



Australian Government

Measures to support economic inclusion since May 2022

Progress update
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In the spirit of reconciliation, the Australian Government acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Overview

The Australian Government (the government) is working to build a stronger, fairer and more inclusive society where more Australians have the chance to contribute and share in our economic success.

Since coming to office, the government has made ongoing investments to address disadvantage, promote economic inclusion and support some of the most vulnerable in the community.

The government's agenda includes strengthening the social safety net, providing tax relief, getting wages moving again, helping Australians pay for essentials, investing in frontline services and communities, and working to increase the availability of social and affordable housing.

The government will continue to do what it responsibly can for Australians who need help the most.

Measures to support economic inclusion since May 2022

Social Safety Net

Increase to working age payments and Commonwealth Rent Assistance

The government is committed to providing responsible and targeted cost-of-living relief to ease pressures on households, while making critical investments to grow the economy's future productive capacity.

In the 2024-25 Budget, the government announced changes to income support payments to provide more support for those Australians relying on the social security safety net, including:

- An increase to the maximum rates of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) by a further 10%, bringing the total increase since May 2022 to over 50%.
- An extension of the higher rate of JobSeeker Payment to those with an assessed partial capacity to work of less than 15 hours per week.
- Improvements to Carer Payment participation settings including changing the 25 hours per week work limit to 100 hours over a 4-week settlement period and removing current restrictions on study, volunteering and travel for work.

This builds upon the government's 2023-24 Budget measures which resulted in around 1.1 million recipients of JobSeeker Payment and other working age and student payments receiving at least a \$40 increase each fortnight and increased the maximum rates of CRA by 15%. In addition, the government has expanded access to Parenting Payment (Single).

Across the 2023-24 and 2024-25 Budgets, the government has provided an additional \$11.5 billion from 2022-23 to 2027-28 in the social security system.

The basic rate of JobSeeker Payment increases biannually in March and September due to indexation. On 20 March 2026, the typical rate of JobSeeker Payment for a single recipient without dependent children increased to \$817.50 per fortnight.

This means that since the government was elected, the rate of JobSeeker Payment for a single recipient without dependent children has increased by \$166.00 a fortnight, or 25%, providing over \$4,300 in additional support each year.

Extending Parenting Payment Single

The government is providing \$1.9 billion over five years from 2022-23 to extend Parenting Payment Single (PPS) to eligible single parents until their youngest child turns 14 (previously 8 years old). To date, this measure has benefitted around 200,000 single principal carers, the majority of whom are women.

These changes are helping single parents balance caring responsibilities with looking for work, while also supporting the wellbeing of themselves and their children.

Carer Payment increased flexibility

The government is providing \$18.6 million over five years from 2023–24 (and \$3.1 million per year ongoing) to support Carer Payment recipients through increased flexibility to undertake work, study and volunteering activities. As of 20 March 2025, the existing 25 hour per week participation limit for Carer Payment recipients was amended to 100 hours over four weeks. As of February 2026, there were 34,870 Carer Payment recipients with earnings.

Incentivising pensioners to downsize

From 1 January 2023, the government has doubled the period of the assets test exemption for principal home sale proceeds to a maximum of 24 months and is only applying the lower deeming rate (currently 1.25%) to these proceeds when calculating deemed income.

This is reducing the financial impact of buying and selling a new principal home on pensioners and other eligible income support recipients and removes a potential barrier to downsizing by giving people more time to purchase, build, rebuild, repair or renovate a new principal home, without the worry of significant impacts on their payment rate. Since its introduction, more than 26,000 pensioners and other income support recipients have benefited from the measure.

Family payments

Paid Parental Leave including superannuation

The government is providing \$1.1 billion over five years from 2023–24 to strengthen Australia’s government-funded Paid Parental Leave scheme and improve women’s retirement outcomes.

This builds from the \$1.2 billion over five years from 2022-23 to support the biggest boost to Australia’s Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme since its inception, giving eligible families with a new baby more choice, greater security and better support.

The government is paying superannuation on Commonwealth government-funded PPL for births and adoptions on or after 1 July 2025, with contributions made annually from 1 July 2026. This will help normalise parental leave as a workplace entitlement and reduce the impact of parental leave on retirement income.

The Paid Parental Leave scheme expands by two weeks each year from 1 July 2024 to reach a total of 26 weeks by 1 July 2026, benefitting around 180,000 families a year.

Making the child support system fairer

The government has implemented legislation, effective from 1 July 2023, to improve the timely collection of child support owed to parents – who are overwhelmingly women – and help prevent future debt among low-income parents. The government has established a Child Support Stakeholder Consultation Group and a Child Support Expert Panel to ensure the views of those with experience and expertise in the child support scheme inform future improvements.

Tax Relief

Tax cuts

The government will deliver new tax cuts to every Australian taxpayer from 1 July 2026. These tax cuts are in addition to the first round of tax cuts for every taxpayer, which have been rolling out since 1 July 2024. The new tax cuts will provide more cost of living relief and return bracket creep. They will also boost labour supply, particularly for women.

Under the government’s new tax cuts:

- From 1 July 2026, the 16% rate will be reduced to 15%.
- From 1 July 2027, the 15% rate will be reduced further to 14%.

Fairer superannuation for low-income workers

The government is boosting the Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset (LISTO) to provide additional support to low income workers to help build their retirement savings. From 1 July 2027, the LISTO threshold will increase from \$37,000 to \$45,000 to match the top of the second income tax bracket. The maximum payment will also increase to \$810 to account for recent increases in the Superannuation Guarantee rate.

This change will provide low-income workers with a fairer tax concession on their super contributions to align with recent increases in the Superannuation Guarantee rate and the government's third round of tax cuts taking effect in 2027.

