**Deaths in custody and care**

- On the weekend of 2–3 August 2025, a 15-year-old Aboriginal boy subject to a child protection order died by suicide in a residential care home south-west of Brisbane.
- On 27 May 2025, Kumanjayi White, a disabled 24-year-old Warlpiri man, died at an Alice Springs supermarket after being restrained by police.
- Kumanjayi's family, including Ned Hargraves, represented by George Newhouse, are demanding an independent investigator be appointed from another state or territory.
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) Chair, Karly Warner, said that the federal government should set up a system to ensure there are independent investigations into deaths in custody.
- The President and all seven Commissioners of the Australian Human Rights Commission united to demand immediate reform over deaths in custody.
- The inquiry into the 2019 death in custody of Kumanjayi Walker found that his death was avoidable and a case of 'officer induced jeopardy' by a racist officer in an organisation with 'hallmarks of institutional racism'. It made 32 recommendations.

**'Tough on crime' initiatives**

- Multiple states and territories have recently introduced 'tough on crime' initiatives, including harsher bail laws, targeted police taskforces and adult sentencing for youth, which UN experts criticised as a 'flagrant disregard' for children's rights.
- NewsCorp subsidiaries ran campaigns pushing for 'tough on crime' legislation in Queensland and Victoria, which they credit as responsible for some of the changes.
- A summit of over 100 Indigenous leaders released a statement accusing the Queensland Government of deliberately destroying First Nations communities.

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- Pat Dodson condemned youth incarceration rates and child removals as an ongoing genocide against First Peoples.
- Members of the Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners Guardians and Advocates group called on the Government to take immediate action to hold States and Territories accountable and to implement the recommendations made in the National Children's Commissioner's *Help Way Earlier!* report, including the establishment of a federal Minister for Children.

**National Commission**

- Catherine Liddle flagged that one of SNAICC's post-election priorities is to push for the National Commission to be fully empowered and fully legislated.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****Establishment**

- The Government has established a National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, which commenced operations on 13 January 2025.
- The National Commission was established as an Executive Agency in accordance with section 65(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999* on 26 September 2024.
- On 5 December 2024, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* was amended to prescribe the National Commission as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity.
- The budget for the National Commission is \$5.9 million over two years from 2024–25 to establish the National Commission as a separate and independent entity within the Social Services portfolio.
- The National Commission's health, safety and wellbeing, information and technology capability, staff training and support, property and building services, corporate services, and human resources support are provided under a shared services arrangement with the Department of Social Services.
- The National Commission operates under the Department of Social Services Enterprise Agreement 2024–2027.

**Functions**

- As outlined in the Executive Order, the National Commission's functions are to:
  - promote and protect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people through strategic policy advice and reports to Government on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and their families
  - provide advice to Government on and inform the implementation of key policy frameworks which seek to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and their families
  - promote and enhance coordination across Commonwealth and state and territory governments, commissioners, guardians and advocates and non-government organisations on matters related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young people
  - undertake consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and their families, relevant Commonwealth and state and territory governments, commissioners, guardians and advocates and non-government organisations
  - ensure the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and their families are reflected in advice to Government.

**Engagement activities**

- The National Commissioner is currently collaborating with key stakeholders, including state and territory children's commissioners, guardians and advocates, as well as Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

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**OFFICIAL****Relationships to national initiatives**

- The Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023–26 focuses on achieving safety and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability and commits to urgent action to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in child protection systems.
- Action 7c commits to establishing advocacy and accountability roles in all jurisdictions and nationally to amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, drive systemic reforms to support their rights and wellbeing, and hold governments and services accountable.
- The Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECCDPP) supports shared decision-making between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and Australian governments under Priority Reform One of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. In 2023, ECCDPP identified the establishment of a fully empowered and legislated National Commission as a priority action.

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<sup>i</sup> SNAICC – National Voice for our Children (2024), *Family Matters Report 2024*. Available at: <https://www.snaicc.org.au/our-work/child-and-family-wellbeing/family-matters/>

<sup>ii</sup> Australian Government Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024), *Youth detention population in Australia 2024*. Available at: [www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-detention-population-in-australia-2024/contents/first-nations-young-people/key-findings](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-detention-population-in-australia-2024/contents/first-nations-young-people/key-findings)

**OFFICIAL****CLOSING THE GAP**

**ISSUE:** What is the Australian Government doing in the Social Services portfolio in relation to Closing the Gap?

- The Department of Social Services (the Department) is the Commonwealth lead for two key socio-economic Targets; 12 (out-of-home care) and 13 (family violence). In addition to addressing the Targets, the Department is working to embed the four Priority Reforms.
- The Department is delivering on its commitments outlined in the Closing the Gap Commonwealth 2025 Implementation Actions Table, including the:
  - Establishment of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Support to drive self-determined research grounded in First Nations knowledge.
  - Establishment of the National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People.
  - Development of Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (Our Ways), informed by the findings of the Senate Inquiry into Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children.
  - Establishment of a National Peak Body to champion the rights and interests of First Nations communities affected by Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.
  - Development of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sector Strengthening Plan, in partnership with First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence (FNAAFV).
- Further details on the departmental actions are at Supplementary Talking Points.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

*If asked, how is the government supporting better outcomes against Target 12 (out-of-home care) for First Nations children?*

- Drivers for the over-representation are multi-faceted and complex. The social and economic disadvantage experienced by First Nations peoples as a result of intergenerational and ongoing experiences of trauma, including racism and dispossession, have ongoing impacts on First Nations people, including family, domestic and sexual violence.
- Under Safe and Supported - The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031 (Safe and Supported) the Australian Government has committed \$49.0 million over five years (2021–22 to 2025–26) to implement the Improving Multidisciplinary Responses program. The program provides flexible funding to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to strengthen supports for First Nations families by connecting providers to deliver holistic, coordinated and culturally safe services.
- In addition, the government is investing over \$130 million from 2022–23 to 2027–28 towards a number of initiatives currently being implemented under Safe and Supported.
- The National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People (National Commission) was established as an Executive Agency on 13 January 2025, with an interim National Commissioner, Ms Lil Gordon. In September 2025, Sue-Anne Hunter, a Wurundjeri and Ngurai Illum Wurrung [pronounced n-gur-ai ill-um wurr-ung] woman, commenced as the first ongoing National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People. The National Commissioner's role is to protect and promote the rights, interests and wellbeing of First Nations children and young people, as well as amplifying their voices, celebrating their strengths, and driving greater accountability and improvement in policy.
- \$38.6 million has been committed through the Closing the Gap Outcomes and Evidence Fund from 2021–22 to 2025–26 to support community-led projects in eight locations across Australia - Darwin (NT), Inner Sydney (NSW), Dubbo (NSW), Darebin (VIC), NPY Lands (SA), East Kimberley (WA), West Kimberley (WA) and Logan (QLD). These projects are focused on addressing out-of-home care and/or family violence (Targets 12 and 13).

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*If asked, how is the government supporting better outcomes against Target 13 to reduce family violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families?*

- The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025* is addressing immediate family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) safety needs of First Nations families and communities and lays the foundations for longer-term structural change.
- Investing \$262.6 million over five years towards First Nations family safety initiatives, including to:
  - Establish a National Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Safety.
  - Develop *Our Ways* which will sit alongside the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–32* (National Plan).
  - Four Immediate Priority Grants for crisis accommodation services, family, domestic and sexual violence programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, men's wellness centres, and community prevention programs and campaigns for children.
  - The Leaving Violence Program Regional Trials commenced in four locations Broome, Cairns, Darwin and Dubbo on 1 July 2025.
  - Develop a First Nations-led, nationally representative data collection that provides a profile of family domestic and sexual violence in the community. The Department has been working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council for Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence to determine the best approach for implementation.
  - By January 2027, expanding culturally safe and child-centred Specialised Family Violence Services (SFVS) by funding up to an additional 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Controlled-Community Organisations (ACCOs). Grant Opportunity Guidelines will be designed to align with the holistic and culturally responsive way that ACCOs deliver services.

*If asked, when will the standalone First Nations national domestic and family violence plan be delivered?*

- Significant progress is being made on the dedicated First Nations National Plan, known as *Our Ways*.
- *Our Ways* will guide a whole of society approach to addressing the alarmingly high rates of violence against First Nations peoples.

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- In line with Priority Reform 1, the development of Our Ways is being led by a Steering Committee which has equal representation from governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.
- It builds on the foundations set in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–25*, under the National Plan.
- It is expected to be finalised in December 2025.

*If asked, what is the Social Services portfolio doing to address the Productivity Commission review and the Closing the Gap Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Led Review?*

- The recent release of the Closing the Gap Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Led Review closely aligns with the findings of the 2024 Productivity Commission Review. Both highlight that the government needs to do more to meaningfully implement Priority Reform 3 (transforming government organisations). To change the status quo - internal cultures, structures, funding rules, and decision-making processes must transform to enable real partnerships.
- The Independent Review offers a deeper analysis of progress – it captures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, experiences and solutions at front and centre.
- In response, the Social Services portfolio is actively collaborating with other Commonwealth departments to address these recommendations. This includes partnering with the National Indigenous Australians Agency and other departments on the development of a Priority Reform 3 Transformation Plan as well as progressing Place-Based Closing the Gap Partnerships and Community Data Projects.
- Place-Based Partnerships are at varying stages of development in: Maningrida (NT), the western suburbs of Adelaide (SA), Tamworth (NSW), Doomadgee (QLD), East Kimberley (WA) and Gippsland (VIC).
- Community Data Projects are under development in: Blacktown City Council local government area (Blacktown LGA – NSW), Doomadgee (QLD), the Kimberley (WA), the western suburbs of Adelaide (SA), Maningrida (NT) and Gippsland (VIC).

*If asked, how is the government supporting better outcomes for First Nations people with disability?*

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- The Government recognises disability as a cross-cutting outcome area across all four Priority Reforms and 19 socio-economic targets. This commitment seeks to ensure all investments under each socio-economic target are inclusive, accessible and equitable for First Nations people with disability.
- Through the Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 and the National Agreement, the government has committed to ensuring policies, programs and services are designed to reflect the lived experience, unique needs, and inherent strengths and capacities of First Nations people with disability, their families and broader communities.
- The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability recommended establishing a First Nations Disability Forum (Forum) as a way for governments and First Nations people with disability to work together to improve supports and services. In July 2024, all governments accepted in principle the Royal Commission recommendation. Governments committed to work in partnership with First Nations people to develop options for a Forum.
- The Commonwealth is working with state and territory governments; and First Nations and disability representative organisations to consult on design options for a Forum. Establishment of a Forum remains a decision of government.
- A new disability employment program, Inclusive Employment Australia, will replace the existing Disability Employment Services (DES) program on 1 November 2025. The new program is designed to better support specific cohorts including First Nations jobseekers, and will include six Indigenous-owned providers (an increase from the current 2 providers delivering DES).

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## TRANSITIONING FUNDING TO ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS

### ISSUE

What is the Department of Social Services (the Department) doing to progress Closing the Gap Priority Reform Two – Building the Community-Controlled Sector & transitioning funding?

### KEY POINTS:

- The Department is committed to implementing the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (National Agreement) to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- The current mainstream services, systems and approach is not addressing the disproportionately high levels of disadvantage that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience alone. A more comprehensive approach is needed.
- The Department is achieving progress through the following mechanisms:
  1. Dedicated Funding Rounds
  2. Sector Strengthening Plans
  3. Grants Administration Reform
  4. Transition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations
  5. Indigenous Procurement Policy
- While early in the implementation, indications of success against Priority Reform Two: Building the Community Control Sector include:
  - Departmental funding for First Nations programs and services going through Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and has increased to nearly three and a half times the amount of funding since the start of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. In 2019–20, \$38 million was provided to ACCOs, increasing to \$125.8 million in 2025–26.
  - Around double the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations funded by the Department, from 83 organisations at the start of the National Agreement to 157 organisations in September 2025, significantly increasing the footprint across Australia.
- Local and national evaluations have been co-designed with First Nations communities across several programs to ensure that data and evidence is used to inform future decision making to support achieving the socio-economic Targets in the National Agreement.
- Further details on the departmental actions are at [Supplementary Talking Points](#).

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 QB25-000069

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- The Department recognises that structural change is essential and has committed to shifting the way governments engage and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in line with the National Agreement's four Priority Reforms:
  - Priority Reform One: formal partnership and shared decision-making
  - Priority Reform Two: building the community-controlled sector
  - Priority Reform Three: transforming government organisations
  - Priority Reform Four: shared access to data and information at a regional level.
- The National Agreement highlights that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a genuine say in the design and delivery of policies, programs and services that affect them, better life outcomes are achieved.
- In line with this, Priority Reform Two commits all parties to build a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of First Nations peoples across the country.
- The Department is achieving progress against Priority Reform Two through the following mechanisms:
  1. **Dedicated Funding Rounds** for the community-controlled sector for the socio-economic Targets that the Department leads on. For example:
    - The government has invested in the National Child and Family Investment Strategy - Innovation Fund Grant (the Innovation Fund) under the Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023–26. The Innovation Fund is providing \$9.8 million in funding over three years to ten ACCOs in targeted priority locations across Australia. This funding will support these ACCOs to trial projects that prepare for the phased transfer of resources and funding for child and family service delivery to ACCOs, and to shift service delivery towards prevention and early intervention services.
    - The government is investing more than \$2.7 million in community-controlled organisations to deliver the First Nations Playgroup Pilot. This investment is providing accessible and affordable spaces, resources and opportunities for First Nations children to play together and for parents and carers to seek social and parenting support.
    - The government has also committed to expand and extend funding to ACCOs to provide culturally safe child-centred support available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and their families under Specialised Family Violence Services. Community consultations will soon commence to inform grant processes for the new services.

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- The government has invested in community-controlled organisations to deliver First Nations Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence preventative programs and campaigns such as men's wellness centres and community-led family safety activities (that include cultural healing, mentoring, education on respectful relationships, healthy parenting, and technology-facilitated abuse and coercive control). Investment also includes expanding and extending programs where the evidence supports doing so (for example the Leaving Violence Program Regional Trials in Broome, Cairns, Darwin and Dubbo – the evaluation noting the holistic case management and culturally safe support provided through a community-controlled provider, contributes to additional choice and sense of safety).
  - The government has invested \$5.5 billion over five years to help more people with disability secure sustainable employment (Disability Employment Service Reform). The new Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) program aimed to increase diversity in the provider market and offer more tailored supports for participants, including First Nations organisations and participants. This has been achieved with the appointment of six Indigenous-owned organisations (of which one is an ACCO) to service 26 regions nationally, including seven remote regions where the Remote Indigenous Procurement Policy applied. This will bring cultural knowledge and expertise to ensure services are culturally appropriate. There are some organisations who are new or have significantly grown due to an increase in their coverage. Advance payments and financial assistance to meet establishment costs will support their commencement, whilst the Centre of Excellence will provide guidance in supporting good practice over the contract period.
2. Developing and implementing **Sector Strengthening Plans** that form part of a joint national sector strengthening effort. The Department is working with key stakeholders on developing a Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sector Strengthening Plan, and continues to support existing activity across various sectors including early childhood, housing and disability. Sector strengthening can also occur through other program initiatives. Examples of effort towards these include:
- The National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People (the National Commission) was established as an Executive Agency on 13 January 2025, with an interim National Commissioner, Ms Lil Gordon. In September 2025, Sue-Anne Hunter, a Wurundjeri and Ngurai Illum Wurrung woman, commenced as the first ongoing National Commissioner. The National Commissioner's role is to protect and promote the rights, interests and wellbeing of First Nations children and young people, as well as amplifying their voices, celebrating their strengths, and driving greater accountability and improvement in policy.
  - The engagement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coalition of Peaks to lead the establishment of the National Peak Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Safety (National Peak Body), ensuring the representative body reflects the needs of the First Nations family safety sector.

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- Developing and delivering Cultural Competence and Trauma Responsiveness training by SNAICC to 1,032 participants from 240 different Children's service provider organisations.
  - The Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI) (part of the Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage package announced in the 2023–24 Budget) supports social enterprises to build their capability and better coordinate the sector to grow their social impact. SEDI has a focus on capability building support for rural and regional and First Nations social enterprises. The First Nations SEDI grants will be provided up to 30 June 2027.
3. **Grants Administration Reform** continues across the Department to reduce barriers for First Nations organisations and communities to access community grants. Activities and projects include grant promotion, embedding best practice Indigenous design principles in policy, and improving the cultural competency and accessibility of grant documents. The Community Grants Hub promotes opportunities by engaging directly with First Nations organisations via the State Office network. Grant Opportunity Guidelines also have been improved to highlight the importance of priority reforms in grant delivery with the aim of encouraging non-Indigenous grant recipients to, where possible, partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations in communities where they operate.
4. The Department is working towards identifying key work programs and locations where it would be appropriate to consider **transition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations**. A preference for ACCOs may be considered where there is a proportionately high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and/or high demonstrated need based on data as well as where current initiatives are not having the desired impact and may benefit from culturally responsive and culturally driven services. Appropriate planning, consultations, supports and timeframes are needed to enable a seamless transition. Examples of transitioning funding include:
- Through the Financial Wellbeing and Capability (FWC) Activity open competitive grant rounds, 29 Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) or Indigenous-led organisations were successful, with around \$37.6 million over five years in grant funding to be awarded across four programs. ACCOs were recommended in locations to reflect local populations with the Financial Wellbeing Hubs program representing the highest proportion of ACCOs across the FWC Activity due to the priority service areas having high First Nations populations. This program will see ten (38%) out of the 26 successful organisations being ACCOs or Indigenous-led organisations, with around \$14.4 million over two years.
  - Under *Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031*, a National Child and Family Investment Strategy is transforming

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investment approaches to child and family services. The Strategy outlines national principles and system elements to realign and drive funding priorities within the child and family service system.

5. The Department continues to promote and meet its obligations under the **Indigenous Procurement Policy**. Key elements include annual targets for the volume and value of contracts to be awarded to Indigenous businesses by the Commonwealth and each portfolio; the Mandatory Set Aside which requires Indigenous businesses to be given an opportunity to demonstrate value for money before general approach to market; and the Mandatory Minimum Indigenous Participation Requirements requiring Indigenous employment and business participation targets to apply to contracts valued at or above \$7.5 million in certain industry sectors.
  - In 2024–25, the Social Services portfolio's annual targets for purchasing from Indigenous businesses were 84 contracts by volume and \$15.7 million by value. As of 1 July 2025, the Social Services portfolio (excluding the machinery of government changes as per the Administrative Arrangements Orders made on 13 May 2025) has exceeded the 2024–25 targets and reported approximately 727 contracts with Indigenous businesses, with an estimated total new procurement value of \$109.3 million.
- Outcomes will be achieved over the longer term where there is a genuine commitment to the Priority Reforms. It won't happen overnight as it takes time for each of these Priority Reforms to be established and implemented in a meaningful way. Some positive examples of outcomes related to implementing the four Priority Reforms:
  - The Department worked in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (Advisory Council) to establish the first dedicated *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025* (Action Plan) under the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032* (National Plan). This Action Plan was informed by extensive community consultations and was agreed to and launched by Australian, state and territory governments in August 2023.
  - The government invested **\$262.6 million** over five years from 2022-23 to implement key actions for the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. This includes funding for Four Immediate Priority grants under the action Plan and the development of Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.
  - The Advisory Council continued to work with the Department to support the implementation of activities under the Action Plan including participation on the design,

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selection and review of these initiatives. This partnership enabled strong progress including the commencement of all Four Immediate Priority Grants, the Leaving Violence Program Regional Trials being expanded and extended, the establishment of a National Peak Body is underway, and work is being done to support data to measure progress against Target 13.

- The Advisory Council provides broader advice to government including in relation to the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches (titled Unlocking the Prevention Potential: accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence), and the Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children Senate Inquiry Report.
- The Closing the Gap Outcomes and Evidence Fund is a \$38.6 million program for First Nations people, organisations and communities to co-design, trial and evaluate projects aimed at contributing to Closing the Gap Targets 12 (out of home care) and 13 (family violence). The program is closely aligned with the four Priority Reforms and aims to support the development of the ACCO sector through formal partnerships and alternative governance approaches, including community-based panels and brokerage funding models, to craft locally led solutions. Developed in partnership with an Expert Panel, including four members of the Coalition of the Peaks, the Fund has been designed to be flexible and to provide opportunities to implement innovative, culturally led solutions. This includes, for example, the novel evaluation and reporting approach being applied to the program.

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**OFFICIAL****CENTRAL AUSTRALIA/ALICE SPRINGS****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to ensure Family Safety in First Nations communities across Central Australia/Alice Springs

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government has committed \$250 million through the *A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia Plan* (Central Australia Plan) to address community safety issues and overcome social disadvantage in Central Australia.
- \$30 million of the Central Australia Plan is for the Strengthening Families and Communities Partnership (the Partnership) through community led solutions.
- The Partnership is helping to prevent family and domestic violence and support people impacted by family and domestic violence. It also aims to support healthy relationships and provide social supports to parents and families.
- To date the Partnership has supported improvements to local community infrastructure such as improving outdoor lighting, and the expansion of community legal outreach and social and youth services. More projects will be rolled out through to 2028.
- The Central Australia Plan complements work addressing family safety through the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*.
- Families in Central Australia can access national programs addressing family violence, such as 1800RESPECT and the Leaving Violence Program.
- The Northern Territory will also receive \$35.470 million through the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021–30 Schedule under the Federation Funding Agreement – Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other. This agreement supports the delivery of critical frontline services in the Northern Territory.
- Under the National Plan, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023-2025* (Action Plan) is supporting family safety across Australia, including in Central Australia.
- Under the Action Plan, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council is funded \$1.8 million to deliver family, domestic and sexual violence programs. Children's Ground Limited are funded \$1.5 million to deliver community-led prevention services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.
- The Government will also provide \$11 million in 2025–26 for intensive family support to selected communities in the Northern Territory. Under this initiative, families can access strengths-based and culturally responsive support tailored to the needs of families.

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, How is the Government ensuring that Partnership funding is targeted to community need?***

- The Partnership draws on the knowledge and expertise of the Aboriginal Leadership Group (ALG) established to support the implementation of the Central Australia Plan.
- Consultation with local communities and service providers to determine where funding is required is supporting community-led solutions to family and community safety.
- Partnership funding is allocated informed by the priorities identified by the ALG and other stakeholders to ensure programs are suitable and consider the cultural contexts of communities.

***If asked, How does the Partnership respond to ongoing family violence and related deaths in remote First Nations communities and Central Australia?***

- The Government is continuing to invest in community-led change, with a \$30 million partnership over five years to support place-based initiatives in Regional and Remote Central Australia, targeted at strengthening family and community safety.
- Through genuine community consultation and by building on advice from the Central Australia Plan Aboriginal Leadership Group (ALG), the Department is exploring opportunities for more flexible approaches to funding place-based solutions that are responsive and timely in meeting local need, particularly to enable family and community safety.

***If asked, What initiatives have been funded under the Partnership?***

- The Central Desert and MacDonnell Regional Councils each received \$700,000 to support projects addressing immediate need in their respective communities.
- Projects funded include a sorry camp, oval lights, a women's business area with shade shelter, new breakout spaces that will support community events, modifications to a hall, including a new Kitchenette, and outdoor BBQ area.
- Five organisations have received grants to address immediate needs that were identified through engagement with community members and service providers. They are as follows:
  - \$3 million from 2024–25 to 2026–27 to the Central Australian Women's Legal Services (CAWLS) to build partnerships and work with local authorities to identify and respond to domestic violence, and increase community legal education, social work outreach and financial counselling through the Community Outreach grant.

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- \$4.8 million from 2024–25 to 2026–27 to the Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit (CAAFLU) to expand their geographical outreach for service provision and enhance online education and awareness of domestic violence through the Community Outreach grant.
- \$500,000 in 2024–25 to Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation to improve infrastructure to address safety concerns, address key challenges like food insecurity, and provide support programs with a focus on youth and their engagement in the community through a Local Solutions Fund.
- \$396,315 in 2024–25 to NPY Women's Council to support community-led services including youth support, men's healing and social support, and community connection activities.
- \$4.9 million from 2025–26 to 2027–2028 to Ngurratjuta/Pmara Ntjarra to support a community-led initiative designed to improve environments where families and children live ensuring homes are culturally secure, family-inclusive, and part of a holistic early intervention system to enable family and community safety.

***If asked, which communities will benefit from funding and activities under the Partnership?***

- The Partnership covers 25 remote communities, spanning the Central Desert Regional Council local government area (excluding the community of Lajamanu) and the MacDonnell Regional Council local government area, Mutitjulu community, and Alice Springs.
- While Alice Springs is covered under the Central Australia Plan, the focus of the Partnership is to provide funding and support service provision in remote communities.
- Current grant activities are being delivered in the following communities: Ntaria (Hermannsburg); Papunya; Yuendumu; Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa); Mutitjulu; Finke; Kintore; Ti Tree; Laramba; Imanpa; Kaltukatjara (Docker River); Titjikala; Mount Liebig; and Haasts Bluff.

***If asked, Is there more funding available under the partnership?***

- Implementation is agreed in partnership with the Central Australia Plan Aboriginal Leadership Group and is dependent on community readiness.
- The approach allows communities to set the pace of engagement and implementation, including to support cultural safety.
- The Partnership was announced on 5 December 2023 and will end 30 June 2028.

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- \$15million has been expended to date. There are more projects under development.
- There is a further \$15million available through to 30 June 2028.

***If asked, How is the Funding Federation Agreement addressing Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV FFA)***

- Through the FDSV Responses 2021–30 Schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement – Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other (FFA), the Northern Territory (NT) will receive a total of \$35.470 million.
- This schedule is an important partnership between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, supporting service providers to meet demand in delivering critical FDSV services to those who need it most.
- It also supports the recruitment of 20 new frontline and community sector workers in the Northern Territory and delivers innovative approaches to address perpetrator behaviour. Funding for each component of the FDSV FFA includes:
  - \$25.073 million to support FDSV services under the 2021–30 FDSV FFA
  - \$3.374 million for Innovative Perpetrator Responses 2022–27.
  - \$7.023 million for 500 New Frontline and Community Sector Workers 2022–26.

***If asked, What is the government doing in relation to the Northern Territory's request to change all social security payment days in Alice Springs to a Monday or Tuesday (takeaway alcohol-free days)?***

- The Australian Government remains committed to improving community safety and tackling the long-standing challenges being faced in Central Australia.
- The payment of income support payments on a set day of the week ceased many years ago.
- Under social security legislation, income support recipients can elect the date their payment is made, or the date is allocated to them based on when they claim payment. Payments in the Alice Springs region are spread relatively evenly across the fortnight.
- Moving all payments to a Monday or Tuesday may bring unintended consequences for both the community and vulnerable individuals, including for individuals who have their own existing payment plans in place.

***If asked, How does the Strengthening Families and Communities Partnership contribute to National Agreement on Closing the Gap?***

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- The Partnership contributes towards Target 13: By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.
- It aligns with Priority Reform One of the Closing the Gap, supporting formal partnerships and shared decision-making by investing time and resources to develop locally led solutions to address family and community safety.

***If asked, Has the Department received enquiries around sustainable funding from current grant recipients?***

- Children's Ground have contacted Department of Health seeking commitment from the Commonwealth to support sustainable funding for their organisation, located in Central Australia.
- Commonwealth departments are reviewing options for future funding opportunities. Department of Health will lead briefing on the response.

**Background**

***Family and Children (FaC) Activity in Central Australia***

- Through the Families and Children (FaC) Activity, the Department provided almost \$7 million in 2024–25 to 21 service providers in the SA3 of Alice Springs. These providers deliver early intervention and prevention services to improve the outcomes of families, children and communities.
- The government will also provide \$11 million in 2025–26 for intensive family support to selected communities in the Northern Territory and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in South Australia.
- Under the Children and Families Intensive Support (CaFIS) Program families can access strengths-based and culturally responsive support tailored to the needs of families. This may include support through group education programs, home visits and advocacy services for basic needs such as food and housing. CaFIS workers identify individual family goals and support referrals to specialised services, such as drug and alcohol counselling, health or emergency relief. This supports kids to grow up strong in families and communities that are safe and nurturing.
- Families in Alice Springs Town Camps and other communities can access this intensive support tailored to needs. This support creates nurturing and safe environments so that children can grow up strong, safe and connected to culture.
- Eleven out of 12 providers delivering CaFIS are Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). ACCOs are well-placed to target community needs because they are connected to their communities, have strong cultural authority and deliver culturally safe and effective services.
- \$53 million is being provided through CaFIS from 2021–22 to 2025–26.

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**OFFICIAL****INCOME MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to meet the support services needs in communities since abolishing the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) program?

**KEY POINTS:**

1. The Albanese Government has delivered a significant package of supports to former CDC communities to continue current support services, establish new services, and address community priorities.
2. The government announced a four year package (2022–23 to 2025–26) of over \$217 million to abolish the CDC program, reform Income Management (IM) and fund related support services.
3. This included \$174.3 million, allocated to provide support services to people in former CDC and existing IM locations. As at 31 July 2025, over \$168.4 million has been invested in services within the IM and former CDC communities, providing support to income support recipients and the broader community.
4. These supports have been developed with local communities and include a range of initiatives that support job readiness, economic development and flexible funding to respond to locally determined priorities.
5. The funding has supported innovative solutions for communities. An example includes funding the Lily Lagoon Development project. This project will transform Wunan's Lily Lagoon Resort in Kununurra into a cultural tourism precinct serving the East Kimberley, increasing Indigenous training and employment opportunities and serving as a tourism hub for the region.



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS*****If asked: How will long-standing issues identified in the Local Services Plans be addressed?***

- The government is serious about targeting entrenched disadvantage and knows that this cannot be addressed simply by a card.
- Evidence and evaluations point to the need to support communities to address their own specific issues in place, and not import a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.
- The government has invested \$67.9 million to support community-identified projects under the four Local Service plans in former CDC and current IM communities.
- This includes funding for the continuation of the Local Partner network established in each former CDC location and \$5 million of funding for access to community identified priorities in the Goldfields region.
- The Local Services Plans represent a whole of community approach to address the identified longstanding systemic issues. They provide agreed-upon action plans to capitalise on existing opportunities and community strengths to improve support services and address identified key social issues.
- One brokerage organisation per location is working with local service providers and the Department of Social Services (the Department) to deliver an approach to support capability building for their region. These are:
  - Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre, Bundaberg and Hervey Bay
  - Far West Community Partnerships, Ceduna
  - Binarri-binyja yarrowoo (BBY) Aboriginal Corporation, East Kimberley
  - City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, the Goldfields.

