



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

Department of Social Services
Incoming Government Briefing – May 2022

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Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Ray Griggs AO CSC
Secretary

The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP
Minister for Social Services (Designate)
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister for Social Services I look forward to meeting with you to discuss your agenda, with a particular focus on how we can work together to meet the Government's broader priorities and progress election commitments. I believe we are well placed to support you and your team to achieve tangible and real change within this term of government.

The Social Services portfolio consists of the Department of Social Services (the department) and six portfolio agencies: two of which are under your remit: the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) and the soon to be established Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission. The remaining four Services Australia Hearing Australia, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission are under the purview of the Minister for Government Services and the NDIS.

The department is the Australian Government's principal social policy and program management agency and is responsible for a significant proportion of the Government's budget expenditure. The administered budget for the department in 2022-23 is estimated at \$153 billion, around one quarter of total Government spending

Work in the department is currently structured around four key outcome areas:

- social security
- families and communities
- disability and carers, and
- housing.

The department is committed to implementing your decisions. This brief has details on how we will assist you to implement your Election commitments.

We are working to establish a strong professional relationship with your office, recognising the key role of your advisers. As Secretary, I place great importance on maintaining the quality of the department's relationship with yourself and your office.

The department will respond quickly and professionally to requests from your office. Departmental staff are aware that executive decisions are the preserve of Ministers and will ensure your decisions are clearly recorded to ensure a solid basis for action.

Immediate Priorities

We are ready to work with you to deliver on the Government's key areas of focus, including:

- Action to improve Women's Safety
- Supporting the Royal Commission into Robodebt (Income Compliance Program)
- Abolishing the cashless debit card and compulsory income management
- Providing safer and more affordable housing in conjunction with the Minister for Housing
- Fixing the NDIS and ensuring a better future for Australians with disability in conjunction with the Minister for the NDIS.

Incoming Government Brief

The department has prepared the attached Incoming Government Brief (IGB) to provide you with a high-level overview of issues relating to the portfolio including:

- environmental scan
- election commitments
- key matters for attention within 30 days portfolio overview
- supporting materials, including outcome summaries, key stakeholders and support for your office.

The IGB is available to you in hard copy and electronic form. A series of fact sheets on key issues and programs are available for your team in addition to the IGB material. So that you have a full view of the portfolio's issues I have included both the Minister for Government Services and the NDIS and the Minister for Housing, Homelessness and Small Business's components of their IGBs.

In addition to the portfolio IGB, the Australian Institute of Family Studies will provide you with a more detailed Incoming Minister Brief.

I have asked Pat Hetherington, Chief Operating Officer to be the lead senior officer in the department to liaise with your Chief of Staff. He will initiate briefing meetings, and assist with all necessary arrangements to support your office. ICT support for your office will be provided through the Services Australia VIP team (Services Australia provide ICT shared services for the department). If there are any concerns relating to setting up the office from an ICT perspective, I would appreciate that either me or my Chief Operating Officer are the first point of call.

I would appreciate an early discussion with you around how you would like your initial series of briefings to be tackled. I, my Deputy Secretaries and other senior officers are ready to discuss next steps and brief you as required.

In terms of my operating approach I have focused on building a more curious, thoughtful and agile department that gets the basics right, one that is respected across government and with our many stakeholders. More broadly I have been working on getting the portfolio to be

collaborative and to have a portfolio team view on key issues and ensuring we have effective relationships in place that help you and other ministers in the portfolio to get the best advice and pursue strong outcomes.

Again, congratulations on your appointment. I look forward to working with you.

s 47F

R.J. GRIGGS

31 May 2022

Environmental Scan

Overview

This scan sets out some of the challenges facing Australia through a social services portfolio lens and outlines the important role that the portfolio can play in addressing them. It is intended as a high level scan which is supported by other elements of this Incoming Government Brief.

The social services portfolio and the challenges facing Australia

This portfolio has a vital role supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians to have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of Australian life. As a portfolio we are responsible for \$172 billion of expenditure each year, accounting for around one quarter of the Commonwealth budget. Last financial year we made payments to 9.4 million people and provided services to nearly half a million people with a disability. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the portfolio responded quickly to provide additional support across the nation.

Australia has come through the COVID-19 pandemic better than most countries. However, it appears that the global environment will remain more uncertain than it has been in recent decades, creating additional challenges for policy making. This means we need to be prepared to respond to unexpected events which may again set the agenda in this term of Parliament.

While Australia has a very high standard of living by international standards and the economy is recovering from the pandemic, significant **social challenges** remain.