Because of these changes, in 2027-28 over 770,000 additional Australians will be eligible for LISTO, and 490,000 Australians will receive a higher LISTO payment. This will mean 1.3 million Australians will benefit from these changes, of which around 60% are women, bringing the total number of Australians eligible for LISTO to 3.1 million.

Increasing the Medicare levy low-income thresholds

The government has increased the Medicare levy low-income thresholds for singles, families, and seniors and pensioners from 1 July 2025 to provide cost-of-living relief. The increase to the thresholds ensures that low-income individuals continue to be exempt from paying the Medicare levy or pay a reduced levy rate.

Wages

Submission to the Annual Wage Review and real wage growth

In its submissions to the Fair Work Commission's Annual Wage Reviews, the government has continued to recommend that the Commission ensures that the real wages of Australia's low-paid workers do not go backwards. Increases to the minimum and award wages are an important tool to help address cost-of-living pressures. The Fair Work Commission awarded a 3.5% increase to minimum and award wages, effective 1 July 2025.

Workplace relations reform

The government is providing \$94.6 million over four years from 2023-24 to improve the workplace relations framework and close the loopholes that have been used to undercut fairness, pay and conditions and job security in the Australian labour market.

The Secure Jobs, Better Pay reforms benefit all workers covered by the Fair Work Act, particularly in industries which are characterised by low pay and insecure working arrangements. Key reforms include closing the labour hire loophole that allows employers to undercut an agreed rate of pay for a job through the strategic use of labour hire, criminalising wage theft and legislating a fair, objective test to determine when an employee can be classified as casual.

Funding a wage increase for aged care workers

The government is delivering \$11.3 billion over four years from 2023-24 to fund pay rises for over 250,000 aged care workers following the Fair Work Commission's interim decision for a 15% increase which took effect on 1 July 2023. This is the largest pay increase ever for aged care workers and recognises the complex and undervalued work of the aged care workforce. The government made a further investment of \$3.8 billion over four years to support a higher standard of care for older Australians by funding pay rises for workers from 1 January 2025. These wage increases support gender pay equality as 86% of aged care workers are women.

The 2025-26 Budget also includes \$2.5 billion over five years from 2024-25 (and an additional \$6.1 billion from 2029-30 to 2034-35) to meet the cost of the Fair Work Commission's decision for aged care nurses with funding to other aged care programs. This measure builds on the 2023-24 Budget and 2024-25 MYEFO measures.

Delivering pay rises for early educators

The government is providing \$3.6 billion over four years from 2024-25 to support a wage increase for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce through a worker retention payment. This includes \$3.5 billion over three years from 2024-25 to support a wage increase in the ECEC sector of 10% on top of the current national award rate in the first year from December 2024 and 15% in the second year from December 2025.

Paying for essentials

Energy Bill Relief Fund

The government's \$3 billion Energy Bill Relief Fund in 2022 provided \$300 electricity bill rebates to eligible households, with \$1.5 billion committed by the Commonwealth and matched by states and territories.

The Commonwealth committed an additional \$3.5 billion for the Energy Bill Relief Fund from 1 July 2024 for households to receive \$300 in electricity rebates and \$325 to eligible small businesses.

The government extended the Energy Bill Relief Fund and committed an additional \$1.8 billion to continue energy bill rebates of \$75 per quarter for Australian households and eligible small businesses until 31 December 2025.

Remote Food Security

The 2025 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan committed \$71.4 million to improve remote food security through a Low-Cost Essentials Subsidy Scheme, dedicated remote store governance training and support package and an in-store Nutrition Workforce. The Low-Cost Essentials Subsidy Scheme aims to reduce the cost of 30 essential product lines in remote stores to be comparable to supermarkets in urban areas, to help address cost-of-living pressures and high rates of food insecurity experienced in remote First Nations communities. The Scheme is delivering savings of up to 50 per cent on food and other essentials with more than 115 remote stores participating in the Scheme to date.

The 2026 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan commits an additional \$60.1 million to expand on the government's investment in remote food security through lifting the 150-store cap on the Low-Cost Essentials Subsidy Scheme, providing greater support to independently managed remote stores to help them access the Scheme and building on the success of the original 2024-25 Stores Efficiency and Resilience Package to support up to an additional 75 stores over 3 years.

Supermarket price gouging

The government is banning supermarket price gouging to help Australians get a better deal at the checkout. The ban will come into effect on 1 July 2026, enforced by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

Health

Inclusion support program

The government provided \$98.4 million in 2024–25 and will provide a further \$59.2 million in 2026-27 to help child care services increase their capacity to support inclusion of children with additional needs, through tailored support and funding to services.

Thriving Kids program

On 30 January 2026, the Commonwealth and state and territory governments committed to jointly contribute \$4 billion over five years to implement the first phase of Foundational Supports, known as 'Thriving Kids'. This investment will support children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs, and their families, carers and kin. At least \$1.4 billion of the government's \$2 billion contribution will be provided as direct funding to states for Thriving Kids services. From 1 October 2026, children with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs will start to access support through Thriving Kids.

Bulk billing incentive

The government provided a \$3.5 billion investment to triple the value of bulk billing incentive items, which commenced on 1 November 2023. This initiative has supported General Practitioners (GPs) to bulk bill more than 11 million children, pensioners and Commonwealth concession card holders.

The government is providing \$7.9 billion over four years from 2025–26 (and \$2.4 billion per year ongoing) to expand eligibility for bulk billing incentive items to all Medicare-eligible patients and introduce the Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program (BBPIP), which will provide GPs and practices with an additional payment if they commit to bulk billing every eligible patient for every eligible service.

Cheaper medicines

The government has delivered cheaper medicines through reforms to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). The government is providing \$784.6 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$236.4 million per year ongoing) to lower the PBS prescription for general patient co-payment even further, from \$31.60 to \$25.00 on 1 January 2026.