***If asked: How do applicants access the Community-led Support Fund?***

- Brokerage Organisations have developed communication strategies to raise awareness of the funds across their region.
- Service providers work with their Brokerage Organisation to submit proposals for activities that link to one or more priorities from their region's Local Services Plan.
- The Brokerage Organisations pass proposals on to the Department for approval, distribute funds to approved proposals, report on progress with delivery and ensure compliance with grant agreements.

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- The Department assesses each proposal as well as seeking input and recommendations from other relevant Commonwealth agencies as required. This collaborative approach across government ensures that funded proposals are not duplicative but complementary to other services in the region.

***If asked: Who can apply for funding through the Local Services Plans – Community-led Support Fund?***

- Any service provider or service provider organisation can submit a proposal for funding for services that align to the Local Service Plan identified priorities. Brokerage Organisations are not eligible for project funding.

***If asked: What engagements have occurred since transition from the CDC?***

- Since cessation of the CDC, the Department has conducted approximately over 450 engagements in former CDC locations.
- Overall, the consultation highlighted that governments play a role to design services that meet the needs of communities. Governments are responsible for developing and investing in services that address specific needs of communities. It is sometimes appropriate for governments to deliver services consistently in every location. In other circumstances, placed-based or 'locally led' models are preferred. These models provide communities with more discretion to decide key program elements or determine how programs should operate to best meet their needs (Nous report).

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****Stronger Services**

- The government has invested \$168.4 million in place-based support services in former CDC and current IM communities.
- This includes funding for the continuation of the Local Partner network established in each former CDC location.

**Strengthening Economic Development**

- The government has invested over \$38.7 million in Community-led Solutions Economic Development (CSED) projects to support the creation of economic and employment pathways in former CDC and current IM communities.
- Tranche One projects are being delivered in the following regions:
  - \$10.5 million in Ceduna,
  - \$2.0 million in Cape York, and
  - \$4.4 million in East Kimberley.
- Tranche Two projects are being delivered in the following regions:
  - \$3.3 million in East Kimberley, and
  - \$2.3 million in Goldfields.
- Tranche Three projects are being delivered in the following regions:
  - \$14.0 million in the Northern Territory (NT),
  - \$1.9 million in Doomadgee, Queensland.
- \$0.3 million has been invested in project coordination.

**Local Services Plans – Community-led Support Fund**

- \$38 million has been invested in Local Services Plans – Community-led Support Fund, brokered by community partner organisations in the four former CDC sites, to respond to immediate and longer-term community needs.
  - Goldfields: \$11 million to be brokered by the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.
  - East Kimberley: \$10.7 million by the Binarri-binyja Yarrowoo Aboriginal Corporation (BBY).
  - Ceduna: \$10.1 million by Far West Community Partnerships.
  - Bundaberg and Hervey Bay (BHB): \$6.2 million by the Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre (HBNC).

**Strengthening financial wellbeing support in the Northern Territory**

- More than \$6 million was invested in 2023–24 to strengthen and increase targeted financial literacy and capability supports for vulnerable Australians in the NT.

**Wrap-around financial wellbeing services**

- An additional \$13.5 million has been invested over 2023–26 in support services delivering financial wellbeing services across the regions.

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**OFFICIAL****Improving Digital Connectivity in the Northern Territory**

- \$9.8 million has been invested for digital uplift in the NT. The funds are supporting delivery of digital and mobile connectivity uplifts, and digital literacy support and training in remote NT communities and in four Town Camps within Alice Springs.
- There are 30 communities that will receive digital connectivity uplift, with 27 communities completed as of 13 August 2025 and three communities in progress.
- A Federation Funding Agreement and partnership with the Northern Territory Government, to provide new and/or improved mobile connectivity by June 2026.

**Alcohol and other drug use (AOD) support services**

- Funding of up to \$49.3 million is available through the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing for the delivery of AOD treatment services in the former CDC trial sites, leveraging a brokerage model.
- The four Brokerage Organisations (one per region) will work in partnership with relevant local AOD stakeholders to develop a community design plan of AOD treatment activities in response to need, and fund the services selected to implement the plan.
- Funding agreements have been executed with the four successful Brokerage Organisations to facilitate this work over an initial period of three years from 2024–25.
- The brokerage organisations are:
  - IMPACT Community Services (Bundaberg-Hervey Bay QLD);
  - Far West Community Partnerships (Ceduna SA);
  - Binarri- binyja yarrawoo Aboriginal Corporation (East Kimberley WA); and
  - City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder (Goldfields WA).
- The brokerage organisations will receive up to \$4.8 million (approximately \$1.2 million per organisation) over the three years for their role and the remaining funds will be allocated to AOD treatment activities based on the community design plan.

**Future of Support Services**

- The Department is preparing advice to the Minister on the future of the Support Services program.

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## **SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERING - VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY, VOLUNTEER GRANTS**

**ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to support and encourage volunteering in Australia?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Albanese Government is committed to supporting the critical role of volunteers in communities across Australia.
- Volunteering is essential to strengthening communities and improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and families across Australia.
- Volunteering also has a profound impact on community cohesion because it can build a sense of belonging and connection with others.
- Around six million people volunteer with organisations in Australia.
- Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2026, the Government is investing over \$85 million through its Volunteering and Community Connectedness programs to support volunteers.
- This includes Volunteer Management Activity (VMA), supporting the National Strategy for Volunteering, and Volunteer Grants.
- The VMA provides funding through state and territory volunteering peak bodies to build the capability and capacity of volunteer involving organisations.
- This support aims help volunteer organisations to recruit, train and retain their volunteers.
- The National Strategy for Volunteering, funded by the Department and developed by Volunteering Australia, was launched by Volunteering Australia in February 2023.
- The first Three Year Action Plan for the National Strategy was launched on 28 August 2024. It outlines a set of co-designed actions designed to address priorities for the implementation of the National Strategy.
- The Department is leading four Actions, including delivery of a national campaign to raise awareness of volunteering.
- The campaign, 'Hanging out to help out', ran from October 2024 to June 2025, was designed to help boost participation in volunteering young people aged 15 to 18 years in Australia. The impact of the campaign is currently being assessed.
- The 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round will provide over 3,800 community organisations with funding between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to support their volunteers.

**Contact Officer:** Mary Hodge

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**Responsible Group:** Community Wellbeing Group  
QB25-000062

**Date updated:**

1 October 2025

**Date reviewed:**

1 October 2025

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, what are the funding arrangements for the VMA post 30 June 2026?***

- The VMA is an ongoing appropriation and between July 2021 and June 2026 it is administered through a five-year funding agreement with state and territory volunteering peak bodies.
- An evaluation of the VMA is currently being finalised with outcomes anticipated to be shared with stakeholders in the coming months. Learnings from the evaluation will help inform improvements to the program beyond 2026.

***If asked, what actions of the National Strategy are being led by your Department?***

- The Department is leading four of the 22 Actions in the National Strategy for Volunteering first Action Plan:
  - Deliver a national advertising campaign to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities for young people.
  - Scope and develop a whole of Australian Government approach to volunteering.
  - Encourage collaboration with states and territories for a greater alignment between their volunteering strategies and the National Strategy.
  - Assess the Australian Government funding for volunteering to better align with the National Strategy.
- Funding from the Department, primarily through the VMA and the Families and Communities Service Improvement Activity, is also assisting with the delivery of seven other actions led by Volunteering Australia, the state and territory volunteering peak bodies and the volunteering sector.

**Volunteer Grants**

- The 2024–25 Volunteer Grants outcomes have been finalised. The Department notified MPs of the successful applicants in early August 2025.
- The Department is currently working with relevant government agencies on the development of the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants round to ensure the program continues to meet the needs of volunteers.
- Further detail on Volunteer Grants is available in QB25-000074 – Volunteer Grants.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****National Strategy for Volunteering 2023–2033**

- Funded by the Government and developed by Volunteering Australia, the National Strategy for Volunteering (2023–2033) provides a strategic framework for enabling safe, supported and sustainable volunteering.
- The Government is providing an additional \$600,000 to Volunteering Australia over the next three years (2025–2027) to break down barriers to volunteering for priority groups through the implementation of the National Strategy for Volunteering Action Plan.
- This builds on the Government’s investment of \$1.2 million to Volunteering Australia to consult with the sector and lead the development of a co-designed National Strategy and its first Three Year Action Plan.

**National Strategy First Three Year Action Plan (2024–2027)**

- The Action Plan contains 22 co-designed concrete actions aiming to make volunteering safe, inclusive, accessible, meaningful, celebrated, and create the right conditions for volunteering to be effective and sustainable.
- The Department is leading four actions, including the National Advertising Campaign.

**National Advertising Campaign**

- Between 20 October 2024 and 30 June 2025, the Government invested \$3 million on a national advertising campaign, ‘Hanging out to help out’, which aimed to build awareness of volunteering and highlight the various ways in which young people can benefit from contributing their time and skills and the benefits that volunteering has in communities.
- Research has shown that the engagement of young people to participate in volunteering activities prior to them entering the workforce makes a substantial difference in their participation rate for the rest of their lives. Instilling lifelong volunteering habits in young people can help build sustainable volunteering communities across Australia.
- The focus of the campaign was to raise awareness among all young people 15 to 18 years of age, including those who identify as First Nations, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, with disability, and/or LGBTQIA+.
- The campaign’s website received over 500,000 visitors, leading to more than 8,400 applications for volunteering opportunities being submitted through the Seek Volunteer widget on the website’s home page.

**Volunteer Management Activity (VMA)**

- From 1 July 2021, the Government is providing \$37.5 million over five years for the VMA.
- Since July 2021, state and territory volunteering peak bodies have used their VMA funding to partner with community organisations to reduce barriers to volunteering and to ensure these organisations are able to effectively recruit, train and retain their volunteer workforce.

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- The VMA also provides \$250,000 per year until 30 June 2026 to Justice Connect to deliver specialist legal services to volunteer not-for-profit community organisations. These services, both online and in person for priority cohorts, provide support in building capacity of volunteer involving organisations (VIOs).
- To support the VMA, and streamline online services, Volunteering Australia also received funding of \$3.4 million to undertake a project to develop an online Volunteer Management Platform. Known as the Volunteering Gateway, this platform is providing tools and resources supporting VIOs to recruit, train, manage and retain volunteers.
- Volunteering Australia launched a public pilot of the Volunteering Gateway on 13 August 2024. The Volunteering Gateway is expected to be complete by late 2025.
- An evaluation of the VMA will be completed in the second half of 2025. Learnings from the evaluation will inform improvements to the program beyond 1 July 2026.

**Support to Volunteer Resource Centres (VRCs)**

- Between 2021–22 and 2025–26, the Government is providing \$14.2 million to support up to 35 VRCs, that were funded under the previous VMA model, to align their services with the VMA.
- This includes providing 32 VRCs with \$50,000 each in 2025–26 via their state and territory volunteering peak bodies to support greater collaboration with their peak bodies.
- This additional funding follows on from the 32 VRCs that received \$50,000 each during 2024–25.
- Prior to this, the Government has provided \$6.6 million in 2021–22 and \$4 million in 2022–23 and 2023–24 in funding for VRCs.

**Small grants to VIOs**

- The Government provided \$3.5 million in 2024–25 to state and territory volunteering peak bodies to administer small grant rounds to VIOs.
- Small grants of between \$10,000 and \$20,000 each were provided to 157 VIOs to build the capacity of volunteering programs that in turn support the social and economic participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged people. This funding also supports these organisations with aligning their programs with the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Volunteering.
- This complements the work of the VMA to help the sector to recruit, train and retain volunteers.

**Inquiry into Volunteering in Queensland Report**

- The Queensland Parliamentary inquiry into volunteering in Queensland delivered its report on 18 September 2025. The report has made eight recommendations, to which the Queensland government has three months to respond.
- One recommendation in the report recommends further state government investment in VRCs. Some VRCs in Queensland receive funding from the Department under VMA.

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This funding is due to cease 30 June 2026. An evaluation of the VMA is currently being finalised, and recommendations from it will help to inform the next steps for supporting the volunteering sector.

**Volunteer Grants – Hinkler round**

- The resignation of the previous Hinkler MP in January 2025 prevented the Hinkler electorate from participating in the main 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round.
- After the election of a new MP for Hinkler, the Department opened a deferred Volunteer Grants round for the Hinkler electorate in September 2025.
- The Department will notify the new Hinkler MP of the outcomes of the round in December 2025.

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**OFFICIAL****SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTING TASKFORCE - OUTCOMES FUND****ISSUE**

In 2023–24 budget, the Government committed \$100 million over ten years as part of the Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage (TED) package (see **QB25-000041**).

The Fund is a full response to recommendation three in the 2023 Australian Social Impact Investing Taskforce Final Update Report.

**KEY POINTS:**

- The \$100 million Outcomes Fund (the Fund) aims to reduce disadvantage in Australia through innovation and working in partnership over the next decade to improve the evidence base for social policy interventions and grow social impact investing in Australia.
- The Department of Social Services (the Department) is implementing the the Fund, following a Treasury led co-design in 2023–24.
  - The Government has provided an additional **\$5.5 million** in the 2024–25 Budget to administer and evaluate the Outcomes Fund.
- The Fund will make contractual payments to states, territories and service providers to deliver social impact projects addressing entrenched disadvantage, with potential investment from philanthropy.
- The Fund will focus projects on three key themes in alignment with Australian Government strategic priorities:
  - Supporting positive outcomes for families and children,
  - Overcoming barriers to employment and broadening opportunities to support people and communities facing concentrated unemployment, and
  - Supporting people facing or experiencing homelessness.
- Four projects have been selected totalling \$21 million, details are at **Attachment A** and in Supplementary Points:
- An approach to funding projects in future rounds is currently being developed through an enhancement process involving philanthropy, Commonwealth, and state and territory governments.



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:****Q: How much for each Outcomes Fund project?**

- Four projects have been selected totalling \$21 million of Commonwealth funding (matched by state funding), leaving \$79 million for future projects (GST exclusive):
  - Get Back in the Game (NSW) – \$5 million
  - Workplace (SA) – \$6.75 million
  - Young Parent Program (SA) – \$1.4 million
  - Delivering Self-determined Aboriginal Employment Initiatives (VIC) – \$7.8 million.

**Q: When will Outcomes Fund projects be up and running?**

- Following a multi-phase assessment process, four projects were supported.
- Three projects (SA and VIC) were announced in December 2024, with the fourth (NSW) announced in March 2025. Bilateral agreements have now been finalised.
- Service delivery has commenced for the three of the projects (SA and NSW), with the Victorian project expected to commence in 2025–26 following a co-design process with Traditional Owners Corporations.

**Q: How is the Fund delivering value for the Commonwealth spending?**

- The Fund will be used to look at how government investment can be made more effective and deliver better outcomes, and disrupt entrenched disadvantage.
- The aim is to make the significant investment governments are already committing to address disadvantage work better and make more impact – thereby bringing a productivity return for this broader spending.
- Funding through state governments has been matched with state contributions and we are working with philanthropic organisations to determine where they can also contribute to enhance the potential impact of projects under the Fund.

**Q: What evidence was used to determine successful Outcomes Fund projects?**

- The first Expression of Interest (EOI) sought well developed proposals. There were 14 proposals received, and each went through a multi-phased assessment process.
- The process leveraged Commonwealth expertise, including the Department, Treasury, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Education, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Each proposal was assessed on cost, maturity and alignment to the Fund, and key government priorities such as the Early Years Strategy and Closing the Gap.

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• **Q: Why is the Government changing the process for selecting Fund projects?**

- The first EOI process focussed on selecting and funding well-developed projects supported by state and territory governments.
- Now the first projects have been selected; it is timely to consider the learnings from the initial process and how the next stage of projects may be generated.
- We are partnering with philanthropy through the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children partnership to consider how Government might work more closely with jurisdictions, philanthropy and the sector earlier in the development of projects.
- The focus of this work is to maximise the opportunity that exists in the Fund to drive innovation and achieve better outcomes for people facing entrenched disadvantage.

**Q: Has the Government implemented all the Social Impact Investing Taskforce Report recommendations?**

- In 2022, at the request of the Prime Minister, the Social Impact Investing Taskforce expert panel reviewed its 2020 Report and delivered an updated Final Report.
- The 2023–24 Budget Measures were informed by the Panel's recommendations and led to the establishment of the \$100 million Outcomes Fund under the Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage initiative.
- In addition to the Outcomes Fund, my department is also implementing the Social Enterprise Development Initiative, and the Social Enterprise Loan Fund as a partial response to the "Foundation for Impact Investment" recommendation.
- We will keep working with the sector and partners such as state and territory governments and philanthropy to understand where we can support the development of social impact investing in Australia within our range of Budget and policy priorities.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- 16 December 2024 - The "Investing to overcome disadvantage in South Australian communities" media release was provided as part of the SA project announcements
- 17 December 2024 - The "Community-led initiatives to improve employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians" media release was provided as part of the VIC project announcement.
- 11 March 2025 – The "Partnering with investors to create jobs for disadvantaged Australians" media release announced the Social Enterprise Loan Fund.
- 25 March 2025 – The "Helping disengaged NSW youth get back in the game" media release was provided as part of the NSW project announcement

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The Social Impact Investing (SII) Taskforce was established in 2019 to develop a strategy for the Australian Government's role in building the SII market.
- In November 2020 the Taskforce submitted the *Final Report of the Australian SII Taskforce*.
- In 2022, the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, asked the Taskforce's Expert Panel to review, update and resubmit this report.
- On 18 December 2023, the Australian SII Taskforce released the *Final Report Update*.
- The final report including four recommendations
  - Foundation for Impact Investment
  - Establishment of an Impact Investing Wholesaler
  - Establishment of a \$100m Commonwealth Outcomes Fund
  - Establish a Commonwealth Office of Impact Investment
- The Fund is a full response to recommendation three, to establish the Fund as part of the architecture Australia needs to sustain a healthy and growing impact investment market.

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**OFFICIAL****TARGETING ENTRENCHED DISADVANTAGE PACKAGE****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to address entrenched disadvantage in Australian communities?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Government is committed to breaking cycles of longstanding disadvantage.
- We are delivering on this commitment through the Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage (TED) package of eight integrated initiatives with an investment of **over \$230 million** from 2023 to 2034.
- Together, these initiatives help change the trajectory of communities experiencing entrenched disadvantage through partnering with communities, building strategic partnerships with philanthropy, delivering innovative funding approaches and supporting government to work closer with communities.
- We are enhancing partnerships with local communities in the Stronger Places, Stronger People (**SPSP**) initiative through greater shared decision-making and local solutions funding.
- We are driving innovative funding approaches through the **Outcomes Fund** and Social Enterprise Loan Fund (**SELF**), and sector building with the Social Enterprise Development Initiative (**SEDI**).
- We are developing resources to help the APS work with communities through the Whole-of-Government Framework to support Community Change (the **Framework**).
- We have already established strategic partnerships with philanthropy through the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children (**IDAC**) and co-funding commitments for Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (**PLACE**).
- These partnerships will deliver outcomes that could not be reached by government or philanthropy working on their own.
- And we are creating an evidence-base to inform long term policy responses to address entrenched disadvantage through the Life Course Data Initiative (**LCDI**).
- By shifting to approaches where we partner and collaborate, we can drive targeted and coordinated investment and effort and disrupt entrenched disadvantage.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked about individual measures under the Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage Package:***

***Outcomes Fund (the Fund)***

- Under the **\$100 million** Outcomes Fund, the Government is partnering with states, territories, philanthropy and social enterprises to tackle disadvantage by collaborating to deliver projects that improve outcomes in communities.
- The Fund aims to reduce disadvantage through innovation, improve the evidence base for social policy interventions and grow social impact investing in Australia.
- The Government has provided an additional **\$5.5 million** in the 2024–25 Budget to administer and evaluate the Outcomes Fund.

***Stronger Places, Stronger People (SPSP)***

- SPSP is a place-based partnership initiative supporting community-led change with 10 communities to create better futures for children and their families.
- We have committed **\$64 million** to extend the SPSP initiative for a further five years to 2028–2029 in its current 10 communities. This includes resourcing for shared decision-making and local solutions funding in six of these communities.

***Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI)***

- SEDI is helping social enterprises scale their impact and further their mission to support Australians experiencing disadvantage. **\$11.6 million** was committed over three years from 2023–24 to 2025–26.
- Decisions are yet to be made on further supports for the social enterprise sector beyond 2025–26.
- In 2023–24, an additional **\$3.3 million** of funding was allocated to the SEDI for First Nations activities. The funding will support First Nations social enterprise grants and learning communities, terminating in 2026–27.

***Social Enterprise Loan Fund (SELF)***

- SELF will offer affordable and flexible finance that enables social enterprises to deliver greater social impact and job creation for people who face barriers to employment, with **\$1.2 million** committed in 2025–26.
- White Box Enterprises (WBE) established the SELF, which was launched in March 2025. The \$1.2 million Commonwealth contribution will be made to WBE, alongside other investment and grant funding from philanthropy, private investors and the Victorian government.

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**OFFICIAL*****Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (PLACE)***

- PLACE is an independent national entity established to support and promote place-based approaches and community-led change.
- **\$19.31 million** has been committed for PLACE, with matched funding provided by five philanthropic partners, with investments totalling **\$38.62 million** over five years from 2024–25 to 2028–29.
- The agreement to co-fund and establish PLACE demonstrates and reaffirms the Government's commitment to working in partnership and with communities in place to disrupt entrenched disadvantage.

***Whole of Government Framework to Support Community Change (the Framework)***  
*- jointly-led by the Department and the Treasury.*

- The Government provided **\$11.31 million** over three years from 2023–24 to 2025–26 to develop the Framework and support its implementation.
- The Framework provides a range of tools and resources to help the Australian Government work differently with communities and other stakeholders to develop and deliver solutions that best fit a community's unique circumstances.
- Resources include guidance on place-based work, community level data, shared decision-making, place-based evaluations, outcomes based contracting and partnering with philanthropy.
- The Framework and supporting resources will be published on the Department's website in 2025.

***Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children (IDAC)*** *- jointly-led by the Department and the Treasury*

- The Government is working in partnership with 25 philanthropic organisations and communities to collectively support ways of working that improve the wellbeing of children, young people, and their families and reduce intergenerational disadvantage in Australia.

***Life Course Data Initiative (LCDI)*** *– led by the Australian Bureau of Statistics*

- The LCDI pilot is being delivered from 2023–24 to 2026–27 through a partnership between the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government, and with South Australia (SA) through the SA Government and the University of Adelaide's BetterStart.
- The Government has committed **\$16.4 million** over four years to improve understanding of how individuals experience disadvantage and how to disrupt cycles of intergenerational disadvantage.

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**BACKGROUND:**

- Refer to **Attachment A** for full details of measures under the TED package.

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# Summary of Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage (TED) Package

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# Outcomes Fund

<b>Short description</b>	Improving the evidence base for social policy interventions to reduce disadvantage, using outcomes-based contracting.
<b>Led by</b>	Department of Social Services.
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$100 million over 10 years from 2024–25 to implement the Fund.</li> <li>• A further \$5.5 million to establish, manage and evaluate the Fund.</li> </ul>
<b>Current Progress:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects under the Fund are developed in partnership with state and territory governments, service providers and philanthropy.</li> <li>• Four projects have been selected to date. The South Australian, Victorian and New South Wales projects will receive a total of up to \$21.02 million from the Fund. States will match contributions to the Fund.</li> <li>• An approach to enhance the Fund is currently being designed in partnership with the IDAC and jurisdictions. The Minister for Social Services is currently considering IDAC advice, which will inform the approach to future commissioning rounds, from the second half of 2025. The approach is part of continuous improvement and learning embedded in outcome based contracting and will ensure that future projects are designed in consultation with partners to drive systems reform and policy learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fund commenced from 2024–25, following the Treasury led co-design process with over 100 stakeholders including state and territory governments, philanthropy, investors and service providers. It will run for 10 years, until 2033–34.</li> <li>• The first process to identify projects opened on 28 May 2024 and closed on 16 August 2024. State and territory governments with well-developed projects were invited to submit an expression of interest.</li> <li>• At the second IDAC roundtable held on 15 November 2024, IDAC members agreed to establish the Social Impact Investing Working Group to collaborate on projects under the Fund. This working group provides the opportunity for ongoing partnership between the Government and philanthropy to support the Fund.</li> </ul>

## Stronger Places, Stronger People (SPSP)

<b>Short description</b>	A community-led partnership supporting community-led change with 10 communities.
<b>Led by</b>	Department of Social Services.
<b>Funding</b>	\$64 million for place-based partnerships to extend the SPSP initiative in the existing 10 communities for a further five years to 2028-29 and enhance resourcing for shared decision-making and local solutions in six of these communities commencing in 2023-24 FY.
<b>Current Progress:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SPSP initiative continues to progress in partnership with state and territory governments in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Logan, Rockhampton and Gladstone (QLD);</li> <li>◦ Bourke and the Macleay Valley, including Kempsey (NSW);</li> <li>◦ Mildura (VIC);</li> <li>◦ Burnie (TAS);</li> <li>◦ the Far West Region, including Ceduna (SA); and</li> <li>◦ the Barkly Region, including Tennant Creek and Gove Peninsula (NT).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Queensland, South Australian, Northern Territory, Tasmanian and New South Wales Governments have confirmed funding for the continuation of the SPSP partnerships.</li> <li>• The Department continues to work closely with the Victorian governments to confirm their continued commitments, including in-kind supports as well as funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPSP is being implemented by the Department in partnerships with State and Territory Governments and communities.</li> <li>• The six communities receiving Shared Decision-Making (SDM) and Local Solutions Funding (LSF) have an established community-led strategy for change. These communities include: Logan (QLD), Gladstone (QLD), Bourke (NSW), Mildura (VIC), Burnie (TAS), and the Far West region (including Ceduna, SA).</li> <li>• Commencing in the 2023-24 FY, each SPSP Backbone team receives annual funding of \$240,000 (GST exclusive) to support shared decision-making activities and \$100,000 (GST exclusive) to support local solutions projects aligned to their community-led strategy.</li> <li>• SPSP partnerships empower local community members to co-design solutions that address their needs and aspirations, including support for local initiatives that drive better outcomes in education and employment, child and maternal health, youth justice, and participation.</li> </ul>

# Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI)

<b>Short description</b>	Helping social enterprises scale their impact and further their mission to support Australians experiencing disadvantage.
<b>Led by</b>	Department of Social Services.
<b>Funding</b>	Originally \$11.6 million over three years from 2023–24, now totalling \$14.9 over four years terminating in 2026-27.
<b>Current Progress:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEDI includes two current active elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Provision of small grants (of up to \$120,000 GST exclusive), from June 2024, to build the capability of the social enterprise sector, administered through Impact Investing Australia (IIA), and</li> <li>◦ Provision of education resources and mentoring services, from June 2024, coordinated by Social Enterprise Australia (SEA).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• An additional \$3.3 million of funding for First Nations social enterprise grants and learning communities has been allocated.</li> <li>• In May 2025, a grant opportunity to deliver the First Nations social enterprise grants was released on GrantConnect.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IIA was appointed as a Grants Administrator to administer SEDI Capability Building Grants through an open selection process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ IIA opened an expression of interest (EOI) process for the capability building grants in June 2024. Following the EOI submission, social enterprises are invited to apply for capability building grants. IIA accepted EOIs up until the end of August 2025, allowing time to select grantees and complete activities prior to the end of the SEDI Grants Administrator activity in June 2026. As of September 2025, IIA has received over 940 EOIs and over 280 applications. So far 32 social enterprise applicants have been selected for a SEDI Grant, totalling over \$3.5 million.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Social Enterprise Australia (SEA) was appointed as the Education and Mentoring Coordinator. They draw on input from the sector to gather resourcing in one accessible place . They also help coordinate communities of practice and peer support networks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ On 30 June 2024, SEA launched Understorey, an online resource available to all and shaped by all who choose to take part.</li> <li>◦ In 2024, SEA held EOI processes to commission four types learning communities. Commissioning was finalised in 2025.</li> <li>◦ In November 2024, SEA held their first open learning community. SEA hold regular learning communities on a range of sector topics.</li> <li>◦ In March 2025, SEA received \$397,000 for First Nations communities of practice (known as learning communities).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• An additional \$3.337 million has been allocated from a previous Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ \$397,000 in 2024–25 for SEA to provide support that will help build First Nations communities of practice.</li> <li>◦ \$2.94 million across 2025–26 and 2026–27 to provide small grants to First Nations social enterprises.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Social Enterprise Loan Fund (SELF)

<b>Short description</b>	Providing social enterprises with access to flexible finance so they can deliver greater employment opportunities to Australians experiencing disadvantage.
<b>Led by</b>	Department of Social Services.
<b>Funding</b>	\$1.2 million in 2025-26.
<b>Current Progress:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 11 March 2025, the Australian Government announced a \$1.2 million funding contribution to the SELF.</li> <li>The SELF has been established with an initial \$4.15 million investment and a target of reaching \$5 million. Prior to the Commonwealth's investment, a \$3.15 million combined contribution was received from investors including banks, private philanthropic investors and the Victorian government.</li> <li>A pipeline of investment-ready social enterprises is being progressed, with the first loan made in March 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Social Enterprise Loan Fund (SELF) was established by White Box Enterprises (WBE) in response to the unique barriers social enterprises face in accessing affordable and appropriate finance.</li> <li>The SELF brings together investment and grant funding from a range of investors to trial small concessional loans to social enterprises that have a mission of employing disadvantaged people.</li> <li>WBE is a specialist intermediary supporting jobs-focused social enterprises (or Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs)).</li> <li>The Commonwealth will provide \$1.2 million to WBE. \$1 million of the funds will be used to make loans to social enterprises and \$200,000 will support operational costs associated with administering the fund.</li> <li>Work is currently underway to put a funding agreement in place for the Commonwealth contribution to the SELF.</li> <li>The SELF will provide loans of between \$100,000 to \$500,000 that will focus on supporting activities that will grow the social enterprise and support more disadvantaged Australians into meaningful work. It is expected to support between 12 and 20 social enterprises.</li> <li>Eligible social enterprises must be not-for-profit or a First Nations business, with deductible gift recipient (DGR) status and must create employment pathways for people with complex barriers to employment.</li> <li>The SELF will run for eight years, allowing for one round of loans to social enterprises, with payment terms of up to seven years.</li> <li>Funds available at the maturity of the SELF will be returned to investors. Repayments relating to the Commonwealth funding will be returned to WBE for specified future uses, including an evaluation of the SELF and reinvestment into jobs-focused social enterprises.</li> <li>The SELF is a trial that will be used to inform government and other investors on the impact that access to affordable finance has on social enterprises.</li> </ul>

# Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children (IDAC)

<b>Short description</b>	A 10-year partnership between government and philanthropy to improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people, and their families.
<b>Led by</b>	Department of Social Services and the Treasury
<b>Funding</b>	Implementation is supported by the ASL allocated to the Whole of Government Framework to Support Community Change.
<b>Current Progress:</b>	<p>The Government is working in partnership with 25 philanthropic organisations and communities to collectively support ways of working that lead to the improved wellbeing of children, young people, and their families and reduce intergenerational disadvantage in Australia.</p> <p>Under IDAC, the Government and five philanthropic organisations have jointly invested \$38.62 million in the establishment and operations of PLACE – a national entity to support, enable and promote place-based approaches.</p> <p>In March 2025, a \$100 million co-investment between the Government and philanthropy to build supply and capacity of integrated early years services was announced as part of the Government's \$1 billion Building Early Education Fund (BEEF).</p>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A First Nations Leadership Council and Community Leadership Council were established to support the work of the IDAC partnership.</li> <li>• Catherine Liddle is Chair of the Community Leadership Council and April Lawrie is Chair of the First Nations Leadership Council.</li> <li>• With the announcement of PLACE and the BEEF co-investment, there has now been near to \$130 million from philanthropy to support the Government's investment of over \$200 million to tackle targeted entrenched disadvantage.</li> <li>• Following discussions at the second Roundtable held on 15 November 2024, members agreed to a range of new initiatives and reaffirmed their strong commitment to engage in genuine dialogue and work together in partnership to achieve long-term, tangible change that ensures children, young people and families thrive. The four key outcomes agreed to are:</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Strengthening the partnership and the path ahead</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underpinned by the Working Together Agreement, partners agreed to the IDAC Strategic Framework as a guide to focus on three portfolios of work: place, the early years and young people.</li> <li>• IDAC partners agreed to invite state and territory governments and additional philanthropic partners to join the dialogue, and welcomed new philanthropic partners: Coaxial Foundation, Brian M David Charitable Foundation, the Eureka Benevolent Foundation and the Phillips Foundation. The Bowness Family Foundation joined in mid-2025 as the 25<sup>th</sup> partner organisation.</li> <li>• Established the IDAC Social Impact Investment and Advisory Working Group to collaborate on projects under the Outcomes Fund.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Backing in communities-led change</b></li> </ol>

- IDAC partners agreed to collaborate in up to 50 communities by 2030, providing a structured approach to align existing and future investment and efforts to better support community-led place-based change.
  - This commitment will include partnering with three place-based community partners to trial innovation zones. The trials aim to explore how we can transform funding models that have appropriate governance controls that are ‘tight’ on evidence base and probity but ‘loose’ in terms of allowing tailoring to community needs and priorities.
- 3. Supporting children to thrive in the early years**
- A dedicated Early Years Working Group has been established to oversee the two early years projects agreed at the Second Roundtable.
  - This includes developing innovative early learning models and integrated approaches to improve early childhood development (Early Years Models Project). Partners also agreed to co-design an approach to collect better strengths-based data on children’s sense of belonging, identity and wellbeing in line with the Early Years Strategy (Measuring Child and Family Wellbeing Demonstration Project).
  - In March 2025, a \$100 million co-investment between the Government and philanthropy to build supply and capacity of integrated early years services was announced as part of the Government’s \$1 billion Building Early Education Fund (BEEF).
- 4. Shaping a portfolio with young people**
- Supporting young people is an emerging area of work. IDAC partners agreed to commence discussions to shape this work ahead of the next roundtable, which is likely to be scheduled for early 2026.
  - Governance arrangements have been established across the Commonwealth to support the design and implementation of these initiatives, including working groups under the portfolios of Early Years, Place and the Outcomes Fund.

## Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (PLACE)

<b>Short description</b>	An independent national entity supporting and promoting place-based approaches.
<b>Led by</b>	Department of Social Services
<b>Funding</b>	\$19.31 million has been committed for PLACE, with funding to be equally matched by the five philanthropic partners, totalling \$38.62 million over five years from 2024-25.
<b>Current Progress:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 30 October 2024, at Our Place at the Carlton Learning Precinct in Victoria, the Minister for Social Services together with the Treasurer, the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, and the five philanthropic partners, publicly announced a funding partnership to support PLACE.</li> <li>The Australian Government signed its funding agreement with PLACE on 25 February 2025, and the organisation is now fully operational.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The concept of a national entity for place-based change has been commonly referred to as the National Centre for Place-based Collaboration or Nexus Centre, however the name of the newly established entity is Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (PLACE).</li> <li>PLACE is a commitment under the IDAC partnership and is a joint initiative of the Government and five philanthropic foundations as co-investors: the Minderoo Foundation, the Paul Ramsay Foundation, the Bryan Foundation, Dusseldorp Forum and the Ian Potter Foundation.</li> <li>The design of the PLACE initiative responds to feedback from those already working in place-based change by bringing together people and resources, sharing data and research, and empowering local practitioners and communities to act on the things that matter most to communities.</li> <li>The Australian Government is partnering with PLACE and local communities to strengthen place-based approaches by developing collaborative, long-term solutions to complex social problems tailored to individual community needs.</li> <li>The PLACE organisation will provide the forum and practical tools required to accelerate the adoption and impact of community-led and place-based approaches.</li> </ul>

# Whole of Government Framework to Support Community Change (the Framework)

<b>Short description</b>	The Framework will provide tools and resources to help the Australian Government partner with communities to tackle entrenched disadvantage.
<b>Led by</b>	Department of Social Services and the Treasury.
<b>Funding</b>	\$7.8 million was provided over 2 years from 2023–24. A further \$3.51 million was provided in 2025-26 to support implementation.
<b>Current Progress:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Framework is on track to be delivered in 2025 and will be published on the Department of Social Services' website along with a range of supporting resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ APS guide to working in place</li> <li>○ Guide to government partnership with philanthropy</li> <li>○ APS shared decision-making guide</li> <li>○ Community Data Toolkit</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Additional resources to be finalised before 30 June 2026: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Place-Based Evaluation Strategy</li> <li>○ Resources on outcomes-based contracting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform the development of the Framework, a stocktake of Commonwealth place-based approaches was conducted in late 2023, identifying more than 60 place-based approaches operating in more than 300 locations across urban, regional and remote communities, spending more than \$600 million each year.</li> <li>• The findings of the Commonwealth stocktake highlighted the prevalence of place-based approaches, the diverse reasons for their implementation, and the challenges faced in achieving cohesive and impactful outcomes.</li> <li>• To further support the development of the Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the Australian Government Actuary was engaged to identify how actuarial modelling could better inform how to measure avoided costs and long-term savings from place-based approaches.</li> <li>○ the Department is working with Geoscience to support Australia's Digital Atlas of Australia to make broad Commonwealth investment data from across the Australian Government publicly available. This will improve the visibility of current government investments by mapping them to geographic boundaries.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Life Course Data Initiative (LCDI)

<b>Short description</b>	The Life Course Data Initiative will create an evidence-base, bringing together data from a range of early childhood, health and community services, and associated data insights, to inform long term policy responses to address entrenched disadvantage.
<b>Led by</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics.
<b>Funding</b>	\$16.4 million over four years from 2023–24.
<b>Current Progress:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress has been made in developing the pilot Life Course Dataset through safely linking the existing Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA) to selected new datasets and developing methodological enhancements to enable analysis of experiences over the life course.</li> <li>Two ABS Community Data Liaison Officers (CDLOs) are engaging with community-led or place-based projects to understand data needs and to put more data in the hands of communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ABS is working with the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and South Australian (SA) governments to deliver the LCDI.</li> <li>Education and health data from ACT and the Better Evidence, Better Outcomes, Linked Data (BEBOLD) asset from SA will be linked to the Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA) to better understand the drivers of entrenched disadvantage.</li> <li>The ABS has recruited two Community Data Liaison Officers to support community access to data, to help enable shared decision making.</li> <li>Engagement with researchers has helped define research priorities for the project.</li> <li>As part of the LCDI, two Data Liaison Officers are working with communities to support gaining access to relevant data to inform their local data priorities.</li> </ul>

**OFFICIAL****VOLUNTEER GRANTS****ISSUE**

What support does the Australian Government provide community organisations that rely on volunteers to help with costs associated with volunteering?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Albanese Government is committed to supporting the critical role of volunteers in communities across Australia.
- Volunteering is essential to building connections within and across communities across Australia. It also improves the health and wellbeing of Australians.
- The Volunteer Grants program provides \$10 million annually in grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to eligible not for profit organisations to support their volunteers.
- Eligible not for profit community organisations can use grant funding to cover expenses for items like small equipment, training, and background screening checks.
- Also, for the first time this year, eligible community organisations were able to allocate their funding towards insurance premiums.
- This change helps successful organisations to better navigate rising operating costs and reduces out of pocket costs for volunteers.
- Over 3,800 community organisations were successful in the recently announced 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round, and will purchase items like:
  - online audio visual equipment for Returned Service League members to hold commemorative events
  - radio communication devices for State Emergency Service volunteers, and
  - sporting equipment for volunteer coaches to train local junior sports teams.
- Community organisations that access Volunteer Grants may focus on, for example:
  - supporting new parents
  - people with disability
  - local sporting teams
  - multicultural activities.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- In the 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round, \$66,225 was available to each electorate to provide funding of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to community organisations.
- Community organisations were nominated by their local Member of Parliament, in consultation with a community committee, and applications then assessed by the Department of Social Services (the Department).
- The Department notified Members of Parliament (MPs) and applicants of the outcomes of the round and made grant payments in August 2025.
- In 2024–25, adjustments were made to the program to ensure it remains relevant to volunteers, reduces barriers to volunteering, and continues to meet the needs of organisations that rely on volunteers.

***If asked, why was a Volunteer Grants round recently opened in Hinkler?***

- In January 2025, the previous Federal MP for Hinkler resigned prior to nominating community organisations to apply for funding in the 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round.
- Following the election of a new Federal MP, a 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round opened for the Hinkler electorate only in September 2025 to ensure eligible organisations in the region had equal access to funding opportunities.

***If asked, when will the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants round open?***

- The Department is currently working on the guidelines for the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants round and will advise all MPs when details for the round are available.

***If asked, how much funding will be available in each electorate for the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants round?***

- In the 2025–26 Volunteer Grants round, \$10 million will be divided equally between all 150 electorates.

***If asked, why supporting volunteering is important?***

- Volunteering is essential to strengthening communities and improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and families across Australia.
- Volunteering has a profound impact on community cohesion because it can build a sense of belonging and connection with others.
- According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 15% of Australians report feelings of loneliness. Engaging in volunteer work and maintaining active memberships of sporting or community organisations are associated with reduced social isolation.

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**OFFICIAL****2024–25 Volunteer Grants Outcomes by State/Territory**

<b>State/Territory</b>	<b>Number of Successful Organisations</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
ACT	76	\$185,174
NSW	1172	\$3,021,246
NT	41	\$115,666
QLD	795	\$1,842,182
SA	270	\$654,177
TAS	113	\$312,865
VIC	1054	\$2,489,942
WA	371	\$901,840
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,892</b>	<b>\$9,523,092</b>

**Volunteer Grants Financial Overview**

	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
<b>Appropriation</b>	\$10m	\$10m	\$0m*	\$20m*
<b>Actual Expenditure</b>	\$9.74m	\$9.63m	\$9.52m	\$0m
<b>Number of Grants</b>	3,614	3,682	3,892	0

\*Movement of funds due to modifications to the Volunteer Grants program in 2024-25

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The Volunteer Grants program is an electorate-based, closed, non-competitive grant process with Federal MPs conducting expressions of interest and nominating organisations in accordance with the recommendations from their Community Committee.
- Nominated organisations are invited to apply for a grant and applications are assessed by the Department against the eligibility criteria and program requirements.
- In the 2024–25 Volunteer Grants round, grants can be used to purchase:
  - communication or insurance items; and/or
  - items or services to assist young volunteers (under 18) or volunteer-run activities that support the development and wellbeing of children (under 18).

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**OFFICIAL****GAMBLING****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to address gambling harm?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Government takes our responsibility seriously to protect Australians – particularly children and young people – from online gambling harms.
- We work closely with our state and territory counterparts, as regulating online gambling is a responsibility shared between all governments.
- In cooperation with all governments, we have brought in:
  - Mandatory pre-verification from September 2023, so that online wagering service providers must verify a customer's identity before they can place a bet.
  - Mandatory training from March 2023, so that all staff involved in providing online wagering services can identify risky gambling behaviours and minimise the potential for harm.
  - New evidence-based taglines from March 2023 – such as “Chances are you're about to lose” – including a call to action directing customers to support services to communicate the risks and potential harms from online wagering.
  - Monthly activity statements from July 2022, giving people clear information on their spend, wins and losses.
- We have banned the use of credit cards for online gambling, because you shouldn't be able to bet with money you don't have.
- And we launched BetStop – the National Self-Exclusion Register so that anyone can immediately exclude themselves from all online gambling services, for a minimum of 3 months to a lifetime.
  - Over 44,000 people have signed up so far. This is a game-changer when it comes to helping people stay safe from gambling harm.
- As part of the Government's \$50 million per year investment in financial counselling services, around \$6 million per year is for dedicated help with gambling harm.
- The Government knows that reducing harm from online gambling is not a set and forget exercise.
- I am proud of the steps we have taken so far, and I assure you the Government will keep working to protect Australians from gambling harm.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, why hasn't the Government responded to the Murphy Inquiry on online gambling harm?***

- We initiated the *Inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm* in September 2022 and welcome its findings handed down in 2023.
- The Government has implemented a range of measures to prevent and minimise gambling harm and support safer gambling for those who choose to wager online.
- We continue to listen to stakeholders to understand their views.
- This includes our state and territory counterparts, as regulating online gambling is a responsibility shared between all governments.

***If asked, what is the Government doing to stop underage gambling***

- In cooperation with all governments, the Government has legislated mandatory pre-verification.
- This means online wagering service providers must verify a customer's identity when they register for a new account and before they can place a bet. This strengthens protections for underage Australians and those self-excluded through BetStop.
- The Government also worked with jurisdictions to introduce mandatory minimum classifications for computer games containing gambling-like content.

***If asked about the link between gambling and suicide***

- Gambling harm is associated with a number of social harms, which tragically includes suicide.
- The Government is committed to reducing gambling-related harm for consumers, their families, and communities.
- As part of the Commonwealth's \$50 million per year investment in financial counselling services, around \$6 million per year is for dedicated help with gambling harm.
- Minimising gambling harm is a shared responsibility with state and territory governments, who also fund a number of counselling and treatment services to help people experiencing gambling harm.

***If asked, is the Government considering national regulation or prohibiting online gambling inducements?***

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- Gambling licensing, including licencing arrangements relating to online wagering, is the responsibility of state governments. Regulation is a responsibility shared between all governments.
- We are continuing to listen to stakeholders to understand their views and strengthen protections for people who choose to wager online.
- OThe Commonwealth, in partnership with all governments, has implemented the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering, which brought us game-changing initiatives such as BetStop and mandatory customer pre-verification.
- The National Consumer Protection Framework is currently being evaluated to ensure it is working as intended and to identify opportunities for refinements so that we can build on and adapt consumer protections as needs shift in the ever-changing online environment.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- ABC's Four Corners program 'Losing Streak' aired on 6 October 2025. It raised concerns about online gambling regulation and the impact of inducements on people who are experiencing high levels of gambling harm. The episode was critical of the largest regulator and licensor of online wagering companies in Australia – the Northern Territory Racing and Wagering Commission – and featured consumer advocates calling for the Government to establish a well-resourced national regulator and to prohibit inducements.
- Ongoing media attention has focused on harm caused by pokies, particularly in NSW.
  - Like all forms of venue-based gambling, pokies are regulated by state and territory governments.
- Recent and ongoing commentary has also focused on gambling advertising and the interests of industry stakeholders (such as sporting codes and media companies). Advertising by online wagering service providers was central to the Inquiry into online gambling.
  - The Australian Government is considering changes to the way it regulates such advertising – this work is led by the Minister for Communications.
- Media coverage of a Coroner's investigation in Victoria has drawn attention to the link between gambling and the risk of suicide.
- Recent media coverage featured the findings of the *Australian Institute of Family Studies' National Gambling Prevalence Study Pilot 2024* (published 24 September 2025), including that overall rates of gambling participation and harm have risen since 2019, with young people (aged 18 to 24) and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples particularly at risk; and highlighting intersections with other harms such as poor mental health, financial hardship, and intimate partner violence.

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## BACKGROUND:

- In 2022, following a referral from the then Minister for Social Services, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs commenced an *Inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm*.
- The Inquiry Report was released in June 2023. It made 31 recommendations.
- The existing framework guiding national policy for online gambling is the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering (National Framework).
- The National Framework was initially agreed by all governments in 2018, and implemented progressively by 2023, through a mix of Commonwealth and state and territory legislation.

National Framework Measure	Implementation Responsibility	Date of effect
<b>1. Prohibition of lines of credit</b> – Except by certain oncourse bookmakers.	Commonwealth (Australian Communications and Media Authority, ACMA)	17 Feb 2018
<b>2. Payday lenders</b> – Discourages small amount credit contracts.	Commonwealth (ACMA)	17 Feb 2018
<b>3. Customer verification</b> – pre-verification commenced 29 September 2023.	Commonwealth (Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, AUSTRAC)	29 Sep 2023 (pre-verification) 2 May 2022 (72 hours) 26 Feb 2019 (14 days)
<b>4. Offering of inducements</b> – Prohibits all specified inducements.	States / Territories	26 May 2019
<b>5. Account closure</b> – Available/accessible closing of wagering accounts.	States / Territories	26 May 2019
<b>6. Voluntary opt-out pre-commitment scheme</b> – Consumer tool to pre-commit to deposit limits.	States / Territories	26 May 2019
<b>7. Activity statements</b> – Meaningful monthly statements for consumers.	States / Territories	31 July 2022
<b>8. Consistent gambling messaging</b> – evidence-based, consistent gambling messaging to replace ‘gamble responsibly’. The 7 taglines are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chances are you’re about to lose.</li> <li>• You win some. You lose more.</li> <li>• Think. Is this a bet you really want to place?</li> <li>• What’s gambling really costing you?</li> <li>• What are you prepared to lose today? Set a deposit limit.</li> <li>• Imagine what you could be buying instead.</li> <li>• What are you really gambling with?</li> </ul>	States / Territories	30 March 2023
<b>9. Staff training</b> – Training of certain staff in delivery of responsible online wagering services.	States / Territories	30 March 2023
<b>10. National Self-Exclusion Register</b> – Self-exclusion from all online wagering (BetStop).	Commonwealth (ACMA)	21 August 2023

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**OFFICIAL****EARLY YEARS STRATEGY****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to ensure that its Early Years Strategy (the Strategy) practically benefits young children and their families?

**KEY POINTS:**

- I am committed to the implementation of the Strategy and creating an integrated and coordinated approach to the early years, to realise our vision of all children thriving.
- The early years are a critical window of opportunity to positively influence the trajectory of a child's life. That's why the Strategy is so important.
- The Strategy is a 10 year framework for change delivered through three action plans.
- The First Action Plan 2024-2027 was released in December 2024 and outlines the practical steps we are taking to support young children and their families to thrive.
- An Outcomes Framework was also released, which sets out how we will measure progress against the Strategy's outcomes and vision over its 10 year life.
- The Strategy is already working to target Government investment in the early years. This includes a \$100 million Outcomes Fund to prevent cycles of intergenerational and community disadvantage.
- In line with the goals of the Strategy, the Government has also:
  - Enhanced the economic security of families by expanding Paid Parental Leave and committed to pay superannuation on it.
  - Announced next steps in building a universal ECEC system where every child is guaranteed at least 3 days of high quality ECEC.
  - Announced a \$1 billion Building Early Education Fund which will see more ECEC centres built and expanded in areas of need, including in the outer suburbs and regional Australia.
  - Strengthened support for single parents.
  - Supported the establishment of more than 300 new playgroups and the delivery of more than 290 toy libraries.
  - Established a Parents and Carers Reference Group ensuring that our work is informed by the voices and views of diverse families across Australia.
- Investing in the future of Australian children, their development, wellbeing, their safety and their families requires group effort.
- The Government is pleased to be part of the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children and continues to work with philanthropy on ways we can reshape systems so that all children and young people can thrive.

**OFFICIAL****IF ASKED – How does the Early Years Strategy intersect with Thriving Kids?**

- The Strategy commits to ensuring the Australian Government's early years supports are responsive to the needs of all children and families by being high quality, evidence-informed, targeted, and accessible.
- Thriving Kids will be an important measure to improve outcomes for children with developmental delay and their families.
- Effective, evidence-based early intervention supports, and focusing on early support, has the greatest potential to improve a child's outcomes and reduce future need of long-term intensive supports.
- Questions on the policy parameters and implementation timing of Thriving Kids is most appropriately directed to the Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

**IF ASKED – Why didn't the 2024-25 or 2025-26 Budget include substantial funding to support implementation of the Strategy?**

- The Strategy sets a whole-of-Government policy agenda for Australian children and families in the early years.
- Every portfolio in the Commonwealth and all levels of government have responsibility for improving the wellbeing of children and families in Australia.
- Delivery under the Strategy is also not limited to one Budget cycle – it is a 10-year framework that will be delivered through three action plans, the first of which was released in December 2024.
- Over the next ten years, the Strategy will continue to shape how Government invests in the early years.

**IF ASKED - What is the Australian Government doing about the results of the 2024 Australian Early Development Census Report?**

- The Australian Early Development Census, published on 13 June 2025, gives us a clear national snapshot of child development in their first year of school.
- The results show more children are starting school developmentally vulnerable, particularly in the domains of social competence and emotional maturity.
- The results reflect the experiences of children born in 2019 and 2020 and are relatively similar across states and territories.
- While COVID-19 and associated lockdowns alone don't explain the outcomes, many children captured in this report did experience disrupted access to early learning, health services and stable routines in their early years.

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- We will continue to focus on opportunities to drive progress and build on the strengths of families, the early years sector and communities to support children.
- We will use these results to understand what's working and respond to what isn't, with communities leading that journey wherever possible.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The Early Years Strategy was launched in May 2024.
- The Strategy identifies four priority focus areas where the Government will direct its efforts. These are:
  - valuing the early years
  - empowering parents, caregivers and families
  - supporting and working with communities; and
  - strengthening accountability and coordination.
- The Strategy was informed by significant stakeholder engagement (over 4,000 people) – and was guided by a 14-member expert Advisory Panel and supported by 8 Commonwealth agencies, via a Band 3 Steering Committee.
- The First Action Plan 2024-2027 (First Action Plan) and Outcomes Framework were released on 20 December 2024. A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be developed in 2025 to measure the impact of the Strategy.
- The Strategy acknowledges the role of states and territories in the early years system and seeks to better integrate, coordinate and collaborate on programs and services to improve outcomes for children and families.
- States and territories are not signatories to the Strategy, but the majority of jurisdictions have comparable strategies focused on child and family wellbeing.

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**OFFICIAL****FINANCIAL WELLBEING AND CAPABILITY (FWC) ACTIVITY GRANT  
ROUNDS****ISSUE**

When will new FWC grants be available?

**KEY POINTS:**

- New FWC grants from 2025-26, totalling around \$150 million a year, will provide supports from pre-crisis, early intervention, to financial response, recovery and resilience.
- New 5-year grants for the National Debt Helpline, Saver Plus, and No Interest Loans (NILS) programs commenced on 1 July 2025.
- The National Debt Helpline provides free and confidential financial counselling help, with around 150,000 phone calls and chats with Australians each year.
- Saver Plus has helped over 64,000 Australians on lower incomes to build savings habits, improve their financial literacy and to save up for education costs.
- NILS and NILS for Vehicles provide safe and affordable loans, with no interest or fees, to help vulnerable people buy essential items such as white goods or a vehicle.
- As I announced on Friday 18 July 2025, new 5-year grants for the Emergency Relief, Food Relief and Financial Counselling programs commenced 1 October 2025.
- Two-year grants commenced from 1 October 2025 for the Financial Wellbeing Hubs program.
- This will allow the Hubs to be responsive to client and community needs while providing an opportunity to reform the program to expand services for clients.
- The Government continues to work with providers to ensure there are services available across the country, as part of the new grants from 1 October 2025.
- FWC grants support around 500,000 Australians each year.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY KEY POINTS:**

- The last FWC grant rounds were conducted in 2018.
- New grants will ensure FWC services are responsive to client and community needs and Government priorities.
- Priorities include comprehensive service coverage, wrap-around supports for clients with complex needs, a mix of service providers, better data, more early intervention approaches (including financial education) and connections with families' programs.
- New grants will expand the Food Relief program to supply cost effective material aid (e.g. personal care products) to Commonwealth-funded Emergency Relief providers.
- The period of 5-year grants for National Debt Helpline, Financial Counselling and Capability Sector Support, Saver Plus, NILS, NILS for Vehicles is 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2030.
- New 5-year grants for Emergency Relief, Food Relief (including Material Aid), Commonwealth Financial Counselling and Financial Capability and Financial Counselling for Gambling commenced 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2030.
- New grants for Financial Wellbeing Hubs commenced 1 October 2025 and will be in place for two years.
- This comes after 3-month grant extensions for current FWC providers were granted from 1 July to 30 September 2025.
- New grant agreements have been executed by successful FWC grant recipients.

*If asked about funding reductions for Hobart City Mission (Recent Media)*

- Total funding for Hobart City Mission is increasing by 23% in 2025-26 for Emergency Relief.
- To reflect greater need, funding for Emergency Relief in southern Tasmania has increased and the number of organisations delivering Emergency Relief services in the Hobart region is increasing.

*If asked about funding reductions for Uniting Vic.Tas and the impacts for local Emergency Relief services in regional Victoria (Recent Media)*

- Emergency Relief services for local communities in and around regional Victoria will be maintained over the next 5 years through multiple service providers.
- Uniting Vic.Tas will receive around \$4.19 million over 5 years to provide Commonwealth Emergency Relief in service areas across Victoria and Tasmania.

*If asked about funding reductions for CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes (Recent Media)*



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- Service coverage across the Far West and Orana region will be maintained with CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes, Salvation Army NSW and Uniting NSW.ACT delivering financial counselling and financial capability services to local communities in this area.
- CatholicCare Wilcannia Forbes will receive over \$3 million to provide Commonwealth financial counselling and financial capability services over the next 5 years across Far West and Orana and the Central West and Murray service areas.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

**Upper Yarra Star Mail** (8 October 2025) – Uniting Vic.Tas, a provider of emergency relief services has missed out of crucial funding from the Australian Government, resulting in the closure of their services in the east.

**Wangaratta Chronicle** (3 October 2025) – Anglicare Victoria stated it had been unsuccessful in securing federal funding to continue its services in Wangaratta that have been running since 2008. Anglicare Victoria is disappointed to be withdrawing emergency relief services from the area.

**Multiple outlets: Sunrise, 7News, ABC News** (1 October – 2 October 2025) – Hobart City Mission stated that its Emergency Relief funding has been halved, despite demand for services doubling over the past two years.

**ABC News** (29 September 2025) – Horsham's Christian Emergency Food Centre will no longer have funding under the Commonwealth Emergency Relief program as it was unsuccessful in the recent grant round, and funding to the area is further reduced due to the 80 per cent funding cut for Uniting Vic.Tas. It also means the organisation must wait until at least 2030 to reapply for grant funding.

**Geelong Advertiser** (10 September 2025) – The Uniting Grovedale emergency relief service (Geelong region) will close due to the 80 per cent funding cut for Uniting Vic.Tas in the recent grant round, with services to be merged with the nearby Norlane site.

**Stawell Times** (6 September 2025) – Stawell Inter Church Council reported loss of funding for its emergency and food relief service in Stawell (as well as the Christian Emergency Food Centre in Horsham) and the impacts for local communities in the North West/Mallee region, due to the 80 per cent funding cut for Uniting Vic.Tas.

**Horsham Weekly Advertiser** (3 September 2025) - Christian Emergency Food Centre reported its emergency relief services will be cut (current grant is \$82,000 a year) and Stawell Inter Church Council will be de-funded, under the recent grant round. The article noted these concerns were raised in Parliament by Member for Mallee, Anne Webster.

**Anglicare Australia** (28 August 2025) – In the *In Every Community – Delivering Services Outside Our Cities* report, Anglicare cited concerns with government funding models. While not the focus of the report, Anglicare pointed to recent emergency relief and financial capability grant processes as examples of long-established providers losing grant funding.

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**Daily Liberal** (4 August 2025) – CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes stated that it will lose 41 per cent of its financial counselling and financial capability funding in the Far West and Orana region as a result of the open competitive grant rounds. The funding cut would impact remote communities in NSW.

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**OFFICIAL****FUNDING FOR FINANCIAL WELLBEING SERVICES****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to support vulnerable Australians experiencing financial crisis?

**KEY POINTS:**

- This Government is working hard to address cost-of-living pressures and support people doing it tough.
- We acknowledge the important role community organisations play in providing direct assistance to vulnerable Australians.
- I have been closely monitoring the impact of cost-of-living pressures and natural disasters on the demand for frontline services that people can access when in financial distress.
- Strengthening frontline services and support for those in crisis has been a key focus for our government. It is also important to build longer-term financial capability and resilience, to prevent people from reaching crisis point in the first place.
- We are committed to providing cohesive investment along a continuum of support, from prevention and early intervention to response and recovery.
- Around 250 community organisations across Australia deliver Financial Wellbeing and Capability services, such as Emergency Relief, Food Relief and Financial Counselling.
- The Government has committed over \$170 million in additional funding for financial wellbeing programs. As a result, from 2025-26, annual funding will increase to around \$150 million per year, up from \$120 million per year.
- This includes \$20 million each year which has been set aside to boost services in response to emergencies and disasters, recognising the need for extra supports during these unexpected but high demand periods.
- The Government has also partnered with industry and the financial counselling sector to implement the Financial Counselling Industry Funding Model to increase people's access to financial counselling services and help address unmet demand.
- An additional \$36 million committed in voluntary industry contributions over 3 years from the banking and finance, energy, insurance, telecommunications and gambling sectors could help an extra 30,000 people access face-to-face appointments or support through the National Debt Helpline.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY KEY POINTS:**

*If asked* about how the Financial Wellbeing and Capability Activity helps address food insecurity in Australia?

