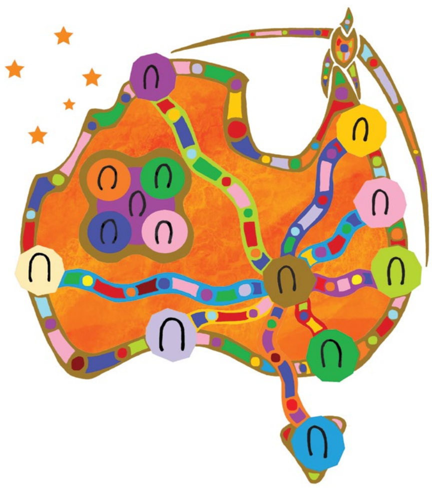
Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Corporate Plan
2026–27

Covering reporting period Financial Years 2026–27 to 2029–30



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Social Services acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, water, culture and community.

We pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.

Artwork: Reconciliation Journeys.
Artists: Mr James (Jim) Abednego and Ms Nikki Gallagher

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Contents

Part one:
Introduction

Secretary's foreword

I am pleased to present the Department of Social Services (the department) 2026–27 Corporate Plan (the plan). The department is the Australian Government's lead agency for social policy, committed to improving the economic and social wellbeing of individuals, families and vulnerable members of Australian communities.

The plan sets out our purpose, outcomes, priorities, capability investments and key activities over the next 4 years. It outlines our operating environment, risks, measures of success and ensures we are accountable to the Parliament and the public.

The previous year was one of change for the department as our policy responsibility was refined following the Machinery of Government changes.

The department had the opportunity to undertake an independent Capability Review, led by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) as part of the APS Reform Agenda. The Capability Review informed our department's two guiding strategic documents:

- our Action Plan responding to the Capability Review (Action Plan) – which outlines our capability uplift priorities, and
- our Impact Strategy on a page which summarises at a high level our policy and delivery priorities.

Details of both these policies are outlined within this 2026–27 Corporate Plan.

This year we focus on the implementation of these policies and delivery of these priorities and on our continued role as steward of Australian social policy. Our priorities include:

- delivering the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 and associated plans to end gender-based violence and ensure people live free from fear and violence
- ensuring children are safe and supported to develop well in their own homes by strengthening support for parents and carers and reducing entries into out-of-home care
- instituting outcomes contracting to enable a more flexible partnership approach between government and providers, one which focuses on delivering clear and practical outcomes for people and communities
- working in partnership with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Services Australia and other commonwealth agencies to support more people to find meaningful work and enable young people to transition into a modern job market
- supporting survivors of child sexual abuse through the National Redress Scheme
- continuing to identify and deliver local solutions that help break cycles of entrenched disadvantage.

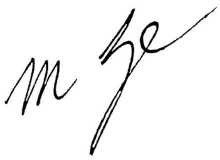
The department will continue to advance its commitment to whole-of-government Closing the Gap Priority Reforms. Our particular focus remains on reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care (Outcome 12), and reducing all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children (Outcome 13). We will also continue to support the development of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation sector, in line with Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2.

We will report on our progress against the department's priorities in the Annual Report, which includes our Annual Performance Statements and our Annual Financial Statements, released in October each year.

We look forward to working with our stakeholders to deliver these outcomes to improve the wellbeing of all Australians and presenting our progress in our 2026–27 Annual Report.

Statement of preparation

As the accountable authority of the Department of Social Services, I present the 2026–27 Department of Social Services Corporate Plan, covering the financial years 2026–27 to 2029–30, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.



Michael Lye
Secretary

Our purpose

The department's purpose is to improve the economic and social wellbeing of individuals, families and vulnerable members of Australian communities.

Our outcomes

The department is responsible for 2 outcome domains in our 2026–27 Portfolio Budget Statement.

Social Security – Support the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of people when they cannot fully support themselves, by providing targeted payments and assistance through the social security system, and disability employment services.

Families and Communities – Promote stronger and more resilient families, children, individuals and communities by providing targeted supports.

Our programs

Social Security – 1.1 Support for Families, 1.2 Paid Parental Leave, 1.3 Support for Seniors, 1.4 Financial Support for People with Disability, 1.5 Financial Support for Carers, 1.6 Working Age Payments, 1.7 Student Payments, 1.8 Disability Employment Services, 1.9 Income Apportionment Resolution Payment.

Families and Communities – 2.1 Families and Communities.

For more detail on key activities under our programs, see Part 3.

Our Impact Strategy

The department's Impact Strategy 2025–2030 sets out the policy outcomes we are working to achieve throughout the next 5 years and the capabilities we are investing in to deliver them. It guides where we focus our resources and efforts in 2026–27 and beyond.

Figure 1 below is an extract from the department's Impact Strategy 2025–2030. It depicts our legislated outcome domains and the policy outcomes we are aiming to deliver.

Figure 1

Outcome domains: What we are responsible for

Social security

Support the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of people when they cannot fully support themselves, by providing targeted payments and assistance through the social security system, and disability employment services.

Families and communities

Promote stronger and more resilient families, children, individuals and communities by providing targeted supports.

Outcomes: What we want to achieve for the Australian people

- Financial security for all
- Stronger communities
- Safer individuals and families
- Thriving children and young people

Sub-Outcomes:

- More people in work
- Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage
- End violence in families and relationships
- A fair social security system
- People are connected to their community
- Parents and carers support their children to be safe and develop

The Impact Strategy aligns with the department's responsibility for:

- Closing the Gap Target 12 – Reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% over 10 years, and
- Closing the Gap Target 13 – Reducing the rate of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

Further details are available in our Impact Strategy 2025–2030.

Our priorities

In 2026–27, we will focus on key deliverables that support the department's long-term policy outcomes, including:

- reducing Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (and progress towards Closing the Gap Target 13)
- keeping children safely at home (and progress towards Closing the Gap Target 12)
- putting kids first by reducing weaponisation of the child support scheme and helping parents meet their child support obligations
- supporting more people to find meaningful work
- identifying and delivering local solutions that help break cycles of entrenched disadvantage
- supporting survivors through the National Redress Scheme.

Delivery culture

The department is committed to a delivery culture, by investing in our delivery capability and strengthening our focus on achieving outcomes for the people we serve.

The department works in partnership with governments and non-government organisations and communities to ensure the effective development, management and delivery of payments, evidence-based policies, programs and services to support Australian communities, individuals and families.

A dedicated Delivery Unit works closely with policy and program teams to drive the department's key delivery priorities and align effort and resources to where the department wants to make an impact.

This includes work with program areas to develop Delivery Plans which are regularly tracked and used to support monitoring, evaluation and learning. Where implementation is delayed, remedial action is identified and support provided to program areas to get implementation ontrack. This is overseen by the department's Delivery Committee.

The department's delivery work links to broader government delivery efforts as needed, such as the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Implementation Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) to drive delivery and implementation of election commitments and strategic objectives.

Our capability

Investing in our people and systems is critical to delivering the government's policy priorities. The department's Action Plan responding to the Capability Review, identifies the areas where we are strengthening our capability and support organisation change.

The Action Plan focuses our capability efforts on 4 key areas:

lead strategic social policy to create beneficial change

drive delivery to achieve real impact

embed supportive systems to work smarter

collaborate meaningfully to build shared purpose and influence

Over the 5-year term of the Impact Strategy and Action Plan the department will continue to respond to challenges and opportunities across the social services environment, including changing community expectations, global disruption and emerging technologies. We will focus on continuing to build our priority capabilities to support our people to thrive in their roles and deliver meaningful impact for communities.

Our planning and reporting framework

The department's planning and reporting framework supports the delivery of our obligations under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)* and ensures the business planning, performance measurement and budget processes are aligned.

This plan is our primary planning document. It integrates our outcomes, performance, priorities, and workplace values. Detailed group business plans and individual performance plans cascade down from the plan, providing the department with a clear line of sight between our purpose and performance. We measure and assess our performance in contributing to government policy objectives.

Part two:
Our operating context

Our environment

Australia is facing complex and rapid challenges. The social security system is dealing with increased demand for support[1], and governments must find new ways to deliver lasting outcomes for communities. Government policies and programs have an important role to play in building individual and community resilience and social cohesion. They also have a critical function in enabling people to take the opportunities which improve their economic participation and social wellbeing.

As identified in our Impact Strategy[2], the challenges and opportunities in our environment, include:

- **widening inequality, across communities and generations**
- **global disruption to culture, security and the economy**
- **declining public trust in government and institutions**
- **digital transformation, including use of AI and automation**
- **user expectations of supports tailored to need.**

Widening inequality, across communities and generations

If left unchecked, widening inequality has the potential to weaken social cohesion between communities and generations. Over the course of decades, changing household structures, challenges with housing affordability and inflation can lead to pressure on families, carers and those living alone. Vulnerable groups, including renters, single parents, young adults, people with disability and some regional communities are likely to be hit hardest[3,4].

Recent government actions have sought to mitigate these trends, including increases to key income support payments, boosting housing supply, tax cuts, cheaper medicines and an expansion of Paid Parental Leave.

There have been signs of improvement in women's workforce participation and First Nations employment. Women's workforce participation has reached record highs of 63.5%. The trajectory of employment for First Nations peoples aged 25–64 (Closing the Gap - Outcome 8) is promising – tracking towards the target rate of 62% by 2031. However, continued effort is needed to ensure that progress continues and that these gains are broadly shared.

Around 5.5 million people receive an income support payment, including over 1.4 million people on working age payments (JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance (other), Parenting Payment) and over 2.7 million on Age Pension and around 850,000 people who receive Disability Support Pension.

1 Australian Government Department of Social Services. DSS Income Support Recipients - Monthly Time Series [Dataset]. Data.gov.au.
2 Australian Government, Department of Social Services, DSS Impact Strategy 2025–2030
3 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2026). Selected Living Cost Indexes, Australia, June 2026. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
4 Scanlon Foundation Research Institute. Social Cohesion Insights 09: Stretched thin: The emotional toll of financial stress. Scanlon Foundation Research Institute.

While unemployment remains at historic lows[5], the number of people aged under 35 on unemployment benefits has grown by 40% since COVID (March 2026 data)[6]. This trend points to a range of factors that can affect workforce participation among younger people, including labour market transitions, the impact of COVID on skills formation and the changing nature of work.

Ensuring that people with disability are able to access sustained and meaningful work is a priority. In 2022, 60.5% of people aged 15–64 years with disability were in the labour force, compared with 84.9% of those without disability. Additionally, people aged 15–64 with disability were more than twice as likely to be unemployed than those without disability.

Australia's extensive and targeted social security system provides strong support for those unable to support themselves due to age, disability, caring responsibilities or unemployment.

Global disruption to culture, security and the economy

Global geopolitical tensions and structural volatility are disrupting supply chains, affecting fuel and food prices, impacting economic growth and contributing to cost-of-living pressures, which often have a disproportionate impact on lower-income households.

Climate change and natural disasters pose risks to housing, livelihoods, food and water security, and access to affordable insurance. These impacts are often greatest for communities that are already vulnerable. At the same time, the transition to renewable energy is reshaping industries, jobs and regions.

Community expectations are increasingly influenced by transnational ideas and forms of expression, which are disseminated and amplified through social media in an increasingly connected world.

Declining public trust in government and institutions

Trust in government and public institutions remains under pressure due to rapid change, misinformation, social polarisation, and fragmented information sources[7]. Government's role as a reliable and authoritative source of information is therefore increasingly important.

Effective responses to complex social issues, including family, domestic and sexual violence, are critical to maintaining public confidence in government. This includes ensuring that engagement with external stakeholders is transparent and inclusive.

This has been reflected in how the department undertakes best practice policy engagement, for example development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032 has included more than 160 roundtables nationwide with frontline services and victim-survivors.

Labour market inclusion is also important to ensure institutional trust. Although unemployment remains relatively low, many vulnerable cohorts require additional support to overcome barriers to participation. As part of the government's response to this challenge, employment and support services are increasingly being delivered through partnerships with local organisations, and First Nations communities, helping to provide more coordinated and place-based support.

These developments create opportunities to achieve better outcomes for communities. They also require greater coordination and consistency to ensure that people receive the support they need to overcome barriers.

5 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2026). Labour Force, Australia, July 2026. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
6 Australian Government Department of Social Services. DSS Income Support Recipients - Monthly Time Series [Dataset]. Data.gov.au.
7 Scanlon Institute for Applied Social Cohesion Research, Mapping Social Cohesion 2025 (Melbourne: Scanlon Institute, 2025)

Digital transformation, including use of AI and automation

Digital transformation is reshaping the economy, government and service delivery, creating both opportunity and risk. AI and automation are expected to disrupt many jobs by 2030[8], with women and some young and older people more exposed to displacement[9,10]. At the same time, digital-first government services are raising expectations for faster, more seamless and user-centred experiences.

To deliver effective services, governments must adapt systems, skills and policy while balancing innovation with inclusion. The social security system touches the lives of Australians in many different ways, and at different points of their lives. It is important that user experience of the system evolves with technological change, while ensuring vulnerable cohorts with limited access to digital tools, capabilities and support are not left behind.

User expectations of supports tailored to need

Australians increasingly expect social supports that are personalised, accessible and easy to navigate. Demand is growing for more holistic, responsive services that reflect people's diverse and intersecting needs.

As demographic pressures grow, the department must remain responsive to demand for services and effective targeting of social security payments and assistance.