Although overall income inequality has remained steady since before the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), pockets of disadvantage remain in particular groups and regions. In its 2018 report *Rising Inequality?*, the Productivity Commission found that people living in single-parent families, unemployed people, people with disability and First Nations people are particularly likely to be disadvantaged on all measures: income poverty, deprivation and social exclusion. Children living in jobless households experience multiple measures of inequality and disadvantage. New research by the Melbourne Institute has confirmed that employment is the most significant factor for entry into, and exit from, poverty. This emphasises the importance of an effective and targeted social security system.

Intergenerational disadvantage persists and people are still missing out. Often the same individuals and families have multiple touch points across the federal and jurisdictional systems - social security, housing, community supports and disability services. Cost of living concerns are being felt more acutely. Emergency Relief providers supported by the department, such as Anglicare and the Salvation Army, are reporting increases in demand for their services, testing their capacity to deliver to their clients.

Employment remains key in reducing disadvantage. However, employment opportunities for people with disability remain a challenge. Remote locations, where a substantial number of more disadvantaged First Nations people live, have few private employment opportunities. Many of those receiving unemployment benefits face multiple barriers to employment, such as reduced work

capacity and long periods out of work. The continuing economic recovery and tightening labour market present a unique moment in which to help those with barriers to employment into jobs.

Around 18 per cent of the Australian population is estimated to have some form of disability. Having a disability can be detrimental to wellbeing;¹ disabled Australians are much less satisfied with life than those without disability.² Only 53 per cent of working age people with disability are participating in the labour force,³ compared with 66⁴ per cent of the general working age population. One in 10 people with disability aged 15 years and over had experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months because of their disability. Less than two thirds had their need for assistance fully met.⁵ People with disability are more likely to experience violence than people without disability, including more than half reporting experiencing physical violence, more than 1 in 4 intimate partner violence and 21 per cent sexual violence⁶. The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is to report to the Governor General by 29 September 2023.

Despite some progress, family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) remains widespread and is a whole of community issue involving all jurisdictions and sectors. There are high expectations from stakeholders around the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (next National Plan) providing a framework basis for tangible change. FDSV can have lifelong impacts for both victims and people who use violence. 1 in 6 women and 1 in 16 men have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner, indicating the highly gendered nature of family and domestic violence. The next National Plan is being finalised, including through working with state and territory Ministers, with progress to date including a shared long-term commitment

¹ Reference: 2018 ABS SDAC Summary of Findings

[Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

² Reference: 2019 ABS General Social Survey: Summary of Results

[General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2019 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

³ Reference: 2020 AIHW People with Disability in Australia Report

[People with disability in Australia 2020: in brief, Employment - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)

⁴ Reference: ABS Labour Force estimates of participation

[Labour Force, Australia, April 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

Note: The ABS figure of 66 per cent includes people with disability as part of its general population. The AIHW report reports 84 per cent labour force participation rate for working-age people without disability as the comparison group to labour force participation for people with disability.

⁵ Reference: 2018 ABS SDAC Summary of Findings

[Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

⁶ sourced from safety TAP. Original source is Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health's March 2021 research report completed for the Royal Commission, p9

to a future free from all forms of gender-based violence in Australia built on four pillars: Prevention, Intervention, Response and Recovery.

People experiencing homelessness, and those at risk of homelessness, are among Australia's most socially and economically disadvantaged. Census data (from 2016) shows the rate of homelessness remains significant, at 50 per 10,000 population. Of the 116,000 people estimated to be homeless on Census night in 2016, 20 per cent identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It is likely that rising prices in the housing market for both purchasing and renting since the last Census will have caused increased homelessness.

We also need to keep making progress towards Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. While on almost every measure there has been absolute progress, the relative gap remains stubbornly wide and in some cases is widening. The portfolio is active in addressing 3 of the socio-economic targets and the disability cross-cutting outcome that we have responsibility for within the Commonwealth, and in influencing the development of the four priority reforms in the Closing the Gap Agreement.

The economic and fiscal context

Over the **short term**, Australia faces substantial **economic challenges**. Inflation rose 5.1 per cent over the past twelve months, the highest it has been in over 20 years. The cost of transport and housing rose by significantly more than overall inflation, up by 13.7 per cent and 6.7 per cent respectively. People on low and fixed incomes tend to have less financial resources to draw upon and fewer opportunities to substitute their consumption to cheaper alternatives, leaving them more exposed to rises in the cost of living. This sudden increase in the cost of living, and the monetary policy response of increased interest rates, is putting more pressure on the people and services supported by this portfolio, at least in the short term.