- The Government welcomes research into food insecurity, including Foodbank Australia's ongoing contribution via its annual Hunger Report. The release of the 2024-25 Report is expected in October 2025.
- Food insecurity is a significant issue which the Government is working hard to help address.
- Under the Emergency Relief program, from 1 October 2025, the Government is providing \$55 million per year to 186 providers throughout Australia to assist people in need with food, clothing, vouchers for fuel and medicine, and other essentials.
- Food is the most common form of assistance provided by Emergency Relief providers. In 2024-25, more than 327,000 Emergency Relief clients were provided with a food parcel or food voucher on at least one occasion.
- To support the delivery of vital Emergency Relief services, my Government is providing a further \$4 million per year so that Foodbank Australia, SecondBite, OzHarvest and Good360 Australia can increase Emergency Relief providers' access to a cost-effective supply of food and material aid.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- "High Cost of Budgeting Pressures"- Sunday Mail, 8 June 2025 - related to cost-of-living and how Australians are selling possessions and taking out Buy Now, Pay later loans to cover weekly costs and cutting back on medical appointments and food.
- Included quote from the department that two-thirds of the 35,000 yearly recipients of the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) were women. The majority of NILS clients are experiencing financial stress but excluded from mainstream finance.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The Financial Wellbeing and Capability (FWC) Activity helps vulnerable individuals and families to navigate financial crises, manage financial stress and hardship and improve their financial wellbeing.

Emergency Relief

- Under new 5-year grant arrangements that commenced on 1 October 2025, Emergency Relief services are delivered by 186 providers nationally.
- Assistance offered by Emergency Relief providers may include food, clothing, vouchers, budgeting assistance, and referral to other services.
- Emergency Relief is restricted to people unable to pay a bill or at imminent risk of being unable to do so.
- Emergency Relief providers determine client eligibility via intake and assessment activities.
- Access to Emergency Relief is free and there are no citizenship or residency requirements to access Emergency Relief.

Food Relief

- The Food Relief (and Material Aid) program increases Commonwealth-funded Emergency Relief providers' access to a cost-effective supply of food and material aid items (such as personal hygiene products and clothing), on a national scale.
- Under new 5-year grant arrangements that commenced on 1 October 2025, food support is available nationally via Foodbank Australia, SecondBite and OzHarvest, with material aid provided by Good360 Australia.
- These 4 providers source these essential items through a range of mechanisms, including donations from major retailers, manufacturers, and primary producers.

Financial counselling services

- The Government provides more than \$50 million per year to over 100 organisations to deliver financial counselling services across Australia, including face-to-face services and over the phone or online through the National Debt Helpline. Services are free and confidential. Around 75,000 people are supported each year, including around 150,000 calls to the Helpline.
- Commonwealth Financial Counselling and Financial Capability services help eligible people to address their financial problems, make informed choices and build longer-term capability to budget and manage debt.
- Specialist financial counselling services provide support for people experiencing gambling harm, while Financial Wellbeing Hubs provide integrated financial counselling, financial capability, Emergency Relief services and access to no interest loans.

Financial Counselling Industry Funding Model

- The Government invested \$1.5 million in 2023-24 to support the establishment and initial operating costs of a new not-for-profit independent body, the Financial Counselling

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Industry Fund (FCIF), to administer industry funding for financial counselling.

- The \$36 million in voluntary industry contributions over 3 years is from the banking and finance, energy, insurance, telecommunications and gambling sectors.
- FCIF is distributing the funding through a series of grant rounds with a focus on supporting more Australians to get more timely access to financial counselling services through service delivery expansion, sector innovation and helping to address gaps in workforce availability.
- FCIF completed its first Innovation grant round in July 2025. Successful projects are testing new ways of working to improve the timeliness or efficiency of financial counselling service delivery.
- FCIF's first service delivery expansion grant round is currently underway, with grants to commence from March 2026.

The No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)

- The Government provides around \$9.75 million per year to Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand (GSANZ) to administer NILS in collaboration with an Australia wide network of community partners. NILS provides people on low incomes access to fair and safe loans ranging between \$1,500 and \$5,000, with no interest, fees or charges.
- The National Australia Bank (NAB) provides the loan capital, and GSANZ also receive funding from state and territory governments for their delivery of NILS.
- Loans can be used for a range of purposes, with the most common being for household appliances and car repairs. Around 35,000 NILS loans are approved each year.
- All NILS applicants, regardless of whether they receive a loan, are offered financial guidance and support. This support may include financial counselling and referrals to support services including hardship programs, rental support, family and domestic violence support and gambling, alcohol, and/or other drugs support.

**OFFICIAL****\*NEW\* - EARLY INTERVENTION - MINDEROO REPORT****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to invest in prevention and early intervention supports for children?

**KEY POINTS:**

- I am committed to ensuring all children in young people in Australia can thrive. This is the vision outlined in the government's Early Years Strategy 2024-2034.
- The latest findings from Minderoo's report about the cost of late intervention are deeply concerning.
- The evidence is clear that it is far better to intervene early to prevent problems from occurring, or escalating, than to try to address them once they have become entrenched.
- The government has taken action on early intervention and prevention, but there is always more to be done.
- The government has:
  - Committed to implement Thriving Kids, from 1 July 2026, to identify developmental concerns earlier and establish a national system of supports for children aged 8 and under with mild to moderate developmental delay and autism, and their families.
  - Committed to progress next steps in building a universal ECEC system where every child is guaranteed at least 3 days of high quality ECEC.
  - Committed to a \$1 billion Building Early Education Fund which will see more ECEC centres built and expanded in areas of need, including in the outer suburbs and regional Australia.
  - Supported the establishment of more than 300 new playgroups and the delivery of more than 290 toy libraries.
- My department also administers around \$320 million per year in services that aim to build parenting capacity and provide prevention and early intervention services for children and their families.

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 QB25-000080

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**OFFICIAL****RECENT MEDIA:**

- *27 August 2025 – The Australian Financial Review reported that the annual cost of child protection services and other late intervention measures for young people in crisis increased by 47 per cent to \$22.3 billion in five years.*
- *27 August 2025 – The Australian reported that Australia's failure to intervene early enough in children's lives to identify health and developmental issues is costing the country more than \$20 billion a year.*

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- On 27 August 2025, the Minderoo Foundation launched the latest Cost of Late Intervention report. The previous report was released in 2019.
- The report was a partnership between CoLab – Collaborate for Kids (a partnership between Telethon Kids Institute and the Minderoo Foundation), The Front Project, the UK's Early Intervention Foundation and Woodside Energy.
- The report found that Governments in Australia are spending over \$20 billion each year on late intervention. This equates to \$838 for every Australian. This is a 47% increase from \$15.2 billion in 2019.
- The report found the highest cost on late intervention services was on child protection at \$10.2 billion. This is a 72% increase since 2019.
- Youth crime and unemployment were other high-cost categories.

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**OFFICIAL****JOBSEEKER AND YOUTH ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS****JOBSEEKER AND YOUTH ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS**

What action is the Australian Government taking to support vulnerable Australians living on income support payments?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The government understands Australians continue to face cost of living pressures and is committed to doing what it can to support people living on income support.
- Our record shows we have delivered responsible budgets, as well as help to people doing it tough.
- Since the government was elected, the typical rate of JobSeeker for a single person without dependent children has increased by \$150.90 per fortnight.
- This is a result of the government's real increase to rates in the 2023-24 Budget of \$40 per fortnight, along with regular indexation.
- It is an increase of 23.2% in three years, providing over \$3,900 in additional support each year.
- The government has also provided a 10% increase to maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance in September 2024. This followed an increase in Commonwealth Rent Assistance maximum rates of 15% a year, which was the largest in 30 years.
- Through these actions and regular indexation, the maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance have increased by nearly 50% since March 2022.
- The government has provided an additional \$11.5 billion in the social security system through the 2024-25 and 2023-24 Budgets combined, delivering on its commitment to provide support where the government responsibly can to Australians who need help the most.
- Boosting economic inclusion and tackling disadvantage are complex challenges and require sustained commitment over time and across government.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- JobSeeker Payment supports Australians who are unable to support themselves whilst they look for a job or have a temporary injury or incapacity.
- It is not designed to replace lost salary or wages.

***If asked, 'will the government consider raising the rate of JobSeeker Payment?'***

- The government has committed to consider the rate of JobSeeker Payment at every Budget.
- It is important that measures are not viewed in isolation. JobSeeker Payment recipients may also be eligible for other cost of living measures, including the additional increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

***If asked, 'what is the government doing to support people into work, with almost 1 million people on JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance (other)?'***

- The government has a vision for a dynamic and inclusive labour market where everyone who wants a job is able to find one.
- We are supporting people into employment with productivity at the heart of our agenda.
- More than 1.1 million jobs have been created since the government was elected in 2022, a higher rate of employment growth than any major advanced economy.
- The number of employed people in Australia has reached over 14.6 million.
- Lifting productivity growth is a whole-of-government priority for the second term of the Albanese Government.
- The Treasurer convened the Economic Reform Roundtable on 19-21 August at Parliament House.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

'Get long-term jobless off dole, into work', Noah Yim, *The Australian*, 5 August 2025

- This article discusses Departmental advice provided as part of the Incoming Government Brief on the rising number of recipients who are on income support payments long term.

**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- In the 2024-25 Budget, the government provided an additional \$2 billion over five years in support for income support recipients including:
  - \$1.9 billion to increase the maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 10%.
  - \$41.2 million to expand eligibility to the higher rate of JobSeeker Payment to single JobSeeker Payment recipients with a partial capacity to work of less than 15 hours per week.
  - \$18.6 million to change the 25 hour per week rule for Carer Payment recipients to instead allow up to 100 hours work over a four week period and remove the restrictions on study, volunteering and travel for work.
- These measures build on the Government's \$9.5 billion package of income support measures in the 2023-24 Budget to boost JobSeeker Payment and other working age and student payments by \$40 per fortnight, increase maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 15%, and expand eligibility for Parenting Payment (Single).
- As at 29 August 2025, there were 887,795 recipients of JobSeeker Payment and 100,160 recipients of Youth Allowance (other).

**Summary of proposed increases**

	<b>Date of proposed rate increase</b>	<b>Typical rate per fortnight</b>	<b>Per day</b>	<b>Percentage increase to current rate of JSP</b>
<b>Current rate</b>	N/A	\$802.40	\$57.31	N/A
<b>Grattan Institute</b>	16 March 2025	\$901.10	\$64.36	12.3%
<b>ACOSS</b>	September 2024	\$1,148.00	At least \$82	43.1%
<b>The Greens</b>	March 2022	\$1,232.00	\$88.00	53.5%
<b>Anglicare</b>	February 2023	\$1,232.00	\$88.00	53.5%

**OFFICIAL****PAID PARENTAL LEAVE****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to ensure equitable access to Paid Parental Leave?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The government introduced Paid Parental Leave in 2011, and since 2022 we are delivering the most significant expansion to provide more support for working families.
- From 1 July 2023, the government made changes to provide better support to working families.
- This included giving more families access to the payment, making it more flexible to support parents in the transition back to work, and making it easier to share care by creating a single payment that both parents can access.
- From 1 July 2024, the government began extending the scheme by two weeks each year until it reaches 26 weeks from 1 July 2026.
- From July this year, the government will pay superannuation on government-funded Paid Parental Leave.
- The addition of a superannuation contribution to Paid Parental Leave is another important step towards gender equality, as many recipients are women who are more likely to have lower superannuation balances.
- The government's total investment in Paid Parental Leave will be around \$4.7 billion a year from 2026–27 and will benefit around 180,000 families.
- Government-funded Paid Parental Leave is designed to complement leave provided by employers, who also play a key role.
- In Australia, around 68% of employers now offer their own paid parental leave, and we look forward to seeing this number continue to grow.

**OFFICIAL*****If asked, why are some working fathers and partners not eligible for Paid Parental Leave if the mother does not meet the work test?***

- Paid Parental Leave has a work test because it is there to support working families, and particularly mothers, to take time off work to care for their baby.
- This means fathers in single income families may not be eligible for Paid Parental Leave if their partner does not work.
- Single income families who are not eligible for Paid Parental Leave may be eligible for a range of other assistance like Family Tax Benefit payments.

***If asked, does the government provide Paid Parental Leave or Stillborn Baby Payment to women who have had an abortion after 20 weeks of gestation?***

- The government recognises that losing a child is a very stressful event, and parents need support to cope with the personal, social and financial impacts.
- Parents of a stillborn child may be eligible for either Paid Parental Leave or Stillborn Baby Payment for the child.
- A medical professional, who was at the birth, must certify a stillborn child was delivered for families to receive these payments. Claims are assessed based on evidence and documentation provided by a medical professional.

***If asked, why doesn't the Paid Parental Leave scheme provide extra leave for parents of premature or sick babies?***

- The Paid Parental Leave scheme provides additional flexibility for families whose children are required to remain in hospital after birth.
- For example, parents can take more Paid Parental Leave together, or one parent can access the full entitlement, allowing the other parent to return to work and extending the time the first parent can spend with their child.
- The government's expansion of Paid Parental Leave to 26 weeks from July 2026 will also help families with a premature or sick baby to manage the care of their child in a way that best suits their circumstances.

***If asked, what is the government doing to reduce the administrative burden of Paid Parental Leave on employers?***

- The government has provided \$10 million to Services Australia to improve the experience of employers, particularly small business employers, when administering Paid Parental Leave.
- This includes system enhancements to simplify registration and streamline employer engagement with Services Australia, and the creation of resources to help employers better understand their obligations and navigate the process.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**Expansion of Paid Parental Leave – Key figures

<b>Commencement date</b>	<b>Weekly PPL rate</b>	<b>Total weeks per family</b>	<b>Maximum weeks for partnered parents</b>	<b>Reserved weeks</b>	<b>Concurrent weeks</b>
<b>1 July 2023</b>	\$882.75	20	18	2	2
<b>1 July 2024</b>	\$915.80	22	20	2	2
<b>1 July 2025</b>	<b>\$948.10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1 July 2026</b>	N/A	26	22	4	4

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****CHILD SUPPORT****ISSUE**

What action is the Australian Government taking to ensure the Child Support Scheme can't be used to perpetrate post-separation abuse?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The government is committed to ensuring that separated parents and children receive the support they are entitled to and that government systems do not exacerbate any abuse.
- Family and domestic violence is unacceptable in any form.
- Most people do the right thing, but others weaponise child support to control and abuse their former partners.
- Evidence from the Financial Abuse Inquiry and the Commonwealth Ombudsman as well as views from organisations like Single Mother Families Australia suggest that financial abuse is a major concern.
- The government shares these concerns, so we committed to audit government systems, following a National Cabinet decision in September 2024.
- We want to ensure the needs of women and children experiencing family and domestic violence are taken into account in the delivery of government services.
- The government is taking action to ensure the Child Support Scheme continues to be effective in assessing and collecting child support.
- This includes implementing key recommendations made by the Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System.
- My Department is leading several reviews of the Child Support Scheme, examining compliance closely and focusing on income accuracy, collection, and enforcement.
- The government has also implemented reforms to improve the timely collection of child support owed to parents – overwhelmingly women, to make the scheme fairer.
- The timely collection of child support will help prevent future debt among separated parents who are on relatively low incomes.



**OFFICIAL*****If asked: 'what is the government doing to stop child support being used as a weapon of financial abuse?'***

- The government acknowledges the findings of the recent Commonwealth Ombudsman's investigation that found people do weaponise the Child Support Scheme against their former partners.
- My Department and Services Australia are working to implement recommendations of the review as soon as possible.
- The government wants to ensure the needs of women and children experiencing family and domestic violence are considered in government service delivery.
- In 2023, the government passed legislation to improve collection of unpaid child support and make child support assessments more accurate.
- The government is overseeing several reviews to inform the long-term operation of the Child Support Scheme.
- These reviews include a close examination of compliance, with a focus on income accuracy (including tax lodgement), as well as collection and enforcement.

***If asked: 'what is the government doing to improve the Child Support Scheme?'***

- The government has made the Child Support Scheme fairer by implementing legislation to improve the timely collection of child support owed to parents.
- This provides Services Australia with more powers to initiate employer withholding arrangements and implement better compliance measures.
- Since the passage of this legislation, the amount of debt under repayment arrangements has increased.
- Measures to provide timely collection will help prevent future debt among low-income parents.

***If asked: 'what actions does the government take to make sure parents lodge their tax return?'***

- The timely lodgement of tax returns is crucial to ensure assessments are accurate and that children receive an appropriate level of support when needed.
- Each year, Services Australia refers parents with outstanding tax returns to the Australian Taxation Office for lodgement enforcement.
- In 2024–25, Services Australia referred around 152,000 parents.
- To improve lodgement compliance, the Australian Taxation Office uses a range of activities, including making default tax assessments and failure-to-lodge penalties.
- The government is reviewing child support compliance to identify ways to strengthen tax lodgement compliance.

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**OFFICIAL****RECENT MEDIA:**

- There have been several media articles following the release of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's own investigation Final Report on 3 June 2025.
- The Report "*Weaponising Child Support: when the system fails families*" was released on 3 June 2025.
- Media such as the ABC cite the report to show that some parents weaponise the Child Support Scheme against their ex-partners (32% of complainants).
- The complainants, who were mostly women, indicated that there was a risk of abusive repercussions if they took any actions to ensure child support payments were being made.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****CARER PAYMENT****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to financially support carers?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Government is committed to supporting Australia's three million unpaid carers through the social security system, with around \$11.5 billion per year provided via Carer Payment and Carer Allowance.
- Along with other pensions, it is generally paid at the highest rate of income support in the Australian social security system.
- Under social security law, base pension rates are indexed twice a year, in March and September, to ensure they keep pace with increases in the cost of living.
- From 20 September 2025, the maximum typical rate of Carer Payment for a single person increased by \$29.70 to \$1,178.70 per fortnight and by \$22.40 per fortnight, to \$888.50, for each member of a couple.
- The Government will ensure carers have access to the supports and resources they need to support them in their caring role.
- This includes supports available through the Carer Gateway, our Carer Inclusive Workplace Initiative and our work to deliver a new National Carer Strategy.
- And it's why we've made changes to Carer Payment, to increase flexibility for carers to balance paid work, study and volunteering with their caring responsibilities.
- The Government values the contribution carers make to the lives of those they care for.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked – ‘What is the government doing to support Carer Payment recipients to work?’***

- As a result of the 2024-25 Budget Measure, from 20 March 2025, Carer Payment recipients are able to work for up to 100 hours over a four-week period, while remaining eligible for payment.
- Should the 100-hour limit or the income threshold be exceeded, Carer Payment will be suspended for up to six months, rather than being cancelled.
- Alternatively, carers can choose to use one or more of their annual 63 temporary cessation of care (respite) days.
- Around 33,000 Carer Payment recipients have earnings and can benefit from the changes.
- Restrictions on travel time, study or volunteering activities were also removed.
- More than 3,000 Carer Payment recipients in regional and remote Australia have earnings and are likely to benefit from the removal of travel time.

***If asked – ‘Will the government commit to paying superannuation on Carer Payment, now it has been introduced for Paid Parental Leave?’***

- Paid Parental Leave is not a social security payment, it is a workplace entitlement. It is designed to support parents who are in the workforce to take time off after the birth or adoption of their child.
- It is like annual leave and sick leave, and that’s why from 1 July 2025, we’ve legislated to pay super on paid parental leave.
- The government provides Carer Payment for people who are unable to earn enough income from paid employment because of their constant caring responsibilities.
- Carer Payment is part of our social safety net, like other payments such as the Age Pension and Disability Support Pension.
- In line with all income support payments, superannuation contributions are not paid to Carer Payment recipients.
- Of course we want carers to have access to a dignified retirement. Our retirement income system is made up of three pillars – superannuation, private savings and the Age Pension.
- Carers who have insufficient superannuation will continue to have access to the same comprehensive social safety net in their retirement.

**OFFICIAL****RECENT MEDIA:**

- Carers Australia, in conjunction with ARE Media, launched a media campaign titled 'The Cost of Caring' in April 2024. The campaign ran until May 2025, and recommended the Government pay superannuation contributions on Carer Payment, and an increase to Carer Allowance.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- As at August 2025, there are 325,670 Carer Payment recipients.
- Carer Payment carers are eligible for a Pensioner Concession Card, which entitles them to a range of concessions including subsidised health care and prescription medicines, as well as some state-based concessions (for example, discounts on motor vehicle registration, electricity, gas and rates). Carers who rent in the private rental market may also receive assistance through Commonwealth Rent Assistance.
- Carers may also be eligible for Carer Allowance, an income supplement of \$159.30 per fortnight, for carers with annual income under \$250,000. As at August 2025, there are 679,100 Carer Allowance recipients.
- Carer Payment and Carer Allowance recipients may be eligible for the \$600 Carer Supplement which is paid for each of these payments in July. Carer Allowance carers of a child under 16 years may also be eligible for the annual \$1,000 Child Disability Assistance Payment.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION****ISSUE**

Why won't the Australian Government address the cost of living crisis for people with disability by increasing the rate of Disability Support Pension?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The government is strongly committed to an income support system that is a safety net for people who need it the most while ensuring the system remains sustainable.
- Pensions, including Disability Support Pension, are paid at the highest legislated rate in the social security system.
- Pensions are paid at a higher rate than JobSeeker Payment in recognition that pension recipients face significant barriers to engaging in work.
- The government recognises living on income support payments is challenging, and it is important that rates of payments keep up with the cost of living.
- Pensions are indexed twice a year, in March and September, to the higher of the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index.
- Indexation keeps payment rates in line with the wider economy and makes sure our social security system remains a safety net that Australians can rely on.
- In the 12 months to September 2025, base pension rates have grown by 3.1%, compared to 2.1% growth in CPI.
- This means pensions have grown above the average rate of inflation.
- Pensioners can also receive a range of concessions including, assistance for people who rent in the private rental market, subsidised prescription medicines, and subsidised health care and related products.
- People receiving the full single rate Disability Support Pension will see a \$29.70 boost to their fortnightly payment, making their annual pension now almost \$5,000 more since Labor came to Government.
- From 20 September 2025, the maximum single rate of Disability Support Pension increased from \$1,149 a fortnight to \$1,178.70 a fortnight (including Pension Supplement and Energy Supplement).

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, why doesn't the government remove the partner income test for Disability Support Pension recipients?***

- Couples are able to pool their resources and share expenses for various utilities, including electricity, gas, water and internet.
- If income support payments, like the Disability Support Pension, were based solely on an individual's own income and assets, this could result in some couples obtaining a higher level of support than other couples of equivalent means.
- The income test is designed to encourage people to supplement their income support payments with other income, if they are able and wish to do so.
- A Disability Support Pension recipient and their partner can earn some income before their payment starts to be reduced, known as the income free area.
- When the recipient earns income above the free area, their payment rate is reduced gradually, which means Disability Support Pension recipients are better off while they or their partner are earning income, in addition to their income support payment.

***If asked, why didn't the government provide a fulsome response to the Senate Committee Inquiry into the purpose, intent and adequacy of the Disability Support Pension?***

- I note this report was not responded to by the government of the day during the parliament when it was tabled, and given the passage of time since then, a substantive government response was no longer appropriate.
- The government has already delivered improvements relevant to the report and its recommendations.
- The government has a significant disability reform agenda with a focus on driving better outcomes for people with disability.

***If asked, will the government abolish the Program of Support requirement?***

- The Program of Support is designed to help Disability Support Pension claimants who do not have a severe impairment (20 points on a single impairment table) get the skills they need to find and keep a job.
- On 13 January 2025, the Attorney-General agreed to defer the sunset date for the Program of Support Determination, for 12 months, to 1 April 2026.
- The deferral allows additional time to consider interactions with the new disability employment program, Inclusive Employment Australia, which will commence on 1 November 2025, and how best to support people with disability take up opportunities for work.

**OFFICIAL**



**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- Disability Support Pension is an income support payment to provide financial help for people who are unable to work for 15 or more hours per week for the next two years, due to physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment, which attracts at least 20 points under the *Tables for the assessment of work-related impairment for Disability Support Pension* (the Impairment Tables).
- People claiming Disability Support Pension must be 16 or older and under Age Pension age at the time of the claim. They are also subject to medical and non-medical requirements, including residency requirements, and income and asset tests.
- As at August 2025, there were 833,200 people on Disability Support Pension.
- Expenditure on Disability Support Pension in 2025-26 is estimated to be \$24.2 billion (Portfolio Budget Statement 2025-26).

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****POVERTY AND INEQUALITY****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to help people who are struggling to make ends meet?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Albanese Labor Government is committed to a social security system that provides a strong safety net to protect vulnerable Australians.
- Labor built the modern safety net – we built universal Medicare, universal superannuation, universal NDIS, and the minimum wage.
- This government knows that those on the lowest incomes or who rely on social security payments are under pressure and struggling to make ends meet.
- Long-term inflation has continued to moderate, with CPI currently at 3.0% (monthly CPI indicator for the 12 months to August 2025).
- To provide assistance to those in need, we provided \$11.5 billion in additional payments in the social security system through the 2024-25 and 2023-24 budgets.
- As a result of the 2023-24 Budget measures, around 1.1 million recipients of JobSeeker Payment and other working age and student payments are receiving at least a \$40 increase a fortnight.
- The government also increased Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 10%, building on the government's 15% increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance maximum rates in the 2023-24 Budget, the largest increase in 30 years.
- These measures are complemented by cost of living relief being delivered by the government to ease the pressure on households, including power bill relief for people and cheaper medicines.
- The government is boosting funding to support Australians in financial distress and to build financial resilience over the longer term, having committed over \$170 million in additional funding for financial wellbeing programs. As a result, from 2025-26, annual funding will increase to around \$150 million per year, up from \$120 million per year.
- In an effort to boost economic inclusion and tackle disadvantage, the government is delivering the Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage (TED) package.
- This delivers over \$200 million to address entrenched disadvantage in communities building on the success of place-based and social impact investing initiatives.
- We should not underestimate the positive impact these measures will have for Australians on low incomes, and those who face an increased risk of disadvantage.

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**Responsible Group:** Participation and Family Payments  
QB25-000022

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If ASKED – ‘why hasn’t the Government agreed to a national poverty measure?’***

- The government has released a national wellbeing framework – Measuring What Matters. This is tracking our progress towards a more healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive and prosperous Australia.
- The government monitors various indicators to understand poverty and the wellbeing of Australians, including income and material deprivation measures.
- The government acknowledges the work of the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee and its recommendations on poverty measures.
- We will engage with the Committee and other stakeholders to consider this recommendation in the future.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee 2025 report to Government, released on 11 March 2025 stated:

*“The Committee recommends the Government move immediately to legislate the introduction of monetary and multidimensional measures of poverty. Although a monetary measure can be set and reported on immediately, reporting should not be required on a multidimensional measure until 2028 to allow for the measure and data to be appropriately developed. Importantly, the Committee suggests that people with lived experience of poverty should be involved in the design and ongoing oversight of poverty measures”.*

- August 2025 marked the 50 year anniversary of the release of Henderson Inquiry Report, *Poverty in Australia*, which was developed at the Melbourne Institute. One of the key outcomes of the Inquiry was the development of the Henderson Poverty Line to help identify Australians who are income poor.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****PORTFOLIO COST OF LIVING****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to address the cost of living?

**KEY POINTS:**

- As part of our comprehensive cost of living plan, the government is providing targeted assistance through our changes to income support payments.
- We provided \$11.5 billion in additional funding in the social security system through the 2024-25 and 2023-24 budgets to deliver targeted and responsible support.
- This includes increasing eligible payments by \$40 per fortnight, expanding Parenting Payment Single to parents with a youngest child under 14 years, extending the higher rate of JobSeeker Payment to recipients with greater barriers to employment, and changing the Carer Payment 25-hour rule.
- The government has also increased Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 10%, building on the government's 15% increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance maximum rates in the 2023-24 Budget, the largest increase in 30 years.
- The government is also boosting funding to support Australians in financial distress and to build financial resilience over the longer term, having committed over \$170 million in additional funding for financial wellbeing programs. As a result, from 2025-26, annual funding will increase to around \$150 million per year, up from \$120 million per year.
- For those families with newborns, the government's historic expansion of Paid Parental Leave is underway, with an extra two weeks being added each year until the scheme reaches 26 weeks on 1 July 2026.
- From July this year, the government will pay superannuation on government-funded Paid Parental Leave.
- These investments are a clear illustration of the government's ongoing dedication to be responsive and to support individuals with the assistance they need.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If ASKED – ‘what is the Government doing to address cost of living for income support recipients?’***

- Income support payments such as JobSeeker Payment are indexed regularly to keep pace with changes in the cost of living.
- Since the government was elected, the rate of JobSeeker Payment for a single person with no dependents has increased by \$150.90 a fortnight, providing over \$3,900 in additional support each year.
- This is an increase of 23.2% over three years.
- Where recipients have additional costs, supplementary payments such as Commonwealth Rent Assistance and Family Tax Benefit are available.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****2024-25 BUDGET MEASURES****2024-25 INCOME SUPPORT BUDGET MEASURES**

What was announced in the 2024-25 Budget for income support recipients?

**KEY POINTS:**

- In the 2024-25 Budget, the government provided an additional \$2 billion over five years in targeted and responsible support for income support recipients including:
  - \$1.9 billion to increase the maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 10%. This builds on the Government's 15% increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance maximum rates in the 2023-24 Budget which was the largest increase in 30 years.
  - \$41.2 million to expand eligibility to the higher rate of JobSeeker Payment to single JobSeeker Payment recipients with a partial capacity to work of less than 15 hours per week.
  - \$18.6 million to change the 25 hour per week rule for Carer Payment recipients to instead allow up to 100 hours work over a four-week period and remove the restrictions on study, volunteering and travel for work.
- These measures build on the Government's \$9.5 billion package of income support measures in the 2023-24 Budget to boost JobSeeker Payment and other working age and student payments, increase maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 15%, and expand eligibility for Parenting Payment (Single).
- Since the Government was elected, the typical rate of JobSeeker Payment for a single person without dependent children has increased by \$150.90 per fortnight. This is as a result of the Government's real increase to rates in the 2023-24 Budget of \$40 per fortnight, along with regular indexation.
- This is an increase of 23.2% in three years, providing over \$3,900 in additional support each year.
- The government will always do what we can for people where it is responsible and affordable, and weighed up against other priorities and fiscal challenges.