Future productivity will depend on strategic collaboration and investment in social services across employment, health and education, to support all Australians to fulfil their potential.

8 World Economic Forum. (2025). The future of jobs report 2025. World Economic Forum.
9 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (OECD). Who will be the workers most affected by AI?
10 PWC Australia. (2026). 2026 AI business predictions. PWC Australia

Key Activities

The department undertakes key activities that support the achievement of our priorities and purpose. Key activities are a function of our funded programs as outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statements. Details of our key activities are listed under each program in Part Three: Our performance section of this document. These key activities are aligned to our Impact Strategy outcomes.

Figure 2 below lists our key activities and how they contribute either explicitly (●) or partially (○) to the Impact Strategy policy outcomes.

Figure 2: Department of Social Service's key activities and how they contribute to the Impact Strategy policy outcomes

Key Activity	Impact Strategy Sub-Outcomes
1.1.1 Family Tax Benefit	○ More people in work ● A fair social security system ● Parents & carers support their children to be safe and develop
1.1.2 Child Support Scheme	● A fair social security system ○ Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage ○ End violence in families and relationships ● Parents & carers support their children to be safe and develop
1.2.1 Paid Parental Leave	● More people in work ● A fair social security system ○ Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage ● Parents & carers support their children to be safe and develop
1.3.1 Age Pension	● A fair social security system
1.4.1 Disability Support Pension	● A fair social security system
1.5.1 Carer Payment & Carer Allowance	● A fair social security system ● Parents & carers support their children to be safe and develop
1.6.1 JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance (other) & Parenting Payment	● More people in work ● A fair social security system ● Parents & carers support their children to be safe and develop

Key Activity	Impact Strategy Sub-Outcomes
1.7.1 Youth Allowance (Student), Austudy & ABSTUDY	● More people in work ● A fair social security system ○ Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage
1.8.1 Inclusive Employment Australia	● More people in work ○ Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage ○ People are connected to their community
1.9.1 Income Apportionment Resolution Payment	● A fair social security system
Cross Program – Rent Assistance	● A fair social security system
2.1.1 Families and Children	○ More people in work ● Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage ● People are connected to their community ● End violence in families and relationships ● Parents & carers support their children to be safe and develop
2.1.2 Family Safety	● Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage ● People are connected to their community ● End violence in families and relationships ● Parents & carers support their children to be safe and develop

Key Activity	Impact Strategy Sub-Outcomes
2.1.5 Financial Wellbeing and Capability	○ More people in work ● Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage ○ People are connected to their community ○ End violence in families and relationships ○ Parents & carers support their children to be safe and develop
2.1.7 National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse	○ Break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage ● People are connected to their community ○ End violence in families and relations

Legend

- ● Has a clear and explicit objective linked to the policy outcome, is a major driver of that outcome.
- ○ Has partial connection to the policy outcome, influences it indirectly through flow-on effects or other factors.

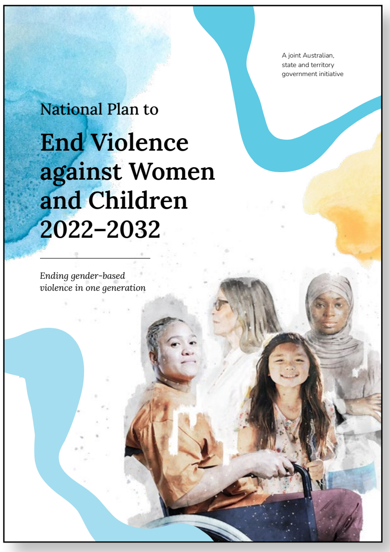
Note: The mapping indicates direct and partial contribution of key activities to the Impact Strategy policy outcomes. However, there may be further pathways that may have important and more marginal contribution which are not represented in this diagram.

DSS and Commonwealth priorities

The department leads and contributes to a range of cross government priorities that aim to improve the lives of Australians. We collaborate with other government agencies to support the implementation of strategies that support more joined up services and systemic change for communities. We engage in opportunities to shape and influence social policy direction in Australia including through delivery of cross-cutting strategies and stewardship of whole of government priorities.

In the section below we identify the key cross government policies that the department plays a leading role in delivering.

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

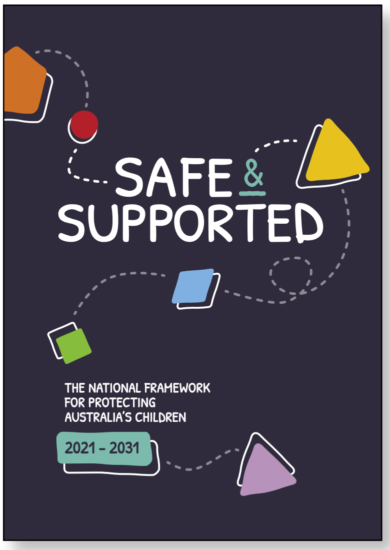


The *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (National Plan) is the overarching national policy framework guiding a coordinated 10-year effort to end gender-based violence in Australia within a generation. The Australian Government has invested over $4.4 billion towards achieving the outcomes of the National Plan since its launch in 2022.

The department has an important role in delivering programs and services across the four domains of the National Plan including: prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing. This includes the key initiatives such as 1800RESPECT, the Leaving Violence Program, Keeping Women Safe in Their Homes, DV Alert, Our Watch and the Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021–30 Federation Funding Agreement (FDSV FFA).

The department also provides governance, oversight and coordination across governments on the implementation of the First Action Plan 2023–2027, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025 and is working across governments to develop the Second Action Plan under the National Plan.

Implementation is shared across the Commonwealth, and states and territories. For example, while the Commonwealth is primarily responsible for nationwide prevention and early intervention, states and territories hold levers in relation to frontline services, and police and justice systems.



The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2021–2031) (Safe and Supported) embeds Priority Reforms from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, to transform how governments work to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families.

Safe and Supported sets out how all governments will work in partnership with First Nations representatives. This includes close collaboration with the non-government sector to help children, young people and families in need of support, particularly those who are experiencing disadvantage or are vulnerable to abuse or neglect. Shared-decision making is embedded in Safe and Supported through a formal partnership agreement that includes the design and delivery of services affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Key successes of Safe and Supported include ongoing investment in prevention, early intervention and family support initiatives through the National Child and Family Investment Strategy and Innovation Fund, strengthening earlier access to support for children and families and helping to improve child safety and wellbeing. Progress has also been made in establishing the National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People and increasing the participation of children and young people, including through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led approaches to policy development.

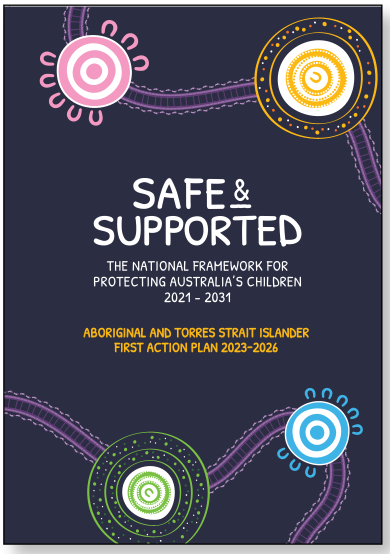
These reforms are supported by shared decision-making arrangements under Safe and Supported, bringing governments and First Nations representatives together to oversee implementation and drive improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families. Governance is provided through a Shared Decision-Making Committee and supporting groups, with a strong commitment to equal representation between governments and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group.

Decisions are made through a Shared Decision-Making Committee and supporting groups, with an emphasis on membership parity between all governments and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group.

Safe and Supported has 4 focus areas to achieve outcomes:

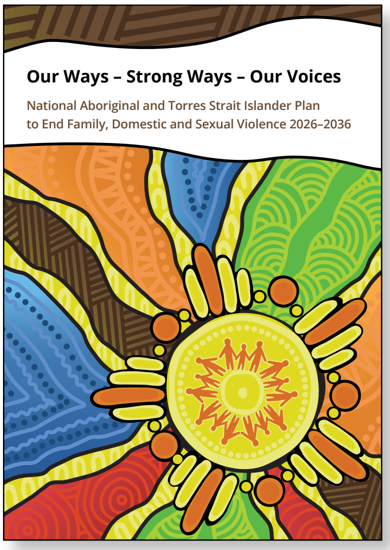
1. a national approach to early intervention and targeted support for children and families experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage
2. addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems
3. improving information sharing, data development and analysis
4. strengthening the child and family sector and workforce capability.

Safe and Supported is being delivered through 2 Action Plans - Safe and Supported: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023–2026 and Safe and Supported: First Action Plan 2023–2026.



The implementation of the Safe and Supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023–26 will assist in addressing the unacceptable rates of First Nations children in out-of-home care by advancing the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, particularly Priority Reform 3 (Transforming Government Organisations) and Priority Reform 2 (Building the Community Controlled Sector), which aim to ensure that First Nations children, families and communities are supported through culturally safe, community-led services and decision making.

The department is committed to supporting the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, by advancing implementation of the Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and in collaboration across government. This includes strengthening partnerships, building Indigenous data capability and improving knowledge of Indigenous data assets with a focus on culturally informed and appropriate practices.



Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026– 2036 is Australia's national plan to address the high and disproportionate rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children. An Our Ways First Action Plan to support Our Ways - Strong Ways - Our Voices is currently under development.

Developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and state and territory governments, the plan centres Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, needs and experiences, reflecting decades of advocacy from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples calling for change that honours culture, kinship and connection to Country.

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices is grounded in respect for human rights, self-determination and cultural authority. It ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have a seat at the table in shaping frameworks that directly impact them.

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices represents key progress towards addressing Closing the Gap Target 13 (reducing the rate of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children) for which the department has lead responsibility.

Recognising these developments, the department will assess the progress made so far on the recommendations of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee in its *Missing and murdered First Nations women and children report* and consider opportunities for further action.

Reconciliation

Our goal is to work in genuine partnership with First Nations people. We want to create better outcomes across all areas of work.

We commit to advancing reconciliation by embedding cultural understanding, strengthening relationships, and creating opportunities that support the self determination of First Nations People. Responsibility for each commitment lies with everyone and strong governance is required to successfully deliver these commitments.

We will implement Priority Reform 3 Plan to address systemic barriers, strengthen accountability, improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and measure the impact of our actions within the department and our services, supporting culturally safe and responsive ways of working.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The department is focused on delivering more impactful outcomes for families and communities through improved performance against the Priority Reforms and Socio-economic Targets as set out in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This aims to better position the department to tackle complex and intersecting socio-economic targets and improve life outcomes for First Nations people.

The department also leads the Commonwealth response to Target 12 (reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care (by 45% by 2031), and Target 13 (reducing the rate of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children). Key priorities are captured in the Commonwealth's 2025 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

The department's progress against specific commitments for the Priority Reforms and Targets is published each year in the Commonwealth Closing the Gap and Implementation Plan on www.niaa.gov.au. Data for the socio-economic targets are published on www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/.

The department also established the Closing the Gap Delivery Committee to strengthen oversight of the department's Closing the Gap commitments. This includes delivery oversight of actions relating to Targets 12 and 13, and the implementation of Priority Reforms. This will be further bolstered through the delivery of departmental implementation plans for each of the Priority Reforms, each of which are championed by a Deputy Secretary. The department's Closing the Gap targets are mapped and integrated into our Impact Strategy.

Challenging the drivers of violence and abuse remain critical to addressing severe disadvantage

Family, domestic and sexual violence remains a significant and complex issue in Australia. Improving the safety and wellbeing of women and children is a national priority, requiring a coordinated, whole-of-society response. Continuing to strengthen and evolve our programs and services so they are responsive, innovative and grounded in evidence is critical to supporting victim-survivors, and to working with young people, particularly boys and young men, to promote respectful and healthy relationships.

Alongside supporting people to leave unsafe situations, there is an opportunity to further strengthen the protective factors that enable individuals, families and communities to thrive, including to identify opportunities to support people at critical life moments such as pregnancy and early parenthood. This includes investing in holistic, person-centred approaches that recognise diverse needs and focus on long-term outcomes.

By building on existing strengths across systems and communities, and continuing to work together, we can drive meaningful and sustained improvements in safety and wellbeing.

Workforce

Our strength and impact are underpinned by how we value our people's skills and perspectives. This enables everyone to contribute meaningfully to our work.

We foster a culture of collaboration, curiosity and constructive challenge. Aligned with our Impact Strategy, we expect our people to be outcome-focused, evidence-driven and collaborative, working together to deliver meaningful results for the community.

We support our people to achieve this with clear purpose and strong governance.

Over the next 12 months, we will progress the priorities in the Workforce Strategy Action Plan, aligned with the Capability Review, to strengthen our capability, talent and ways of working. This includes a more strategic and data-informed approach to workforce planning, with a focus on addressing skills gaps in data, digital and emerging capabilities and ensuring we have the right people in the right roles.

We will continue to build capability through targeted development and the adoption of digital tools and technologies, including the appropriate and responsible use of artificial intelligence, alongside strengthening leadership and manager capability to support effective team performance.

Our flexible and hybrid ways of working will continue to evolve, supporting collaboration, productivity and access to a broader national talent pool, and ensuring we remain well placed to deliver for government and the community.