The Pre-Election Economic and Fiscal Outlook forecast that unemployment will fall to 3 ¾ per cent in 2022-23. The latest labour force statistics indicate that the unemployment rate has already fallen to 3.9 per cent. While this is a positive outcome, it is also creating a very tight labour market. Businesses are reporting significant skills shortages, which may impede the economic recovery and further stoke inflation. This is likely to enhance the focus on supporting social security recipients into work, and on the reform of disability employment services.

Over the **long term**, Australia is facing lower economic growth than we have been accustomed to in the past forty years. The 2021 Intergenerational Report found that this would be driven by slower population growth and the effects of an ageing population. Australia is in the midst of a major demographic transition, as the Baby Boomer generation begins to reach retirement.

Boosting economic growth will enhance the Government's capacity to address social challenges, particularly if the focus is on ways to enhance productivity growth and maximise labour force participation. Although it is at historic highs, Australia's rate of labour force participation by women lags peer countries like New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Canada. The right incentives in the social security system can make a substantial contribution to boosting labour force participation by women.

The three major programs for supporting families with children, Family Tax Benefit, the Child Care Subsidy (a responsibility of the Education portfolio) and the Paid Parental Leave Scheme have a significant influence on women's labour force participation. There may be opportunities to support further growth in women's labour force participation by closely examining the way these programs interact and the incentives they create.

Australia also faces a **fiscal challenge**. The necessary emergency spending in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to a larger debt burden. The Pre-Election Fiscal and Economic Outlook shows that gross debt is expected to peak at 44.9 per cent of GDP in 2024-25. This is more than double pre-COVID levels of debt.

Over the long term, spending is expected to increase on health and disability, aged care and public debt interest payments. According to the 2021 Intergenerational Report, Australia faces 40 years of deficits. In part this reflects decisions to pursue important social objectives through structural increases in spending, for example boosting the rate of JobSeeker Payment and the establishment and growth of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Priorities for the portfolio

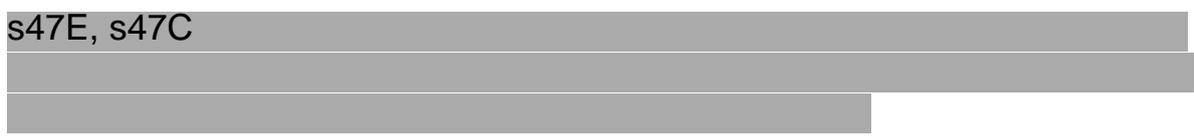
The Government has indicated it is committed to reducing wasteful spending and to strengthen the **fiscal position**. A waste audit will be conducted by the Departments of Finance and Treasury over the next year with the objective of identifying additional savings to repair the Budget.

The continued recovery of the economy from the pandemic has led to downward revisions in social security working age payments. For example, the projected improvement in the unemployment rate contributed to a 16 per cent decline in forecast expenditure on JobSeeker Payment over the forward estimates between the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Budgets.

Most of the spending in the portfolio is demand driven and in the case of social security payments, driven by broader economic factors included inflation. As total spending within the portfolio is over half a trillion dollars across the forward estimates, relatively small changes in indexation or in the number of recipients can have substantial financial impacts.

This portfolio has historically been called on to significantly contribute to budget repair as the portfolio is responsible for six of the top 20 largest programs across Government, and accounts for around a quarter of the total Commonwealth budget.

s47E, s47C



Significant fiscal pressures are weighing on the portfolio across the medium term. This includes the NDIS, with outlays on participant supports projected to grow from \$33.9 billion in 2022-23 to

\$44.6 billion in 2025-26⁷, which includes both Commonwealth and State contributions. This is at the same time as participants and disability advocates are increasingly vocal about the adequacy of participant supports. Media coverage has claimed that participants have had their funding arbitrarily cut or had requests for necessary supports declined. In the last year, requests to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for reviews of decisions made by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) have more than doubled.

The single biggest driver of higher than expected outlays on the NDIS (as compared to the 2017 Productivity Commission study report on *NDIS costs*¹) is higher than expected average costs per participant. Over the forward years, this will be compounded by continued growth in participant numbers, which had been expected to drop back to parallel overall population growth of around 2 per cent or about 10,000 per year once participant numbers reached around 500,000, but which are now projected to continue to increase by 50-60,000 per year, even though they have reached 523,223 as at 30 April 2022.⁸

Services Australia has undergone some profound change in recent years as it increasingly has been delivering more and more Government services. Its performance throughout the pandemic has been highly effective in supporting the broader population. To continue modernising the effective and efficient delivery of government services by Services Australia will require further ICT investment; this will also continue to present fiscal pressure in the portfolio.