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked, 'what was in the Budget to help social security recipients with the cost of rent?'***

- The government is providing \$1.9 billion in order to increase the maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 10% on 20 September 2024.
- This builds on the 15% increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance maximum rates from 20 September 2023, which was the largest increase in 30 years.
- Through these actions and regular indexation, the maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance have increased by nearly 50% since March 2022.
- Nearly a million households are better off from the additional 10% increase.

***If asked, 'what was in the Budget for JobSeekers with a partial capacity to work?'***

- From 20 September 2024, the higher rate of JobSeeker Payment was extended to single people with a partial capacity to work of 0-14 hours per week.
- As a result, around 4,400 recipients are benefitting from at least an additional \$87.90 a fortnight.
- This change acknowledges the significant barriers to work faced by JobSeeker Payment recipients who have been assessed as unable to work more than 14 hours a week due to physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment.

***If asked, 'what was in the 2024-25 Budget for Carer Payment recipients?'***

- Under changes to the 25 hours a week participation rule, Carer Payment recipients are able to work up to 100 hours over a four-week period.
- This can benefit around 33,000 Carer Payment recipients who are currently working.
- It is also benefitting around 1,000 Carer Payment recipients who will not have their payment cancelled when they exceed 100 hours of work over a four-week period.



**OFFICIAL****FIRST NATIONS BOARDING DESIGN REVIEW****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to access secondary school?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government is committed to supporting First Nations students' access to secondary school.
- The government provides ABSTUDY funding to support students who live away from home to access secondary school.
- ABSTUDY supports secondary students with boarding, tuition and travel costs.
- The government is finalising a boarding design review, announced as part of the 2023 'Closing the Gap Implementation Plan'.
- The review explores options to improve support for First Nations boarding students from rural and remote locations, including access to ABSTUDY.
- The National Indigenous Australians Agency is leading the review with support from my Department, the Department of Education and Services Australia.
- The review considers the views of First Nations stakeholders as well as education providers.
- When the review is finalised, the government will consider the findings to ensure funding arrangements are fit for purpose and improve educational outcomes.
- In October 2024, the government announced the Indigenous Boarding Provider Grants program will be extended until the end of 2026.
- The program will provide certainty to boarding providers while the government considers and responds to the review.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked, how does the Australian Government ensure ABSTUDY travel is cost-effective ensuring seats on chartered transport are occupied?***

- Charter flights are only used where it is the cheapest or most cost effective alternative, from very remote communities.
- Funding for charter flights is administered by Services Australia through a travel management provider.
- Approval of charter flights is determined by the mode of travel most practicable and cost-effective, while also being reasonable in the circumstances, including minimising the number of school days missed due to travelling.
- The allocation of spare seats is a matter for the charter company.
- The Government agrees that empty seats should be made available for other students or community members to purchase where safe and practical to do so.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- ABSTUDY supported over 4,400 First Nations boarding students and around 280 boarding schools and hostels in 2024.
- Around 72% of the students were from remote and very remote areas.
- The maximum annual amount of ABSTUDY payable to a boarding provider on behalf of a secondary school student is \$36,686. Students can also access Fares Allowance to cover the reasonable costs of travel between home and school.
- The rate of Fares Allowance is determined by the most practicable and cost-effective mode of transport. This includes consideration of minimising school days missed, reducing lengthy layovers requiring overnight accommodation, concerns around student safety and whether alternative modes of transport are available.
- The Indigenous Boarding Provider Grants Program is administered by the National Indigenous Australians Agency.
- It supports more than 40 boarding schools and stand-alone facilities to provide accommodation and wrap-around supports for up to 2,500 First Nations students.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****UNIVERSITIES ACCORD AND STUDENT PAYMENTS****ISSUE**

Why hasn't the Australian Government accepted the Universities Accord Final Report recommendation to increase income support payments for students?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government is committed to building a better and fairer education system and the recommendations of the Universities Accord are helping drive this change.
- The *Universities Accord (Cutting Student Debt by 20 Per Cent) Act 2025* commenced on 3 August 2025.
- This Act introduces a one-off 20% reduction to student loan debts, removing \$16 billion in HELP and other student debt for over three million Australians.
- The Act also makes repayments fairer for the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) and other student loan schemes.
- Repayments are now based on the portion of a person's income above the minimum repayment threshold, which increased to \$67,000.
- This delivers cost of living relief by increasing the amount a person must earn before making compulsory repayments and by reducing the amount of repayments.
- These measures apply to Student Financial Supplement Scheme and Student Start-up Loan debts.
- Together with changes made to indexation last year, the Government is wiping around \$20 billion in student debts.
- The Government has also increased support for students receiving income support payments, including Youth Allowance.
- As a result of the Government's 2023-24 Budget, students receiving Youth Allowance, Austudy and ABSTUDY have been receiving an extra \$40 a fortnight, in addition to regular indexation.
- Students relying on Commonwealth Rent Assistance received an increase of 15% in September 2023 and a further 10% in September 2024.
- Through the actions of the Government and regular indexation, the maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance have increased by almost 50% since March 2022.
- 

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, will the Australian Government wipe remaining Student Financial Supplement Scheme debts?***

- Student Financial Supplement Scheme debts will receive a one-off reduction of 20% back dated to 1 June 2025.
- This is in addition to indexation reductions already being delivered which capped student loan debts to be the lower of Wage Price Index or the Consumer Price Index, reducing the loan value and repayments for the Student Financial Supplement Scheme.
- The Student Financial Supplement Scheme repayment system ensures people do not begin repaying the loan until their income exceeds a set threshold.
- This means repayments are based on a person's capacity to repay.
- People experiencing financial hardship can contact the Australian Taxation Office to discuss deferring or amending their repayments.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****Universities Accord Final Report**

- Recommendation 16 of the Universities Accord Final Report aimed to reduce the long-term costs of studying by reforming the current student loan system.
- Changes announced to repayment arrangements on 2 November 2024 respond to this recommendation by reducing the costs of studying by introducing fairer and simpler indexation and repayment arrangements.
- The 2024-25 Budget measure capped indexation of HELP debts to the lower of Wage Price Index (WPI) or the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- Under previous arrangements student loans were indexed based on CPI only. During periods of high inflation this resulted in unusually high indexation rates, such as the increase in June 2023.
- The *Universities Accord (Cutting Student Debt by 20 Per Cent) Act 2025* has passed parliament and:
  - makes the repayment system fairer by increasing the minimum repayment threshold for HELP and other student loan schemes from \$54,435 in 2024-25 to \$67,000 in 2025-26.
  - reduces student loan debt by 20% back dated to 1 June 2025, before indexation was applied.

**Student Financial Supplement Scheme (SFSS)**

- The SFSS was introduced in 1993 and closed on 31 December 2003.
- Students traded in their Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY or Pensioner Education Supplement to receive double the amount as a repayable loan.
- For example, a student would receive two dollars under the scheme for every one dollar of Austudy they traded in.
- Students who accepted the loan signed a five year contract with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Loans do not accrue interest but are indexed annually.
- A significant number of SFSS loans remain outstanding. The current value of loans outstanding was \$2.07 billion at 30 April 2025, with around 135,000 debtors remaining.

**Student Start-up Loan (SSL)**

- The Student Start-up Loan is a voluntary income contingent loan that students can apply for to help with the costs of study, including the purchase of textbooks, computers and internet access.
- The loan is paid twice per year, generally at the beginning of each semester. Each loan payment is valued at \$1,321 in 2025.
- The current value of loans outstanding is \$1.34 billion at 30 April 2025, with around 318,000 total debtors.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****NZYQ DECISION AND SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS****ISSUE**

Is the Government giving social security payments to people released from immigration detention due to the NZYQ High Court decision?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Individuals impacted by the NZYQ High Court decision may receive Special Benefit and certain supplementary payments.
- This is consistent with existing provisions in social security law.
- No legislative or policy changes have been made to longstanding rules for Special Benefit or payments to people in these circumstances.
- Special Benefit is an income support payment for individuals who are in financial hardship and are ineligible for any other income support payment.
- The rate of payment is equivalent to the rate of JobSeeker Payment for recipients 22 years and over and Youth Allowance for recipients under 22 years.
- Depending on their circumstances, Special Benefit recipients may also receive Family Tax Benefit and supplementary payments such as Commonwealth Rent Assistance.
- In addition, Special Benefit recipients receive a Health Care Card that entitles them to cheaper medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked: 'how many individuals impacted by the High Court decision are being paid Special Benefit?'***

- It is estimated that around 215 individuals impacted by the High Court decision are receiving Special Benefit.
- This is based on the number of individuals that commenced on Special Benefit after the High Court decision, that have a Bridging (Removal Pending) (subclass 070) visa.
- In total, there are around 5,480 Special Benefit recipients.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- On 28 February 2025, it was reported in papers such as the Daily Telegraph, the Herald Sun and the NT News that the NZYQ cohort were receiving Special Benefit. The shadow government services minister at the time, Senator Claire Chandler, was quoted saying “the NZYQ cohort are criminals including murderers, rapists and child sex offenders, yet now we find out that 219 of them are getting cash “special benefits payments” from the government”.

**BACKGROUND:**

- On 8 November 2023, the High Court decision in NZYQ v Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs required the release from immigration detention of NZYQ on the basis that his detention was unlawful.
- These individuals were placed on Bridging (Removal Pending) (subclass 070) visas which made them eligible to receive Special Benefit, subject to meeting the other eligibility criteria:
  - be ineligible for any other income support payment;
  - unable to earn a sufficient livelihood, for example, unemployed;
  - an Australian resident (that is, an Australian citizen or permanent resident) or the holder of certain temporary visas; and
  - in financial hardship.



**OFFICIAL****SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM AND FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to ensure that the social security system supports victims and survivors of family and domestic violence?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Australia's social security system supports victims and survivors to not only leave a violent relationship, but to establish a life free from violence.
- Supports in the social security system include Crisis Payment, priority claim processing, social worker support and exemptions from mutual obligations and partner assets tests.
- To stamp out opportunities for abuse, the government is conducting audits of key Commonwealth government systems.
- These audits will help to identify ways perpetrators of family and domestic violence are exploiting the social security system to abuse victim-survivors.
- As an immediate response to the audits, the government has committed to consult on changes to tax and social security law so that perpetrators, not victim-survivors, are accountable for debts they accrue through financial abuse.
- The audits will also consider the ways policies and service delivery could change to improve the supports to victim-survivors.
- The government is taking action to ensure the Child Support Scheme continues to be effective in assessing and collecting child support.
- My Department is leading several reviews of the Child Support Scheme, examining compliance closely and focusing on income accuracy, collection and enforcement.
- The government has also implemented reforms to improve the timely collection of child support owed to parents to make the scheme fairer.
- The government has invested over \$4 billion towards the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.
- On 1 July 2025, the Leaving Violence Program commenced delivering financial support packages for victim-survivors leaving intimate partner violence.
- The Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Technical Changes No. 2) Bill 2025 was introduced into the House of Representatives on 4 September. The Bill allows Services Australia to better account for circumstances like coercion or financial abuse when administering the special circumstances debt waiver.

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

***If asked – ‘is it reasonable to expect victim-survivors of family and domestic violence to claim Crisis Payment within seven days of a traumatic event?’***

- While legislation requires that a person has seven days from a traumatic event to lodge a claim for Crisis Payment, there is flexibility to support people in this circumstance.
- Services Australia provides an additional 14 days after contact to lodge a claim if they have experienced domestic or family violence.

***If asked – ‘what is the government doing to address the findings of the Ombudsman’s own motion investigation into financial abuse in the child support system?’***

- The government acknowledges the findings and eight recommendations of the recent Commonwealth Ombudsman’s investigation that found people do weaponise the Child Support Scheme against their former partners.
- My Department and Services Australia are working together to address these recommendations as soon as possible.
- The government wants to ensure the needs of women and children experiencing family and domestic violence are considered in government service delivery.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****Crisis Payment**

- The rate of Crisis Payment is equal to one week of a person's maximum basic rate of income support. For example, a Parenting Payment Single recipient would be paid \$499.10.
- In 2024-25, 36,755 Crisis Payment grants were made to victim-survivors of family or domestic violence.
- A further 5,865 Crisis Payment grants were made to victim-survivors from 1 July 2025 to 31 August 2025.

**Leaving Violence Program**

- The Leaving Violence Program provides a financial support package to eligible victim-survivors, regardless of visa status, gender, or sexuality, up to \$5,000 in financial support, including a cash payment of up to \$1,500 and the remaining funds in goods and services. The support package also includes mandatory risk assessments, and safety planning and referrals to other services as needed for a period of up to 12 weeks.
- The Leaving Violence Program has two delivery models, a national delivery model delivered by Telstra Health, referred to as the National Program, and four Regional Trials delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led organisations in Broome, Cairns, Darwin and Dubbo.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****MULTIPLE BIRTHS****ISSUE**

Why are families with twins excluded from receiving Multiple Birth Allowance?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government recognises the unique challenges faced by families who have multiple births, including families of twins.
- We acknowledge this can include increased costs of raising children and challenges for parents to re-enter the workforce.
- We are committed to supporting families during this time.
- There are a range of payments and assistance available for parents of twins.
- Parents of twins can access Family Tax Benefit payments to support the cost of raising children, including Family Tax Benefit Part A and Part B, Newborn Supplement and Newborn Upfront Payment. They may also be eligible for other supplementary payments such as Rent Assistance.
- This government established Paid Parental Leave to support parents take time off to care for their newborn child or children.
- Parents of twins will benefit from our ongoing expansion of Paid Parental Leave, which will reach 26 weeks by July 2026, and the addition of superannuation payments on Paid Parental Leave from 1 July 2025.
- Parents of twins also have the ability to access both Paid Parental Leave and Family Tax Benefit supplements, like the Newborn Supplement and Newborn Upfront Payment, at the same time. This provides up to an additional \$2,735.05 for parents of twins.
- This is not available to parents of one child and is designed to provide additional support to families of twins.
- The Multiple Birth Allowance payment recognises families with three or more children born at the same time face disproportionately higher costs across their children's lives, as well as additional challenges related to workforce participation.

**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- Multiple Birth Allowance may be paid to families eligible for Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A with three or more children born at the same time.
- For triplets, the payment rate is \$5,124.60 per year (\$196.56 per fortnight). For quadruplets or more, the payment rate is \$6,829.15 per year (\$261.94 per fortnight).
- Multiple Birth Allowance is paid until the children turn 16 years of age, or if at least one three of the children are in full-time study, until the end of the calendar year in which they turn 18.
- Multiple Birth Allowance is paid in addition to their FTB Part A entitlements, which can be up to \$6,865.65 per year, per child aged 12 and under, or up to \$8,650.50 per year, per child aged 13 to 19.
- Newborn Supplement is another component of FTB Part A to help with the immediate costs of a newborn or adopted child. The maximum rate of Newborn Supplement is \$2,735.05, which is paid for the family's first child and for each child in a multiple birth. This includes the Newborn Upfront Payment of \$683. Fortnightly payments are made for a continuous period of up to 13 weeks (91 days).
- Both Multiple Birth Allowance and Newborn Supplement are subject to income testing via the FTB Part A income test.
- In addition to FTB payments, parents can also receive Paid Parental Leave for one child in a multiple birth if they meet eligibility requirements.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to ensure that people with disability have greater access to employment?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Getting more people with disability in to work brings many benefits for the individuals working, for employers and for our economy.
- It also creates a fairer and more inclusive society.
- Unfortunately, Australians living with disability still face significant barriers to employment.
- The unemployment rate for people with disability is more than double that of working age people without disability and this is just not good enough.
- That's why the Australian Government is investing more than \$5.5 billion over four years in a new disability employment program – Inclusive Employment Australia.
- [A total of 83 organisations received an offer for funding under Inclusive Employment Australia following a competitive tender process.](#)
- The new program will replace the current Disability Employment Services program as of 1 November 2025.
- People with disability and employers need a system that meets their needs and provides the right supports to find and keep a job.
- Inclusive Employment Australia has been designed with this in mind.
- It will provide tailored and flexible support that reflect individuals' diverse pathways to employment, including greater accessibility to providers with expertise in particular groups such as First Nations people, refugees and specific disability types.
- Inclusive Employment Australia is complemented by a new Centre for Inclusive Employment.
- The \$23.3 million investment in the Centre will allow for resources and tools to be developed, to help employment service providers deliver services that work.
- The Government is investing \$52.7 million over four years to ensure people with disability with high support needs have choice and control about their work.
- Our goal is that all people with disability, including those with complex needs, have genuine options at work, and pathways to well paid jobs in open employment.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Contact Officer:** Alex Buckley

**Phone:** 5 22 [REDACTED]

**Responsible Group:** Disability Employment  
QB25-000052

**Date updated:**

22 August 2025

**Date reviewed:**

22 August 2025

**OFFICIAL****Inclusive Employment Australia**

- The design of Inclusive Employment Australia has been informed by extensive consultation with stakeholders and reviews of disability and employment services.
- As part of the 2024–25 Budget, the Government has provided additional funding of \$227.6 million over four years (from 2024–25) to ensure successful implementation.

**If asked: Why did some providers not get business or have a reduction in market share?**

- I cannot talk specifically about the circumstances of individual providers, but I can make some general comments.
- Providers were selected following a rigorous comparative assessment process, where they were assessed against on criteria of organisational capacity, service model design and local connections to deliver high-quality employment services for people with disability, injury or a health condition. These criteria were consulted on through an Exposure Draft of the Request for Tender.

**Market design**

- The Inclusive Employment Australia market approach has been designed to:
  - give choice to participants, by increasing the number and accessibility of providers with deep expertise in specific cohorts, and
  - assist in improving viability for providers through market share arrangements.
- There will be six Indigenous-owned providers (an increase from the current two providers delivering DES), two refugee specific and one CALD specific provider.
- There will also be six providers specialising in intellectual disability.

**Centre for Inclusive Employment**

- A dedicated online hub, providing best-practice resources, will be available by September 2025.
- The Centre will improve the quality of services by providers in Disability Employment Services and Inclusive Employment Australia, Workforce Australia, the Community Development Program and the National Disability Insurance Scheme, including supported employment providers.
- The consortium delivering the Centre includes representatives from peak disability and capacity building organisations, including Inclusion Australia, Family Advocacy, Disability Employment Australia, National Disability Services and the University of Melbourne.

**Supported employment**

- The Government is committed to ensuring people with disability with high support needs continue to receive support to work.

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- The Government invested \$52.7 million over four years to support evolution of the supported employment sector. This includes:
  - the Structural Adjustment Fund, which will increase the range of employment opportunities and pathways available to people with high support needs;
  - Disability Employment Expos; and
  - a new, targeted Disability Employment Advocacy and Information program to provide.

*Further information on supported employment is provided in QB25-000054 – Supported Employment.*

**If asked: About Bedford and the Financial Viability of the Supported Employment Sector**

- The depth of the financial crisis that Bedford has found itself in is deeply worrying and the Government is monitoring the situation closely.
- Bedford, as a registered National Disability Insurance Service provider, has and continues to receive substantial Commonwealth funding.
- NDIS participants at Bedford can work with their local area coordinator, planner or support coordinator if they have any concerns.

*Further information is provided in QB25-000071 – Bedford Group viability concerns.*



**OFFICIAL**Key program changes for Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA)

<b>Eligibility</b>	Eligibility criteria will be expanded to include around 15,000 additional participants each year with less than 8 hours a week work capacity and those not in receipt of an income support payment (that is, volunteers).
<b>Service duration</b>	The current 2-year participation limit will be removed to ensure continuity of service.
<b>Program structure</b>	The existing Disability Management Service and Employment Support Service will be combined into a single specialist disability employment service. This simplified approach will focus on participant need, and reduce program complexity and contract administration.
<b>Service offer</b>	<p>IEA will provide an intensive service and a flexible service, to better recognise individuals' capacity to participate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intensive service will include building work skills and experience, addressing vocational and non-vocational barriers, and supporting participants who are actively looking for work.</li> <li>• The flexible service assists people to work towards their employment goals while recognising that many participants are undertaking other activities.</li> <li>• Examples of activities for participants engaging in flexible services may include employment, study, caring, volunteer, or non-vocational activities that are building an individuals' work capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>Meaningful Engagement</b>	Meaningful engagement aims to build positive relationships for participants with their provider by taking a partnership-based approach to goal setting and participation in activities rather than a compliance focus.
<b>Fee structure</b>	IEA will continue to pay service fees, outcomes fees and fees for ongoing support. A new 'Progress fee' will recognise movement toward employment goals, such as undertaking education and training, volunteer work, work experience and/or completing 4 weeks of employment.
<b>Market structure</b>	Employment Service Area geographic boundaries will be maintained, and market controls introduced to encourage more specialist providers to enter the market while ensuring participant choice.
<b>Provider capability</b>	Providers must have staff recruitment and development strategies to ensure their staff have competence to work with people with disability. Providers staff must have a diversity of skills and experience, including lived experience of disability, and are representative of the communities they work in.
<b>Wage subsidies</b>	Wage subsidies for employers will be increased to up to \$10,000 to support participants and employers in achieving sustainable job placements.

**OFFICIAL****DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT - PROCUREMENT OUTCOMES****ISSUE**

Outcome of the recent procurement processes for Inclusive Employment Australia and National Panel of Assessors.

**KEY POINTS:**

1. Eighty one (81) providers will deliver better employment outcomes for people with disability through the new Inclusive Employment Australia program.
2. Inclusive Employment Australia will replace Disability Employment Services (DES) from 1 November 2025 and will have a very strong focus on the quality of service provided to participants. Providers will be required to work with participants meaningfully and tailor support to their individual needs.
3. Inclusive Employment Australia contributes to achieving the vision of an inclusive society and assists to boost employment participation for people with disability, illness, and injury.
4. The design of the program is in line with key recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission and represents an investment of more than \$5.5 billion over 5 years to help more people with disability secure sustainable employment.
5. I am pleased to announce that in Inclusive Employment Australia we will have more providers who have expertise in supporting key cohorts. This includes providers with expertise in specific disability areas such as intellectual disability, as well as providers with cultural expertise for First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people.
6. Providers for Inclusive Employment Australia will work closely with employers to identify their needs, find suitable candidates, and assist with workplace adjustments. This support aims to create safe and productive workplaces, helping employers retain employees with disability.
7. Providers, including those providing more specialised servicing, will have centralised access to evidence-based best practice resources developed by the Centre of Excellence. The resources will be specialised, innovative and drive quality practice.
8. To support the new program, a network of providers funded through the National Panel of Assessors program will conduct assessment to ensure workplaces are accessible and people with disability have the support they need at work.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, who will be able to access Inclusive Employment Australia?***

- Inclusive Employment Australia will expand eligibility for people with disability with less than 8 hours per week work capacity and those not in receipt of an income support payment (that is, volunteers). Other eligibility criteria include, that a person:
  - have a disability, injury, or health condition
  - be at least 14 years of age but has not yet attained the Age Pension qualifying age
  - be at or above the minimum legal working age in their state or territory.
  - be an Australian resident, or a Temporary Protection Visa/Safe Haven Enterprise Visa holder
  - not be studying full-time, unless the individual is an Eligible School Leaver, and
  - not be working at or above their assessed work capacity, unless the individual is receiving NDIS funding for supports in employment and/or is working in a Supported Employment Service or is eligible as an Ongoing Support (Work Assist) Participant.
- Individuals do not need to be in receipt of an Income Support Payment to access support under Inclusive Employment Australia.

***If asked, what is the selected mix (or make up) of providers?***

- The procurement for Inclusive Employment Australia sought to attract a diverse range of providers that offer high quality services to participants and employers, including attracting providers with deep expertise in supporting key cohorts of participants.
- The results achieve this diversity across the 81 providers that will deliver Inclusive Employment Australia services.
  - 57 providers will continue from the current DES program and 24 providers are new to disability employment services.
  - 61 are not-for-profit and are 20 for-profit providers.
  - 29 specific cohort providers providing around 20 specialist services have been appointed and around half of these are new to the disability employment services market.
- Consistent with the consultation, there has been some reduction in number of providers to improve viability of the market. However, more regions will include specific cohort providers and increase choice of services for participants.

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**OFFICIAL*****If asked, why did a Provider not get business or have a reduction in market share?***

- I cannot talk specifically about why a provider was or was not selected as an Inclusive Employment Australia provider or may have lost business. My department can assist you further and is providing all tenderers with feedback, should they wish to receive it.
- The tender process was extremely competitive, with many Employment Services Areas attracting up to four times more bids than the number of providers sufficient to service the areas.
- Providers were selected following a rigorous comparative assessment process, this means they were assessed against the selection criteria in comparison to other respondents. This assessment considered their organisational capacity, service model design and local connections to deliver high quality employment services for people with disability, illness, or injury.
- 83 providers were offered a Deed following the tender process. Two providers subsequently handed their Deed back based on their own commercial decisions, with their business reallocated to other providers in the relevant Employment Service Areas.

***If asked, When were the outcomes of the tenders published?***

- The list of successful tenderers were published on the DSS Website on 4 August 2025.

Contracts were also published on Austender on 18 September 2025 in accordance with the 42 day reporting timeframe. ***If asked, how many existing DES providers have not been selected to deliver the new program, and why?***

- 23 current providers will exit the program..

***If asked, will there be any support for exiting providers? What will happen to their existing participants?***

- A range of Transition supports for exiting providers are available. A 12 month Market Adjustment Support Initiative, delivered by the National Employment Services Association is supporting providers, including with Exit Strategy Development, Staff Redeployment Services to support their current workforce and transition planning.
- Current DES participants and their nominees are being fully supported during the Transition process, with a range of services including access to a dedicated Transition hotline . The Department has also issued two rounds of correspondence to all participants and their nominees which include information on their Inclusive Employment Australia provider and access to services and supports.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The design of Inclusive Employment Australia has been informed by extensive consultation with stakeholders and reviews of disability and employment services.
- As part of the 2024–25 Budget, the Government has provided additional funding of \$227.6 million over 4 years (from 2024–25) to ensure successful implementation.
- Further information on the new program is provided in QB25-000052.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****BEDFORD****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to ensure people with disability employed by Bedford Group are supported during this time?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Albanese Government applauds the work the Malinauskas Government has done to secure a \$15 million support package to protect the livelihoods of hundreds of South Australians living with a disability.
- The depth of the financial crisis that Bedford has found itself in is deeply worrying.
- Bedford, as a registered NDIS provider, has and continues to receive substantial Commonwealth funding. We understand the employment opportunities provided by Bedford are highly valued by supported employees and their families and the South Australian community.
- The Government is monitoring the situation closely.
- NDIS participants can also work with their local area coordinator, planner or support coordinator if they have any concerns.
- More broadly, my Department is considering next steps for the supported employment sector.
- We are now mid-way through a public consultation process which will inform future policy development.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, How many supported employees would a closure affect?***

- Bedford currently employs 1,400 people, 870 of which are supported employees (i.e. those who use NDIS funding for on the job support).

***If asked, When did the Government become aware of this?***

- Government officials have been in discussions with Bedford since early June 2025, with a focus on NDIS pricing. The risk of closure became evident over time.

***If asked, why didn't the Australian Government offer financial support so that Bedford could continue to operate?***

- This is a complex matter, and it is really for those in charge of Bedford/the administrator to work through its financial position and take appropriate operational decisions.
- As I've said, Australian Government agencies will do everything they can to support Bedford's employees and NDIS participants through the range supports that are available to all organisations facing similar challenges.

***If asked, What is the Government doing to ensure people with high support needs have the opportunity to work?***

- The Australian Government has a strong focus on employment for people with disability. The Government is focussed on long term, structural reform to support the disability employment sector.
- As part of the 2023-24 Budget, we invested \$52.7 million to uplift the supported employment sector, including \$29.5 million to establish a Structural Adjustment Fund (the Fund).
- The Fund is supporting projects that increase the range of job opportunities and pathways into open employment for people with disability with high support needs.
- Broader disability employment reforms also have a strong focus on better supporting people with high support needs.
- Inclusive Employment Australia, which will replace the current DES program on 1 November 2025, will expand current eligibility settings and be open to people with an assessed work capacity of under 8 hours.
- This change means that people with higher support needs, including those working in supported employment, will soon be able access additional supports to prepare for, find and maintain work, and grow their career in open employment settings.

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- Inclusive Employment Australia will include a range of specialist providers with proven experience in working with specific cohorts, including people with intellectual disability.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

- No new media reports have occurred since late July 2025 on Bedford Group circumstances.
- On 27 July 2025, South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas said a "comprehensive" rescue plan has now been developed to "stave-off" the organisation going into administration.
- The support package is a \$15 million loan in exchange for the state government taking ownership of one of Bedford's supported accommodation sites, which is said to be worth \$12 million.
- "It was not an acceptable proposition from the South Australian government's perspective that Bedford would go into administration this morning," Mr Malinauskas said.
- On 24 July 2025, numerous reports began in mainstream and South Australian media outlets reported Bedford was expected to go into voluntary administration on Sunday 27 July 2025, which would directly impact around 1400 workers.
- News reports state that the South Australian Government's \$15 million loan to Support Bedford operations has stopped the organisation from entering voluntary administration.
- Bedford CEO Myron Mann resigned on Sunday 27 July 2025 and a change of management was required.
- Some reports note that Bedford has received around \$43 million in NDIS funding since April 2024.
- Public commentary on the closure emphasises the need for continued support of individuals and families impacted.
- Most articles indicate NDIS pricing is the problem, and the need for reform.
- For example, the Courier Mail states: *"Dr Martin Lavery, a founding member of the NDIS Board, and current CEO of disability services provider Aruma, blamed "flawed" NDIS pricing as the reason for the company's downfall."... "This crisis in disability employment could easily have been avoided had the NDIA moved to correct flawed price calculations sooner and been responsive to warnings from the not-for-profit sector that price faults would lead to charity collapses."*
- 7 News interviewed impacted employees on 25 July 2025 about the impact of the closure.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- Bedford Group is a large, supported employment provider based in South Australia.
- In late May 2025, Bedford wrote to Minister Butler raising concerns with current NDIS pricing and requesting that the July 2025 NDIS Annual Price Guide review include a one-off payment to providers, equal to at least 14-15% of their annual total funding.
- In mid-July 2025, the Department was made aware that Bedford expected to cease providing services on or about 18 July 2025, should Government intervention not be provided.
- Bedford has been engaging with the South Australian (SA) government and on 10 July 2025, the SA Acting Treasurer, the Hon Andrea Michaels MP, wrote to Minister Butler seeking Commonwealth agreement to partner with SA in providing financial assistance to Bedford.
- As at 21 August 2025, the Commonwealth has declined to provide financial assistance.
- The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, the Department of Social Services, the National Disability Insurance Agency and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission are monitoring this situation.
- It is understood that a restructuring plan for Bedford Group will be delivered to the South Australian Government and the Commonwealth in late September 2025. Recommendations for funding support from the Commonwealth may be included in the plan.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to ensure people with disability with high support needs are supported to work in inclusive and supported workplaces.