Our partners

Our portfolio agencies are important partners in advancing the department's purpose and priorities. Through ongoing collaboration, the Australian Institute of Family Studies strengthens our evidence base through research and insights on families and communities; the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission provides national leadership to help drive action to end violence; and the National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People brings a dedicated focus to improving outcomes for First Nations children and young people. Each agency brings distinct expertise, perspectives and leadership that strengthen and complement our collective impact. Together, we work across shared priorities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Relationships across the Commonwealth

Strong cooperation and collaboration across government, including with our Commonwealth agencies, the states and territories and the community sector is essential in delivering our policy agenda and service delivery responsibilities. For example, our Community Grants Hub is a shared services provider of grant administration for 9 external client agencies, and the department works closely with Safe and Supported and National Plan partners to deliver on the outcomes of the national frameworks. We will continue to foster open, respectful, and productive relationships with our partners and communities to deliver meaningful change to the lives of individuals and families.

Portfolio agencies

Under the PGPA Act, the Social Services portfolio is comprised of non-corporate Commonwealth entities; one Department of State and three listed entities. Each entity publishes its own Corporate Plan detailing its purpose and performance measures.

Non-corporate Commonwealth Entities

- Department of Social Services
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission
- National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People.

Our capability

Our workforce

Our strength and impact are underpinned by how we value our people's skills and perspectives. This enables everyone to contribute meaningfully to our work.

There are approximately **2,700 people** working in the department in locations around Australia. We span policy and program development, corporate services, stakeholder engagement, and frontline service delivery.

We foster a culture of collaboration, curiosity and constructive challenge. Aligned with our Impact Strategy, we expect our people to be outcome-focused, evidence-driven and collaborative, working together to deliver meaningful results for the community.

We support our people to achieve this with clear purpose and strong governance.

Over the next 12 months, we will progress the priorities in the Workforce Strategy Action Plan, aligned with the Capability Review, to strengthen our capability, talent and ways of working. This includes a more strategic and data-informed approach to workforce planning, with a focus on addressing skills gaps in data, digital and emerging capabilities and ensuring we have the right people in the right roles. In 2025–26, we identified over 50 initiatives to support uplift across the department's 4 priority capability areas and will continue to embed and strengthen these over the coming year.

We will undertake targeted actions to attract, retain, engage, and develop our workforce, aligned with the Action Plan responding to the Capability Review. This includes strengthening the capability we need now and into the future with a focus on priority skills and workforce needs. We will continue to invest in our people through targeted development opportunities and capacity uplift. Our success relies on clear workforce priorities that build a capable, adaptable and high-performing workforce.

Our flexible and hybrid ways of working will continue to evolve, supporting collaboration, productivity and access to a broader national talent pool, and ensuring we remain well placed to deliver for government and the community.

Our diversity

Our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities we serve, bringing a wide range of perspectives, experiences and expertise. We value the range of views and approaches this diversity brings to our workplace. We apply an intersectional lens to understand how disadvantage can overlap and compound, and use this to identify systemic barriers, prioritise effort and drive targeted improvements across the workforce. We are committed to building on the successes of the past year to foster an inclusive culturally diverse workplace. This includes working to strengthen inclusion for our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) staff; after securing Bronze Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) status moving towards gold as a LGBTIQA+ employer of choice, improving the experience of our staff with disability, including invisible disabilities and neurodiversity, and supporting our Indigenous staff through training opportunities and through the reinvigoration of our Indigenous Liaison Officer program.

We recognise that building our cultural capability, particularly in relation to First Nations peoples, cultures and histories, is essential to delivering high-quality and culturally appropriate services, policies and programs. We understand that inclusion is a key enabler of capability and delivery.

Our inclusion and accessibility

The department is committed to building and embedding an inclusive and accessible workplace where everyone feels safe, valued and empowered to contribute.

Over the next 12 months, we will progress the DSS Inclusion Framework 2026–2030, embedding inclusion and accessibility across our culture, systems and everyday ways of working. This includes strengthening leadership accountability, improving access to opportunities and capability development, and ensuring employee voice and lived experience inform decision-making and design.

We will continue to remove systemic barriers, support workplace adjustments and flexibility, partner with employee-led Diversity Committees and Networks, and strengthen our First Nations capability, including Indigenous Liaison Officer roles to enhance cultural advice, engagement and support across the department.

Our health, safety and wellbeing

Our commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of our people remains fundamental. We continue to build a strong safety culture by embedding safety into all aspects of our work and strengthening the capability of our people and leaders.

We take a risk-based and evidence-informed approach to safety, supported by effective consultation and engagement with our workforce. This ensures our people’s expertise and experiences inform how we identify and manage risks and continuously improve our approach.

Over the next 12 months, we will strengthen our focus on health and safety, with a continued emphasis on prevention and early intervention. We will enhance how we identify, assess and manage risks, supporting our people to raise and address safety concerns with confidence.

We will also continue to build capability across the department, reinforcing shared responsibility for health and safety and supporting leaders to actively manage risks in their areas.

Together, these actions will support a safe, respectful and healthy workplace and contribute to positive wellbeing and performance outcomes for our people.

Our learning and development

To meet workforce challenges now and into the future and to manage risk we are strengthening workforce capability in line with the Action Plan responding to the Capability Review, we are investing in our people to deliver high-quality social policy and outcomes. We support continuous learning through flexible development opportunities, from bite-sized to intensive programs which provide multiple ways for staff to learn in the workplace. We are building capability across the policy lifecycle, using data, evaluation and user-centred design to drive real-world impact. We are also fostering collaboration and contestability through strengthened policy functions, enabling a high-performing workforce to deliver on the department's Impact Strategy.

We have a focus on policy excellence through our Social Policy Toolkit, the department's central resource for guidance on better practice policymaking. We are providing the tools and resources to build the capability of our staff wherever they are in their career.

Our ways of working

We will continue to evolve our ways of working to attract and maintain the essential skills and talent needed to deliver for the government and community.

We are improving how we work by delivering more inclusive and accessible workplaces supported by better use of technology and contemporary work practices. We will invest in leadership and manager capability to equip our people to lead teams, manage performance, drive innovation and continuous improvement. Our ways of working are underpinned by empowering our people to take ownership, work collaboratively and demonstrate leadership at all levels, with a strong focus on integrity, respect and delivering outcomes.

We recognise the importance of balancing work and employees' personal commitments. Our flexible and hybrid ways of working support productivity, wellbeing, and business continuity, enabling us to work effectively from a range of locations.

The department supports flexible working arrangements. This important change has resulted in the recruiting the best staff member possible due to skill and experience rather than where they live. This includes in regional areas thus providing a footprint in the bush and the city helping the local economies where our staff live.

Australian Public Service Strategic Commissioning Framework

Our department continues to operate in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework. Core work is undertaken in-house wherever possible, with external support engaged only in limited and appropriate circumstances.

For the department, core work is APS and agency-specific in nature and is specifically geared towards serving the Australian public using fundamental APS skills. This includes working the job families of: policy, portfolio, program and project management, administration, service delivery, communications and marketing, accounting and finance, compliance and regulation, data and research, senior executive, legal and parliamentary, human resources, ICT and digital solutions, monitoring and audit, information and knowledge management and intelligence.

In 2026–27, the department will continue working to bring core work in-house in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework. To strengthen capability to deliver core work, the department will develop and implement a DSS learning and development plan to guide capability uplift. The plan will describe how learning opportunities are identified, developed, and evaluated to align with the department's priorities, core work and capability needs.

Our grants capability

The Community Grants Hub (the Hub) will continue its strong partnership with the department, client agencies and the community sector to deliver best-practice, efficient and scalable grants administration. In 2025–26, the Hub managed approximately 28,812 grants, totalling $12.3 billion, on behalf of the department and client agencies, working with 9,470 community sector organisations. We will continue to enhance governance, consistency and performance to maximise impact and value for money.

The Hub is moving to new way of partnering with organisations, through Outcomes Contracting – Partnering for Impact, that will better measure the impact of services to Australians through our grants. This partnership will be relationship and client-centred to prioritise the design and delivery of services that are culturally appropriate, accessible and adapt with the evolving community needs. In collaboration with the Community Sector Advisory Group and other sector partners, we will reshape our commissioning and grant management approach to be more collaborative, transparent and outcomes-focused. This includes embedding innovation, reducing administrative burden, closely monitoring and adapting to maximise to impact and strengthening sector capability to ensure sustainable, effective service delivery.

Leveraging our geographically dispersed and highly specialised workforce, the Hub will expand its strategic engagement with the community sector to better inform program design and delivery. We will systematically use data, evidence and stakeholder insights to improve targeting, accessibility and effectiveness of grant programs. This will enable more responsive, outcomes-driven investments that deliver measurable improvements in the lives of Australians.

Our data

The department's Data and Evaluation Group supports the department's policy and program areas with performance monitoring, evaluation, data extraction and reporting services. The department draws on extensive data from our policies, programs and services.

The department manages the administrative data from our policies, programs and services, as well as funding the delivery of 4 active longitudinal studies: *Living in Australia: The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children; Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children and Building a New Life in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Humanitarian Migrants.* The department's administrative and longitudinal data holdings provide important evidence about how Australian's circumstances, needs and outcomes change over time – which is crucial for examining the appropriateness, efficiency, and effectiveness of programs and policies.

One year into implementation of the Data and Analytics Strategy 2025–2027, the department is focused on embedding its data and analytics priorities. This includes strengthening trusted, best-practice data governance within safe, secure, lawful and ethical guardrails; using administrative and longitudinal data to inform policies, programs and services; ensuring technology and systems support the data lifecycle; enabling open access to data; lifting staff capability in the use of data.

The Strategy is informed by cross government strategies and commitments and will continue to:

- ensure our data governance builds trust, reflects best-practice and enables the use of administrative and longitudinal data in a safe, secure, lawful and ethical way
- ensure data provides the evidence to deliver with impact and support improvements to payments, policies, programs and services
- ensure our technology and systems support all aspects of the data lifecycle
- support open access to data by default, contributing to the data ecosystem and sharing and leveraging data, internally and externally
- increase staff capability and confidence in using data to support departmental priorities
- create a culture of data-driven curiosity and enquiry where data is embedded into all aspects of our business.

The department also released a new *Evaluation Strategy 2025–27* to guide work to understand the impacts of our payments, policies and programs, and what difference they make to Australians. Evaluation is an integral part of our work, and the Evaluation Strategy has a focus on continuing to build evaluation capability and ensuring findings are shared and used to drive positive outcomes and deliver better services for Australians.

In 2026–27, the department will:

- continue to embed the *Data and Analytics Strategy* and *Evaluation Strategy 2025–27*
- deliver on commitments under the whole-of-APS Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data
- progress open access to administrative and longitudinal data, including improving the visibility, accessibility and use of the department's data assets
- strengthen the use of administrative and longitudinal data and evidence to inform critical departmental priorities, including family, domestic and sexual violence, Closing the Gap
- support safe, secure, lawful and ethical data sharing
- continue to uplift staff capability and confidence in using administrative and longitudinal data to support decision-making, reporting, service improvement and policy development.

Our financial capability

The department's Finance and Information Services Group supports our financial capability, ensuring compliance with legislation and sound financial stewardship. It also equips the department to make informed decisions that improve program performance and deliver better policy, optimising the use of public resources and achieving stronger outcomes for the Australia community. The Group provides strong oversight of the department's financial control framework, its associated systems and supports the facilitation of external and internal budget processes, reports on financial performance and produces the financial statements.

The department actively participates in the Australian Government Budget process by collaborating closely across the department's enabling, policy and delivery areas, central agencies, our Portfolio entities and other agencies. The department has built sound working relationships with our key stakeholders, which enables us to deliver our priorities and commitments.

The group is a key enabler in the financial stewardship of the department, providing advice to the:

- Executive Management Group (EMG) in a timely and accurate manner about financial performance, forecast, pressures and risks
- departmental managers, in relation to:
  - the development of robust and easy to use financial management policies, systems and processes
  - assisting in the development of new policy proposals and coordinating the Budget process
  - the provision of timely and accurate financial information, analysis and advice
  - anticipating financial issues and working collaboratively in developing solutions
  - financial literacy training and support to enhance financial knowledge
  - procurement advice, use of credit cards, travel and fleet management.

The group ensures departmental stakeholders understand their financial obligations when undertaking their work, and facilitates regular capability development opportunities through mentoring, training modules and on the job learning.

Our Emissions Reduction Plan

The *Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy* further describes the approach for implementing the government's commitment to achieve net zero government operations by 2030.

The department is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2030, including through the following actions:

- procuring renewable electricity
- improving building standards
- transitioning the fleet vehicles to low emission vehicles
- sustainable procurement
- encouraging low-emission sources of travel
- people, culture and capability uplift
- reporting departmental emissions in our Annual Report.

Our climate disclosure

The department is committed to environmentally sustainable operations, including meeting the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements aligned with the Australian Sustainability Reporting Standard AASB S2 Climate-related Disclosure Standard and are being implemented progressively over time.

The Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements focus on the 4 key aspects of climate related reporting:

- Governance: includes governance processes, controls and procedures in place to support climate risk management within entities.
- Strategy: includes strategic approaches an entity uses to manage climate-related risks and opportunities and reduce its emissions over time.
- Risk Management: includes the methods used to assess an entity's overall risk profile and embed climate risk management practices across its organisation.
- Metrics and Targets: includes processes and methodologies an entity uses to track its performance and meet its targets.