The government has also made PBS medicines cheaper through the introduction of 60-day dispensing. Since 1 September 2023, Australians with eligible prescriptions can buy two months' worth of medicines for the price of a single prescription, rather than the current 30-day supply. From September 2024, around 300 medicines are available.

The government also finalised the 8th Community Pharmacy Agreement commencing 1 July 2024 to deliver cheaper medicines and improve patient health outcomes. This included a one-year freeze on the maximum PBS patient co-payment for everyone with a Medicare card from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, and a 5-year freeze until 2029 for pensioners and other concession cardholders. The maximum co-payment for a PBS prescription medicine for Commonwealth concession card holders will continue to be \$7.70 until 1 January 2030.

Improving Access to Medicines and Pharmacy Programs

The government is providing funding over six years from 2024–25 to improve access to medicines and to trial an expansion of the range of services delivered by community pharmacies. Funding includes:

- \$539.4 million over five years from 2024–25 (and an additional \$98.8 million in 2029–30) to establish the First Pharmaceutical Wholesalers Agreement with the National Pharmaceutical Services Association to ensure medicines remain accessible across Australia.
- \$109.1 million over four years from 2025–26 to support two national trials to make it cheaper and easier for many women to get contraceptives and treatment for uncomplicated urinary tract infections.
- \$13.2 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$4.5 million per year ongoing) to meet increasing demand on the National Return and Disposal of Unwanted Medicines Program and guarantee safe disposal of unwanted medicines.

- \$10.0 million in 2027–28 to review pharmaceutical wholesaling arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- \$5.7 million in 2025–26 to extend funding to ensure sustainability of Australia’s electronic prescribing infrastructure.
- \$1.0 million in 2025–26 to update Australia’s pharmacist practice standards and guidelines as part of implementing the Strategic Agreement on Pharmacist Professional Practice with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

Strengthening Medicare

The government is providing additional funding of \$8.4 billion over five years from 2024–25 (and \$2.5 billion per year ongoing) to increase access to bulk billing. By 2030, the government’s significant investment will mean nine out of 10 GP services are bulk billed, delivering significant savings to patients, every year.

Over 3,700 Medicare Bulk Billing Practices are now registered nationally, exceeding the original target of 3,600 by late 2027 and putting Australia more than halfway toward the full target of 4,800 bulk billing practices.

The early uptake has lifted the national bulk billing rate to 81.4% (from 1 November 2025) and means around 97% of Australians now live within a 20-minute drive of a bulk billing GP.

This expansion forms part of the government’s \$8.5 billion investment to make health care more affordable, including:

- \$7.9 billion over four years from 2025–26 (and \$2.4 billion per year ongoing) to expand eligibility for bulk billing incentive items to all Medicare-eligible patients and introduce the BBPIP, which provides GPs and practices with an additional payment if they commit to bulk billing every Medicare-eligible patient for every eligible service.
- \$256.2 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$82.1 million per year ongoing) to introduce new and amend existing items on the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS), including:
 - \$74.9 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$29.1 million per year ongoing) for severe speech and language disorders to be added to the eligible disabilities under the MBS item group for complex neurodevelopmental disorder and disability services.
 - \$57.9 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$16.4 million per year ongoing) to provide faecal calprotectin tests to manage symptomatic inflammatory bowel disease.
 - \$43.6 million over four years from 2025–26 (and \$12.9 million per year ongoing) to support treatment of advanced neuroendocrine tumours.
- \$228.7 million in 2025–26 to continue modernising My Health Record and support the digital health reform agenda.
- \$17.3 million over three years from 2025–26 to provide affordable access to Medicare-eligible Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) services at three metropolitan locations with below average bulk-billed MRI services, pending MRI licencing requirement changes commencing 1 July 2027.

- \$15.6 million over two years from 2025–26 to continue initiatives under the Health Delivery Transformation Program.
- \$7.0 million over five years from 2024–25 to deliver improved functionality and more transparency on the Medical Costs Finder website, allowing the public access to data about the median fees charged by individual non-GP specialists and gap arrangements from private health insurers.
- \$0.9 million over five years from 2024–25 (and \$0.3 million per year ongoing) for the Supporting Living Organ Donors Program to increase reimbursements and therefore reduce barriers in accessing the program.

Expanding Medicare Urgent Care Clinics

The government is providing \$644 million over three years from 2025–26 to expand the Medicare Urgent Care Clinics Program, building on more than \$860 million already invested by the government to establish and strengthen Medicare Urgent Care Clinics since 2022–23. This includes an additional \$26.7 million provided in the 2025–26 MYEFO to support the continued operation and expansion of clinics.

This investment will deliver an additional 50 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics across Australia, taking the total number of Medicare Urgent Care Clinics to 137.

Medicare Urgent Care Clinics reduce pressure on hospital emergency departments by supporting Australians to access care for urgent, but not life-threatening, conditions. Medicare Urgent Care Clinics are open during extended business hours with no appointments or referrals required, and with no out-of-pocket costs for patients. Funding includes:

- \$653.8 million over three years from 2025–26 to expand the Medicare Urgent Care Clinics Program by an additional 50 clinics, extend the opening hours of the Batemans Bay and Launceston Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, and to continue to support the operations of the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) Medicare Urgent Care Clinic.
- \$4.1 million over two years from 2025–26 to enable state-funded urgent care services to access MBS items.

Free mental health services

The government is investing \$1.1 billion from 2025-26 to 2028-29 to deliver more free mental health care. This includes:

- \$490.3 million for a new network of 20 Youth Specialist Care Centres.
- \$267.3 million for 32 new and upgraded Medicare Mental Health Centres.
- \$225.3 million for 58 new, upgraded or expanded headspace services.
- \$83.9 million for additional training places for mental health professionals and peer workers.
- Funding for the new Medicare Mental Health Check In, providing free, early mental health support and low-intensity cognitive behavioural therapy (LiCBT) delivered by trained practitioners via telehealth, without the need for a GP referral.