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Government invested \$52.7 million over four years to assist the supported employment sector to evolve and offer a wider range of employment opportunities, and provide people with disability with access to advocacy and information about employment rights and options.
- The Government is committed to ensuring people with disability with high support needs continue to receive support to work. This includes:
  - **Structural Adjustment Fund** which will increase the range of employment opportunities and pathways available to people with high support needs through investing **\$29.5 million in 63 projects** across Australia;
  - **Disability Employment Expos** which will allow people with disability and their families to explore new employment supports and connect with local employers through investing **\$1.8 million**; and
  - A new, targeted **Disability Employment Advocacy and Information program (Advocacy program)** for people with high support needs and their families and carers to assist them to better understand their rights and options at work through investing **\$9.8 million**
- Commencing in November 2025, Inclusive Employment Australia, the new specialist disability employment program will include people with 8 hours or less work capacity which can include supported employees in inclusive employment.
- An additional 15,000 people are expected to benefit from this support each year and importantly, this responds to a key Disability Royal Commission recommendation regarding supported employment.
- Consultation is also underway to determine next steps following the Royal Commission's recommendations regarding supported employment. This is will continue throughout 2025 to allow for engagement on the ideas and issues raised.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS: What is the government doing to support people with disability who are working for \$3 per hour wages?**

- Work is underway to increase the range of high quality, well-paid employment opportunities available for people with disability.
- This includes the Government investment in the Structural Adjustment Fund which is enabling supported employment services and social enterprises to evolve their business models to better meet community expectations, including by paying higher wages.
- My Department is currently consulting on the future of the supported employment sector. The Government is interested in understanding the views of the community, service providers, people with disability and their families to inform how people with high support are provided choice and employment opportunities.
- Supported wages are authorised through the Supported Wage System (in both open and supported employment settings), and through special classifications under the Supported Employment Services Award.
- The independent industrial relations tribunal, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) is responsible for making, reviewing, and varying modern awards, including setting wage rates and classifications, through consultation with affected parties.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****End to sub-minimum award wages and the Disability Royal Commission**

- The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (the DRC) made a number of recommendations in response to information received about Supported Employment.
- Recommendation 7.30 is to *Support the transition to inclusive employment*. The Australian Government response agreed to 7.30 in principle.
- Recommendation 7.31 is to *Raise Sub-Minimum Wages*, including recommending the Commonwealth develop a model and pathway to lift minimum wages to employees with disability to 100 per cent of the minimum wage by 2034.
- Recommendation 7.32 is to *End Segregated Employment by 2034*. The DRC recommended introducing a National Inclusive Employment Roadmap to implement a transformation of ADEs to social firm models that provide open workplaces, as well as to eliminate subminimum wages by 2034.
- This last recommendation was provided by four of the six Commissioners. Two commissioners did not support the recommendation.
- The Australian Government response to both 7.31 and 7.32 was 'Subject to Further Consideration', noting consultation would be required.

**Previous reforms to supported employment**

- The Government worked with states and territories to develop a Supported Employment Plan (the plan). The plan includes a range of practical initiatives and actions, with a specific focus on employment for people with disability with high support needs. The plan was developed in 2023 and updated in November 2024 to include new actions and initiatives.
- There are around 145 organisations providing supported employment to around 15,150 people with significant disability.
- Many employees and their families derive benefits from these jobs. However, supported employment services are dealing with 3 main challenges:
  - pressure from the community to increase wages;
  - pressure from the community to move away from segregated settings; and poor commercial viability.

**OFFICIAL**

**OFFICIAL****DES PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY FRAMEWORKS****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to improve the quality of disability employment services for people with disability?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Improving the quality of Disability Employment Services (DES) has been a focus in the current program and is central to the design of the new Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) program scheduled to commence on 1 November 2025.
- Extensive participant consultation was completed to get their views on what high quality employment services looked like and were incorporated into the Quality Framework for the current program and the design of the new program.
- The DES Quality Framework is now incorporated into a new program Performance Framework and sets out the Australian Government's expectations for both service standards and the achievement of participant employment outcomes.
- Under the Quality Framework, the rights, goals, and support needs of people with disability who are supported by the DES program are paramount as they should be.
- Both Frameworks ensure that providers are consistently focused on driving meaningful and sustained improvements in delivering employment services.
- Quarterly provider performance scorecards showcase how providers are doing against the Quality and Effectiveness measures and are available on my Department's website.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, how have participants shaped the DES Performance and Quality Framework?***

- Participants have been at the centre of the development of these frameworks.
- My department published a Quality Framework discussion paper which was open to all Australians.
- They have consulted with Disability Representative Organisations and held feedback sessions with over 50 DES participants to test the participant scorecard.

***If asked, what is the purpose of the DES Performance Scorecards?***

- The scorecards ensure 250,000 current DES participants, any future DES participants, their families, and carers, can make informed decisions about their preferred DES provider.

***If asked, how are providers ranked or assessed?***

- The Quality performance measures assess the quality of services delivered by providers in accordance with the Quality Framework and includes participant rights, understanding quality, provider capability and compliance.
- The performance measure for effectiveness is measured by comparing actual results achieved by providers against a set of benchmarked expected outcomes.
- Benchmarks are specific to each provider and consider a range of caseload characteristics including disability type and the amount of time a participant has been unemployed.
- Providers are given a rating of either 'improvement required,' 'meets expectations,' or 'exceeds expectations' for each measure.
- Performance is measured over a rolling 12-month period.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****DES Quality Framework**

- The DES Quality Framework was implemented in July 2023 and includes four elements:
  - Participant Rights – Participants understand their rights and responsibilities as DES participants, and the role of DES providers in helping them access supports available to enable them to improve their employability and achieve positive employment outcomes.
  - Understanding Quality – DES providers understand participants' needs and support participants to build capacity and achieve their employment goals and aspirations. DES providers understand the local labour market and the needs and expectations of employers, and work with employers and community services to effectively support participants.
  - Provider Capability – DES providers have a continuous improvement culture with appropriate policies, systems, and processes, together with staff and management capabilities to deliver quality services and manage risk.
  - Compliance – DES providers use existing compliance and assurance processes and associated outcomes to proactively support quality service delivery and continuous quality improvement.

**DES Performance Framework**

- The DES Performance Framework incorporates the Quality Framework and has a goal of delivering 4 outcomes:
  - Empower participants, their families, and carers to achieve better quality outcomes with providers.
  - Enable employers to make informed choices on the providers they choose to work with.
  - Enable Government to assess and manage the performance of providers and transparently communicate the quality of DES program services.
  - Drive continuous improvement of provider performance and service quality.

**Differences from DES Star Ratings**

- DES Star Ratings was the previous DES Performance measure. It has been replaced following errors in the code.
- The new Performance Framework (the Framework) is simpler, more transparent and aims to improve provider performance. It aims to encourage collaboration, not competition, among providers to meet the needs of employers and participants.
- The Framework measures providers against the Quality and Effectiveness measures in their Grant Agreement, whereas Star Ratings just measured employment outcomes.

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**OFFICIAL****User testing the Performance Framework**

- Between August 2024 and October 2024, the department visited 9 DES provider sites and held detailed qualitative feedback sessions with over 50 DES participants to test iterations of the participant-facing scorecard.
- The feedback sessions included specific consultation with regional and First Nations participants, participants with mental health conditions, and people with intellectual disability.
- The design and information on the final participant-facing scorecard uses feedback received from participants, their carers, and advocates.
- This feedback included simplifying the presentation of the scorecard over several iterations to remove lengthy text and duplicate content.
- The language used in the scorecard was also simplified to promote participant understanding.
- The participant-facing scorecard moves away from descriptive ratings (exceeds expectations, meets expectations, needs improvement) to a visual representation of the ratings.
- Further work is underway to incorporate the participant voice as a separate measure of provider performance into Inclusive Employment Australia.

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**OFFICIAL****INCOME APPORTIONMENT****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing in response to Income Apportionment, as identified in the Commonwealth Ombudsman's public statements "*Lessons in lawfulness*" and "*Accountability in Action*"?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Income apportionment is a historical practice which applied to individuals prior to December 2020 who received both income support and employment income over their instalment periods. It is not a method used to calculate income support payments today due to changes in the legislation in December 2020 that simplified income reporting.

**Post-Chaplin decision holding line**

- The Government is aware of the decision of the Full Federal Court in the matter of Chaplin, which was handed down on Tuesday 15 July 2025.
- My department and Services Australia are carefully considering the decision and will provide advice to Government as soon as possible. It would be premature to make any further comment at this time.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:****Income apportionment debt recovery pauses**

- In October 2023, Services Australia paused the recovery of debts potentially affected by this issue. Additional potentially affected debts were identified and paused in April 2024.
- This pause on recovery of potentially income apportionment related debts applies to approximately 148,000 debts.
- This does not mean these debts have been waived, only that recovery has been paused.
- Services Australia has written to affected people whose debt recovery has been paused.
- People concerned about their debt can contact the Services Australia's income apportionment line on 1800 560 870.

**Re-pause of previously recommenced internal reviews, explanations of decision and raising of pre- December 2020 employment income debts**

- From April 2024, Services Australia recommenced certain activities be paused due to income apportionment, where appropriate, in a staged manner including formal reviews and explanations of decisions.
- This was in response to the Commonwealth Ombudsman's recommendations in their 2023 reports, *Lessons in Lawfulness* and *Accountability in Action*.
  - These reports emphasised the need for my Department to come to a firm legal position and restart debt activity in a timely manner.
  - My Department had done this, in consultation with Services Australia, the Ombudsman, and stakeholders.
- However, to minimise the potential future impact of an adverse decision in the Federal Court on individuals, Services Australia redirected resources to other work until the appeal is resolved (effectively re-pausing internal reviews, explanations of decisions and raising of new debts potentially affected by income apportionment).
- People can request their review continue if they need their matter finalised now.
- As at 29 June 2025, Services Australia have actioned 57 requests to progress review matters that were previously paused, since this redirection of resources.

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**OFFICIAL*****If asked - Is this Robodebt?***

- Income apportionment is not Robodebt.
- It was a reasonable method of assessing a person's need for Government support in a given fortnight.
- It was a misunderstanding of how the law applied.
- It went unnoticed and unchallenged for decades, until being raised with the Government in late 2020.
- It was based on clear evidence of employment income, typically from fortnightly payslips shared by individuals with Centrelink.
- It was not a scheme to increase debt recovered from social security recipients. In fact, some people were better off because income apportionment was used to calculate their debt.

***If asked - How does income apportionment work?***

- In simple terms, where Centrelink fortnights did not align with employer pay cycles, income was apportioned over the Centrelink fortnightly period using payslips and other evidence to calculate a daily income amount. That daily income amount was then applied proportionally across two or more Centrelink fortnights to align with the individual's payslip. This practice was used for multiple decades.
- Apportioning income across multiple Centrelink fortnights could cause **over or under payments**.
- This practice was not supported by the *Social Security Act 1991*.
- The rules changed in December 2020. The 2020 reform significantly improved the reporting and attribution of employment income and therefore income apportionment has ceased and is no longer used by Services Australia.

***If asked – How many historical debts are potentially affected by income apportionment?***

- At least 5.5 million debts held by 3 million people, totalling \$4.4 billion, may potentially be impacted by income apportionment.

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- This estimate does not include:
  - Debts attributed to deceased persons.
  - Debts that have been overturned in full.
- This estimate reflects debts that may be impacted by income apportionment. It is not possible to know whether a debt is affected by income apportionment without a manual investigation of the debt.

***If asked – What can I do if I have problems repaying a debt?***

- Anyone with a Social Security debt who is experiencing difficulty in repaying their debt is encouraged to contact Services Australia.
- Customers can self-manage their debt repayments through contacting Services Australia, or online through their Services Australia online account or 'Money You Owe' app.

***If asked - Why was sampling undertaken?***

- My Department wrote to Services Australia on 14 July 2023, requesting a sample of income apportioned debts to understand the extent and impact of income apportionment.
- Sampling has confirmed that without income apportionment being applied, debts would still exist in over 90 per cent of cases.
- The results of this sampling have been released under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (refer Background/Key Facts for high level overview).

***If asked - How long has the Department been aware of this issue?***

- This issue was first raised with my Department in October 2020, although it was not identified as an income apportionment issue at that time.
- As the Ombudsman has recognised, there is a degree of legal complexity in this matter that necessitated significant work for my Department, Services Australia and legal providers.

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**OFFICIAL*****If asked – About individual debt matters***

- The Government has a responsibility, including to Australian taxpayers, to take steps to recover debts owed. This is done fairly and compassionately, with flexible debt repayment options available based on people's circumstances.
- I cannot discuss the details of individual cases.
- People concerned about their debt can contact the Services Australia income apportionment line on 1800 560 870.

***If asked – Why are two people in jail based on income apportioned debts?***

- Since 22 December 2023, no person remains in jail that had a conviction related to a debt which was impacted by income apportionment. Their release from prison was a matter for the relevant law enforcement authorities and was not related to income apportionment.
- The criminal offences involve situations where the convicted person intentionally and dishonestly failed to correctly declare their income from employment and continued to receive social security benefits to which they were not entitled; the prosecution is for fraud. Income apportionment may slightly impact the scale of the fraud, but usually only at the margins. Individuals can contact Services Australia to have their debt reassessed in order to understand the impact income apportionment had on the quantum.
- Prosecutions often involve tens of thousands of dollars. In these two cases, one conviction related to around \$60,000 of fraud and the second related to over \$120,000 of fraud. This is more than a hundred thousand dollars which the person intentionally obtained in circumstances where they knew that they were not entitled to receive that money.
- People are only referred by Services Australia to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP) for serious cases that are supported by a brief of evidence, in accordance with the prosecution policy of the Commonwealth.
- A prosecution results in a conviction because the nature of the offending is so significant. People are never referred to the CDPP for merely getting an overpayment.

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- Services Australia is working closely with CDPP to establish how many past matters may be impacted by income apportionment.

***If asked – How are other cases being handled where there has been a conviction and the debt is affected by income apportionment?***

- For current matters, the CDPP:
  - ceased issuing criminal charges in briefs of evidence referred to it where debts had been calculated using income apportionment
  - initially paused affected cases before the Court, and
  - discontinued affected cases once advised by Services Australia that it would take some time for Services Australia and my department to settle the correct method of debt calculation.
- For past cases, the CDPP:
  - wrote to individuals identified by Services Australia who had active orders (e.g. 'suspended sentences' or recognisance release orders) to advise them that their debts were impacted by the income apportionment issue; and
  - will work closely with Services Australia and my Department to manage disclosure obligations as past prosecutions affected by income apportionment are identified. The CDPP will then commence informing impacted individuals and/or their legal representative.

***If asked – Why have criminal prosecutions been dropped because of income apportionment?***

- The CDPP has discontinued current prosecutions, in accordance with the Prosecution Policy of the Commonwealth.
- Given the uncertainty around how to recalculate affected debts, prosecutors are not able to accurately advise the defence and the court of the quantum of the debt alleged as part of the alleged offending.
- In the absence of the precise quantum of the debt alleged, the CDPP has discontinued current prosecutions involving income apportionment.

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***If asked – What is the effect of the income apportioned debt on convictions? Will convictions be quashed?***

- Prosecutions are very serious and where they result in a custodial sentence this is because the nature of the offending is so significant. People are never referred to the CDPP for overpayments alone.
- The CDPP cannot definitively determine whether any individual has been wrongfully convicted until: (a) Services Australia identifies the individuals that are impacted by income apportionment; and (b) has recalculated the debts that were the subject of prosecution.

***If asked – Has anyone come forward to query whether their conviction was affected by unlawful income apportionment?***

- The CDPP has received queries as to whether their convictions were affected.

***If asked – If a convicted person's debt was higher after being recalculated, would the case be re-prosecuted?***

- If a person has been convicted and the quantum of the debt subsequently increases, the CDPP would not re-prosecute for a higher amount.

***If asked – How can people appeal their criminal convictions?***

- Individuals that wish to appeal their criminal convictions would need to do so in accordance with the laws of the relevant State or Territory in which the conviction occurred. These laws vary.

***If asked – If there are costs associated with seeking legal advice, who would bear those costs?***

- Generally, individuals seeking legal advice bear these costs, noting legal aid or pro bono services may be available.

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**BACKGROUND:** The Commonwealth Ombudsman has completed 2 own motion investigations into Income Apportionment.

- On 2 August 2023 the Commonwealth Ombudsman released the first public statement titled '*Lessons in Lawfulness*' that summarised the outcome of the Ombudsman's first investigation into income apportionment.
  - This investigation focused on examining the legal framework for income apportionment.
  - This report made 4 recommendations, 2 comments and 1 suggestion.
  - The Department and Services Australia have either partially accepted or accepted all recommendations and suggestions (*refer Attachment A*).
- On 4 December 2023, the Commonwealth Ombudsman released the second public statement titled '*Accountability in Action*' that summarised the outcome of the Ombudsman's second investigation into income apportionment.
  - This investigation focused on the administration of income apportionment including engagement with customers, training and guidance to staff, as well as handling of complaints, internal reviews and AAT or Federal Court appeals.
  - This report made 8 recommendations.
  - The Department and Services Australia have accepted all recommendations (*refer Attachment B*).

#### **High-level outcomes of income apportionment sampling activity**

- Services Australia conducted sampling of 4,352 debt files potentially affected by income apportionment from August 2023 to March 2024. The sampling occurred across 2 activities.
- Of the 4,352 files reviewed:
  - 1,999 were 'undetermined' debts (i.e. potential debts that have not yet been raised).
  - 1,000 were determined debt outcomes (i.e. standard debts that have been raised).
  - 1,353 were related to AAT cases, court matters, or formal reviews (i.e. debts under contention, where additional information is on the record).
- The sampling of determined debt outcomes gives the best indication of the broad impacts of income apportionment, as they have already been investigated and raised for recovery.
- Of the 1,000 files reviewed, 970 related to employment income. Of these, 614 (63.3%) were found to be affected by income apportionment.
- Of these 614 files affected by income apportionment, 409 (66.8%), had sufficient information on file for recalculation.
- Where there was sufficient information on file, the debts were recalculated without using income apportionment.
- Of the 409 debts recalculated:
  - 29 (7%) resulted in the debt amount decreasing to zero or below (i.e. the person would not have had a debt if income apportionment had not been used).
  - 243 (59%) resulted in the debt amount decreasing, but a debt still being owed.

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- 126 (31%) resulted in the debt amount increasing.
- 11 (3%) resulted in nil change.
- Note: Services Australia did not reach out to employers or use bank statements to recalculate debts. Where information was unavailable for part of the debt period, the file was categorised as having insufficient information. These caveats impact the number of files that were able to be recalculated. The proportion of files able to be recalculated would likely increase if the debts were to be formally reviewed.

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**OFFICIAL****SUPPORT FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to support older Australians?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Government is committed to ensuring older Australians can age with dignity, security and support.
- We are delivering this by maintaining a strong safety net for those who need it, strengthening incentives for those who wish to work, and ensuring more seniors can access health concessions.
- Over 2.6 million older Australians receive the Age Pension. The Government estimates around \$65 billion will be spent on the Age Pension in 2025-26.
- Regular indexation ensures pensions keep pace with increases in the cost of living. Pensions will next be indexed on 20 March 2026.
- Enhancements to the Work Bonus from 1 January 2024 mean pensioners over Age Pension age can earn more from work without affecting their pension, with:
  - a permanent increase to the income bank balance from \$7,800 to \$11,800; and
  - a \$4,000 starting balance in their Work Bonus income bank instead of \$0 for all new pensioners over Age Pension age
- In 2022, the Government expanded access to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, easing cost of living pressures for seniors who do not receive the Age Pension.
- The Home Equity Access Scheme is a Government loan allowing Australians of Age Pension age – pensioners and self funded retirees – to supplement their income, secured by the equity in their home or other real estate assets. At 30 June 2025, the Scheme had around 17,000 participants.
- To support pensioners and income support recipients to downsize, on 1 January 2023, the Government extended the assets test exemption for principal home sale proceeds from a maximum of 12 months to a maximum of 24 months.
- The Government also ensured income on the exempt home sale proceeds is calculated using the lower deeming rate only for this period – currently 0.75 per cent.
- The Government kept the social security deeming rates frozen from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025 to ease cost of living pressures on pensioners and other recipients. The freeze has now ended, and the Government is gradually returning the deeming rates to normal levels.

**Contact Officer:** § 22  
**Phone:** § 22  
**Responsible Group:** System Strategy and Seniors  
 QB25-000051

**Date updated:**  
 29 September 2025  
**Date reviewed:**  
 29 September 2025

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****Why did the Government increase the deeming rates on 20 September 2025?***

- The most vulnerable pensioners (those with little or no income and assets) are not affected by changes to the deeming rates.
- As our economy recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 and Australians begin to feel the impacts of inflation easing, we're gradually returning the deeming rates to pre-pandemic settings – ensuring they reflect rates of return that pensioners can reasonably access on their investments.
- From 20 September 2025, a deeming rate of 0.75 per cent now applies to financial assets under \$64,200 for singles and \$106,200 for couples combined. Financial assets over this amount are now deemed at a rate of 2.75 per cent.
- Even with these increases, the deeming rates remain below historical pre-COVID averages.
- The Government remains committed to easing cost of living pressures for all Australians including through cheaper medicines, energy bill relief and tax cuts.

*Refer QB25-000046 for further points on deeming.*

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****Age Pension**

- The Age Pension qualification age is 67 years. To receive the Age Pension, a person must also satisfy the residence requirements and have income and assets below certain limits.
- As a result of indexation, on 20 September 2025, maximum pension rates increased **by \$29.70 to \$1,178.70 a fortnight for singles** and **by \$44.80 to \$1,777.00 a fortnight for couples combined**.
- These 2.7 per cent increases reflect the increase in the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index in the 6 months to the June 2025 quarter, which grew at a higher rate than the Consumer Price Index (1.6 per cent) in the same period.

**Providing financial encouragement to work through the Work Bonus**

- Under the Work Bonus, the first \$300 of work income a fortnight, in addition to the income free area, is not counted in the pension income test and does not reduce the amount of pension received. Pensioners are able to build up any unused amount of the \$300 fortnightly concession in a Work Bonus income bank.
- All pensioners over Age Pension age have access to the Work Bonus concession. This is primarily Age Pension recipients, but also includes some Disability Support Payment and Carer Payment recipients over Age Pension age.

As at August 2025, 3.5 per cent of age pensioners (around 92,960 people out of 2.67 million) with work income (i.e. employment income only, or self-employment and employment income) were taking advantage of the current Work Bonus concession. A further 44,420 Age Pension recipients were also benefitting from the Work Bonus and had self-employment income only – around 1.7 per cent of Age Pension recipients.

**Home Equity Access Scheme**

- From 20 September 2025, the maximum fortnightly pension plus loan payment is:
  - \$1,768.05 for singles.
  - \$2,665.50 for couples combined.
- From 20 September 2025, the maximum advance is:
  - \$15,323.10 for singles.
  - \$23,101.00 for couples combined.
- Participants can choose to receive fortnightly payments of up to 150 per cent of the maximum Age Pension rate, less any pension they already receive.
- Participants can also choose to receive up to 2 lump sum advance payments in any 26 fortnight period, to a combined total of 50 per cent of the maximum annual rate of Age Pension.
- Payments under the Scheme accrue compound interest, currently at a rate of 3.95 per cent per annum. The loan must be repaid on the sale of the securing property, or out of the participant's estate.
- A No Negative Equity Guarantee ensures no participant will need to repay more than the

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equity they hold in the property they used to secure their loan.

**Commonwealth Seniors Health Card**

- On 4 November 2022, the Government delivered on its election commitment to expand access to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC), by increasing income limits to \$90,000 for singles and \$144,000 for couples (combined).
- Since the new thresholds took effect, more than 44,000 self-funded retirees have been granted the CSHC who would not have been eligible previously (as at 1 August 2025).
- On 20 September 2025, the income limits for the CHSC increased to \$101,105 for singles and \$161,768 for couples (combined) due to annual indexation.

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**OFFICIAL****DEEMING****ISSUE**

What changes to the deeming rates occurred on 20 September 2025?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The most vulnerable pensioners and income support recipients (those with little or no income and assets) are not affected by changes to the deeming rates.
- As our economy recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 and Australians begin to feel the impacts of inflation easing, we're gradually returning the deeming rates to pre-pandemic settings – ensuring they reflect rates of return that pensioners can reasonably access on their investments.
- From 20 September 2025, a deeming rate of 0.75 per cent now applies to financial assets under \$64,200 for singles and \$106,200 for couples combined. Financial assets over this amount are now deemed at a rate of 2.75 per cent. Even with these increases, the deeming rates remain below historical pre-COVID averages.
- The Government has to ensure deeming rates are fair. If deeming rates were frozen further, income support recipients with investment income will receive a disproportionate concession compared to recipients with other forms of income, including employment income for working age people.
- In line with stakeholder feedback, future changes to the deeming rates will happen at the same time as the indexation of pensions and most allowances, on 20 March and 20 September each year.
- Changes outside of these times will only be considered in extenuating circumstances.
- In future, the Australian Government Actuary will take on the role of recommending deeming rates. They will advise government on the most appropriate rate, guided by the returns pensioners and other payment recipients can reasonably access on their investments.
- The Government will retain the power to make adjustments, including during exceptional circumstances or events.

**OFFICIAL****RECENT MEDIA:**

- There has been significant commentary in the media about the announcement of an increase to the deeming rates on 20 September 2025.
  - National Seniors Australia (NSA) said it recognised the government has attempted to cushion the impact by aligning changes with indexation to the Age Pension. It also said, “changes to deeming rates should be introduced in a measured, incremental, and transparent way.”
  - The Council on the Ageing (COTA) said the changes will give older Australians greater certainty to plan and budget.
    - COTA said, “staging the changes and coupling the introduction of the change with one of the largest pension increases in the past 60 years should offset the impact for many pensioners.”
    - COTA “will also be watching closely to ensure the government’s methodology for setting future deeming rates works for all older Australians - including those who are not digitally connected to online savings accounts.”
  - The Australian Financial Review said the alignment of deeming rate increases to payment indexation has “helped mask the impact”. It also stated that the government will then “wash its hands” for responsibility of the increase by handing responsibility to the Australian Government Actuary (AGA).
    - The announcement is that the AGA will recommend appropriate deeming rates. Responsibility for setting the rates will continue to rest with you as Minister.
  - The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) reported on the department’s publicly available impact analysis, in a recent article on the deeming changes.
    - After quoting various distributional impacts of the changes, the ABC noted “...this is all according to the department’s draft impact analysis, which wasn’t finalised or assessed by the federal Office of Impact Analysis before the government announced the changes in August.”

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- Deeming provides a simple and fair way to assess income from financial assets for social security purposes. The deeming rates assume an income support recipient earns a certain investment return on their financial assets. Actual investment income is not assessed, and any returns a person earns above the deeming rates has no effect on their payment rate.
- Financial assets include all cash, bank accounts, shares and, for people over Age Pension age, most forms of superannuation.
- Deemed income is calculated for all income support recipients with financial assets, and can affect the rate of all payment types. Around 59 per cent of people on a rate of payment affected by deeming are Age Pensioners.
- There are two deeming rates, which apply to financial assets above and below certain thresholds.
  - The lower deeming rate applies to the first \$64,200 of a single recipient's total financial assets, and the first \$106,200 of a pensioner couple's total combined financial assets.
  - The upper deeming rate applies to any financial investments above these thresholds.
  - The deeming thresholds are indexed on 1 July each year in line with growth in the Consumer Price Index.
- The deeming rates are set at the discretion of the Minister for Social Services through a legislative instrument.
- The deeming rates were frozen for three years, from 1 July 2022 until 30 June 2025. A two-year freeze from 1 July 2022 was a first term election commitment of the Government. The freeze was extended for a further year in the 2024-25 Budget.



**OFFICIAL****SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENT ACCURACY, DEBT AND COMPLIANCE****ISSUE**

What is the Government doing to ensure the accuracy of social security payments?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Government takes its responsibility for upholding the integrity of Australia's social security system seriously, including providing reliable and accurate support to people in Australia who are facing hardship when they need it most.
- As a Government, we focus on identifying measures that preserve and sustain the integrity of our nation's social security system and protect those most in need.
- Our focus on payment accuracy, recovery of debts and reviews is supported through improved education for income support recipients on their income reporting obligations and use of technology.
- The Government has a responsibility, including to Australian taxpayers, to take steps to recover debts owed. We do this fairly with flexible debt repayment options available based on people's circumstances.
  - We understand that some people face special circumstances. This includes situations where the person is experiencing family or domestic violence, is in financial hardship, or where there are other indicators of vulnerability.
- Anyone who owes a debt and is experiencing difficulty with repayments is encouraged to contact Services Australia to discuss their individual circumstances. They can do this on the dedicated debt phone line (1800 076 072).
- Services Australia also has social workers who can assist if someone is struggling financially. An appointment to talk to a social worker can be arranged by contacting Services Australia on an individual's normal payments line.

**OFFICIAL*****If asked – what is the Government doing in relation to the Royal Commission Recommendations?***

- Refer to **QB25-000013** for detail on the Robodebt Royal Commission Government response.

***If asked – what is the government doing in relation to debt raising and recovery in disaster affected areas?***

- The Government is committed to helping those who have been affected by disasters.
- Flexible debt repayment choices are available for people living in disaster declared Local Government Areas (LGAs). This will allow people impacted by the disaster who are repaying a debt, to adjust or pause their repayments for up to 3 months.

***If asked - how is the Government preventing payment inaccuracy and debt***

- Services Australia makes use of technology such as SMS text reminders, information on customers' MyGov accounts, and data matching to alert a customer to information discrepancies so they have an opportunity to correct the information, which could otherwise lead to a debt.
- Single Touch Payroll (STP) data is being provided to Services Australia by the Australian Taxation Office and is being used to prefill employment earned income details to make reporting easier.