Our governance and risk management

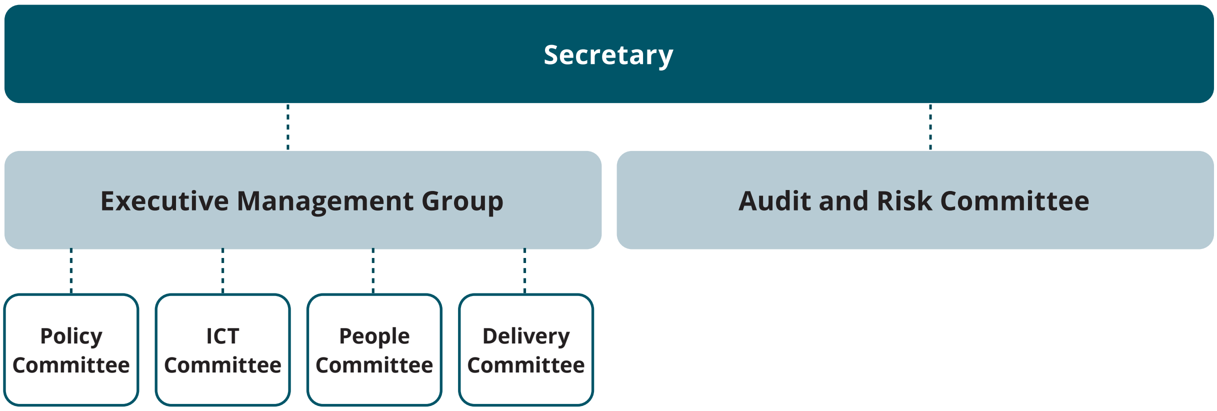
Our governance

Our governance arrangements underpin our decision making by ensuring transparency, accountability and integrity are applied to all our activities.

Our governance structure includes the EMG and its sub-committees, which consider information and communication technologies (ICT), people, the delivery of policy and program related matters, and oversight of the department's strategic priorities and intended outcomes.

The Delivery Committee also sits quarterly as the Closing the Gap Delivery Committee to strengthen oversight of the department's Closing the Gap commitments. Our governance structure informs the strategic prioritisation of resources as part of policy setting, program and workforce planning, risk management and audit and compliance activities.

Figure 3



Our risk management

Our *Risk Management Framework* (the RM Framework) assists staff at all levels across the department to effectively identify and manage risk. The RM Framework is aligned to the 9 elements of the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy. The RM Framework includes a risk management policy, along with a risk and issues management procedures, and a legal risk reporting framework. It also provides clear responsibilities for all our staff to consistently escalate and report on risk and issues. Identification, reporting and management of legal and other specialist risks is iterative and needs to be incorporated in all activities and operations of the department.

Our processes align with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy and section 16 of the *PGPA Act.*

Our risk governance

EMG oversees the approach and effectiveness of the RM Framework and makes decisions about strategic risks. The strategic risks are continuously monitored and reviewed.

The Chief Risk Officer provides oversight of risk management culture and capabilities across the department and is supported by senior executives to manage and report on risk.

Significant risks, including emerging risks, are escalated to the Secretary or relevant Deputy Secretary, through Group and Branch Managers. Issues are reported to the relevant senior executive and as appropriate to the Secretary.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent assurance and advice to the Secretary, and EMG, on the design and operation of our department's risk, control and compliance framework, including its external accountabilities.

Our strategic risks

The department's 5 strategic risks, identified by the EMG, have the potential to impact our purpose. These risks are interdependent and cut across organisational boundaries. Our strategic risks and associated risk treatments are detailed below:

Table 1

Strategic risk	Description	Risk mitigations
Policy Development and Delivery	There is a risk that the department fails to design and deliver key policy, programs, projects and services that are citizen centric and meet government priorities.	▶ Continue delivering against our outcomes by implementing Government priorities in line with relevant legislation, frameworks and guidance. ▶ Continue embedding good design principles through guidance tools and resources to foster citizen-centric policy design, implementation and monitoring. ▶ Prioritise and invest in policy capability development including resources such as the Social Policy Toolkit, the department's centralised resource for guidance on better practice policymaking. ▶ Work collaboratively with our key partners and stakeholders to ensure all views are considered and policy advice is timely, influential, and has a strong evidence base. ▶ Continue to embed more robust scrutiny of current and future policies. ▶ Focus on delivery priorities using data and evidence to set clear targets and drive the delivery of outcomes.
Integrity	There is a risk to the department that not upholding a culture of integrity and professionalism will reduce the effectiveness of the delivery of outcomes for Australian communities.	▶ Continue building and embedding a pro-integrity culture through an Action Plan, in which is aligned to APS expectations, the department's Integrity Strategy and Framework and the 4Cs behavioural framework. ▶ Continue educating staff on their integrity responsibilities through APS integrity training, including awareness of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, complemented by department-specific integrity training with emphasis on the 4Cs behavioural framework. ▶ Continue delivery of mandatory training on APS Values, the Code of Conduct, fraud awareness, employment principles and behavioural expectations.

Strategic risk	Description	Risk mitigations
Our People	There is a risk to the department having the workforce capability needed, including managing the safety, wellbeing and development of staff.	▶ Develop and implement the department's Workforce Strategy that sets direction and priorities to support and develop our people. ▶ Through Work Health and Safety Management Arrangements, continue demonstrating the department's commitment to managing health and wellbeing in the workplace. ▶ Mature diversity and inclusion efforts in the department through the development of an Inclusion Framework and continued work with Diversity Networks and Champions.
Partnerships	There is a risk to ensuring the department's partnerships with other agencies and organisations maximises the outcomes for the Australian community.	▶ Implement best-practice principles identified through the Australian Public Service Commission's Charter of Partnerships and Engagement and good practice guidance, which supports leveraging partnerships to develop community/person-centred policies and services. ▶ Continue to consult with key stakeholders on policy and program solutions to ensure that outcomes are maximised. ▶ Contractual Agreements with our key stakeholders are in place, regularly monitored and adapted to support emerging risks to meet our policy, program and service delivery responsibilities.
Systems and Data Integrity	There is a risk to maintaining and protecting data held by the department and using data and information effectively to support our outcomes.	▶ Implement strategies within our *2025–27 Data and Analytics Strategy* to embed data-driven improvements to the economic and social wellbeing of Australians and continue to ensure strong governance processes are in place in relation to the quality, use, and sharing of our data. ▶ Continue to ensure that Service Level Agreements are in place with our key stakeholders in relation to our IT systems and support for our data and ensure they are reviewed on a regular basis.

Fraud and Corruption

Fraud and corruption pose a serious risk to the department's programs, schemes and corporate functions. To meet its obligations under the *PGPA Act* and Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework, the department has in place a Fraud and Corruption Control Plan 2026–28, Fraud and Corruption Policy, and Secretary's Instruction 1.3 Fraud and Corruption Control. These documents outline the governance, roles and responsibilities of officers, fraud and corruption risk assessments and other fraud management activities the department undertakes to meet its requirements under the Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework.

The department maintains systems of fraud and corruption risk management and oversight, ensuring all reasonable measures are in place to prevent, detect, deter, disrupt and respond to fraud and corruption.

Our integrity

Our integrity culture is reinforced through a strong commitment to pro-integrity behaviours and our purpose of improving the economic and social wellbeing of individuals, families and vulnerable members of Australian communities. To support this culture, the department has established:

- the 4Cs behavioural framework, aligned to the APS Values and designed to support an adaptive and accountable workplace culture, demonstrated through:
  - being **curious**
  - respectfully **contesting** ideas
  - having the **courage** to call out inappropriate behaviour
  - working **collaboratively** across the department and with stakeholders and partners.
- a dedicated Integrity Unit providing education, advice and support in relation to integrity matters, including engagement with the National Anti-Corruption Commission and Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office.
- an integrity strategy and framework for 2024–26
- an Integrity Champion whose important role is to promote integrity across DSS, encourage open conversations and the behaviours and culture that underpin good decision-making and public trust.

Throughout 2026–27, the department will continue strengthening pro-integrity culture through implementation of APS reform initiatives, APS Integrity Taskforce recommendations, engagement across APS integrity forums, and ongoing support for the work of the National Anti-Corruption Commission and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Part three:
Our performance

The department's key activities are delivered in partnership with a range of third parties including Commonwealth agencies, for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. The majority of the data used to report our performance is sourced from our third-party delivery partners. The department aims for better practice approaches to ensure third-party data is reliable, verifiable, and supported by proportionate assurance processes. In practice, some third-party data may have limitations. In the interest of transparency, we disclose any limitations associated with the data and methodology used to assess our performance.

Within our operating context, there are external factors beyond the department's control that can impact our performance. Performance measures that may be impacted by external factors are identified in this chapter using the diamond symbol (♦).

The assessment of performance measures outlined in this Corporate Plan will be published in the 2026–27 Annual Report.

Categorising Data Sources

The PGPA Rule requires that performance measures should use sources of information and methodologies that are reliable and verifiable. This includes appropriate assurances and controls of data. Reliable and verifiable data is key to supporting advice to better inform government decisions which the department is continuously working towards. Performance statements will include categorisations of data that underpin the department's performance measures. Data categorisations are identified as follows:

Data Source	Definition
Primary source	Generated from within the department.
Secondary source	Data sourced from another Commonwealth or state and territory entity.
Tertiary source	Contracted business or service provider.

Assurance	Definition
Tier 1	The department has assurances over this data.
Tier 2	The data is sourced from a third party. The department has some controls in place which assure this data, for example an agreement with the data provider outlining data quality expectations or data is supported by a quality statement.
Tier 3	Data is sourced from a third party, such as a contracted business or service provider. The department has minimal mechanisms by which to assure the data reported by the third party.

Outcome 1: Social Security

Programs and activities

Outcome 1 comprises 9 programs and a number of activities, all of which contribute to achieving the social security outcome.

An in-depth description of each of the activities, performance measures, targets, rationale, methodology and outputs are in the Performance Tables Section on the pages that follow.

OUTCOME 1 – SOCIAL SECURITY

Support the financial wellbeing and self-sufficiency of people when they cannot fully support themselves, by providing targeted payments and assistance through the social security system, and disability employment services.

PROGRAM 1.1 SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Key activities
1.1.1 Family Tax Benefit
1.1.2 Child Support Scheme

PROGRAM 1.2 PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

Key activities
1.2.1 Paid Parental Leave

PROGRAM 1.3 SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

Key activities
1.3.1 Age Pension

PROGRAM 1.4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Key activities
1.4.1 Disability Support Pension

PROGRAM 1.5 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CARERS

Key activities
1.5.1 Carer Payment and Carer Allowance

PROGRAM 1.6 WORKING AGE PAYMENTS

Key activities
1.6.1 JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance (other) and Parenting Payment

PROGRAM 1.7 STUDENT PAYMENTS

Key activities
1.7.1 Youth Allowance (Student), Austudy and ABSTUDY

PROGRAM 1.8 DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Key activities
1.8.1 Inclusive Employment Australia

Program 1.9 INCOME APPORTIONMENT RESOLUTION SCHEME

Key activities
1.9.1 Income Apportionment Resolution Payment

CROSS-PROGRAM RENT ASSISTANCE

Key activities
Cross Program Rent Assistance

PROGRAM 1.1 SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Assist eligible families with the cost of raising children while ensuring that parents remain primarily responsible for supporting their children.

Key Activity — 1.1.1 Family Tax Benefit

Family Tax Benefit (FTB) is a key activity of the Support for Families Program. The FTB activity makes payments to eligible low and medium income families to help with the direct and indirect cost of raising dependent children. It comprises two parts:

- FTB Part A – is paid per child and the amount paid is based on the family's circumstances.
- FTB Part B – is paid per family and gives extra help to single parents and some couple families with one main income.

FTB can be paid fortnightly or as a lump sum at the end of the financial year. Families who are eligible for FTB may also be eligible for other payments and supplements, such as Newborn Supplement, Newborn Upfront Payment, and Rent Assistance. FTB Part A recipients must also meet immunisation and health check requirements (where applicable).

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the key activity. This includes providing advice to government on policy and legislation, program implementation and management, program performance, monitoring and meeting all relevant deliverables, setting key performance indicators, and providing guidance and advice to Services Australia on the administration of the program.

Services Australia is responsible for administering FTB on the department's behalf, including receiving, processing, and managing payment applications and making payments.

Performance Measure

1.1.1-1 Extent to which families with lower incomes are supported with the costs of raising children through Family Tax Benefit.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.1.1-1A – The number of FTB Part A families with adjusted taxable income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area is aligned with the number of families in Australia with family income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area.	Recipient numbers align with the proportion of families with income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area	Recipient numbers align with the proportion of families with income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area	Recipient numbers align with the proportion of families with income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area	Recipient numbers align with the proportion of families with income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area

Rationale

Measuring the extent to which families with lower incomes are supported with the costs of raising children through the FTB aims to demonstrate how the payment is targeted towards these families. This measure demonstrates the **effectiveness** of the FTB in achieving the objective of the key activity, which is to ensure eligible families are helped with the cost of raising children.

The target demonstrates the **effectiveness** of the department's role in delivering the key activity by showing the extent to which low income families are supported by FTB.

Methodology

The number of FTB Part A families with adjusted taxable income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area is aligned with the number of families in Australia with family income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area is calculated by:

- using the number of FTB Part A families with adjusted taxable income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area, divided by,
- the number of families in Australia with family income under the FTB Part A Lower Income Free Area.

This is used to measure the proportion of lower income families in Australia who are supported by receiving FTB.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data.	Secondary source	Tier 1
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).	Secondary source	Tier 1

Note: FTB data is not considered mature until 2 years (8 quarters) after the end of the entitlement year.