These commitments build on the \$888 million over eight years for mental health measures announced in the 2024–25 Budget to broaden access to high-quality, free mental health care and supporting early intervention to prevent escalation to more acute services.

1800MEDICARE

The government is investing \$219.8 million from 2025-26 to 2028-29 to establish 1800MEDICARE to help strengthen access to urgent care and take pressure off hospitals. From 1 January 2026, this initiative will facilitate access to free, nationwide 24/7 health advice and afterhours GP telehealth services. Nationwide 1800MEDICARE is expected to result in the delivery of over 130,000 free telehealth GP services per year by 2029-30.

Women's Health

The government is delivering its \$792.9 million women's health package, focused on providing more choice, lower costs and better care for Australian women and girls.

Lower costs through the PBS:

- More than 660,000 women have accessed over 2 million cheaper PBS scripts for contraceptives, menopausal hormone therapies and endometriosis treatments.
- First new PBS listed contraceptive pills in over 30 years, and two additional contraceptive options have helped 303,000 women save more than \$23 million on 573,000 scripts.
- First PBS listing of new menopausal hormone therapies in over 20 years has supported 363,000 women, saving \$45.4 million on 1.5 million scripts.
- More than 6,700 women with endometriosis have accessed PBS listed treatments, saving \$4.9 million on 26,000 scripts.
- Women undergoing IVF are receiving earlier, more affordable access to fertility treatments, with 46,000 women accessing 273,000 PBS scripts.

Making Medicare work better for women:

- Over 71,000 women have already received a Medicare menopause health assessment since it became available on 1 July 2025.
- \$49 million has been invested to deliver around 430,000 additional Medicare services for women with complex gynaecological conditions, including endometriosis, PCOS and chronic pelvic pain.
- New Medicare items support longer consultations and higher rebates for specialised gynaecological care.
- Increased Medicare payments and expanded bulk billing for IUDs and birth control implants are saving some women up to \$400 per year in out of pocket costs.
- The Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Clinic network has expanded to 33 clinics nationwide, with 11 new clinics opened, now also delivering perimenopause and menopause care.
- National clinical guidelines for perimenopause and menopause will be developed, alongside Australia's first national awareness campaign, launching this year.

This investment builds on the \$56.1 million women’s health investment in the 2024–25 Budget to strengthen evidence-based care and improve health outcomes for women.

Better health outcomes for regional Australia

In 2025-26, the government is making a number of investments to improve access to health care in regional and remote communities. This includes \$10.1 million to CareFlight for aeromedical retrievals and care in the Top End region of the Northern Territory. A further \$2.0 million will strengthen preventive health and health promotion activities for communities in Cairns and Far North Queensland, including cancer screening and skin cancer checks.

In addition, the government is providing \$73.4 million to strengthen and support Australia’s health workforce in regional, rural and remote areas. This extends funding for seven programs that support medical professionals to deliver essential health services in areas of need.

Expanding access to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

The government has expanded access to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, with the largest increase to the income limits for eligibility in more than 20 years.

As a result of these changes, already more than 27,000 additional self-funded retirees have received access to the card, which provides cheaper healthcare, cheaper medicines and other benefits available to concession cardholders.

Frontline Services and Community Support

Partnering with Communities for Change

The government is delivering \$199.8 million from 2023-24 over six years to support communities to overcome barriers that entrench disadvantage. This includes funding to strengthen place-based partnerships that drive better local outcomes in education, employment, child and maternal health, youth justice and participation.

The government is providing \$19.3 million to strengthen the capacity of communities to design and deliver place-based programs through Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment (PLACE), a non-government organisation, with funding matched by five philanthropic partners.

A \$100 million Outcomes Fund has also been established, working with states and territories and philanthropy to commission innovative programs that aim to improve employment outcomes and keep more children, safely, at home.

The government is supporting social enterprises to address community needs through the Social Enterprise Development Initiative (investing \$18.4 million from 2023-24 to 2026-27). The initiative supports social enterprises to build their capability, scale their impact and further their mission. The government has also increased access to affordable and flexible finance for social enterprises that support disadvantaged job seekers by increasing the Social Enterprise Loan Fund by \$1.2 million in 2025-26.

Financial Wellbeing and Capability

The government has committed over \$170 million in additional funding for financial wellbeing programs. As a result, from 2025-26, annual funding under new grants has increased by 25% 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 funding will help address demand for critical frontline services over the five years and ensure certainty and stability for a number of organisations including those delivering emergency relief and financial counselling. It will help more Australian households to pay and manage unexpected bills or expenses such as high electricity bills, rent, fuel and medicines. This funding also saw an expansion to the Food Relief program to provide 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.

In addition to these commitments:

- On 2 April 2026, the government announced an expansion of financial counselling support for gambling.
- In December 2025, the government provided \$10 million to the Bill Crews Foundation to deliver on the election commitment to support the critical work of the Foundation to provide free meals, support to people impacted by family and domestic violence and literacy programs.

The government also provided \$3.1 million to increase financial wellbeing supports for First Nations individuals and strengthen supports in the Northern Territory.

Ensuring access to government services

The government has provided \$228 million in 2023-24 in funding to Services Australia for frontline and service delivery staffing in the Agency to help reduce claim backlogs and to support more timely access for vulnerable Australians to government services. This will help the Agency facilitate easy and efficient engagement options suited to the circumstances of the customer.

The government is providing a further \$1.8 billion over three years from 2023–24 for additional frontline staff to help stabilise Services Australia claims backlogs and service standards, to continue emergency response capability and improve the cyber security environment.