For many priorities within this portfolio, you will engage with multiple Ministers across states and territories, including Disability Ministers, Attorneys-General, Community Services Ministers and Housing Ministers. It is vital that the portfolio's interests are reflected in whole of government discussions regarding any approach to resetting the relationship with states and territories. Strong, collaborative partnerships with states and territories are needed to deliver many of the Government's priorities, including the NDIS, family, domestic and sexual violence, housing and the National Redress Scheme. In a number of these matters, there are governance and fiscal risks; the Commonwealth bears the lion's share of the costs, yet decisions cannot be taken on policy or program design without unanimous agreement from states and territories. s47E, s47C

[Redacted text block]

⁷ Reference: DSS 2022-23 PBS (p. 124)
[2022-23 social services pbs.pdf \(dss.gov.au\)](#)
⁸ Reference: NDIA Monthly Summary Report – April 2022
[PB Monthly update April 2022.pdf](#)

A better social security system

The **tight labour market** provides an opportunity to drive further participation amongst women and the long-term unemployed. For those with barriers to labour force participation, the current labour market may provide the best opportunity in many years to secure a job in spite of skills mismatches, or in the case of people with disability, employer discrimination or attitudinal hesitancy.

Australia has one of the most targeted, non-contributory social security systems in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In 2020-21, Centrelink provided support to over 9.4 million Australians. In the 2022-23 Budget Australia's expenditure on social security and welfare (including childcare and aged care delivered in other portfolios) is estimated to be \$222 billion (35.3 per cent of total expenditure) and reach \$249 billion across the forward estimates. This portfolio is typically a strong contributor to budget repair. s47E, s47C

As the economy recovers from the pandemic, a significant proportion of the working age population who came onto income support in 2020 and 2021 have returned to employment. The number of people on JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance (other) has fallen from a peak of 1,635,286 in May 2020 to 883,645 as at 6 May 2022, just 0.1 per cent higher than the level at the onset of COVID-19. There are opportunities to support many of those who remain on payments into work despite barriers to employment such as partial capacity to work (43 per cent), long-term unemployment (defined as longer than one year on income support; 83 per cent) or mature age (defined as being over 55; 30 per cent). Around 15 per cent of the JobSeeker Payment population has all three barriers to employment, while only 10 per cent is considered more work ready.

The tightening labour market offers an opportunity to look for opportunities to support those with more limited capacity into employment. The Jobs Summit that the Government has committed to hold will provide an opportunity to hear directly from diverse parties on many issues ranging from skill shortages to addressing barriers to employment. This will be a strong foundation for the Full Employment White Paper the Government has committed to in its first term.

Housing

There are increasing calls for greater funding for social and affordable housing in response to significant demand pressures in the housing market. The impact of the pandemic, rising house and rental prices and cost of living pressures (including the recent rise in interest rates) all add to the pressure in the housing market. The affordable housing shortfall disproportionately affects people with disability who are eight times more likely to live in public housing, five times more likely to be homeless, and three times more likely to receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

Lack of access to general housing is another source of significant pressure to expand the scope of the NDIS. The NDIS does not fund accommodation except for short-term stays in respite care and specialist disability accommodation (SDA) for a small percentage of participants (around 5 per cent) who require it due to the very specific nature of their care needs. There is increasing pressure, including from states and territories, for the NDIS to fund accommodation beyond SDA, as unstable housing or homelessness disrupts care and contributes to some people with disability remaining in public hospitals after they are medically ready for discharge.

The Government's plan to establish a Housing Australia Future Fund and commit to building 30,000 new social and affordable houses will be an important step forward. s47E, s47C

Better support for people living with disability

Following the trial phase of the NDIS up to mid-2016, the focus through the transition phase was on transitioning people from state and territory run services into the scheme while also developing a market for the provision of disability services. Participation grew more slowly than anticipated, however, following continued efforts from 2017-18 through 2020-21, there are now more people supported through the scheme than previously expected; growth continues at a higher rate than previously expected. There are now more than twice as many people with disability supported through the NDIS as was the case before the NDIS was established, with expenditure on supports more than three times what it was before the NDIS, in real terms.

Around 4.4 million Australians⁹ are estimated to have some form of disability, of whom around 2.5 million are aged 0 to 64 years old, of whom in turn, around 729,000 have a severe or profound core activity limitation.ⁱⁱ As at 30 April 2022, the NDIS provides funds for supports to 523,223 participants in the scheme. With the establishment of the NDIS, the states and territories have largely ceased providing other disability support programs, creating pressure on the NDIS as the only vehicle to get support.