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Payment accuracy
- Number of recipients – FTB Part A and Part B
- Number of children – FTB Part A and Part B

PROGRAM 1.1 SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Assist eligible families with the cost of raising children while ensuring that parents remain primarily responsible for supporting their children.

Key Activity — 1.1.2 Child Support Scheme

The Child Support Scheme is a key activity of the Support for Families Program. The Child Support Scheme ensures children receive an appropriate level of support from their parents following separation.

Child support payments are calculated according to an administrative formula that uses an income shares approach and is based on research into the cost of raising children in Australia. Child support payments can be transferred privately (Private Collect), or Services Australia can collect and transfer the payments on parents' behalf (Agency Collect).

Child support legislation provides Services Australia with extensive collection and enforcement powers to collect child support in Agency Collect cases.

The department is working with Services Australia, the Australian Taxation Office and other Australian Government agencies to implement reforms announced in the 2026–27 Budget to make the child support system safer and to help more children get the support they are owed. This package of reforms will help prevent the weaponisation of the child support system and protect parents and children from financial abuse.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the Child Support Scheme, including child support policy and legislation.

Services Australia delivers the Child Support Scheme on the department's behalf and provides services to parents and carers. Services Australia assists parents to apply for a child support assessment, determines the amount payable and, where applicable, facilitates the collection and transfer of child support payments. Where payments are not made voluntarily, Services Australia has a range of powers to enforce the collection of child support. The Child Support Registrar in Services Australia has decision making powers under child support legislation.

Performance Measure

1.1.2.1 Extent to which separated parents in the child support system meet their financial obligations to support their children.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.1.2.1A – Services Australia collects payments equivalent to more than 95% of child support liabilities in Agency Collect cases each year.	>95%	>95%	>95%	>95%

Rationale

Measuring the extent to which separated parents who are assessed to pay child support in Agency Collect cases are complying with their obligation demonstrates the effectiveness of the Child Support Scheme in supporting children of separated parents. The measure is also relevant to the effectiveness of enforcement payments in the Child Support Scheme. This demonstrates how the Child Support Scheme is effective in maximising the economic resources available to raise their children.

The target demonstrates the **effectiveness** of the key activity by showing:

- the value of child support payments collected by Services Australia and paid to receiving parents, as a proportion of all child support liabilities raised in Agency Collect cases.
- a significant percentage of children continue to receive financial support from their parents following separation.

Methodology

For each financial year (from 2025–26 onwards):

- Annual Agency Collect liabilities assessed; and
- Annual Agency Collect liabilities collected.

The percentage is the Annual Agency Collect liabilities collected divided by the Annual Agency Collect liabilities assessed.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data.	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Child Support Scheme (number of cases)

PROGRAM 1.2 PAID PARENTAL LEAVE
Assist parents to take time out of the workforce to bond with their children following birth or adoption and encourage continued participation in the workforce.
Key Activity — 1.2.1 Paid Parental Leave

Paid Parental Leave is a key activity of the Paid Parental Leave Program. Paid Parental Leave provides financial support to help eligible parents to take time off work to care for a newborn or recently adopted child, to encourage women's workforce participation, to enhance the health and development of mothers and their children and promote equality between men and women, and the balance between work and family life. It also aims to increase the time that fathers and partners take off work around the time of birth or adoption to provide further opportunities for fathers and partners to take a greater share of caring responsibilities.

For children born or adopted from 1 July 2026, Paid Parental Leave provides eligible families with up to 26 weeks of pay based on the national minimum wage. To support a more balanced approach to paid and unpaid work within families, 4 weeks are reserved on a dedicated 'use it or lose it' basis for each parent. Single parents can access the full 26 weeks. To be eligible for Paid Parental Leave, a claimant must meet the scheme's work test, income test, and residency requirements.

For children born or adopted from 1 July 2025, eligible parents receive an additional 12% of their Paid Parental Leave as a contribution to their superannuation account.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the key activity, including providing advice to government on policy and legislation, program implementation and management, program performance, monitoring and meeting all relevant deliverables, setting guidelines, and providing guidance and advice to Services Australia on the administration of the program.

Services Australia is responsible for administering Paid Parental Leave on the department's behalf, including receiving, processing, and managing payment applications and delivering Paid Parental Leave.

Employers are responsible for providing Paid Parental Leave on the government's behalf to eligible employees in their usual pay cycle.

Performance Measure

1.2.1-1 Extent to which eligible families use their unreserved entitlement to Parental Leave Pay.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.2.1-1A – At least 95% of eligible Paid Parental Leave families receive payment.	≥95%	≥95%	≥95%	≥95%

Rationale

Measuring the extent to which families use their unreserved entitlement to Paid Parental Leave aims to demonstrate that parents are financially assisted to take time off work following the birth or adoption of a child.

This performance measure demonstrates the effectiveness of Paid Parental Leave in achieving the objectives of enhancing the health and development of mothers and children, encouraging women's workforce participation, and promoting equality between men and women and balance between work and family life.

Targeting at least 95% of eligible Paid Parental Leave families using at least the entire unreserved entitlement demonstrates the effectiveness of the key activity by showing the extent of assistance accessed by eligible families to take time off work following the birth or adoption of a child.

Methodology

'Eligible Paid Parental Leave families' is defined as the number of children whose parents or carers received Paid Parental Leave. 'Receive payment' is defined as the receipt of Paid Parental Leave for at least the entire unreserved period for children born or adopted on or after 1 July 2023.

The percentage is based on the number of Paid Parental Leave children whose parents or combination of carers took at least the full number of unreserved weeks of Paid Parental Leave as a proportion of the total number of Paid Parental Leave children whose entitlement and two-year claim period finished during the financial year.

As the scheme expands the number of unreserved weeks will increase. For children born or adopted:

- between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, there are 20 weeks of unreserved Paid Parental Leave;
- between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026, there are 21 weeks of unreserved Paid Parental Leave; and
- from 1 July 2026, there are 22 weeks of unreserved Paid Parental Leave.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data.	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Number of recipients

PROGRAM 1.3 SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

Assist eligible senior Australians financially and to encourage them to use their financial resources to support their retirement income.

Key Activity — 1.3.1 Age Pension

The Age Pension is a key activity of the Support for Seniors Program. The key activity provides income support to senior Australians who need it, while encouraging pensioners to maximise their overall incomes. The Age Pension is paid to people who meet age and residency requirements, subject to a means test. Pension rates are indexed to ensure they keep pace with Australian price increases and benchmarked to wages.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the Age Pension, including providing advice to government on policy and legislation, program implementation and management, program performance, monitoring and meeting all relevant deliverables, setting guidelines and providing guidance and advice to Services Australia on the administration of the program.

Services Australia is the primary portfolio agency responsible for administering the Age Pension, including receiving, processing and managing applications and delivering payments.

Performance Measure

1.3.1-1 Extent to which people over the Age Pension qualification age are supported in their retirement through the Age Pension or other income support.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.3.1-1A – 75% or below of people of Age Pension age are supported by the Age Pension or other income support.	≤75%	≤75%	≤75%	≤75%

Rationale

This measure aims to demonstrate that senior Australians with low to moderate means are assisted financially, and the **effectiveness** of the Age Pension in achieving the objective of the key activity: senior Australians are assisted financially in a manner that encourages them to manage resources and life transitions through self-reliance.

The target demonstrates the **effectiveness** of the key activity by showing funding is targeted to eligible senior Australians and that ineligible senior Australians can fully support themselves due to the level of their income and assets.

Methodology

The number of people supported by the Age Pension or other income support (the numerator for the calculation of the measure) is calculated using the sum of:

- Age Pension recipients
- DVA Service Pension and Income Support Supplement recipients over Age Pension age
- other income support recipients over Age Pension age.

The number of people over pension age is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics population projections, which draws on the base population data set released on 23 November 2023.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data	Secondary source	Tier 1
Department of Veterans' Affairs administrative data.	Secondary source	Tier 1
ABS - Population Projections, Australia 2022–2071	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Payment accuracy
- Number of recipients

PROGRAM 1.4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY
To financially assist eligible people with disability.
Key Activity — 1.4.1 Disability Support Pension

The Disability Support Pension key activity aims to make payments to eligible people with disability who cannot fully support themselves.

The Disability Support Pension is an income support payment, for people who have a physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment which is expected to persist, in light of available evidence, for at least 2 years, and attracts at least 20 points under the *Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension* (the Impairment Tables). People who are eligible to claim Disability Support Pension include people who are unable to work for at least 15 hours per week at or above the relevant minimum wage.

The person must be aged 16 years or over and under Age Pension age at the time of claim. Disability Support Pension recipients are automatically issued with a Pensioner Concession Card. Disability Support Pension is income and assets tested.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the key activity, including providing advice to government on policy and legislation, program implementation and management, program performance, monitoring and meeting all relevant deliverables, setting guidelines and providing guidance and advice to Services Australia on the administration of the program.

Services Australia is responsible for administering the Disability Support Pension on the department's behalf, including managing applications and making payments.

Performance Measure

1.4.1-1 Extent to which Disability Support Pension policies support a Disability Support Pension recipient to participate in the workforce

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.4.1-1A – Longer-term Disability Support Pension recipients participate in the workforce at a higher rate than newly granted Disability Support Pension recipients.	Met/ Not Met	Met/ Not Met	Met/ Not Met	Met/ Not Met

Rationale

Comparing the extent to which Disability Support Pension recipients participate in the workforce when they first enter the payment (up to the first 2 years on payment) against longer term recipients (more than 2 years on payment) demonstrates that the payment supports recipients who are less likely to be able to fully support themselves when they seek social security support and supports recipients to increase workforce participation, where they can, to improve self-reliance over time.

Arrangements currently built into the Disability Support Pension eligibility criteria seek to encourage and support people to re-enter or increase participation in the workforce, where they can. The measure demonstrates the effectiveness of those policies in supporting people to take up additional work while in receipt of payment, subject to income testing.

The measure compares the proportion of working age Disability Support Pension recipients (those aged 16 to age pension age) participating in paid work, by their duration on Disability Support Pension. Specifically, Disability Support Pension recipients that have been in receipt of payment for more than two years are compared to recipients that have been on payment for up to two years. Recipients are considered to be in paid work where they report hours worked.

Methodology

Disability Support Pension recipients below Age Pension are grouped into two categories:

- those that became entitled for payment more than two years prior to the reported date; and
- those that became entitled for payment two years prior to the reported date or more recently.

These two groups are separated into those reporting hours worked and those not reporting any hours worked.

The proportion of each group reporting hours worked are then compared.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data.	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Payment accuracy
- Payment recipients

PROGRAM 1.5 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CARERS
To financially assist eligible carers of people with disability or a severe medical condition.
Key Activity — 1.5.1 Carer Payment and Carer Allowance

The Carer Payment and Carer Allowance are key activities of the Financial Support for Carers Program and provide financial assistance to eligible carers of people with disability or a severe medical condition.

Carer Payment is for eligible carers of people with disability or a severe medical condition. Carer Payment may be paid where the constant care a carer provides to a child (under 16 years) and/or adult (16 years and over) with disability or medical condition prevents the carer from supporting themselves through paid employment. Carer Payment is income and assets tested and paid at the same rate as other social security pensions. Most Carer Payment recipients also qualify for Carer Allowance.

Carer Allowance is an income supplement to people who provide daily care and attention in a private home to a person with disability or a severe medical condition. Carer Allowance is a fortnightly payment for carers who provide daily care and attention to a child (under 16 years) or an adult (over 16 years).

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the key activity. This includes providing advice to government on policy and legislation, program implementation and management, program performance, monitoring and meeting all relevant deliverables, setting guidelines and providing guidance and advice to Services Australia on the administration of the program.

Services Australia is responsible for administering the Carer Payment and Carer Allowance on the department's behalf including managing applications and making payments.

Performance Measure

1.5.1-1 Extent to which payments are made to, or with respect to, carers unable to financially support themselves, and trends align with broader population trends.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.5.1-1A – The proportion of the Australian population who are Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance recipients remains within 3 percentage points of the proportion of people who identify as primary carers.	≤ 3p.p.	≤ 3p.p.	≤ 3p.p.	≤ 3p.p.

Rationale

The measure seeks to ensure the payments are reaching intended recipient cohorts by comparing trends in the number of primary carers with those who receive Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance as a proportion of the overall Australian community.

In turn, this measure demonstrates the effectiveness of the Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance in achieving the objective of the key activity: to make payments and allowances to financially assist eligible carers of people with disability or a severe medical condition.

The target of the proportion of the Australian population who are Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance recipients remaining within 3 percentage points of the proportion of Australian population who are primary carers demonstrates the effectiveness of the key activity by matching trends of the broader Australian community.

Methodology

The number of primary carers that are supported is calculated using the number of payment recipients of Carer Payment, Carer Allowance (Adult) and Carer Allowance (Child).

The number of primary carers in Australia is based on the ABS – Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

The Australian population is based on the ABS – National state and territories population tables.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data	Secondary source	Tier 1
ABS - Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers	Secondary source	Tier 1
ABS - National state and territories population tables	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Payment accuracy
- Number of payment recipients

PROGRAM 1.6 WORKING AGE PAYMENTS
To provide financial assistance to people while they are unable to fully support themselves through work.
Key Activity — 1.6.1 JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance (other) and Parenting Payment

JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance (other) and Parenting Payment are key activities of the Working Age Payments program.