Supporting multicultural communities

The government is providing \$220.6 million over four years from 2025–26 to support multiculturalism in Australia, to strengthen and support multicultural communities; and promote inclusion, economic participation and stronger community connections.

This includes \$171.3 million over three years from 2025–26 for grants to community organisations to support the delivery of priority infrastructure, amenities and events initiatives. It also includes \$25.6 million over four years from 2025–26 to support over 600 community language schools across Australia, which will benefit over 90,000 students.

Support for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence

The government has committed more than \$4 billion to prevent violence against women and children and to strengthen long-term support for victim-survivors under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*.

This record investment focuses on safety, prevention, recovery and system reform, ensuring victim-survivors can access coordinated, trauma-informed support when and where they need it. Key measures include:

- Making the Leaving Violence Program permanent, providing financial assistance, safety planning, and referrals to specialist supports to help victim-survivors leave violent intimate partner relationships, as part of the government’s broader women’s safety investment.
- Over \$4.4 billion in combined Commonwealth commitments, including new National Cabinet investments to strengthen frontline family, domestic and sexual violence services, support legal assistance, and improve crisis responses nationwide.
- A renewed National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses, supporting specialist frontline services and improving consistency and access across jurisdictions.
- Expanded trauma-informed, child-centred supports for children and young people who witness or experience family, domestic and sexual violence.
- Continued investment in end-to-end responses, including legal assistance, perpetrator interventions, culturally safe services for First Nations communities, and workforce sustainability for frontline services.

The 2025-26 MYEFO builds on this work by strengthening the sustainability of key programs and supporting continuation of specialist and wrap-around services for victim-survivors, including complex case management and improved coordination of trauma-informed mental health supports.

Together, these investments demonstrate the government’s commitment to long-term reform, ensuring victim-survivors are supported to be safe, recover, and rebuild their lives, while maintaining momentum to end violence in one generation.

Strengthening justice system response to sexual violence

The government is providing \$21.4 million over three years from 2025–26 to improve victim and survivor engagement in the justice system and inform a broader response to the Australian Law Reform Commission’s (ALRC) Inquiry into the Justice System’s Response to Sexual Violence. Funding includes:

- \$19.6 million over three years from 2025–26 to expand specialist, trauma-informed sexual assault legal services pilots, building on programs operating in Victoria, Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Queensland, with a pathway toward national expansion.
 - The pilots provide tailored, trauma-informed legal assistance to victim-survivors of sexual violence.
 - Funding also supports the trial of complementary non-legal supports, including culturally safe justice system navigators and improvements in access to restorative justice pathways, where appropriate.
- \$1.2 million over two years from 2025–26 to extend the ALRC’s lived experience Advisory Group for one year to support implementation of the Inquiry’s recommendations and to strengthen engagement with sector stakeholders and experts.
- \$0.6 million in 2025–26 to engage academics and other experts to:
 - Research systemic factors contributing to the withdrawal of sexual violence complaints.
 - Review supports provided during the police investigation phase.
 - Commence scoping work on an independent complaints mechanism to review police decisions not to pursue charges.

Strengthening access to legal services

The government is providing \$3.9 billion over five years from 1 July 2025 to the National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP). The NAJP is a National Agreement between the government and all states and territories to enhance access to justice for people experiencing vulnerability and financial disadvantage. The NAJP will:

- Provide essential legal assistance services to people who are unable to afford private legal services including in family, civil, administrative and criminal law.
- Focus on providing services for women and children who are escaping or at risk of experiencing family and domestic violence.
- Provide culturally appropriate legal assistance services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Delivery support for veterans

The government is providing \$47.6 million in 2025–26 to address the additional increased demand for downstream services following the increase in the determination of veterans’ claims. This includes additional resourcing for the Veterans’ Access Network, Veteran Support Officers,

complex case management, information access and mental health support. Since 2022, the government's investment in additional resourcing for the Department of Veterans' Affairs to clear the claims backlog and process additional claims has resulted in an additional \$13 billion in payments to veterans.

Housing and homelessness

Building more social and affordable homes

The government is delivering on an ambitious \$45 billion plan to build more homes, get more Australians into homeownership, and give renters a better deal. This plan provides national leadership to address housing supply, affordability and homelessness, working closely with state, territory and local governments, industry and communities. Key elements of the government's housing agenda include:

Driving system-wide reform and new supply:

- Providing national leadership through the aspirational target of 1.2 million new, well-located homes under the National Housing Accord, driving reforms across planning, zoning and housing delivery systems.
- Making it easier to build more homes, more quickly by:
 - Pausing and streamlining the National Construction Code
 - Reforming environmental approvals
 - Working with states and territories through the National Planning Reform Blueprint to improve housing supply and affordability, and
 - Accelerating the uptake of productivity-enhancing modern methods of construction, through regulatory reforms and investment.
- Training more skilled workers to deliver new housing through Free TAFE and \$10,000 apprenticeship incentives for tradies.
- Unlocking thousands of new market homes through Build to Rent reforms and targeted investments in enabling and critical infrastructure.

Supporting home ownership:

- Helping more than 247,000 Australians into homeownership through the government's 5% Deposit Scheme since May 2022 to 20 April 2026.
- Supporting low- and middle-income earners locked out of homeownership through the Help to Buy shared equity scheme, now open.