***If asked – Has the Government implemented the recommendations of the ANAO Report into the Accuracy and Timeliness of Welfare Payments?***

- The Government acknowledges the importance of the Accuracy and Timelines of Welfare Payments report released by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) in August 2023.
- The Government is focused on ensuring social security and family payments are accurate and that recipients are paid correctly and in a timely way.
- The Department worked with Services Australia to implement the recommendations from the ANAO's report has finalised closure packs to document the work undertaken.

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- The Department works closely with Services Australia to support the accurate delivery of payments and I am keen to see improvements to timing and accuracy of payments for vulnerable Australians.
- Any changes to improve the administration and service delivery of the social security and family payments system will be rigorously developed and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose in supporting vulnerable Australians.

***If asked - what is the Government doing in relation to debt raising and recovery for those experiencing financial difficulties?***

- We understand that some people face special circumstances. This includes situations where the person is experiencing family or domestic violence, is in financial hardship, or where there are other indicators of vulnerability.
- Anyone who owes a debt and is experiencing difficulty with repayments is encouraged to contact Services Australia to discuss their individual circumstances. They can do this on the dedicated debt phone line (1800 076 072).
- Services Australia also has social workers who can assist if someone is struggling financially. An appointment to talk to a social worker can be arranged by contacting Services Australia on an individual's normal payments line.
- Customers can also self-manage their debt repayments through contacting Services Australia, or online through their Services Australia online account or 'Money You Owe' app.

***If asked – what is the Government doing about income apportionment?***

- Refer to **QB25-000047** for detail on Income Apportionment.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- Debt pauses responding to natural disasters and COVID-19 led to an increase in unprocessed potential overpayments, known as debt shells.
- While social security payment accuracy has increased in the last two years, with overall annual payment accuracy increasing from 93.26 per cent in 2020-21 to 95.07 per cent in 2023-24, there is still further work to do. The current overall accuracy results are buoyed by sustained strong results for Age Pension and Disability Support Pension, while results for working age payments are generally lower.
  - Payment Accuracy Reviews for approximately 20,000 recipients are conducted annually by Services Australia to measure payment accuracy, using a random sample of the population for 13 different payment types.
- Services Australia is focusing on the most effective actions to address key payment risks such as JobSeeker Payment inaccuracy and is examining what impact the Single Touch Payroll (STP) could have in driving improvements to the accuracy of recipient reporting of employment income across all payments.
- STP employment income data is being prefilled to the recipient's record for them to confirm, making the process simpler for the recipient to complete.
- As at 31 July 2023, 95 per cent of employers have transitioned to STP. ATO advise this is the final implementation data, effectively representing the full implementation of STP.
- Services Australia also uses data matching with third parties, such as Births, Deaths and Marriages, allowing it to verify information which could affect payment accuracy, including residency, identity, income and assets.
- Automated/pre-programmed debt pauses no longer apply. From August 2022, Services Australia implemented flexible repayment arrangements that support people to self-manage debt repayments through the Money You Owe service, which can be accessed via MyGov.

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**OFFICIAL****COMMONWEALTH RENT ASSISTANCE****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to assist Australians with the costs of renting?

**KEY POINTS:**

- Rent Assistance is the most effective policy lever the Government has to target and provide immediate assistance for vulnerable households.
- The Government has provided additional Rent Assistance to social security recipients to help with the costs of renting.
- As at August 2025 there were around 1.4 million social security recipient households receiving Rent Assistance with their payments.
- In 2025-26, the Government expects to spend around \$6.7 billion on Rent Assistance to assist households on social security payments with the cost of renting.
- In September 2024, the maximum fortnightly rates of Rent Assistance were increased by 10%, to benefit around 1 million households.
- This followed an increase in Rent Assistance maximum rates of 15% a year earlier in September 2023.
- Through the actions of the government and regular indexation, the maximum rates of Rent Assistance have increased by almost 50% since March 2022.
- Nearly 1.1 million (74.8%) Rent Assistance households would be in rental stress if they did not receive Rent Assistance with their social security payments.
- In addition to Rent Assistance, the Government is addressing rental and housing affordability with longer-term solutions to increase the supply of housing. Some of these include:
  - \$9.3 billion of funding to State governments over five years through the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness (NASHH).
  - A \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) to support 30,000 new social and affordable rental homes over its first five years.
  - \$1 billion from the National Housing Infrastructure Facility will go to crisis and transitional accommodation.
- The Government is also working with states to achieve a nationally consistent policy on reasonable grounds for eviction and limiting rental increases to once a year.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS**

***If asked: The 10% increase in Rent Assistance maximum rates was around \$20, how is that sufficient to cover rent increases of \$100?***

- The Government increased Rent Assistance maximum rates by 10% in September 2024 and 15% in September 2023 both in addition to regular indexation increases.
  - Rent Assistance is only one policy lever. A key focus of the Government is improving the supply of affordable housing with policies such as funding agreements and targets to assist State governments, and the HAFF to fund social housing.

***If pushed further..***

- The median rent for a single person on Rent Assistance is \$480. The Rent Assistance maximum rate of \$215.40 makes up around 45% of this amount.
  - While this makes a substantial contribution, it is not intended to cover the full cost of rent. The recipient's social security payment also contributes to housing costs and is indexed regularly to keep pace with the cost of living.
- For many income support recipients, more CRA has worked in tandem with other cost of living relief such as the \$40 increase to eligible working-age and student payments, energy bill relief and cheaper medicines.

***If asked: Are the Rent Assistance increases causing inflation in rents that landlords charge?***

- This is unlikely to have a significant impact on rent increases for a few reasons:
  - Rent Assistance increases are targeted towards a subset of renters. Recipients make up around a third of renting households and Rent Assistance is a supplement to their incomes, making it a small proportion of overall rents.
  - Rent Assistance is not paid directly to landlords. There are also limits on the frequency with which landlords can increase rents.
  - Recipients have other household costs and are likely to spend only a small portion of additional income on housing.

**OFFICIAL*****Department of Treasury's incoming government brief mentioned a review of Rent Assistance. Does the Government intend to complete this review?***

- The Government increased Rent Assistance maximum rates by 15% in September 2023 and 10% in September 2024, in addition to regular indexation increases.
- This is a significant investment in assisting low income renters.
- The Government has committed to consider the rates of income support payments at every Budget update.
- The Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee (the Committee) was established to provide independent advice to government before every federal Budget on economic inclusion and tackling disadvantage. The Committee has an important role in providing advice to Government on barriers to work as well as the adequacy and effectiveness of payments.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is a non-taxable income supplement payable with income support payments, Family Tax Benefit Part A and means-tested payments for veterans.
- To receive CRA, a person must pay rent above a minimum level, called the rent threshold. CRA is calculated at 75 cents for per dollar above the rent threshold up to a maximum rate.
- The amount of CRA payable is also dependent on a recipient's family situation (single, partnered, number of dependt children, and for single people whether they are sharing).
- As CRA is paid along with a primary income support payment, it is means tested in the same manner as the income support payment it is attached to.

Primary payment	Household type	CRA maximum rates as at September 2025	2023 and 2024 increases to CRA maximum rate		
			September 2023 15% increase (not including indexation)	September 2024 10% increase (not including indexation)	Combined increases (not including indexation)
Rates paid with income support payments	single	\$215.40	\$23.60	\$18.80	\$42.40
	single, sharer	\$143.60	\$15.73	\$12.53	\$28.26
	couple, combined	\$203.00	\$22.20	\$17.80	\$40.00
Rates paid with Family Tax Benefit	single, with 1 or 2 children	\$253.12	\$22.20	\$22.12	\$49.84
	single, with 3 or more children	\$286.02	\$27.72	\$25.06	\$56.42
	a couple, with 1 or 2 children	\$253.12	\$31.36	\$22.12	\$49.84
	a couple, with 3 or more children	\$286.02	\$27.72	\$25.06	\$56.42

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**OFFICIAL****\*NEW\* - 2024–25 PAYMENT ACCURACY REVIEW PROGRAM (PARP)****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to ensure the accuracy of social security and family payments?

**KEY POINTS:**

- We are focussed on preserving and sustaining the integrity of our nation's social security system and supporting Australians when they need it most.
- Our focus on payment accuracy is supported by the Payment Accuracy Review Program (PARP). The PARP is the primary assurance mechanism for measuring the accuracy of social security and family payments. The results from the PARP are reported in the Department of Social Services Annual Report.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- Of the 13 payments sampled for the PARP in 2024–25, four payments met their respective benchmark. An additional two payments were not significantly below their target.
  - During COVID-19, payment accuracy across most payments declined, except Disability Support Pension which remained stable.
  - While overall payment accuracy has improved post-COVID-19, some payments are yet to return to pre-COVID performance.
- Trends in overall payment accuracy are largely driven by larger payments, such as Age Pension and JobSeeker Payment.

***If asked about claim timeliness?***

- Claim timeliness is the responsibility of the Minister for Government Services.
- Services Australia measures and reports publicly on the timeliness of claims processing.

***If asked, how is the government preventing payment inaccuracy and debt?***

- Services Australia makes use of technology, such as SMS text reminders, information on customers' MyGov accounts, and data matching to alert a customer to information discrepancies so they have an opportunity to correct the information, which could otherwise lead to a debt.
- Single Touch Payroll data is being provided to Services Australia by the Australian Taxation Office and is being used to prefill employment earned income details to make reporting easier.

***If asked, has the government implemented the recommendation of the ANAO Report into the Accuracy and Timeliness of Welfare Payments?***

- The government acknowledges the importance of the Accuracy and Timeliness of Welfare Payments audit report released in August 2023.
- The government is focussed on ensuring social security and family payments are accurate and individuals are paid correctly and in a timely way.

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- The Department of Social Services worked with Services Australia to implement the recommendations from the ANAO report.

**BACKGROUND:****Facts and Figures***Payment Accuracy*

- Payment accuracy reviews are conducted annually by Services Australia to measure payment accuracy, using a random sample of the population for 13 different payment types.
- There were 22,301 recipients reviewed as part of the Payment Accuracy Review Program in 2024–25.
- While overall payment accuracy has increased in the last two years from 94.03% in 2022-23 to 95.01% in 2024-25, it has stabilised when compared to the previous year, 95.07% in 2023-24.
- The current overall accuracy results are buoyed by sustained strong results for Age Pension and Disability Support Pension, while results for working age payments are generally lower.
- Of the 13 payments sampled for the PARP, four payments met their respective benchmark and an additional two payments were not significantly below their target.
- The four payments meeting benchmark in 2024–25 were:
  - Disability Support Pension (98.07%, benchmark is 95%).
  - Age Pension (97.12%, benchmark is 97%).
  - Family Tax Benefit (96.50%, benchmark is 95%).
  - Carer Allowance (95.89%, benchmark is 95%).
- The two payments not significantly below benchmark were:
  - Special Benefit (94.24%, benchmark is 95%).
  - Carer Payment (93.83%, benchmark is 95%).
- Age Pension (\$1.8 billion) and JobSeeker Payment (\$1.9 billion) were the payments with the highest contribution to overall payment inaccuracy, due to larger administrative outlays.
- The two risk categories with the highest contribution to overall payment inaccuracy of 4.99% were:
  - Cancellation of the recipient's payment for failing to comply with the requirements of the PARP which represents 1.8% payment inaccuracy risk and extrapolates to a potential value of \$2.5 billion.
  - Changes to the recipient's eligibility due to their employment status or earnings, which represents 0.95% payment inaccuracy risk and extrapolates to a potential value of \$1.3 billion.
- Payments may be varied for a number of reasons, including changes in a recipient's circumstances or error on the part of either the recipient or Services Australia.
- A summary of the payment accuracy results from 2022–23 is at **Attachment A**.

*Timeliness*

- In 2024–25, 13 out of 22 payments achieved their timeliness Key Performance Measure. An improvement of eight payments compared to the 2023–24 of eight payments.
- The nine payments below benchmark were:
  - Parenting Payment Single — 68.2% (benchmark is 90% in 21 days).
  - ABSTUDY — 53.6% (benchmark is 70% in 21 days).
  - Austudy — 74.8% (benchmark is 85% in 42 days).
  - Parenting Payment Partnered — 75.7% (benchmark is 80% in 28 days).

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- Crisis Payment — 85.9% (benchmark is 90% in 2 days).
- Age Pension — 76.0% (benchmark is 80% in 49 days).
- Youth Allowance (Student and Apprentice) — 76.6% (benchmark is 80% in 42 days).
- Disability Support Pension — 77.0% (benchmark is 80% in 84 days).
- Special Benefit — 77.0% (benchmark is 80% in 21 days).
- A summary of timeliness results from 2023–24 is at **Attachment B**.

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## Attachment A – Payment Accuracy results by payment

An extract of the Payment Accuracy results from the Quarter Four, 2024–25 Quarterly Performance Assurance Report (QPAR) is below.

Payment Integrity												
KPM 2.1 Accuracy of Income Support Payments												
DSS and Services Australia ensure that all social security payments are paid within agreed accuracy levels, collaboratively and in accordance with policy requirements and standards.												
Indicator (% Accuracy against KPM benchmarks – Overall [Total] KPM benchmark of 95%)	2022-23		2023-24				2024-25				T3 Performance Rating	KPM Benchmark G%/A%/R%
	T3 2022-23	FY 2022-23	T1 2023-24	T2 2023-24	T3 2023-24	FY 2023-24	T1 2024-25	T2 <sup>1</sup> 2024-25	T3 2024-25	FY 2024-25		
<b>Labour Market and Students</b>												
a) ABSTUDY	66.41	64.54	69.31	66.67	61.32	66.44	71.32	73.67	73.13	72.64	R	95%/85%
b) Austudy	70.11	72.87	76.53	72.64	77.25	76.34	76.71	76.25	74.41	75.78	R	95%/93%
c) Youth Allowance (Student and Apprentice)	77.75	75.01	75.54	80.80	78.18	79.11	83.46	80.52	82.15	81.99	R	95%/85%
d) Parenting Payment Partnered	76.29	75.97	77.36 <sup>1</sup>	81.11	81.40	81.08	72.82	80.12	79.01	77.32	R	95%/90%
e) Parenting Payment Single	95.48	92.26	92.13	90.47	93.44	92.39	93.65	91.58	92.73	92.67	A	95%/90%
f) JobSeeker Payment	87.50	86.53	89.67	89.17	90.20	89.89	89.19	87.99	85.07	87.35	R	95%/90%
h) Special Benefit	96.16	95.72	94.13	94.42	91.77	93.90	94.48	93.44	94.57	94.24	A	95%/93%
j) Youth Allowance (Other)	82.40	81.12	84.79	84.27	85.80	85.15	84.80	84.45	82.92	83.98	R	95%/85%
<b>Age, Disability and Carers; Family Assistance</b>												
k) Age Pension	97.25	96.95	96.85	96.49	97.34	96.97	97.38	97.47	96.60	97.12	A	97%/95%
l) Disability Support Pension	96.65	97.28	98.12	97.41	98.28	97.95	97.81	98.13	98.26	98.07	G	95%/93%
m) Carer Payment	94.05	92.61	92.55	93.37	93.69	93.45	92.81	94.42	94.25	93.83	A	95%/93%
n) Carer Allowance	95.68	94.91	93.65	94.14	95.13	94.49	95.97	94.85	96.75	95.89	G	95%/93%
o) Family Tax Benefit	94.67	93.86	93.82	96.74	95.95	95.54	96.87	97.06	95.66	96.50	G	95%/93%
<b>Payment aggregate TOTAL</b>												
<b>Total (aggregated assessable payments)</b>	94.69	94.03	94.71	94.68	95.42	95.07	95.30	95.20	94.58	95.01	G	95%/93%

Source: Payment Accuracy Review System

Note: <sup>1</sup> Results as at 22 July 2025 and based upon an overall completion rate of 98.12%

## Attachment B – Timeliness results by payment

An extract of the timeliness results provided by Services Australia from the Quarter Four, 2024–25 QPAR is provided below.

Timeliness													
KPM 1.1 Income Support Payments													
All customers are connected to an income support payment in accordance with policy requirements and standards.													
Indicator (% on time against KPM benchmarks)	2022-23 Q4 Jun 23	2023-24 Q1 Sep 23	2023-24 Q2 Dec 23	2023-24 Q3 Mar 24	2023-24 Q4 Jun 24	2024-25 Q1 Sep 24	2024-25 Q2 Dec 24	2024-25 Q3 Mar 25	2024-25 Q4 Jun 25	FY 2024-25 <sup>1</sup>	Q4 Performance Rating	KPM Benchmark <sup>2</sup> G%/A%/R%	Benchmark s
1.1.1 Labour Market and Students													
a) Crisis Payment	68.2	68.3	63.1	62.5	67.4	80.0	82.7	89.9	90.5	85.9	G	90%/80%	in 2 days
b) Mobility Allowance	95.9	99.0	97.5	92.8	45.2	93.4	99.7	99.7	91.0	95.5	G	85%/80%	in 42 days
c) JobSeeker Payment	73.8	55.8	54.6	53.6	85.4	91.4	87.1	83.2	82.7	86.2	G	80%/75%	in 16 days
d) Parenting Payment Partnered	63.9	20.3	22.1	20.5	70.0	90.1	83.9	66.9	63.0	75.7	R	80%/75%	in 28 days
e) Parenting Payment Single	54.6	86.4	38.7	20.5	54.8	82.9	72.6	63.9	53.9	68.2	R	90%/85%	in 21 days
f) Special Benefit	65.9	62.3	80.3	57.5	67.7	89.9	83.1	55.6	85.1	77.0	G	80%/70%	in 21 days
g) Youth Allowance (Other)	74.3	49.2	52.8	57.1	81.8	86.6	88.0	83.3	80.9	84.5	G	70%/65%	in 21 days
h) ABSTUDY	79.4	70.4	70.5	59.6	40.0	63.3	60.8	39.8	55.5	53.6	R	70%/65%	in 21 days
i) Assistance for Isolated Children	100.0	99.9	99.9	99.7	99.7	100.0	99.0	99.8	99.4	99.5	G	70%/65%	in 21 days
j) Austudy	76.8	77.7	31.1	27.0	14.7	67.2	96.2	87.6	61.1	74.8	R	85%/75%	in 42 days
k) Youth Allowance (Student and Apprentice)	52.9	67.3	14.8	28.8	22.2	75.7	97.4	81.8	64.1	76.6	R	80%/70%	in 42 days
l) Pensioner Education Supplement	49.1	77.7	88.4	83.2	63.2	81.8	84.4	70.7	68.1	75.6	A	70%/65%	in 21 days
1.1.2 Family Assistance													
a) Family Tax Benefit	41.3	54.7	46.8	49.7	54.0	94.6	95.8	94.5	93.9	94.7	G	80%/75%	in 31 days
b) Stillborn Baby Payment	79.4	80.5	80.5	85.8	83.8	82.9	84.8	83.6	88.7	85.0	G	80%/75%	in 14 days
c) Paid Parental Leave	46.4	60.1	72.5	63.3	76.0	97.0	97.9	97.8	97.5	97.5	G	80%/70%	in 21 days
d) Dad and Partner Pay	54.5	21.1	9.4	24.7	74.4	96.4	100.0	100.0	95.6	95.6	G	80%/70%	in 21 days
1.1.3 Age, Disability and Carer													
a) Age Pension	75.8	51.6	47.3	38.6	52.7	63.9	84.8	76.2	82.0	76.0	G	80%/70%	in 49 days
b) Carer Payment	59.5	56.1	61.0	42.6	60.9	95.0	91.6	92.4	94.7	93.5	G	80%/70%	in 49 days
c) Carer Allowance	60.7	61.4	67.3	63.0	77.1	97.1	93.9	94.6	96.8	95.7	G	80%/70%	in 49 days
d) Disability Support Pension (DSP)	78.2	59.2	50.5	39.1	47.3	62.8	71.4	82.2	95.2	77.0	G	80%/70%	in 84 days
e) Commonwealth Seniors Health Card	80.4	61.6	29.7	29.7	77.2	81.7	78.2	79.0	82.7	80.4	G	80%/70%	in 28 days
f) Low Income Health Care Card	71.8	20.3	16.9	37.8	89.7	94.7	89.2	78.1	66.5	81.4	R	80%/70%	in 28 days

Source: Services Australia administrative data (DSS extract) – CLK\_CLAIMS\_COMPLETED\_CUST\_CUR SAS dataset (from 1 July 2018)

Note: <sup>1</sup> Column refers to the period from 1 July 2024 up to 30 June 2025.

<sup>2</sup> The traffic light methodology indicates performance against agreed KPMs. The criteria for each of the performance ratings is outlined in the Service Arrangement for each payment.

**OFFICIAL****NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME****ISSUE**

The Albanese Labor Government is committed to a timely, trauma-informed, accessible Redress Scheme that supports and recognises survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

**KEY POINTS:**

- As at 5 September 2025, over 23,000 Redress outcomes have been advised to survivors, with payments representing \$1.73 billion.
- As at 5 September, 67,124 applications have been submitted to the Scheme. This exceeds the estimate of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse which estimated 60,000 applications over the life of the Scheme.
- The Australian Government funds 44 Redress Support Services (RSS) nationally.
- The Government also funds Knowmore to assist survivors to apply and understand available options (including civil litigation) under the Scheme. Knowmore delivers redress-specific financial counselling, and capacity building support for RSS.
- There are currently more than 600 institutions participating in the Scheme.
- The National Redress Scheme is committed to processing applications as quickly as possible, noting the significant and sustained increase in the number of applications submitted since March 2022 (following legislative amendments that eased some of the rules around accessing the Scheme).
- My department continues to prioritise application processing efforts and implementing efficiencies to increase outcomes for survivors.
- The Scheme is committed to transparency and providing publicly available data about its processes, changes and performance. A range of mechanisms are used for this, including the Scheme's website, Service Charter, and success measures.
- The Scheme has measures in place to safeguard the Scheme to ensure genuine survivors have access to Redress and deter those who seek to take advantage of the Scheme's low threshold.



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:****Safeguarding the Scheme*****If asked – What assurance measures does the Scheme have in place?***

- Fraud against the Scheme diverts resources away from supporting genuine survivors of abuse and delivering them an outcome as quickly as possible.
- The Scheme has a dedicated Assurance team who work with staff receiving and assessing applications and use specialist tools and expertise to identify assurance concerns.
- All assurance concerns and allegations of fraud are assessed to determine if formal investigation is appropriate and if so, referred to the department's Audit and Assurance branch.

***If asked – What is the Scheme doing to address the issue of claim farming?***

- 'Claim farming' is where vulnerable people are being targeted by advocacy organisations and/or law firms who are trying to achieve the highest possible financial benefit for their respective service, either through a civil claim, class action or Redress. Contact is often unsolicited, and applications may be legitimate or fraudulent.
- To address this issue, the Scheme's website contains information about these practices and how Scheme applicants can respond. The Scheme has also restricted the use of the Scheme name and logo without permission, to stop businesses representing themselves as connected to the Scheme.
- Several state and territory governments have also introduced legislation to address claim farming concerns, with criminal offences as well as professional consequences for solicitors in breach.
- If asked about the article on Strike Force Veritas published in the Sydney on 25 August, this is primarily related to state based civil compensation schemes.

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**OFFICIAL****Joint Standing Committee*****If asked – Is there an update on the Government's response to the Joint Standing Committee report?***

- I am aware that on 26 November 2024, the Joint Standing Committee on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Committee) released its final report, titled Redress: Journey to Justice.
- I thank the Committee for their work in examining the Redress Scheme and advocating for victim-survivors.
- The Government is considering the report including its 29 recommendations.
- For Noting: On 23 July 2025, the Committee was re-established for this term of Government (as moved by the Hon Tony Burke MP, Leader of the House).
- The Committee held a private briefing with Departmental officials on Thursday 4 September.

**Recent Media*****If asked – about institutions (including churches and Scout groups) having to sell assets including property to pay for the National Redress Scheme.***

- Institutions participating in the Scheme are responsible for the cost of redress to survivors where abuse was found to be occurring in their organisations.
- The Scheme regularly updates the status of current participating institutions on the Scheme's public website.

**Redress Support Services (RSS)*****If asked – Withdrawal of Victims Support Services from the RSS program in South Australia***

- On 2 July 2025, Victim Support Service (VSS) advised the department it had decided to withdraw from delivery of RSS in South Australia.
- The Scheme is continuing to work with VSS to manage VSS's transition out of the RSS program and ensure clients receive continuity of support.
- Relationships Australia South Australia Limited (RASA) has agreed in principle to a Deed of Novation, whereby the VSS grant agreement and remaining funding allocations will transfer to RASA.

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- The Deed of Novation is being progressed by DSS.
- VSS service delivery staff are likely to transfer their employment to RASA beginning 1 September 2025.
- VSS is currently supporting their clients with referrals to either RASA or another RSS of their choosing.

**Application Processing Timeframes*****If asked – why are survivors waiting so long for Redress?***

- I am aware survivors are waiting too long for Redress.
- My department is focused on increasing application processing efforts to increase outcomes for survivors.
- The Scheme continues to experience an increasing number of applications.
- Processing times can vary, depending on the complexity of an application, or whether an institution has joined the Redress Scheme.
- The Scheme continues to look for improvement opportunities at each step of the application process to maximise efficiency.
- Over the life of the Scheme, the average processing time from the date the Scheme first receives an application until notifying an outcome is around 14.3 months.

**Child Safety and Reporting*****If asked – about implementation of recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and their relation to recent criminal cases involving childcare workers***

- The National Office for Child Safety lead the development and implementation of several recommendations by the Royal Commission to strengthen child safety and wellbeing.

***If asked – what does the Scheme do when applications show that there are still children at risk***

- The Scheme treats the safety of children as a priority, and applications are assessed for all risks to child safety child safe risk.
- When there are reasonable grounds to suspect the safety or wellbeing of a child is at risk, the Scheme will make a report to the relevant state or territory authority.

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- All Australian Government entities must comply with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (CCSF), which sets minimum standards for creating and maintaining child safe culture and practices.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**KEY STATISTICS AS AT 5 SEPTEMBER 2025

- 21,698 applications have been finalised resulting in 19,420 payments, totalling approximately \$1.73 billion.
- The Australian Government is boosting assistance for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in 2025-26 with \$27.2 million in additional funding to support services for National Redress Scheme applicants.
- As part of this increase of funding, 44 Redress Support Services across Australia will share in an additional \$15.7 million this financial year, a 64 per cent increase from the previous year, to support more survivors through their redress journey. This additional funding will help services meet demand, reduce waitlists and extend this free support to more survivors of institutional child sexual abuse as they apply for redress.
- A further \$11.5 million will also go to extend survivor legal advice and support through Knowmore Legal Service. This funding will help Knowmore continue to deliver high quality support to applicants and respond to increasing application numbers and complexity.
- To date, 17 institutions are publicly named as declining to join, or being unresponsive to the Scheme:
  - Woodlands Golf Club (VIC)
  - CYMS Basketball Association (VIC)
  - Devonport Community Church (TAS)
  - Forrest Tennis Club (ACT)
  - Kenja Communication (ACT, NSW & VIC)
  - De La Salle Caringbah Junior Rugby League Football Club (NSW)
  - Darwin Cycling Club (NT)
  - Home Hill Cricket Association (QLD)
  - Reby Enterprises t/a Townsville Indoor Sports and Wildcatz Indoor Sports (QLD)
  - South Australian National Football League (SANFL) Umpires Association (SA)
  - New Norfolk District Football Club (TAS)
  - Knox Basketball Incorporated (VIC)
  - Christian Youth Camps (WA)
  - Eagle Vale St Andrews Junior Rugby League Football Club Inc. (NSW)
  - Morphett Vale Christian Community Church Incorporated (SA)
  - Munno Para City Soccer Club Incorporated (SA), and
  - Tingira Community Church (NSW)
- Institutions which fail to join the Scheme will be publicly named, be ineligible for Commonwealth grant funding and may be stripped of their charitable status.
- There are currently more than 600 institutions participating in the Scheme. In addition, Commonwealth, state and territory governments have taken responsibility for 144 individual institutions under Funder of Last Resort (FOLR) arrangements including 16 partly-participating institutions.
- Processing times can vary, depending on the complexity of an application, or whether an institution has joined the Redress Scheme.
- Over the life of the Scheme, the average processing time from the date the Scheme first receives an application until notifying an outcome is around 14.3 months which includes time outside the Scheme's with an institution for response or when an applicant is considering their options.

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**OFFICIAL****2025-26 BUDGET MEASURES****ISSUE****How is the Government supporting individuals and families in the 2025-26 Budget?****KEY POINTS:**

- In the 2025-26 Budget, the Government continues to support individuals and families who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged, our First Nations peoples and women and children leaving family, domestic and sexual violence. In the 2025-26 Budget, the Government announced the following measures:
- Extension to the Local Support Coordinator (LSC) Program - \$0.2 million in 2025-26
  - The program supports women who have experienced family and domestic violence by connecting them to the support services they need, including counselling, crisis accommodation, financial assistance or health and legal services.
  - This funding will be provided for the LSC program over 12 months to support the Australian Capital Territory's (ACT) Domestic Violence Crisis Service.
  - Since the program's commencement in 2015-16 to 30 December 2024 (the most current and complete reporting period), 263 individual clients have been supported by LSC in the ACT.
- Contribution to the Social Enterprise Loan Fund - \$1.2 million in 2025-26
  - The Government, complementing support from the Finance Sector and philanthropy, will provide \$1.2 million in 2025-26 to partner with White Box Enterprises on a Social Enterprise Loan Fund (the Fund) which is designed to give social enterprises access to low-cost finance to grow their businesses and support more disadvantaged Australians.
  - Loan sizes range from \$100,000 to \$500,000 and will focus on enabling greater social impact and job creation for people who face barriers to employment, while also supporting the growth and financial resilience of social enterprises.
  - The fund is \$5 million which requires a minimum of 12-20 loans to be distributed and loan terms of up to 7 years. The total size of the Fund is currently at \$4.2 million, including the Commonwealth's contribution of \$1.0 million and funding for operational costs have been provided by Westpac Foundation (\$500,000) and the Commonwealth (\$200,000).

**OFFICIAL****DSS PORTFOLIO 2025 ELECTION COMMITMENTS****ISSUE**

The Albanese Government is delivering on its important agenda for the Social Services Portfolio, prioritising the wellbeing of individuals, families and vulnerable members of the Australian community.

**KEY POINTS:**

- Commitments announced in the May 2025 election that are the responsibility of social services include:

**Boosting Innovative Perpetrator Responses** - \$8.6 million to support initiatives for perpetrators behavioural change as well as targeted approaches to identify and respond to high-risk perpetrators.