Working Age Payments assist people who are temporarily unable to support themselves through work or who have a limited capacity to work due to injury or illness or parenting responsibilities. Eligibility for payments is targeted with means testing and supplementary payments are available where people have additional costs, ensuring that assistance is directed to those with the greatest need.

JobSeeker Payment is the main income support payment for eligible people aged between 22 years to Age Pension qualification age who are looking for work, who temporarily cannot work or study because of an injury or illness, or bereaved partners in the period immediately following the death of their partners.

Youth Allowance (other) is the main income support payment for eligible young people aged 16–21 years who are looking for full time work or undertaking approved activities to improve their job prospects.

Parenting Payment is the main income support payment for single parents, partnered parents, or guardians who have principal care for a young child; it provides them with incentives to increase workforce participation.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing these payments, including providing advice to government on policy and legislation, program management, program performance, monitoring and meeting all relevant deliverables, setting guidelines and providing guidance and advice to Services Australia on the administration of the program.

Services Australia is the agency responsible for administering the key activities on the department's behalf including receiving, processing and managing claims for payment, ensuring recipients' continued eligibility for payment and delivering the JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance (other) and Parenting Payment.

Performance Measure

1.6.1-1 Extent to which payments are made to, or with respect to, people unable to fully support themselves.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.6.1-1A – Recipient numbers reflect the number of people who are unable to fully support themselves through work.	Recipient numbers align with changes in the number of unemployed total persons	Recipient numbers align with changes in the number of unemployed total persons	Recipient numbers align with changes in the number of unemployed total persons	Recipient numbers align with changes in the number of unemployed total persons

Criteria for the 2026–27 performance target is:

- **Met:** both data sets trend in the same direction for 6 or more months of the financial year (can be continuous or non-continuous).
- **Partially Met:** data sets trend in the same direction for less than 6 months in the financial year, but the trend on an annual basis (increase, decrease or no change over the financial year) is in the same direction for both data sets.
- **Not Met:** there is alignment in less than 6 months per year and the trend on an annual basis is not in the same direction.

Rationale

Measuring the extent to which payments are made to people unable to fully support themselves demonstrates that people are assisted financially when they are temporarily unable to support themselves through work or who have a limited capacity and availability to work. This includes due to injury or illness or parenting responsibilities.

This measure demonstrates the **effectiveness** of JobSeeker Payment, Parenting Payment and Youth Allowance (other) in achieving the objectives of the key activities: to financially assist people who are temporarily unable to support themselves through work or have a limited capacity to work.

The extent to which changes in recipient numbers align with the number of unemployed total persons demonstrates the **effectiveness** of the key activities, by showing how closely the system responds to need in the community as they change (measured in terms of movement in the number of unemployed total persons). It also demonstrates the **effectiveness** of payment policy in providing the right incentives for income support recipients to take up available and suitable work to fully support themselves.

Methodology

The number of people supported by Working Age Payments is calculated using the number of recipients of:

- JobSeeker Payment
- Parenting Payment (Partnered + Single)
- Youth Allowance (other).

The number of unemployed total persons uses the ABS, Labour Force Survey – Number of unemployed total persons (original series).

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data	Secondary source	Tier 1
ABS - Labour Force Survey – Number of unemployed total persons (original series)	Secondary source	Tier 1

It is important to note there are significant differences between the population measured by the ABS to calculate the number of unemployed total persons and Working Age Payment population recipients. There is also a lag between changes in labour market conditions (as reflected in the change in the number of unemployed persons) and people moving on to or off income support payments.

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Payment accuracy

PROGRAM 1.7 STUDENT PAYMENTS

To support eligible students whilst they undertake education and training, so that they can gain employment. To increase access and participation by Indigenous students in secondary and tertiary education and accelerate their educational outcomes.

Key Activity — 1.7.1 Youth Allowance (Student), Austudy, ABSTUDY

Youth Allowance (Student), Austudy and ABSTUDY are key activities of the Student Payments program.

- Youth Allowance (Student) is a payment to eligible students or apprentices aged 16–24 years who are in need of financial assistance to undertake education or training.
- Austudy is a payment to eligible students or apprentices aged 25 years and over who are in need of financial assistance to undertake education or training.
- ABSTUDY includes a number of payments to eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or apprentices to address the particular educational disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the key activity, including providing advice to government on policy and legislation, program implementation and management, program performance, monitoring and meeting all relevant deliverables, setting guidelines and providing guidance and advice to Services Australia on the administration of the program.

Services Australia is responsible for administering the key activities on the department's behalf including receiving, processing and managing payment applications and delivering student payments.

Performance Measure

1.7.1-1 Extent to which payment recipients have improved financial self-reliance

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.7.1-1A – The proportion of Austudy, Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY recipients who are not receiving income support 12 months after exiting student payments reflect the number of people who are able to fully support themselves through work. Movements in exit rates correlate with an opposite movement in the unemployment rate.	Increases in exit rates align with decreases in the unemployment rate.	Increases in exit rates align with decreases in the unemployment rate.	Increases in exit rates align with decreases in the unemployment rate.	Increases in exit rates align with decreases in the unemployment rate.

Rationale

Measuring the extent to which payment recipients have improved financial self-reliance demonstrates that students receiving income support and other financial assistance achieve growth in skills and qualifications, to support their participation in the workforce. This measure demonstrates the **effectiveness** of ABSTUDY, Austudy and Youth Allowance (Student) in achieving the objectives of the key activity: recipients have improved financial self-reliance.

Targeting the proportion of recipients who are not receiving income support 12 months after exiting student payments aligns with movements in the unemployment rate and demonstrates the **effectiveness** of the key activity by showing that those leaving the temporary payments are able to support themselves through employment.

Methodology

The number of recipients who exit student payments and have improved financial self-reliance (for example, by remaining in employment) is calculated by comparing the:

- percentage of people who are not receiving income support 12 months after exiting student payments
- the unemployment rate as measured by the ABS.

Student payment recipients include recipients of Austudy, Youth Allowance (Student) and ABSTUDY over a 12–month calendar year, where the recipient has been on a student payment for more than 3 months.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data	Secondary source	Tier 1
ABS, National Accounts – Labour Force Australia	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Payment accuracy
- Payment recipients

PROGRAM 1.8: DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

To support people with disabilities, injury or health conditions to prepare for, find and maintain work.

Key Activity — 1.8.1 Inclusive Employment Australia

Inclusive Employment Australia is a key activity that supports individuals with disability, injury or health conditions to prepare for, find and maintain work and grow their career. It replaced the Disability Employment Services Program on 1 November 2025.

Inclusive Employment Australia is delivered through a network of contracted providers, including a mix of large, medium, and small for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. These providers have experience in supporting people with disability and deliver tailored assistance to address both vocational and non-vocational barriers to employment. They help participants build skills, prepare for work and secure suitable job opportunities.

Once a participant gains employment, their Inclusive Employment Australia provider continues to support both the individual and their employer to ensure the placement is successful and sustainable. This support and available for as long as it is needed.

Inclusive Employment Australia providers also play an important role in supporting employers. They offer advice on inclusive workplace practices, assist with recruitment, and help employers build supportive environments for employees with disability. In some cases, providers can offer a wage subsidy to help employers assess a participant's suitability for a role. They can also assist employers to access funding for workplace adjustments and connect them with JobAccess. JobAccess is an Australian Government funded program delivered by industry professionals, providing free, expert advice and support to help remove barriers to employing people with disability.

To support the introduction of Inclusive Employment Australia, a new provider performance framework has been developed. The new framework places a strong emphasis on early intervention, collaboration and accountability, with a clear focus on participant experience and achieving sustainable employment outcomes.

The Centre for Inclusive Employment (the Centre), formerly known as the Disability Employment Centre of Excellence, further supports the program by providing best-practice, evidence-based information to employment service providers. The Centre commenced on 7 March 2025, with its first suite of resources and online hub launched in November 2025.

Performance Measure

1.8.1-1 - Extent to which people with disability are supported to find and maintain employment through Inclusive Employment Australia.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 1.8.1-1A – **Employment Placements:** The percentage of participants placed in a job for at least 28 days.	20%	20%	20%	20%
♦ 1.8.1-1B – **Employment Sustainability:** The percentage of participants who stayed employed for 12 weeks after being placed in a job.	65%	65%	65%	65%
♦ 1.8.1-1C – **Employment Sustainability:** The percentage of participants who stayed employed for 26 weeks after being placed in a job.	50%	50%	50%	50%
♦ 1.8.1 -1D – **Employment Sustainability:** The percentage of participants who stayed employed for 52 weeks after being placed in a job.	35%	35%	35%	35%

Rationale

The Employment Placement and Employment Sustainability measures the extent to which people with disability are supported to find and maintain employment through Inclusive Employment Australia. These align with the performance measures in the Inclusive Employment Australia provider performance framework. The Employment Sustainability measures have stronger alignment with Inclusive Employment Australia program objectives as supporting sustained employment, as a unique feature in the Inclusive Employment Australia service offer (e.g. employment to 52 weeks).

The Employment Placements and Employment Sustainability measures aim to demonstrate the extent to which the Inclusive Employment Australia program has assisted people with disability, illness or health condition to secure and maintain sustainable open employment. This measures the **effectiveness** of the program in achieving the objective of the key activity and in particular measuring the effectiveness of the program in supporting sustained employment outcome.

Methodology

The Employment Placement per cent is the proportion of commencements to employment placements/anchors.

The Employment Sustainability per cent is the proportion of employment placements/anchors sustained to 12, 26 and 52 weeks.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Employment Business Intelligence Warehouse.	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Number of Inclusive Employment Australia participants.
- Number of Inclusive Employment Australia providers.

PROGRAM 1.9: INCOME APPORTIONMENT RESOLUTION PAYMENT

A one-off payment available to applicants under the Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme for each eligible debt affected by income apportionment between 20 September 2003 and 6 December 2020.

Key Activity — 1.9.1 Income Apportionment Resolution Payment

The Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme provides one-off payments to applicants with historical debts affected by income apportionment, in recognition that income apportionment was not consistent with social security law at the time.

Eligible applicants may receive a payment of up to $600 for each eligible debt. The amount payable depends on the original value of the debt, assessed in accordance with the Scheme rules.

The Resolution Scheme has opened for applications for 12 months from 30 January 2026, with processing of applications to commence in July 2026. Late applications will be accepted in special circumstances for an additional 12 months.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme, including providing advice to government on policy and legislation, program implementation and management, program performance, monitoring and meeting all relevant deliverables, setting guidelines and providing guidance and advice to Services Australia on the administration of the program.

Services Australia is the primary portfolio agency responsible for administering the Income Apportionment Resolution Payment, including receiving, processing and managing applications and delivering payments.

Performance Measure

1.9.1-1 Extent to which applications for the Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme are finalised, and payments made where applicants meet eligibility requirements, in accordance with the Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme Determination 2025.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
♦ 1.9.1-1 – Proportion of valid applications for the Income Apportionment Resolution Payment finalised by the relevant target date, with resolution payments made in accordance with the Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme Determination 2025.	at least 70% of valid applications submitted by 30 June 2027 are finalised by 30 June 2027.	at least 95% of valid applications submitted by 29 January 2028 are finalised by 30 June 2028.	at least 99% of valid applications submitted by 29 January 2028 are finalised by 30 June 2029.

Rationale

This measure aligns with the department's purpose of supporting a fair, trusted and effective social security system by ensuring eligible individuals receive timely resolution payments for debts affected by income apportionment.

The measure is designed to demonstrate the department's effectiveness in delivering a nationally consistent and timely resolution scheme, providing closure for applicants with affected debts. It shows progress over time in finalising applications and issuing payments, reflecting both service delivery performance and the overall success of the Scheme in resolving historical issues.

Methodology

In relation to the targets, valid application is defined as a debt that has been registered for assessment in accordance with the requirements as set out in the Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme Determination. An application is considered finalised when Services Australia has completed assessment and one of the following outcomes has occurred:

- a resolution payment has been made to the applicant;
- a resolution payment has been applied to reduce the outstanding amount of the debt;
- the application has been refused; or
- another final administrative outcome has been recorded in accordance with the Determination.

The target date means the date specified for the financial year that applications are expected to be finalised by. Valid applications that have a debt under review will not count towards the target being finalised.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Payment accuracy
- Number of recipients

CROSS PROGRAM - RENT ASSISTANCE

To make payments to income support or family payment recipients to assist with the costs of renting private and community housing

Key Activity — Rent Assistance

Cross Program Rent Assistance is a supplementary payment to assist eligible Australians receiving income support or family assistance payments with the cost of private rental or community housing. Individuals receiving the following payments may be eligible for Rent Assistance:

- Age Pension, Carer Payment or Disability Support Pension
- ABSTUDY Living Allowance, Austudy or Youth Allowance
- Special Benefit
- FTB Part A, at more than the base rate
- Parenting Payment, partnered and single
- JobSeeker Payment or Farm Household Allowance
- Service Pension, Income Support Supplement, Veteran Payment, or Department of Veterans' Affairs Education Schemes.

In 2026–27, the government expects to spend around $7.4 billion on CRA to assist households who are in private rental accommodation or community housing and receiving income support or FTB.

The department is responsible for Rent Assistance policy and program management.

Services Australia is responsible for administering Rent Assistance, including assessments, compliance and payments.