Building more social and affordable housing:

- Establishing the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) to deliver 20,000 new social homes and 10,000 new affordable rental homes in its first five years, including for a range of acute housing needs, including repair and maintenance in remote Indigenous communities, crisis and transitional accommodation for women and children, and housing support for Veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- The National Housing Accord will support the delivery of 10,000 new affordable dwellings. Under the National Housing Accord, the Commonwealth, states and territories have also agreed to an aspirational target of building 1.2 million well-located homes over five years supported through planning and zoning reforms.
- Delivering more than 21,000 social and affordable homes through Round 3 of the HAFF, contributing to the government's commitment to 40,000 social and affordable homes by 30 June 2029 through the HAFF and the National Housing Accord.
- Expanding support for First Nations housing through \$600 million dedicated in HAFF Round 3, access to concessional loans, and a 10% First Nations tenancy target across all Round 3 social housing.
- Increasing the cap on the Commonwealth's guarantee over Housing Australia's liabilities from \$26 billion to \$44 billion to support commitments for HAFF Round 3 projects.
- The National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF) provides support in the form of concessional loans and grants. There are three streams of NHIF. \$1 billion (up to \$175 million in grants) is available for housing-enabling critical infrastructure and social and affordable housing. An additional \$1 billion (up to \$700 million in grants) is available for crisis and transitional accommodation under HAFF Crisis and Transitional.
- Providing \$2 billion through the Social Housing Accelerator to deliver around 4,000 new and refurbished social homes across Australia.
- Contributing to a landmark \$4 billion investment with the Northern Territory government to deliver housing, housing improvements and essential infrastructure in remote communities and on homelands. The investment will contribute to Closing the Gap Outcome 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and needs.
- Providing \$6 million to extend the Housing Policy Partnership, a key commitment under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, for two years from 2026–27. The Partnership brings together governments and First Nations representatives to have a genuine say in the design and delivery of First Nations housing.

Through the government's over \$45 billion Homes for Australia plan, the government is boosting housing supply across the system, strengthening social and affordable housing, and ensuring more Australians can access secure, affordable places to live.

Household Energy Upgrades Fund – social housing component

The government has provided \$1.3 billion in the Household Energy Upgrades Fund to help households save on energy bills. This complements the \$300 million Social Housing Energy Performance Initiative (SHEPI), which is targeted to support the liveability of social housing and delivered in partnership with states and territories. With most social housing built before the minimum build standards, the energy efficiency of most social housing is amongst the lowest in Australia. The investment is expected to cut the energy needed by 60,000 social housing properties by one-third, providing tenants with savings on their energy bills.

Improving energy efficiency for vulnerable households

In November 2024, the government committed a further \$500 million to expand the existing SHEPI to improve energy efficiency and access to solar and batteries, in partnership with states and territories. With the expansion, the SHEPI is now expected to reach more than 100,000 social housing properties across Australia to save on energy bills and reduce emissions each year. This can save tenants' energy usage by up to 25% and help improve their thermal comfort.

National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness

The government has agreed the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness, with state and territory governments, to support Australia's social housing and homelessness service sectors, and help people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. The government is providing \$9.3 billion over 5 years from 1 July 2024, or approximately \$1.8 billion per year, with around \$400 million annually dedicated to homelessness funding, which jurisdictions are required to match.

Additional Support for the Housing Services Sector

The government is providing \$8.9 million over three years from 2025–26 to improve and expand support services for vulnerable Australians, including Australians experiencing housing insecurity and family, domestic and sexual violence. Funding includes:

- \$6.2 million over three years from 2025–26 to housing and homelessness peak bodies to undertake research, sector development and provide advice to government on improving housing security for Australians at risk of homelessness.
- \$2.5 million in 2025–26 to provide emergency accommodation for women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence under the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program.
- \$0.2 million in 2025–26 to extend funding for complex case management and provide wrap around support services for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence.

The government also provides \$91.7 million investment into youth homelessness prevention services over 3 years to 30 June 2026 through the Reconnect program. The government has agreed to extend grant arrangements for an additional year to June 2027, providing approximately \$32.9 million to Reconnect providers.

The government is investing over \$1.27 billion across three major programs to expand crisis, emergency, crisis and transitional accommodation for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, and other vulnerable groups. This includes \$175.1 million through the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program (including the Inclusion Round), \$100 million through the Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program, and up to \$1 billion through the Housing Australia Future Fund Crisis and Transitional program to deliver and expand safe, secure housing nationwide.

Housing Australia Future Fund Crisis and Transitional (HAFF CT)

- The government is investing \$1 billion through the HAFF CT to support crisis and transitional accommodation for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, and for youth at risk of homelessness. The program, administered by Housing Australia, provides capital grants and concessional loans to deliver new or expanded crisis and transitional housing.
- Up to \$700 million is available in grants and \$300 million in concessional loans. As at 12 March 2026, \$321.2 million in grant funding has been approved, with \$679 million remaining unallocated.

Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program (Safe Places)

- The government is investing \$175.1 million through the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program to deliver crisis accommodation for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence.
- This includes \$75.1 million for 40 projects delivering 233 dwellings, supporting an estimated 8,238 women and children annually, and a further \$100 million under the Safe Places Inclusion Round to fund 20 projects delivering 189 dwellings for First Nations women, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and women and children with disability. In total, Safe Places will deliver 422 emergency accommodation dwellings nationwide.

Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program (CTAP)

- Under the government's Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program (CTAP), \$100 million has been committed over five years to deliver additional crisis and transitional housing for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, and older women at risk of homelessness.
- Funding outcomes were announced on 2 February 2025, with 42 projects offered funding. As at 21 April 2026, 35 grants have been executed and 6 projects have commenced service delivery, and the remaining contracts are under negotiation. All CTAP projects are expected to commence tenancy by June 2029.

Full Employment

Employment White Paper, *Working Future*

In the Employment White Paper, *Working Future*, the government committed to a sustained and inclusive full employment target, where everyone who wants a job should be able to find one without having to search for too long.