**Investigate concerns about the Australia-Korea adoption program - s 47E(d)** to investigate this program and report to the Minister.

**Supporting the Reverend Bill Crews Foundation** - \$10 million to support the critical work of the Foundation's frontline crisis centre to serve vulnerable Australians.

- The Government continues to deliver on measures previously announced.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:****Boosting Innovative Perpetrator Responses*****If asked, how is the Innovative Perpetrator Responses measure being delivered?***

- This builds on the \$27 million in funding already provided to states and territories under the Innovative Perpetrator Responses initiative to develop and deliver innovative approaches to address perpetrator behaviour.
- On 12 September 2025, I wrote to state and territory Women's Safety Ministers confirming an additional \$8.6 million in funding over two years has been committed to the Innovative Perpetrator Responses Initiative. My department is currently working with jurisdictions to identify evidence-based programs suitable for funding.
- The Innovative Perpetrator Responses measure will be delivered by state and territory governments under the *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement – Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other*.

***If asked, how is this funding different to the \$27 million in Commonwealth Government funding already provided under the Innovative Perpetrator Responses initiative?***

- Incidents of family, domestic and sexual violence, continue to be unacceptable, with female intimate partner homicides increasing over the past 2 years.
- Further investment in interventions targeting high-risk perpetrators is required to improve victim-survivor safety, hold perpetrators to account and reduce incidents of violence.
- This additional \$8.6 million of funding will specifically target interventions for high-risk perpetrators and young people using violence or at risk of using violence.
- Interventions may include intensive behaviour change programs and specialist early interventions for young people using or at risk of using violence.

**Investigate concerns about the Australia-Korea adoption program*****If asked, what is the status of the Australian Government investigation into historical adoptions from the Republic of Korea (South Korea)?***

- The Government has committed to the Department of Social Services conducting an investigation into historical adoption practice from South Korea.
- My Department is working across government, including with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Home Affairs and the

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Attorney-General's Department to inform the design of the investigation and support to adoptees and their families.

- On 29 August 2025, I met with adoptee community stakeholders to gather feedback on the design of the investigation as the initial step in consultations.
- I will provide details of the investigation in due course.

***If asked, how is the Government currently supporting affected Australians:***

- The Government acknowledges the potential lifelong consequences of poor adoption practices for intercountry adoptees and their families. My department funds the Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service (ICAFSS) to provide specialist support for intercountry adoption-specific issues.
- Adoptees and their families experiencing negative impacts arising from their adoption from South Korea can access ICAFSS by calling 1800 422 377 or via email at [icafss@rasa.org.au](mailto:icafss@rasa.org.au).
- Adoptees and their families are also encouraged to contact the state and territory authority through which their adoption was facilitated to receive additional support, request access to adoption files and discuss their adoption circumstances.
- My Department is engaging regularly with South Korean government authorities, including the National Centre for the Rights of the Child (NCRC), to eliminate obstacles for provision of appropriate post-adoption services, including access to adoption records and birth family search and reunion support.

***If asked, what is the Government's response to the South Korean Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings on historical adoptions from South Korea?***

- The Australian Government is aware that at as many as 5 Korean-Australian adoptees have received confirmation from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of its investigation findings of their case.
- The Australian Government has not been contacted by the TRC or the South Korean Government about the investigation, or TRC findings on any Australian submissions.
- The Government welcomed South Korean President Lee Jae Myung's 2 October 2025 apology for the suffering experienced by intercountry adoptees in the past.

***If asked, what is the number of Korean-Australian adoptees?***

- The estimated total number of Korean-Australian adoptees is approximately 3,600.

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- Families of Korean-Australian adoptees may also be affected.

***If asked, what was the Government's response to the 2005 Inquiry into the Adoption of Children from Overseas***

- The Government responded to the House of Representatives inquiry report in 2006.
- Many of the report's recommendations were addressed through the renegotiation of the *Commonwealth-State Agreement for the Continued Operation of Australia's Intercountry Adoption Program*, undertaken by the former Australian Central Authority (ACA), the Attorney-General's Department (AGD).
- The ACA function transferred to my Department in 2019. Since then, my Department has implemented further safeguards into the Commonwealth-State Agreement, which was renegotiated in 2019 and is currently under review.

**Supporting the Reverend Bill Crews Foundation**

***If asked, how will the commitment to the Reverend Bill Crews Foundation support the most vulnerable Australians?***

- Through a combination of caring services like food provision, social welfare and education support, the Reverend Bill Crews Foundation is helping address the cause and effect of homelessness and poverty, as well as unemployment.
- This commitment will help to build upon critical work providing immediate assistance, such as free meals, food hampers and accessible healthcare and help secure the Foundation's future.
- Individuals and families experiencing financial crises, including those affected by homelessness, rental stress, addiction, and Family and Domestic Violence across the Sydney regions will continue to be the beneficiaries of the Foundation's work.
- The Foundation's literacy programs for young people in New South Wales and the Northern Territory will also benefit from this commitment, where over 3,000 children have learnt to read.
- In 2023-24, the Foundation provided about 500,000 meals, distributed 25,000 food hampers, conducted 1,300 General Practitioner and dental appointments, with the support of 2,110 volunteers.
- The Foundations frontline crisis centre is one of only 2 accessible free medical and drop-in centres in Sydney.

**RECENT MEDIA:**

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**South Korea's president apologises on Facebook for poorly managed foreign adoption programs** (ABC News) 3 October 2025 [South Korea's president apologises on Facebook for poorly managed foreign adoption programs - ABC News](#)

South Korea's president has apologised on behalf of the country to South Koreans adopted abroad and their adoptive and birth families.

**South Korea's president has apologised to adoptees. They say his words are not enough** (The Age) 3 October 2025 [South Korea adoption program: Australian adoptees call for action after apology for human rights violations](#) Australian adoptees say South Korea must act to make it easier for adoption records to be accessed and families to reunite, after the country's leader apologised for human rights violations caused by its overseas adoption program.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:****Boosting Innovative Perpetrator Responses**

The innovative Perpetrator Responses Initiative is delivered as a component under the *Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence Responses 2021-30 Schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement – Affordable Housing, Community Services and Other*. It supports innovative approaches to address family and domestic violence perpetrator behaviour.

The October 2022-23 Budget provided \$25 million in funding (\$3.125 million per state and territories) over 5 years. All states and territories (states) signed the multilateral schedule for this funding (the last the states signed August 2023).

The 2023-24 Budget allocated an additional \$1.99 million in funding (\$0.249 million per states) to this measure. The revised multilateral schedule was executed in all states by February 2024. Each state and territory could use up to \$500,000 to conduct a scoping study to better understand perpetration interventions within their jurisdiction.

As at 18 September 2025, 20 projects have been approved which includes six scoping studies, 12 trials and two combined scoping studies and trials.

**Investigate concerns about the Australia-Korea adoption program**

The Government had limited involvement in intercountry adoption prior to the 1998 ratification of the Hague Adoption Convention. The New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice was responsible for the management of the South Korea Program in Australia from 1977, until the former Australian Central Authority (ACA), the Attorney-General's Department assumed primary responsibility for all of Australia's intercountry adoption programs in 2007. My department became the ACA in 2019.

The South Korean TRC was established in 2022 to investigate the adoption of children from South Korea to other nations (including Australia) between 1964 and 1999. The ACA is aware that as many as 10 Australian cases were submitted to the TRC. As many as 5 Korean-Australian adoptees have since received confirmation from the TRC of findings of the investigation of their case. The ACA is yet to be officially notified of the TRC findings on any Australian submissions. To date, there has been no contact between the TRC and Australian governments, and no allegations of wrongdoing on the part of Australia.

The TRC's March 2025 interim findings identified systemic fraud and abuse in the country's historical adoption program, resulting in human rights violations. There has been no response from the South Korean government to the TRC findings. The TRC has since been suspended indefinitely, with no announcement from the South Korean government about its future. Interim findings raise sufficient concerns about historical South Korean adoption practices for Australia to investigate local historical processes.

**Notes**

Following the 2025 Machinery of Government (MoG), previously announced measures that related to: Housing and Homelessness have been transferred to The Treasury.

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- Disability and Carers have been transferred to the Department of Health Disability and Ageing, with the exception of measures relating to Disability Employment Services.

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**OFFICIAL****ROBODEBT****ISSUE**

The Government Response to the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme.

**KEY POINTS:**

- I am aware of the filing with the Federal Court to re-open the Robodebt class action and appeal the settlement orders.
- The Commonwealth takes this appeal very seriously and has been fully engaged in the case.
- Noting the matter is before the Federal Court, is not appropriate for me to comment any further. Any questions should be referred to the Attorney-General's Department as the lead Commonwealth instructor.
- The Albanese Government released its response to the Robodebt Royal Commission on 13 November 2023.
- The Government agreed, or agreed in principle, to all 56 recommendations as part of the ongoing work to restore faith, integrity and trust in government and ensure that this gross betrayal to the Australian people never happens again.
- The Government has progressed work on the recommendations made by the Royal Commission, implementing the commitments outlined in the Response as quickly as possible.
- Many of the Royal Commission's findings align with the priorities and reforms the Australian Government took to the Australian people at the last election – rebuilding trust in government, investing in a capable public sector, delivering strong institutions and ensuring people are at the centre of service delivery.
- The Government has already embarked on a series of reforms to achieve these outcomes and is continuing with further reforms to ensure a failure like Robodebt can never occur again.
- The Government is fulfilling our promise to put people back at the centre of the work of government, and invest in better services for the Australian community.
- Throughout the Royal Commission we saw courage, leadership and ethics on display from victims, advocates and whistleblowers.
- To those who shared their stories with the Royal Commission – thank you.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- The Australian Government has carefully considered the Royal Commission's report and recommendations.
- The Government **accepts** (49) or **accepts in principle** (7) **all 56 recommendations** made by the Royal Commission.
- The commitments outlined in the Government response have been carefully designed.
- For some recommendations, the commitments outlined in the Government Response go further than the Commissioner recommended.
- Where a recommendation has been accepted in principle, the implementation activities outlined in the Response will be further informed by consultation to ensure lasting effectiveness.
- The Government is committed to a strong social security safety net and service delivery that puts people at the centre.
- The Government has fully implemented 42 of 56 recommendations. The majority of the remaining 14 recommendations are significantly progressed or in the final stages of implementation and 6 require legislation.
- The Government has embarked on a series of reforms to ensure a failure like Robodebt can never occur again.
- This work includes the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), the Australian Public Service Reform agenda, strengthening of Australia's whistleblowing framework and protections and the *Public Service Amendment Act (No. 2) 2024*.

*National Anti-Corruption Commission activities*

- On 6 June 2024, the NACC decided not to pursue Robodebt Royal Commission referrals, citing it would not add value to the public interest given the conduct of the 6 public officials in connection with the Robodebt Scheme has already been fully explored by the Robodebt Royal Commission.
- The NACC will continue to address the integrity issues raised in the final report, particularly in relation to ethical decision making, to ensure that those lessons are learnt, and to hold public officials to account.
- On 13 June 2024, the Inspector of the NACC, Ms Gail Furness SC, had received nearly 900 individual complaints about the decision by the NACC not to commence a corruption investigation into the referrals concerning 6 public officials from the Royal

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Commission into the Robodebt Scheme. Accordingly, she decided to inquire into that decision with findings being made public, in due course.

- On 30 October 2024, the Inspector of the NACC released her Report into the NACC's decision not to investigate referrals from the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme.
- The Inspector's report concluded that the NACC Commissioner engaged in officer misconduct as defined in section 184(3) of the *NACC Act*, being conduct that is not unlawful but arose from a mistake of law or fact.
- The Inspector made one recommendation: that the Commissioner delegate the function under s 41(5) of the *NACC Act*, that is, to reconsider whether or how to deal with a corruption issue, namely the referrals from the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme, to an appropriate person.
- The NACC has accepted that the decision should be reconsidered by an appropriate person.
- On 13 December 2024, the NACC issued a public statement appointing Mr Geoffrey Nettle AC KC to independently reconsider its decision relating to the referrals made to the NACC by the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme.
- On 18 February 2025, the NACC issued a further public statement that as a result of the decision made by Mr Geoffrey Nettle AC KC, on 10 February 2025, the Commission will investigate the 6 referrals it received from the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme.

#### *APS Commissioner Activities*

- The Public Service Amendment Act provides an express power for the APS Commissioner to investigate former agency heads for alleged breaches of the APS Code of Conduct and make determinations.
- The APS Commissioner was close to finalising investigations into former agency heads regarding their conduct on Robodebt. However, before the investigations could be concluded, some former agency heads argued that alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by former Agency Heads could not be investigated given the absence of express provisions in the *Public Service Act 1999*.
- To ensure full accountability for the Robodebt Scheme, legislation was introduced and received royal assent on 26 August 2024 and clarifies that former agency heads can be held to account for breaches of the Code of Conduct while they were an Agency Head, in the same manner as current and former APS employees.
- On 13 September 2024 the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) finalised its inquiries into alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by current and former agency heads and public servants.

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- On 10 October 2024, the Government introduced the *Oversight Legislation Amendment (Robodebt Royal Commission Response and Other Measures) Bill 2024*, which will impose stronger and more rigorous scrutiny on public service agencies.

***If asked, about recommendation 18.2 of the Royal Commission Report concerning debt raising practices***

- The Response outlines the Government's commitment to ensuring debt raising and recovery is undertaken in a timely, fair and respectful manner.
- We have accepted this recommendation in principle on the basis the Government will carefully consider options for legislative reform, including appropriate statutory limitation periods for the raising and recovery of social security debts to comprehensively address the issues identified by the Royal Commission.
- The previous 6-year limitation was complex and created ambiguity while in place. Simply re-instating the previous statutory provision will not provide the certainty the Royal Commissioner sought in making the recommendation.
- To wholly resolve the issues identified by the Commissioner, debt raising and recovery needs to be carefully reformed to ensure the settings are right, and the people who rely on the social safety net are not treated unfairly.
- The Department of Social Services and Services Australia are working collaboratively to implement the Response and the recommendations made by the Royal Commission, particularly on payment assurance and debt reforms.

***If asked, about income apportionment?***

- Refer to **QB25-000047** for detail on income apportionment.

***If asked, recommendations 19.3, 19.4 and 19.5 of the Royal Commission Report concerning lawyers and legal services***

- Recommendations concerned with the governance and professionalisation of the Department's in-house legal service were already or have since been actioned.
- The Legal Practice Manual issued by the department's Chief Counsel outlines the duties, obligations and expectations of legal staff in the Department and compliance is regulated through individual performance agreements.
- All legal staff have attended training sessions focused on the professional duties of government lawyers and will undertake similar training on an annual basis.
- Guidance concerning the status and finalisation of draft legal advice has been issued by the Chief Counsel. Recent updates to associated guidance from the Attorney

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General's Department have been broadly communicated and will be incorporated into that guidance.

***If asked, about recommendation 23.1 of the Royal Commission Report concerning structure of government departments***

- The recommendation has been accepted in principle.
- The Government agrees that portfolio structures should support the effective delivery of government services and programs.
- I will continue to work together with the Minister for Government Services to ensure the distribution of responsibilities between the Department of Social Services and Services Australia is clear.
- The Government will be guided by the Royal Commission's findings when considering the most optimal arrangement of functions and responsibilities between social policy agencies and Services Australia.

***If asked, about the implications for public servants, including any sanctions, such as individuals being stood down***

- The findings and referrals made by the Commissioner in the confidential chapter of the Report are not addressed in the Government's Response.
- The Commissioner created the confidential chapter so as not to prejudice the conduct of any future civil action or criminal prosecution.
- The Attorney-General confirmed on 7 November 2024 that the Government would propose to publish the confidential chapter. The Government sought the advice of the Commission and Mr Nettle on tabling the confidential chapter. It would not be appropriate to discuss the content of that advice. The publication of the chapter remains under consideration by Government.
- The Inspector of the NACC released her Report into the NACC's decision not to investigate referrals from the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme. The main issue which emerged from the material gathered during the investigation, was the actions taken by the NACC Commissioner following his declaration of a conflict of interest in relation to one of the referred persons.
- The *Public Service Amendment Act (No.2) 2024*, came into effect on 27 August 2024.
- The amendments give express powers to the Australian Public Service Commissioner to conduct inquiries and make determinations with respect to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by current and former Agency Heads.

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- These amendments are aligned to the broader Australian Public Service reforms around increasing accountability and meeting the public's expectations regarding the accountability of our most senior officials.
- On 13 September 2024, the Australian Public Service Commissioner handed down the report into the *Robodebt Centralised Code of Conduct Inquiry* (the inquiry).
- The inquiry found that 12 current and former public servants breached the public service code of conduct on 97 occasions.
- Questions about the code of conduct process and outcome of the inquiry should be directed to the APSC.

***If asked about cultural changes within the Department of Social Services since Robodebt ended***

- Since mid-2021, the Department has been focused on building a culture founded upon collaboration, contestability, curiosity and courage. This has included:
  - Deepening portfolio engagement and collaboration.
  - Strengthening the relationship with Services Australia.
  - Improving policy implementation which has included improvements to income reporting arrangements and a payment accuracy review.
  - Strengthened legal arrangements giving our lawyers greater influence, authority and visibility over the broad range of departmental functions.

***If asked about compensation for individuals impacted by the Robodebt scheme***

- After long and careful consideration, the Commissioner for the Robodebt Royal Commission reluctantly concluded to not recommend a compensation scheme to the Australian Government.
- The Commissioner noted it would be difficult to devise any set criteria that would apply across the board, because people were affected in such varying ways.
- The Robodebt class action was settled by a Deed of Settlement, approved by the Federal Court on 11 June 2021, which refunded Robodebts and interest to individuals affected.

***If asked about Gordon Legal filing with the Federal Court to re-open the class action and appeal the settlement orders***

- The Commonwealth takes the application made by Gordon legal very seriously, and has been engaging faithfully with Gordon Legal through the life of the matter.

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- It is long standing practice that the Commonwealth does not provide details relating to a specific claim due to privacy considerations, legal professional privilege and confidentiality obligations.

***If asked will the Commonwealth defend the matter?***

- The Commonwealth is current considering its position in line with our obligations under the *Legal Services Directions 2017*.
- It is not appropriate to comment any further, noting the matter is before a Federal Court.

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**OFFICIAL****DSS STAFFING NUMBERS****ISSUE**

What is the Australian Government doing to support the Department of Social services to ensure work streams and critical areas of service provision are maintained?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Strategic Commissioning Framework is part of the Government's commitment to reduce outsourcing and strengthen the capability of the APS. The framework's focus is on reducing inappropriate outsourcing of core work.
- As of 31 August 2025, the department workforce comprised of:
  - 2,894 APS staff (headcount) or 2,692.9 FTE, consisting of 2,819 ongoing APS staff, 75 non-ongoing APS staff.
  - Total workforce headcount was 3,105, including 211 Contractors (headcount).
  - The Machinery of Government changes resulted in 496 staff moving to Health, Disability and Ageing (417 on 31 July 2025 and 79 on 14 August 2025) and 74 moving to the Treasury (all on 31 July 2025).
- Contractor numbers (currently 211) have reduced by 49.5% since 2022 – 418 (30 June 2022), 386 (30 June 2023), 266 (30 June 2024), 259 (30 June 2025).
- As of 31 August 2025, 35.3% of the DSS workforce is located outside the ACT.
- As of 31 August 2025, 74 staff are SES, 1,073 are EL1-2, 1,707 are APS1-6 and 40 are graduates or trainees.

**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:**

- The Community Grants Hub staffing is 864.6 FTE as at 31 August 2025.
  - This is a decrease from 918.7 (30 June 2025), 946.0 (30 June 2024), but an increase from 774.7 (30 June 2023) and 767.3 (30 June 2022).
- Redress staffing is 458.4 FTE as at 31 August 2025.
  - This has decreased from 483 (30 June 2025), although an increase from 393.5 (30 June 2024), 280.6 (30 June 2023) and 265.8 (30 June 2022).
- Staff focussed on supporting Ending Gender Based Violence (now Family Safety Group) is 180.1 FTE as at 31 August 2025.
  - This has increased from 144.1 (30 June 2025), 125.8 (30 June 2024), 95.4 (30 June 2023) and 70.3 (30 June 2022).

***If asked,***

- The Community Grants Hub provides a shared-services arrangement to deliver grant administration services on behalf of the Australian Government client agencies to support their policy outcomes.
- For grant applicants and recipients this means reduced red tape through faster, simpler processes so organisations don't have to repeat the same information, improved reporting processes, increased self-service capability, increased access to grant opportunities and grant information, and more intuitive online services.
- The National Redress Scheme helps people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a redress payment.
- The Government remains committed towards ending violence against women and children in one generation.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

30-Jun-22	Headcount (end of month)	FTE (average)	
<b>Department of Social Services</b>	<b>2,819</b>	<b>2,376.0</b>	<b>DSS Departmental Core Structure</b>
DSS Executive	20	22.3	DSS Executive
<b>Social Security</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>297.4</b>	<b>Social Security Stream</b>
Data and Evaluation	158	130.4	Data and Evaluation Group
Participation and Family Payments	89	74.6	Participation and Family Payments Group
Pensions, Housing and Homelessness	114	92.5	Pensions Housing and Homelessness Group
<b>Families and Communities</b>	<b>1,571</b>	<b>1,348.9</b>	<b>Families &amp; Communities Stream</b>
Families	125	101.7	Families Group
Redress	313	265.8	Redress Group
Women's Safety	92	70.3	Womens Safety Group
Communities	164	143.7	Communities Group
Community Grants Hub	877	767.3	Community Grants Hub
<b>Chief Operating Officer</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>432.8</b>	<b>Chief Operating Officer Corporate</b>
Portfolio Coordination	116	93.0	Portfolio Coordination
Finance	114	103.1	Finance Group
Corporate	247	201.1	Corporate Group
Legal Services	47	35.6	Legal Services Group
<b>Disability and Carers</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>274.5</b>	<b>Disability &amp; Carers Stream</b>
Disability Employment and Carers Group	102	82.0	Disability Employment & Carers Group
Strategic Policy, Markets and Safeguards	67	55.2	Strategic Policy Markets & Safeguards Gp
NDIS Participants and Performance	57	48.2	NDIS Participants and Performance Group
Disability Strategy	117	89.1	Disability Strategy Group

<b>174.0</b>	<b>DSS Departmental Overheads</b>
6.0	Ministerial Office Support
2.0	Corporate Learning & Development
15.0	Maternity Leave
151.0	Entry Level Program

<b>13.9</b>	<b>DSS Other Departmental</b>
13.9	Disability Royal Commission

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31-Aug-25	Headcount (EOM)	FTE (average)	
<b>Department of Social Services</b>	<b>2,894</b>	<b>2,692.9</b>	<b>DSS Departmental Core Structure</b>
DSS Executive	17	16.8	DSS Executive
<b>Social Security</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>295.0</b>	<b>Social Security Stream</b>
Disability Employment	134	120.9	Disability Employment Group
Participation and Family Payments	96	82.7	Participation and Family Payments Group
System, Strategy and Seniors	106	91.4	System Strategy and Seniors Group
<b>Families and Communities</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>395.6</b>	<b>Families &amp; Communities Stream</b>
Family Wellbeing	113	102.3	Family Wellbeing
Family Safety	204	180.1	Family Safety
Community Wellbeing	122	107.2	Community Wellbeing
Stream Delivery Office	6	6.0	Stream Delivery Office
<b>Chief Operating Officer</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>1,751.6</b>	<b>Chief Operating Officer Corporate</b>
Community Grants Hub	935	864.6	Community Grants Hub
Corporate & Government Services	207	175.1	Corporate & Government Services
Finance & Information Services	155	137.5	Finance & Information Services
Legal Services Audit & Assurance	86	76.0	Legal Services Audit & Assurance
Redress	503	458.4	Redress Group
Social Policy & Governance	40	40.0	Social Policy & Governance
<b>Delivery and Data Stream</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>154.4</b>	<b>Delivery Stream</b>
Data and Evaluation Group	142	127.3	Data and Evaluation Group
Delivery Group	2	3.0	Delivery Group
Income Management	26	24.1	IM Taskforce Group

<b>78.6</b>	<b>DSS Departmental Overheads</b>
30.1	Maternity Leave
3.0	Ministerial Office Support
45.5	Entry Level Program

<b>1.0</b>	<b>DSS Other Departmental</b>
1.0	FNCC Commission

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**OFFICIAL****FUTURE OF INCOME MANAGEMENT****ISSUE**

What is the Government's plan for the future of income management?

**KEY POINTS:**

- The Australian Government is delivering a long-term plan to reform income management and is committed to listening to communities.
- Over the last two years, we have consulted with over 4,500 community members and 250 stakeholders across 81 communities including 200 online responses.
- Communities have told us people want choice and would prefer a longer transition period for future change.
- We heard that reforms need to reflect the complex needs of participants and to ensure people are well supported.
- At 29 August 2025, 32,354 participants were on some form of Income Management:
  - 9,938 participants were on Income Management. Of these participants:
    - 88% were First Nations people.
    - 9,563 resided in the Northern Territory.
  - 22,416 participants were on enhanced Income Management. Of these participants:
    - 79% were First Nations people.
    - 20,451 resided in the Northern Territory.



**OFFICIAL****SUPPLEMENTARY TALKING POINTS:*****If asked, What is the annual cost to deliver the enhanced Income Management program?***

- The *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* requires the Minister to publish an estimate of the cost of the operation of the enhanced Income Management regime.
- The annual estimated cost to deliver the enhanced Income Management program for the period, 4 March 2025 to 3 March 2025, is \$59.8m.
- As the service delivery agency for the program, most of these costs are based service delivery cost estimates provided by Services Australia. The service delivery costs include:
  - telephony, remote servicing and face to face and engagement specialists.
  - compliance and technology/system costs.
  - procurement and contract management costs.
- A small component relates to Department of Social Services technical policy support, operational engagement, and data performance.

***If asked, What is the Government doing following the release of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Compulsory Income Management report?***

- The Government welcomes the report and is considering the recommendations, along with the extensive and genuine consultation we have undertaken with communities across Australia about income management.

***If asked, When will the Government deliver on its commitment to abolish income management?***

- My department concluded an extensive consultation process with community members and stakeholders on the future of income management in December 2024 and is analysing the findings.
- Once completed, Government will consider how to implement long-term reforms to income management.

***If asked, Do the new income management legislative instruments indicate the Government is committed to compulsory income management?***

- These instruments support Services Australia to maintain current operational arrangements for income management programs pending future decisions on reform.

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- The *Social Security (Administration) (Enhanced Income Management Regime – Qualified Portion of Payments) Determination 2025* enables Services Australia to delay quarantining for new enhanced Income Management participants until they receive their card.
- *Social Security (Administration) (Income Management - Crediting of Accounts) Rules 2025* enables the movement of money between a person's Income Management account and their BasicsCard.

***If asked, How are Northern Territory Government policies around referral of people to income management going to be implemented?***

- State and territory government agencies have existing pathways to refer individuals to income management programs.
- How the Northern Territory Government chooses to implement its policies is a matter for the Northern Territory Government.

***If asked, The University of Adelaide report: Review of the Impact of the Cessation of the Cashless Debit Card***

- The Government commissioned the University of Adelaide to undertake a Review of the Impact of the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) transition (the Review). The Review was publicly released on the department's website on 19 July 2024.
- The Review found the majority of former participants welcomed the cessation of the program, as it led to a decrease in feelings of discrimination, stigma and shame and gave people more control and freedom over their finances.
- The Review found that the cessation of the CDC could not be linked to negative social outcomes in former CDC trial sites.
- The Government is committed to supporting communities in former CDC program areas by putting in place services and supports which communities say make a difference.
- \$174.3 million was allocated to provide support services to people in former CDC and existing income management locations. As at 31 July 2025, over \$168.4 million has been invested in services within the income management and former CDC communities, providing support to income support recipients and the broader community.
- This funding includes youth services in Ceduna, children and parental support services in the East Kimberley and employment and skills services in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay.

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**OFFICIAL*****If asked, What is the department doing to follow up on the welfare of respondents identified in the review?***

- Under the ethics approval for the project, participation in the review was anonymous. No names or other personal details that may identify the participating individual is to be disclosed to anyone outside the University research team.
- While the department is unable to follow up on individual cases identified in the review, the department continues to work closely with local stakeholders in former CDC sites, including community leaders, service providers, police, shires, councils, and local partners to ensure visibility of issues identified in communities, and to support communities to address local priorities.
- The department is funding local brokerage organisations to administer a Community-led Support Fund.
- The brokerage arrangements provide a flexible and responsive means by which local communities can address local needs.
- Additional support services are also funded in the former CDC sites including youth supports, financial and digital literacy support, job readiness and employment capability programs.

***If asked, What is the Government's reaction to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) report on the Transitional Arrangements for the Cashless Debit Card?***

- The ANAO has concluded that the transitional arrangements managed by my department in the transition to enhanced Income Management program were largely effective.
- My department has agreed to all ANAO's recommendations.

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**OFFICIAL****BACKGROUND:**

- The number of income management programs participants by each site as at 29 August 2025 is:

	Enhanced Income Management	Income Management
Northern Territory	20,451	9,563
Kimberley (WA)	68	127
NG Lands and Kiwirrkurra (WA)	55	29
Greater Perth and Peel (WA)	46	69
East-Kimberley (WA)	55	n.p
Goldfields (WA)	28	n.p
Logan (QLD)	516	13
Rockhampton and Livingstone (QLD)	144	11
Cape York (QLD)	67	n.p
Bundaberg & Hervey Bay (QLD)	8	n.p
Greater Adelaide (SA)	91	12
Playford (SA)	192	12
APY Lands (SA)	147	36
Ceduna & Surrounds (SA)	14	n.p
Greater Shepparton (VIC)	75	23
Bankstown (NSW)	102	10
Other / Out of Area	357	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,416</b>	<b>9,938</b>

Note that the number of Income Management program participants are not provided (n.p.) where they will be suppressed in the 29 August 2025 data.gov update.

'Out of area' refers to participants who have moved out of an Income Management or enhanced Income Management location but remain eligible for the program.

### **How many people have moved to enhanced Income Management since 4 September 2023?**

- Entrance to Income Management closed on 4 September 2023.
- Between 4 September 2023 and 29 August 2025:
  - 7,319 Income Management participants have chosen to move to enhanced Income Management, and
  - 12,387 people have been placed onto enhanced Income Management or were on enhanced Income Management before 4 September 2023 and remain on the program.

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