Performance Measure

Australians receiving income support or family assistance payments are assisted with the cost of private rental or community housing.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) reduces the proportion of recipient households in "rental stress" by at least 25 percentage points [11].	CRA reduces the proportion of recipient households in "rental stress" by at least 25 percentage points.	CRA reduces the proportion of recipient households in "rental stress" by at least 25 percentage points.	CRA reduces the proportion of recipient households in "rental stress" by at least 25 percentage points.	CRA reduces the proportion of recipient households in "rental stress" by at least 25 percentage points.

11 A recipient household or 'income unit' comprises a single person (with or without dependent children) or a couple (with or without dependent children) receiving a social security or family assistance payment and expected to share financial resources. Single social security recipients living together in the same dwelling are regarded as separate recipient households.

Rationale

This measure demonstrates the effectiveness of CRA in achieving the objective of Outcome 1 in delivering: a sustainable social security system that incentivises self-reliance and supports people who cannot fully support themselves by providing targeted payments and assistance.

Reducing the proportion of recipient households in "rental stress" by at least 25 percentage points measures the effectiveness of CRA for recipient households.

Methodology

Rental stress is defined as a rent assistance recipient household paying more than 30% of their income on rent. The proportion of individuals and families experiencing rental stress after receipt of CRA is calculated using:

- Percentage of CRA recipients paying more than 30% of their income in rent prior to receiving CRA
- Percentage of CRA recipients paying more than 30% of their income in rent including after receiving CRA.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia administrative data - Social Services Housing Data Set.	Secondary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays

Outcome 2: Families and Communities

Programs and activities

Outcome 2 comprises one program underpinned by a number of activities that seek to contribute to stronger and more resilient individuals, children, families and communities. The table below depicts how this purpose is translated into measurable activities.

An in-depth description of each of the activities, performance measures, targets, rationale, methodology and outputs are in the Performance Tables Section on the pages that follow.

OUTCOME 2 – FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Promote stronger and more resilient families, children, individuals and communities by providing targeted supports.

PROGRAM 2.1

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Key activities*

2.1.1 – Families and Children
2.1.2 – Family Safety
2.1.5 – Financial Wellbeing and Capability
2.1.7 – National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

*The key activity numbering in Outcome 2 is not consecutive as it reflects the 2025-26 Portfolio Budget Statement appropriation numbering.

PROGRAM 2.1 FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

To strengthen relationships, support families, improve wellbeing of children and young people, reduce the cost of family breakdown, and strengthen family and community functioning.

Key Activity — 2.1.1 – Families and Children

Families and Children is a key activity of the Families and Communities Program. The Families and Children key activity provides services and initiatives to support families, strengthen relationships, improve the wellbeing of children and young people, enhance family and community functioning, and build capacity within the families and communities sector.

Families and children service providers deliver early intervention and prevention activities to improve the wellbeing of families and children (including after separation), including parenting programs, relationship counselling, playgroups and other supports.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing the Families and Children key activity, including:

- designing policy and legislation
- designing and managing grants to service providers.

Performance Measure

2.1.1-1 Extent to which individuals have improved individual and family functioning

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 2.1.1-1A – At least 75% of clients in reporting services have improved family functioning.	≥75%	≥75%	≥75%	≥75%

Rationale

Measuring the extent to which individuals have improved individual and family functioning demonstrates that Families and Children Service Providers have strengthened family functioning. This measure demonstrates the **effectiveness** of Families and Children in achieving the objective of the key activity: to provide services and initiatives to support families, strengthen relationships, improve the wellbeing of children and young people, enhance family and community functioning, and build capacity within the families and communities sector.

The target of 'at least 75% of clients in reporting services have improved family functioning' demonstrates the **effectiveness** of the key activity by showing that a significant majority of clients that received services from Families and Children Service Providers have improved individual and family functioning.

Methodology

Funded service providers conduct a survey with a sample of clients to whom they provide a service. Client Circumstances data is based on a self-assessment of functioning, pre-service to establish a baseline and post-service to record the self-assessed outcome.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
The department's Data Exchange - Family Functioning SCORE data.	Tertiary source	Tier 2

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Number of individuals assisted
- Percentage of assisted individuals from priority groups

PROGRAM 2.1 Families and Communities

To strengthen relationships, support families, improve wellbeing of children and young people, reduce the cost of family breakdown, and strengthen family and community functioning.

Key Activity — 2.1.2 – Family Safety

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 (National Plan) sets the national policy agenda to guide the work of Commonwealth, state and territory governments, family safety experts and front-line services to end violence against women and children. Under the national plan:

The department is responsible for policy stewardship of the National Plan and subsequent action plans and creating policies and programs that operate under its remit, following on from the former *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women (2010–2022).* This includes key activity 2.1.2 - Family Safety in part 3 of the Corporate Plan.

The **Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission** (Commission) is responsible for promoting the objectives under the National Plan and providing yearly reporting to Parliament on the National Plan's efficacy at meeting its targets. The Commission also engages with victim survivors, providing lived experience to inform policies and solutions across government

The **Office for Women (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet)** is responsible for coordinating and promoting policies and programs across the public service that address gender inequality, and work to advance the overall commitment for the government to achieve gender equality and improve the lives of people in Australia, such as providing annual gender balance reporting for Australian Government boards.

State and territory governments support delivery of frontline domestic, family and sexual violence services and delivery of housing that supports response, recovery and healing for victim-survivors. This is in addition to policing and judicial responsibilities and providing prevention and early intervention programs focused on gender-based violence.

All governments have committed to the aim of ending gender-based violence in one generation. The main vehicle to achieve this goal is through the implementation of the National Plan. The National Plan utilises a public health approach, with clear objectives spanning 4 domains: prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing. All Australian governments have committed to the National Plan with clear actions for implementation as outlined in the *First Action Plan 2023–2027* and dedicated *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2023–2025*. While the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan has formally concluded, a number of continuing measures and commitments established under the plan remain in place and continue to inform implementation under the National Plan. The department contributes to the aim of ending gender-based violence through policy stewardship of the National Plan and implementing a range of actions and activities in the Action Plans.

The National Plan is supported by an Outcomes Framework. The Outcomes Framework interprets the vision of the National Plan. It paves the way for the next 10 years, to achieve our goal, where Australia is a country in which all people live free from gender-based violence and are safe in all settings including at home, at work, at school, in the community, and online. There are 6 long-term outcomes drawn from the National Plan:

1. Systems and institutions effectively support and protect people impacted by violence.
2. Services and prevention programs are effective, culturally responsive, intersectional and accessible.
3. Community attitudes and beliefs embrace gender equality and condemn all forms of gendered violence without exception.
4. People who choose to use violence are accountable for their actions and stop their violent, coercive and abusive behaviours.
5. Children and young people are safe in all settings and are effectively supported by systems and services.
6. Women are safe and respected in all settings and experience economic, political, cultural and social equality

As part of the Commonwealth initiatives, the department has a number of national programs that it delivers. There are 7 key national initiatives for which the department is responsible, these are outlined further below with output targets and success criterion.

Performance Measure

2.1.2-1 Successful implementation of Department of Social Services-led initiatives under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.*

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 2.1.2-1A – Demonstrated achievement of continued successful delivery of initiatives under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.*	The department will report implementation outputs against the 6 long-term *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* outcomes.	The department will report implementation outputs against the 6 long-term *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* outcomes.	The department will report implementation outputs against the 6 long-term *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* outcomes.	The department will report implementation outputs against the 6 long-term *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* outcomes.

Criteria for the 2026–27 performance target is:

- **Met:** each long-term outcome has an initiative that has met its output target
- **Partially Met:** 3-5 of the long-term outcomes have an initiative that has met its output target
- **Not Met:** less than 3 long-term outcomes have initiatives that meet their target.

Rationale

This measure primarily demonstrates the achievement of outputs from the national programs (referred to here as initiatives) administered by the department which directly support implementation of the National Plan.

Reporting outputs for initiatives the department administers will demonstrate achievement under this key activity during the implementation of the National Plan.

Methodology

Under the National Plan, the department delivers a number of national programs as part of Commonwealth initiatives. The department reports on implementation outputs aligned with the National Plan's six long term outcomes. These outputs are delivered through 7 key national initiatives for which the department holds responsibility, each supported by established output targets and success criteria.

Performance Measure – 1800RESPECT

The number of calls to the service answered within 20 seconds is calculated as a percentage of the total number of calls answered and number of calls abandoned (minus the number of calls abandoned within 5 seconds).

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
The success criterion is met if the percentage is greater than or equal to 80%.	≥80%	≥80%	≥80%	≥80%

Our Watch

The proportion of participants surveyed that report an improvement in their knowledge, understanding and/or awareness of the drivers of gender-based violence, and/or effective prevention of violence against women and children, following engagement with a PPAP activity.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
At least 70% of survey respondents report improved knowledge, understanding, and/or awareness.	≥70%	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*

* TBD following acceptance of the National Plan's Second Action Plan.

Performance Measure – DV alert

The total number of workshops delivered equals the target number of workshops listed for each financial year.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
The success criterion is met if the target number of workshops is delivered each year.	≥ 400 workshops	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*

* TBD following acceptance of the National Plan's Second Action Plan.

Performance Measure – Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)

The total number of research and data activities including delivery of technical, strategy and/or policy reports by ANROWS in the 2026–27 financial year to track outcomes and sub-outcomes under the National Plan

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Greater than or equal to the annual target.	20	TBD*	TBD*	TBD*

* TBD following acceptance of the National Plan's Second Action Plan.

Performance Measure – Federation Funding Agreement

The Federation Funding Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses supports coordinated delivery across jurisdictions.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
Demonstrated stewardship of Commonwealth investment through the *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021–30 Federation Funding Agreement* (FDSV FFA).	**The FDSV FFA** is administered under Social Services*	**The FDSV FFA** is administered under Social Services*	**The FDSV FFA** is administered under Social Services*	**The FDSV FFA** is administered under Social Services*

*Administered involves the department effectively stewarding Commonwealth funding provided through the FDSV FFA, including monitoring jurisdictional reporting and implementation against agreed performance and accountability requirements. Jurisdictions remain responsible for delivering funded activities and reporting on their outcomes and impacts.

Performance Measure – Keeping Women Safe in Their Homes (KWSITH)

The extent to which victim-survivors of family and domestic violence are supported to safely remain in their homes or a home of their choosing.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
The total number of Keeping Women Safe in their Homes clients assisted nationally is maintained at a minimum of 80% compared to the same period last financial year.	(n = 4,303) At least 80% of 2025–26 client numbers (5,379).	N/A	N/A	N/A

Performance Measure – Leaving Violence Program

85% of assessments completed within 3 business days of a complete application being submitted.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
The success criterion is met if the percentage of assessments completed within 3 business days is equal to or greater than 85% for the financial year.	85%.	TBD	TBD	TBD

Data Categorisation

Initiative	Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
1800RESPECT	Telstra Health Contact Centre Management System (GENESYS)	Tertiary source	Tier 2
Our Watch	Online discrete stakeholder survey	Tertiary source	Tier 2
DV-alert	Department's Data Exchange (DEX)	Secondary source	Tier 2
Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)	ANROWS's technical, strategy and/or policy reports	Tertiary source	Tier 1
Keeping Women Safe in their Homes	Department's Data Exchange (DEX)	Tertiary source	Tier 2
Leaving Violence Program	Service Provider Data	Tertiary source	Tier 3
Federation Funding Agreement	Executed FFA Schedule DSS payment records State and territory project plans State and territory progress reports	Tertiary source	Tier 2

PROGRAM 2.1 FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

To strengthen relationships, support families, improve wellbeing of children and young people, reduce the cost of family breakdown, and strengthen family and community functioning.

Key Activity — 2.1.5 Financial Wellbeing and Capability

Financial Wellbeing and Capability (FWC) is a key activity of the Families and Communities Program. It aims to provide services and initiatives to support vulnerable individuals and families to navigate financial crises, manage financial stress and hardship, and to improve financial wellbeing for individuals and families.

The department provides grants to FWC service providers to deliver financial crisis and material aid, including the provision of Emergency Relief and Food Relief (ER/FR).

- ER provides immediate financial and/or material support to people in financial crisis.
- FR increases emergency relief organisations' access to a cost-effective supply of food and material aid which are provided to people in need across Australia.

Financial Counselling, Capability and Resilience provides financial counselling, financial literacy education, and access to financial services including microfinance products such as no-interest loans.

- Commonwealth Financial Counselling Capability (CFCC) services helps people in financial difficulty to address their financial problems and make informed choices.
- Financial Capability services aim to help people build longer-term capability to budget and manage their money better.
- Financial Resilience offers a variety of financial services and products targeted at financially vulnerable people that help build self-reliance and provide access to financial products.

The department is responsible for designing and implementing services and initiatives for FWC. The department's role is to:

- design and implement policy
- undertake research and evaluation
- design and manage grants to service providers.

Performance Measure

Extent to which individuals and families can navigate through financial crises, build financial resilience and reduce vulnerability to financial shock.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
♦ 2.1.5-1A – 10% or less of people with multiple requests for Emergency Relief.	≤10%	≤10%	≤10%	≤10%
♦ 2.1.5-1B – At least 80% of assessed clients record stabilisation or improvement in their financial resilience and/or material wellbeing and basic necessities during their assistance period.	≥80%	≥80%	≥80%	≥80%

Rationale

This measure demonstrates the effectiveness of FWC in achieving the objective of the key activity: to support vulnerable individuals and families to navigate financial crises, address financial stress and hardship, and increase financial literacy for individuals and families.