The White Paper included two immediate actions in social security:

- Permanently extending the Pension Work Bonus measure for older pensioners and eligible veterans, by providing an upfront Work Bonus credit of \$4,000 to all new pension entrants over Age Pension age, and permanently increasing the maximum Work Bonus income bank balance from \$7,800 to \$11,800. This built on the temporary measure announced at the 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit, and gives pensioners the option to earn more income from working without reducing their pension.
- Smoothing the transition to work for many income support recipients by doubling the period they can receive a nil rate of payment from six to 12 fortnights, and expanding access to those who enter full-time employment. This allows people to stay active in the system – and retain supplementary benefits such as concession cards, childcare subsidies and other supplementary payments, for longer. It provides more support for people to get back into work, without the fear that the social safety net won't be there if they need it again.

VET and Training support

The government is providing \$26.1 million over four years from 2024–25 to contribute to a strong and effective Vocational Education and Training system, continue structural reforms, and maximise returns on previous skills and training investments and commitments.

The government provided \$4.4 million in 2024–25 to drive demand for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in support of delivering the workforce required to meet Australia's future skills needs. This included delivering strategic communications to increase the appeal of VET for students, parents and teachers, and extending community awareness of Fee-Free TAFE courses in areas of high skills needs which has ensured strong uptake of Fee-Free TAFE places to date.

The government is providing further funding of \$10.0 million in 2025–26 to extend support for skills and training priorities.

Fee-Free TAFE

Through the Fee-Free TAFE Skills Agreement, the Commonwealth government has partnered with states and territories to deliver over \$1.5 billion funding for 500,000 Fee-Free TAFE and VET places across Australia over 2023 to 2026.

The government partnered with state and territory governments to establish the \$1 billion 12-month Skills Agreement to deliver an initial 180,000 Fee-Free TAFE and VET places from January 2023. The government contribution of \$493 million to support the delivery of training places was matched by states and territories.

In August 2023 the government announced an additional \$414.1 million for a further 300,000 TAFE and VET places to be made fee-free from January 2024, with these places currently being rolled out nationally.

As part of the 2024-25 Budget, the government committed an additional \$86.4 million for states and territories to deliver a further 20,000 Fee-Free TAFE and VET places, including approximately 5,000 pre-apprenticeship places, over two years from January 2025, to boost the supply of the construction industry.

This government is supporting Australians to gain well-paid, secure jobs. As of March 2025, there have been over 650,000 free TAFE enrolments in courses linked to key priority areas across the economy. Ongoing free TAFE will provide certainty and ease cost-of-living pressures for students while supporting them to obtain secure employment.

Student Debt Relief

The government is reducing the student debts of more than 3 million Australians by 20%, removing around \$16 billion in debt. As of 19 December 2025, the ATO had successfully applied 20% reductions to 3.23 million student loan holders to the value of \$16.98 billion. For the average student with \$27,600 in debt, the government's initiative has reduced this by about \$5,500.

The government has also reformed student debt repayment arrangements so that Australians can keep more of what they earn. The arrangements applied from 1 July 2025 and increase take-home pay for Australians with student debts by up to around \$55 a fortnight.

This is in addition to the government's 2024 changes to indexation which removed more than \$3 billion in outstanding student debt. Combined, these changes have delivered cost-of-living relief to Australians with student debt, lowering the amount they pay back and allowing them to keep more of what they earn.

Reform of Workforce Australia Employment Services

The government is committed to reforming employment services to ensure the system better meets the needs of individuals, employers and the economy. The policy directions for employment services reform are outlined in the government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities and response to the House Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services. The government has taken initial steps towards building a more responsive employment services system, including:

- Delivering targeted programs for vulnerable cohorts such as the Parent Pathways program and the Reconnection, Employment and Learning (REAL) program.
- Extending the Local Jobs program to 30 June 2027 to help bring a local focus to employment services.

- Trialling new models of service delivery, including service improvement trials for people in online services, public service delivery, directly and in partnership with employment service providers, and supports for employers to hire long-term unemployed jobseekers.
- Strengthening the complaints mechanism for people using employment services.
- Introducing changes to mutual obligations requirements to ensure that settings are more appropriate for people based on their individual circumstances.
- Partnering with the Victorian government to support the implementation of two employment hub models, the Thrive Hubs and the Dandenong Employment Hub, across three locations (Broadmeadows, Frankston and Dandenong) in Victoria.

These measures are building better services for job seekers and employers, as well as providing insights and ongoing evidence for employment services reform.

Voluntary pre-employment service for parents

The government introduced the Parent Pathways program on 1 November 2024, a voluntary pre-employment service for disadvantaged parents of children under six years of age which replaced the ParentsNext program. The government invested \$552.18 million from 2025-26 through to 2028-29 (inclusive) to support the delivery of Parent Pathways.

Parent Pathways supports the economic security of eligible parents with young children to achieve their personal, education and employment goals, while keeping their family front and centre.

Reconnection, Employment and Learning (REAL) Program

In the 2024-25 Budget, the government committed \$76.2 million over 5 years to a new voluntary employment services program to improve the economic security of First Nations people transitioning out of the justice system and reestablishing themselves into the community.

The Reconnection, Employment and Learning (REAL) Program is a voluntary program for First Nations people who are on remand or in prison. Services include personalised mentoring and support to build pathways to employment, education and training opportunities. The program will also facilitate greater connection to culture, Country and language where appropriate. The program offers up to 6 months pre-release and 12 months post-release support for participants.

The program is available to First Nations people who are aged 15 years or over and are:

- In custody waiting for a court decision (on remand)
- In prison or a youth justice centre and have a planned release date
- Their planned release date must be within the next 6 months.

Enhancing place-based approaches

The government is improving place-based employment services by providing \$62.6 million over three years from 2024–25 to extend and improve the Local Jobs Program. This program helps bring a local focus to employment services and supports employment outcomes.

As part of its 2025 election commitments, the government has partnered with the Victorian government to support the implementation of two employment hub models. This includes \$1.5 million to support the Greater Dandenong City Council to establish an Employment Hub in Dandenong and \$1 million (with the Victorian government also co-investing \$1 million) for the Brotherhood of St Laurence to deliver Thrive Hubs in Broadmeadows and Frankston. These hubs will support job seekers and employers with access to services delivered by local organisations, including training providers, and will provide insights into what locally led employment solutions can look like.