By 2025-26 it is projected that there will be 710,000 participants with cost of supports reaching \$44.6 billion,¹⁰ significantly higher than expected when the scheme was introduced. While state and territory governments are co-stewards of the Scheme, they are not equal financial partners. The Commonwealth is responsible for the costs of the NDIS above the set contributions from states and territories, which grow at 4 per cent per year, as per full scheme agreements agreed between the Commonwealth and states and territories. With expenditure on participant supports growing much

⁹ 4.4 million Australians had disability in 2018 [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#).

¹⁰ Reference: DSS 2022-23 PBS (p. 124) [2022-23 social services pbs.pdf \(dss.gov.au\)](#)

faster than 4 per cent per year, the Commonwealth's share of total participant costs was 55 per cent in 2020-21 (\$18.2 billion) and is forecast to reach 71 per cent (\$31.5 billion) in 2025-26¹¹.

While states and territories are insulated from the greater than expected growth in NDIS costs, their say in the Scheme remains rightly significant, with the NDIS Act 2013 providing that making or amending most regulations affecting participants must be supported by each and every state and territory. s47E, s47C

Following the earlier focus on establishing the NDIS and transitioning people from state and territory services into the Scheme, there now needs to be a much stronger focus on improving the operation of the Scheme. A collective understanding of the effectiveness of supports delivered under the Scheme needs to be developed – what works and what doesn't, what delivers the most for participants while costing them the least and ensuring there is a vibrant support market to enable choice and control. There is also a need to lift the capability of providers and workers through responsive regulation, market and workforce development that works to ensure the safety of participants, availability and quality of supports, and embed the rights of participants in the way supports are delivered. Central to this must be meaningful engagement of people with disability, carers, representative organisations, providers, and state and territory governments.

Australia's Disability Strategy for 2021 to 2031 (ADS) is the overarching policy framework for all people with disability. The strategy has had very strong support from the disability sector through the genuine and deep engagement that was undertaken in its design and development. The commitments in the strategy, and associated targeted action plans, represent how all three tiers of government are seeking to protect, promote and realise the human rights of people with disability, consistent with Australia's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The success of the ADS is also critical to rebuilding the support ecosystem for people with a disability thus mitigating the long-term costs of the NDIS and income support for people with disability. To the extent that public and private housing, transport, education, health services and, critically, employers are not responsive and inclusive of people with disability, pressure will be applied to the NDIS and to Commonwealth income support programs and funding bridge the gap.

In addition to the changes envisaged by the ADS, there are reform opportunities being driven by external factors, most notably the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, due to deliver its final report by 29 September 2023. There will also be

¹¹ Reference: DSS internal figures

opportunity to revisit how best to support people with disability to achieve employment in the open jobs market through the Disability Employment Services program.

Equity and the Age Pension

s47E, s47C

Over time, the proportion of pensioners who rent will increase as home ownership levels fall. The 2019 Retirement Income Review found that in retirement, renters have higher levels of financial stress.

Pensions are paid at a higher rate and have more generous indexation and means testing provisions, higher income free area and limits, and have significantly higher asset test limits than other payments. s47E, s47C

Women and children's safety

Rates of domestic, family and sexual violence against women remain alarmingly high, with long term impacts on women's health, economic standing and lifelong wellbeing. Traditional and rigid gender norms associated with higher levels of violence against women remain entrenched in the attitudes and belief systems of many Australians. Child safety issues are interwoven with broader family violence issues in complex ways, with intergenerational trauma at the heart of much offending. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders are calling for differential responses to these issues, and for greater investment in community controlled services.

Delivering change under the new National Plan to end violence against women and children 2022-32, and Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-31, are key priorities for the department. Your election commitments are aimed at ensuring that women and children are supported and violence is addressed across all domains – including additional crisis housing and frontline support. There is scope to influence the shape of initiatives already underway which range from prevention activities, to funding for early intervention services, and to recovery and healing services. This includes working with states and territories on systems reform, and ensuring women's safety at work. More detail is provided in the strategic issues briefs section of this document.

First Nations people - Closing the Gap

There is a significant disparity in the outcomes for First Nations people across the department's range of programs. The rate of First Nations children placed in out-of-home care continues to worsen (currently 57.6 per 1000 Indigenous children compared to 5.0 per 1000 non-Indigenous children) and is not on track to meet Closing the Gap Target 12 of 29.8 per 1000 children by 2031. The other Closing the Gap targets where the Department has the Commonwealth lead (Family Violence and Housing) also require very active efforts, as they are not on track to be met. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's safety practitioners and experts are calling for a fundamental change in approach including a much stronger focus on healing for both victims and perpetrators. The department is working closely with the ABS and AIHW to develop new data sources to measure

these targets. The provision of disability supports also continues to trail the non-Indigenous population. The department is working with states and territories who hold the majority of the levers to implement actions to meet these targets.