- Targeting 10% or less of people with multiple requests for ER demonstrates the effectiveness of the key activity by showing people who have experienced financial crisis (i.e. require ER) have reduced their reliance on ER as a result of being more financially resilient and navigating through financial crisis.
- Targeting at least 80% of people who report an improvement or stabilisation in their financial wellbeing following engagement with a funded service demonstrates the effectiveness of the key activity by showing improvements and/or stabilisation in 'financial wellbeing' of services provided to clients as they navigate life transitions and/or financial stress or crisis.

Methodology

Target 1A - The percentage for ER is based on the cohort of clients that had at least five sessions of ER on different days within a 90–day period in the current reporting year. The data source used for this calculation is the Department of Social Services Data Exchange using Statistical Linkage Key matching of de-identified clients.

Target 1B - The percentage for financial wellbeing is based on improved and/or stabilised financial wellbeing measured as a positive and/or neutral change in financial wellbeing circumstances during the assistance period as compared to initial circumstances, recorded on the five-point Data Exchange Standard Client/Community Outcome Reporting Circumstances domains. The relevant domains used in this measure are Financial Resilience and Material Wellbeing and Basic Necessities.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Department's Data Exchange (DEX)	Tertiary source	Tier 2

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Number of individuals assisted
- Number of organisations contracted or receiving grant funding to deliver services

PROGRAM 2.1 FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

To strengthen relationships, support families, improve wellbeing of children and young people, reduce the cost of family breakdown, and strengthen family and community functioning.

Key Activity — 2.1.7 National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

The National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (the Scheme) is a key activity of the Families and Communities program. The Scheme provides support to people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. The Scheme:

- acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions
- recognises the harm caused by this abuse
- holds institutions accountable for this abuse
- helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling and psychological services, a direct personal response, and a monetary payment.

The Scheme has been developed with the needs of survivors at its core. The Scheme provides support to people through free access to Redress Support Services and independent legal support. Eligible people will be able to access the 3 components of redress: counselling; a redress payment; and a direct personal response from an institution (e.g. an apology).

The department is responsible for:

- policy, guidelines, eligibility criteria, and legislation for the activity
- processing and managing applications:
  - considering applications; deciding if an applicant can access redress, and which redress the institution(s) needs to make to the applicant
  - asking the relevant institution(s) for information
  - communicating with the applicant, including requesting more information and about the outcome of the application (an offer of redress).
- providing free access to Redress Support Services and redress-specific financial counselling support
- working with institutions to join the Scheme
- publicly identifying institutions that decline to join the Scheme.

The institutions are responsible for:

- joining the Scheme
- providing information to the department about relevant applicants
- when required, providing redress to people who experienced child sexual abuse while in the care of their institution (counselling, a redress payment and a direct personal response from an institution).

The role of **the applicant** is to:

- complete and submit an application form
- provide true and correct information
- provide extra information when requested from the department
- accept, decline or ask for a review of an offer of redress.

Performance Measure

2.1.7-1 Ensure quality and timely decisions are made on applications to the Scheme.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
2.1.7-1A – The Scheme will notify at least 25% of survivors about an outcome within 6 months of the date that all required information is received.	≥25%	≥25%	N/A	N/A
2.1.7-1B – The Scheme will notify at least 50% of survivors about an outcome within 9 months of the date that all required information is received.	≥50%	≥50%	N/A	N/A
2.1.7-1C – The Scheme will notify at least 75% of survivors about an outcome within 12 months of the date that all required information is received.	≥75%	≥75%	N/A	N/A
2.1.7-1D – The Scheme will maintain quality decision-making, with at least 95% of initial determinations reflecting the final outcome.	≥95%	≥95%	N/A	N/A

Rationale

Measuring the quality and timely finalisation of the Scheme applications and offers made to survivors aims to demonstrate the department has efficiently processed and managed applications. This is a **proxy measure of efficiency** that demonstrates achievement of a key output of the Scheme key activity: the department has called or sent the applicant a letter about the outcome of their application. Further, the proportion of initial determinations that reflect the final outcome indicates the quality of decision making – that the details in the application have been fully considered in the determination made, and, where a further review of a decision is requested, the review does not lead to the original decision being overturned in more than a small number of instances.

Targeting a proportion (25%, 50% or 75%) of applications that name institutions that participate in the Scheme have a decision communicated to the applicant within a specified time period (6, 9 or 12 months) of all required information being received by the Scheme demonstrates **proxy efficiency** of the key activity by showing applications are processed within a reasonable timeframe, and is reflective of the complexity of the assessment process, available resources to process applications, and institutions that have joined the Scheme.

Methodology

2.1.7-1A - The percentage of applications that progress with at least one named institution participating in the Scheme and are advised of their redress outcome within 6 months of all required information being received, as a proportion of all applicants who are advised of their redress outcome.

2.1.7-1B - The percentage of applications that progress with at least one named institution participating in the Scheme and are advised of their redress outcome within 9 months of all required information being received, as a proportion of all applicants who are advised of their redress outcome.

2.1.7-1C - The percentage of applications that progress with at least one named institution participating in the Scheme and are advised of their redress outcome within 12 months of all required information being received, as a proportion of all applicants who are advised of their redress outcome.

2.1.7-1D - The percentage of completed applications where the initial outcome was accepted or where a review was requested and the initial outcome was upheld, as a proportion of all applications completed after the initial outcome was advised.

Performance Measure

2.1.7-2 Maximise institution participation with the Scheme.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
2.1.7-2A – The Scheme will engage and maintain participation, with institutions on board to cover at least 95% of applications in progress.	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	N/A	N/A

Rationale

Measuring maximising institutional participation with the Scheme aims to demonstrate that the department **effectively** worked with institutions to join the Scheme. This measure demonstrates achievement of a key **output** of the National Redress Scheme key activity: institutions have joined the Scheme and provide redress.

Targeting engagement and maintenance of participation of institutions, with institutions on-board to cover 95% of applications in progress demonstrates achievement of a key output of the key activity, by showing a significant percentage of people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse are supported by the institutions who have joined the Scheme and are providing redress.

Methodology

Percentage of applications on hand where all of the named institution(s) are participating in the Scheme, or an applicant has chosen to progress with only some of the named institution(s) are participating in the Scheme.

Performance Measure

2.1.7-3 Provide survivors a redress payment.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
2.1.7-3A – The Scheme will issue at least 80% of eligible survivors an advance payment within 7 days of receiving acceptance documentation.	≥ 80%	≥ 80%	N/A	N/A
2.1.7-3B – The Scheme will issue at least 80% of survivors a redress payment within 14 days of receiving acceptance documentation.	≥ 80%	≥ 80%	N/A	N/A

Rationale

Measuring issuing survivors a redress payment within 7 days (advance payments) or 14 days (redress payments) of receiving acceptance documentation aims to demonstrate the department **effectively** administers the Scheme. This measure demonstrates achievement of a key output of the Scheme key activity: people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling and psychological services, a direct personal response and a monetary payment.

Of the three redress outputs (payment, counselling and apology), the payment is the only output delivered by the department. The other 2 are delivered by (mostly) state and territory governments and institutions.

Targeting providing survivors an advance payment or a redress payment demonstrates achievement of a key output of the Scheme.

Advance payments are made to survivors with exceptional circumstances. The shorter timeframe for advance payments reflects the importance placed by the Scheme on making these payments available to survivors.

Methodology

2.1.7-3A - Percentage of survivors who accept an offer of an advance payment and receive the payment within 7 days, as a proportion of all eligible survivors who have received the advance payment.

2.1.7-3B - Percentage of survivors who receive the monetary component of redress within 14 days of the Scheme receiving acceptance of the offer, as a proportion of all applicants with completed redress payments.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Services Australia Enterprise Data Warehouse	Secondary source	Tier 1
Department's Administrative data	Primary source	Tier 1
Institutions Customer Relationships Management System (SIEBEL)	Primary source	Tier 1

Supporting Information

- Administered outlays
- Number of Scheme applications received
- Number of institutions that have joined the Scheme

CROSS OUTCOME - CROSS PROGRAM SUPPORT

Key Activity — Advice and Support to Ministers

Advice and support to Ministers is a key activity of Program Support for Outcomes 1 – 2 and aims to support programs across all outcomes to ensure that Ministers and Assistant Ministers are provided with timely advice and support from the department.

Performance Measure

CO1-1 Timeliness of advice and support provided to Portfolio Ministers and Assistant Ministers by the department across the 2 outcomes.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
CO1-1A – At least 95% of ministerial briefs and correspondence across the 2 outcomes are provided on time.	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%

Rationale

Measuring timeliness of advice and support provided to Portfolio Ministers and Assistant Ministers aims to demonstrate timely advice and support in order to allow Ministers and Assistant Ministers to make decisions that support the department to achieve its objectives. This measure demonstrates the **efficiency** of the Program Support in achieving the key activity: Timely advice and support to Ministers and Assistant Ministers.

Methodology

A report generated within the record keeping system, filtering records not relevant to the evaluation of the performance measure. The number of records provided on time is represented as the percentage of records provided to the relevant Ministers' Office on or before the associated due date.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
The department's Parliamentary Document Management System (PDMS).	Primary source	Tier 1

CROSS OUTCOME - GRANTS ADMINISTRATION
Key Activity — Community Grants Hub

Improving customer experience is a key activity of the Community Grants Hub (the Hub). Through the application of person-centred design principles, the Hub places the needs of people and families at the centre of grants administration.

The Hub is responsible for delivering a positive grant experience through the entire grant lifecycle, from the initial application process through to the ongoing management of the grant agreements, supported by the department's geographically dispersed network of Funding Arrangement Managers.

Performance Measure

C0-2 Survey respondents (grant applicants and recipients) satisfied with their experience of the Community Grants Hub.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
C0-2A – Grant applicant and recipient experience is 70% positive or above.	> 70%	> 70%	> 70%	> 70%

Rationale

The Hub was established to streamline and standardise grants administration by mandating grants delivery through centralised grants hubs. A key benefit of this approach is an improved user experience for grant applicants and recipients. By understanding and measuring the experience of grant applicants and recipients, the Hub can better target investment to reduce barriers and administrative costs for the community sector in accessing and managing Commonwealth grants.

The 70% target demonstrates the **effectiveness** of the key activity by confirming that the majority of stakeholders interacting with the Hub have a positive experience, highlighting the benefits of a consistent grant experience.

Methodology

The Hub customer satisfaction survey captures the experiences of grant applicants and recipients across key interaction points and stages of the grants lifecycle during the reporting period. The survey adopts a census approach, inviting both successful and unsuccessful grant applicants, as well as grant recipients to participate. The survey captures their experiences with interaction channels including the Helpdesk, point of service engagements and ongoing interactions with Funding Arrangement Managers. Customer experience data is collected through a structured survey and disaggregated by interaction channel, user cohort and phase of the grant process.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
Department of Social Services survey of grant stakeholders.	Primary source	Tier 1

PROGRAM - CROSS PROGRAM SUPPORT

Key Activity — Stronger Communities – place-based work in 18 communities

Targeting disadvantage is a cross outcome key activity and the department's place-based work aims to break cycles of disadvantage by delivering place-based solutions in 18 communities.

This activity supports the department to use evidence, data, lived experience and place-based insights to better understand the drivers of disadvantage and target policy, program and investment advice to individuals, families and communities experiencing the greatest need. It supports delivery of the Department's purpose to improve the economic and social wellbeing of individuals, families and vulnerable members of Australian communities, and aligns with the department's priority to break the cycle of entrenched disadvantage.

Performance Measure

CO-3: The extent to which the department's flexible funding arrangements enable communities to address community-determined priorities and improve agreed outcomes through responsive funding administration.

Target	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29	2029–30
CO-3A Improve funding outcomes and impact by better targeting investment to locally identified need.	Hold Partnership Tables in up to 18 communities to better align the Children and Family Supports Program to local community needs.	Establish flexible funding mechanism to support investment to locally identified need.	Demonstrate impact on local communities of better alignment and flexible investment.	Expand the number of local communities in the Place Partnership Model.

Rationale

Flexible funding arrangements are intended to enable communities experiencing entrenched disadvantage to identify their own priorities and implement tailored responses. This measure assesses whether DSS funding design and administration supports community-led action, improves alignment of existing investment to local need, enables flexible investment where required and contributes to agreed outcomes.

The measure is appropriate during early implementation because the targets follow a staged pathway. This includes establishing Partnership Tables and CaFS alignment, creating a flexible funding mechanism, demonstrating local impact, and expanding the Place Partnership Model where the approach is effective. This allows DSS to assess progress over time while recognising that population-level change in entrenched disadvantage generally takes longer to emerge.

Methodology

DSS will assess whether the yearly target has been met using evidence relevant to each stage of implementation. This may include records of Partnership Tables and CaFS alignment activity, approved flexible funding mechanism design and governance documents, funding and decision records, Delivery Plans, progress reports, monitoring and evaluation material, and evidence supporting expansion of the Place Partnership Model. The assessment will consider whether DSS funding design and administration has supported locally identified priorities, responsive investment and agreed outcomes.

Data Categorisation

Data source	Categorisation of data source	Categorisation of assurance
DSS grants/records	Primary source	Tier 1
Evidence sourced from stakeholders used to demonstrate local priorities, implementation progress, outcomes, community feedback, or impact from aligned and flexible investment	Tertiary source	Tier 3

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