Remote Jobs and Economic Development program

The government has established the Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) program to create 6,000 jobs in remote Australia until 2030. RJED is helping income support recipients move into paid employment through the creation of new jobs that support community priorities.

As part of its commitment to improve employment outcomes for people living in remote Australia, the government also replaced the Community Development Program (CDP) with the Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES). This service supports job seekers to build their skills, address barriers to employment and move into jobs (including those created through RJED).

Introduction of Inclusive Employment Australia

The government has delivered a new specialist disability employment program, Inclusive Employment Australia, that commenced on 1 November 2025, replacing the Disability Employment Services program. Inclusive Employment Australia better supports people with disability, injury or health condition to prepare for, find and maintain work, and grow their career.

The new program places participants at the centre of the service and improves and simplifies services for people looking for work, as well as employers and service providers.

More people are able to access specialist employment support through Inclusive Employment Australia, including:

- People with an assessed work capacity of less than 8 hours per week.
- Voluntary participants not getting a Centrelink income support payment.

The two-year participation time limit, in place under the Disability Employment Services program, has also been removed so people can stay in the new program for as long as it is needed.

Inclusive Employment Australia Performance Framework

With the commencement of Inclusive Employment Australia, a new Performance Framework has been developed through consultation with Employment Services peak bodies, Disability Representative Organisations, and Inclusive Employment Australia providers.

The Framework will measure provider performance against two Key Performance Indicators:

- How satisfied participants are and whether provider support helps them move toward sustainable employment, and
- How well providers do at helping participants to find and keep a job.

The Framework will support participants, carers and families to make informed decisions when selecting their preferred service provider, and will be a key tool for managing provider performance.

Centre for Inclusive Employment

The government established the Centre for Inclusive Employment in March 2025. The Centre is supporting employment service providers to deliver high-quality, inclusive employment services by increasing knowledge of evidence-based models and approaches.

The Centre operates as an evidence-informed, best-practice hub, which provides practical resources, tools, and training to all employment service providers including those in Inclusive Employment Australia, Workforce Australia and the RJED program, the RAES, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Centre also assists employers to improve disability employment outcomes by strengthening inclusive recruitment and workplace practices. It aims to increase understanding of employer needs and equip providers with the skills and knowledge required to help employers recruit, support, and retain employees with disability.

Supporting people with disability with the highest needs into employment

The government has 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.

Funding included the Structural Adjustment Fund that is supporting more than 60 organisations across Australia to increase the range of job opportunities and pathways into open employment for people with disability with high support needs.

An evaluation on the supported employment measures is currently underway and is due to be finalised in mid-2027. The Department of Social Services is currently consulting on next steps in supported employment.

Building Australia's Future – Increased Support for Apprentices

The government is providing \$722.8 million over four years from 2025–26 to deliver increased support for apprentices. Funding includes:

- \$626.9 million over four years from 2025–26 to reframe the New Energy Apprenticeships Program as the Key Apprenticeship Program and expand it to capture critical residential construction occupations.
- \$77.8 million over four years from 2025–26 to extend the current interim Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System program settings for a further six months from 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025.
- \$11.0 million over four years from 2025–26 to increase the Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support subsidy.
- \$7.0 million over four years from 2025–26 to increase the Living Away From Home Allowance.

Early childhood

Reforming early childhood education and care

As part of the October 2022 Budget, the government invested \$4.7 billion over four years from 2022–23 to introduce Cheaper Child Care reforms. The changes included increasing Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rates for families earning less than \$530,000, making Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) more affordable for around 96% of families with children in care – over 1 million families. This figure was indexed to \$535,279 in July 2025.

The government is also providing \$3.6 billion over four years from 2024–25 to support a wage increase for the ECEC workforce through a Worker Retention Payment (WRP) delivered over two years. The WRP supports a wage increase equivalent to 15% above the relevant award rates for eligible workers employed in CCS-approved Centre Based Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services.

The WRP supports the attraction and retention of early childhood educators and teachers in a predominantly female workforce. It also delivers affordability improvements for families through its fee growth cap that limits fee increases to 4.4% over the 12 months from 8 August 2024, and to 4.2% in the 12 months from 8 August 2025.

On 11 December 2024, the government announced next steps to building a universal early education and care system through:

- A 3 Day Guarantee, which from January 2026 replaced the Child Care Subsidy Activity Test to provide all CCS-eligible families with a guaranteed entitlement to at least 72 hours of subsidised ECEC per fortnight (equivalent to 3 full days of care a week), per eligible child. First Nations families are eligible for an entitlement of 100 hours of subsidised ECEC per fortnight, per eligible child.

- Establishing a \$1 billion Building Early Education Fund which will see more centres built and expanded in areas of need, including in the outer suburbs and regional Australia.
- Undertaking the Early Education Service Delivery Prices project to provide a data-driven understanding of the reasonable costs of safe and quality ECEC service delivery across Australia and inform future reforms and policy development.

The reforms have been informed by the Productivity Commission and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's work on early education.

Safer and better early childhood education and care

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every child in early childhood education and care is a national priority. The government will provide \$226 million over four years from 2025–26 to strengthen safety and quality in early childhood education and care. This includes developing a National Childhood Worker Register, supporting the workforce to complete mandatory child safety training, an assessment of CCTV in up to 300 services, improving transparency for families about services' quality and safety, banning the use of personal devices in ECEC and increased regulatory actions.

As part of its investment, the government is providing \$37 million to address existing gaps in the Working With Children Checks (WWCC) process and to implement the National Continuous Checking Capability to provide all jurisdictions near-real time information on the suitability of WWCC holders across the country.