The priority reforms included in the Closing the Gap agreement represent a significant opportunity to bring about genuine change in the relationship between governments and First Nations people. For the portfolio, work is underway around priority reform three in particular, where enhancing the service delivery experience for First Nations people is crucial to transforming the relationship with Government.

First Nations people with disability

Prevalence of disability is approximately twice the rate in First Nations populations compared with non-Indigenous people. Current estimates indicate there are 60,000 First Nations people living with severe and profound disability,¹² with evidence of under-reporting in First Nations communities.

In the current national policy context, there remain gaps in national disability and First Nations peoples' public policy. Within Closing the Gap, disability is a cross-cutting outcome across all 17 targets and outcomes, and under *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031* (ADS) First Nations people are one of the diversity groups for focus in actions and activities. A discrete national plan dedicated to addressing the unique experiences of First Nations people with disability, their families and communities is critical to drive this stronger focus in national policy and set targets for accountability. This plan would be co-designed in partnership with the First Nations disability sector. A key vehicle for this is the Disability Sector Strengthening Plan under Closing the Gap which the department has played a key role in developing with the First Peoples Disability Network. This plan is currently waiting for endorsement by the Closing the Gap Joint Council.

ⁱ Productivity Commission 2017, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Costs, Study Report, Canberra.

ⁱⁱ 4.4 million Australians had disability in 2018 [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#).

¹² Dr Scott Avery, (2020) *Living Our Ways*, page 69

Election Commitments

Commitment	Lead Minister
Housing Australia and Delivery of Housing Commitments	Housing
NDIS Operation	NDIS
NDIS Governance	NDIS
NDIS pricing, markets, remote services and workforce	NDIS
Measure Progress on a National Disability Strategy	Social Services
Double Disability Advocacy Funding	Social Services
Develop a National Autism Strategy	NDIS
Central Coordination of Disability	NDIS
Centre of Excellence to Generate Employment for People with Disabilities	NDIS
Supported Employment Workplaces	Social Services
Support for People with Disability - s47G	Social Services
NDIS accommodation and supported independent living	Social Services
Women's Safety commitments including investment of \$1.3 billion	Social Services
Abolish the Cashless Debit Card program	Social Services
Royal Commission into the Income Compliance Program ('Robodebt')	Social Services
Increase to Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) income limits	Social Services
Restoring Respect for the Community Sector	Social Services
Two Year Freeze to Deeming Rates	Social Services
Incentivising Pensioners to Downsize	Social Services
Food Relief Loaves' and Fishes	Social Services
Playgroup Australia and Toy Libraries	Social Services
User audit of myGov	Government Services
Boosting shopfront services around the nation for Centrelink offices	Government Services



Housing Australia and Delivery of Housing Commitments

<p>Stated Commitment:</p>	<p>The Government has committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of a \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund (the Fund), with the returns from the Fund to deliver (in its first five years): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20,000 new social housing properties which includes 4,000 new social housing properties for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence; ○ 10,000 affordable housing properties for frontline workers. • A portion of the investment returns being available to fund acute housing needs on an ongoing basis. <p>https://www.alp.org.au/policies/safer-and-more-affordable-housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of a National Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan). • The establishment of a National Housing Supply and Affordability Council (the Council), with policy research, reporting and advisory functions. • An expansion and renaming of the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) to Housing Australia, which will have responsibility for national housing programs, including the 'Help to Buy' scheme, the Housing Australia Future Fund and Regional First Home Buyer Support Scheme, along with existing NHFIC functions and guarantees. <p>https://www.alp.org.au/policies/national-housing-supply-and-affordability-council</p>
<p>Date announced:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 May 2021 (the Fund) • 1 May 2022 (the Council and Plan)
<p>Funding Amount (if stated):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10 billion (raised by issuing debt) to establish the Housing Australia Future Fund. Returns will be provided to Housing Australia each year to finance additional housing stock. The Government has also committed to investing the following portion of returns (over the first five years): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$200 million to fund the repair, maintenance of housing in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland. ○ \$100 million to fund crisis and transitional housing options for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness. The Government has made specific funding allocations within the \$100 million for a number of regions across Australia ○ \$30 million to fund building of more housing and support specialist services for veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk homelessness. <p>Detailed costings are not yet available.</p>
<p>Funding Profile / Timeframe:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

<p>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the supply, affordability and security of housing, including for vulnerable Australians. • Building 30,000 new social and affordable housing properties in the first five years of the Fund, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20,000 new social housing properties of which 4,000 are for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence ○ 10,000 affordable housing properties for frontline workers
<p>Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government wants to build more social housing, upgrade existing housing, and make sure the promise of home ownership is extended to all Australians. The Government wants every Australian to know the security of having a roof over their head.
<p>Related commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIAA to brief: On 27 April 2022, the Government committed to providing an additional \$100 million for housing and essential infrastructure on Northern Territory homelands and a new housing agreement to replace the \$1.1 billion National Partnership for Remote Housing NT (NPRHNT). The National Indigenous Australians Agency manages the current NPRHNT. • Treasury to brief: On 1 May 2022, the Government committed \$329 million over the forward estimates to establish the Help to Buy shared-equity scheme open to 10,000 Australians each financial year. Treasury will also provide briefings on the Regional First Home Buyer Support Scheme and additional briefing on the commitments outlined below as they relate to the Treasury portfolio, in particular, NHFIC governance and the establishment and operation of the Fund.
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<p>This implementation response is premised on the fact that existing housing policy responsibilities between the Treasury and Social Services portfolios are not changed.</p> <p>The creation of Housing Australia and the expansion of the Commonwealth’s role in housing will require a co-ordinated approach and careful early planning across portfolios to achieve the Government’s objectives.</p> <p>Key implementation considerations include:</p> <p>Housing Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ s47E, s47C 

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ s47E, s47C   ○ A formal process for developing and delivering the Plan will assist you to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ align outcomes with the Government’s broader economic and fiscal strategy○ ensure the policy process stays focused on housing supply and affordability○ communicate effectively with the Australian community about the need for housing policy reforms. <p>Housing Australia Future Fund</p>
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NDIS Operation

<p>Stated Commitment:</p>	<p>From “A Better Future for the NDIS”</p> <p>The Government will ensure a better future for the NDIS through our commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review NDIS design, operation and sustainability. We will bring forward a planned review of the scheme and consult on terms of reference that will consider all available evidence and look at benefits as well as problems inside and outside the NDIS. The review findings will guide the Government on priority areas for reform. • put people with disability back at the centre of the NDIS. The Government will identify and solve the problems with the design and operation of the scheme, ensuring solutions are evidence based and are co-designed with people with disability, their families and carers, and service providers and workers. • fix the planning pathway and appeals to make NDIS decision-making more efficient, fair, and investment focused. • introduce an expert review that will guarantee plans will not be arbitrarily cut. • lift the NDIA staffing cap, and reduce spending on external lawyers and consultants. • investigate the NDIA Call Centre operation so participants and their families get the best possible service.
<p>Date announced:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 April 2022
<p>Funding Amount (if stated):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No funding attached to the commitment
<p>Funding Profile / Timeframe:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil
<p>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NDIS review will inform a number of government commitments and government priorities for further reform. • Getting the first version of a plan right – through consistent and fair NDIS decisions which are better explained, leading to fewer appeals. • Stronger and more timely feedback between participants, families and carers and NDIA staff throughout the planning process. • Clearer guidance on evidence required to inform decisions about access to the NDIS and to support planning. • The Government’s introduction of expert review will address a cause of increasing AAT appeals and reduce the amount spent on lawyers. • Optimal service for participants and carers through the NDIA’s call centre. • An additional 380 public servants in priority areas of the NDIA.
<p>Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The NDIS is Australia’s disability safety net – a great Labor idea like Medicare and Superannuation – that has been damaged by a decade of Liberal cuts, mismanagement and chaos.”
<p>Related commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of people with disability on the NDIA executive and board.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share governance with people with disability and their families and state and territory governments and ensure the scheme is working with mainstream services. • Publish data so the scheme can be properly monitored, evaluated, and interrogated. We will identify gaps in the current evidence base and gather more information, data and research. • Make all proposed changes to the scheme transparent to rebuild trust between the NDIS and the people who rely on it for support. • Review of market, pricing and compliance (including fraud). • Changes to specialist disability accommodation and supported independent living.
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<p>NDIS Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We propose the review be initiated to focus on NDIS design, operation and sustainability, subject to early further clarification with the Government, followed by consultation with states and territories and people with disability, their families and carers on proposed terms of reference: • We also propose that the review also examine the operationalisation of the NDIS Act and the Rules to ensure that the work delivered by the Agency is aligned to the intention and design of the Scheme. • On design, the review could consider the emerging issues, in light of the past six years of full-Scheme experience. • An examination of the governance arrangements between the Commonwealth and the jurisdictions is important for the review. • It could also consider how reasonable and necessary supports for participants are determined so as to maximise the objects of the Scheme, including improved social and economic participation and choice and control, for participants. • On operation, the focus could be on the processes for gathering necessary information, and then the making, communicating and reviewing of decisions by the Agency. • Other opportunities may include addressing service provider sharp practice and fraud, consideration of the use of external lawyers and consultants, and the overall governance, staffing, structure and operations of the Agency itself. • On sustainability, the review can build on the December 2021 report by actuarial firm Taylor Fry, Independent Review of the NDIA actuarial forecast model, which found that the baseline estimates (on which the 2022-23 Budget Estimates are based) may represent a modest underestimate of future costs. • The review would also need to consider how the NDIS works with mainstream services - a priority for Disability Reform Ministers – and how to ensure mainstream services meet the needs of people with disability, including NDIS participants. • The review could address early the existing commitment in full scheme agreements with states and territories to commission a review of scheme costs before the end of 2023, and, with agreement of states and territories, bring forward that review to commence in 2022.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to the government’s views and the support of the Treasurer, the review could be undertaken by the Productivity Commission. <p><i>Placing participants at the centre of the Scheme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Placing participants at the centre of the Scheme and enhancing their outcomes to enhance the focus on participant wellbeing and improved outcomes, stronger engagement is required with people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and workers, and particularly with participants in the NDIS.• The NDIA and the sector have made progress on a co-design framework, and the NDIA and the department are working closely with the sector on a series of co-design projects to enhance Scheme operation.• It is anticipated the importance of work to understand outcomes and effectiveness will be identified by the review of Scheme design, operations and sustainability, and in the independent review of NDIS costs in 2023 and 2028 as provided for in full scheme agreements with states and territories, to be commissioned by the Ministerial Council.• s47E, • This could also be a focus of research supported by the Government’s commitment to provide \$15 million for the National Disability Research Partnership, and consideration of continued support for the National Disability Data Asset. <p><i>Reform the planning pathway, improve the participant experience.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participant experience and efficiency for the NDIA would be enhanced by the ability to get the original version of a plan for a participant right.• Reform in this area should be co-designed with the sector to support a shared understanding of the pain points and determine their resolution. There is a current formal co-design project with the sector addressing exactly this question.• Where a participant’s plan would reduce by 20 per cent or more (not including reductions due to one-off capital items) we propose that a plan with such a proposed reduction be referred to a higher-qualified Agency delegate for expert review before finalisation. This is within the current legislative framework.• This approach would be further supported by improvements the Agency is already trialling for the section 100 internal review process, which occurs after the original plan decision is finalised, to increase the level of direct participant engagement and discussion.• Both these initiatives hold the prospect of further reducing numbers progressing to the AAT, in turn reducing expenditure on associated legal costs.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions from expert review will be monitored so trends and patterns can be identified to foster continuous improvement in operational guidance to NDIA planners. • s47E, [REDACTED] <p><i>Abolishing the staffing cap, reviewing call centre operations.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NDIA's approved average staffing level for 2021-22 is 4500. Because staffing has grown through the financial year, the NDIA expects to finish FY 2021-22 with 4800 full time equivalent staff. Both the Secretary and CEO NDIA are keen to discuss NDIA resourcing issues. • For the best possible service, participants, their families and carers or nominees need to very easily engage with the NDIA to receive information or discuss their circumstances. This includes the ability to receive high quality advice over the phone. • s47E, [REDACTED]
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This commitment can be implemented without legislative change.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are ready to brief you and recommend we brief on the review of the NDIS and on the Expert Review process within the first 30 days.

Contact Officer	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers	Phone:	s47F [REDACTED]
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NDIS Governance

<p>Stated Commitment:</p>	<p>From “A Better Future for the NDIS”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share governance with people with disability and their families and state and territory Governments, and ensure the scheme is working with mainstream services. • publish data so the scheme can be properly monitored, evaluated, and interrogated. We will identify gaps in the current evidence base and gather more information, data and research. • make all proposed changes to the scheme transparent to rebuild trust between the NDIS and the people who rely on it for support. • increase the number of people with disability on the NDIA executive and board so that the voice and experience of participants is returned to the scheme.
<p>Date announced:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 April 2022
<p>Funding Amount (if stated):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No funding attached to the commitment
<p>Funding Profile / Timeframe:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil
<p>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability and lived experience of disability are well represented on the NDIA Board and in the NDIA Executive. • Newly published NDIS data is available to inform policy and operations. • Trust from participants and the sector rebuilt in the NDIS. • States and territories productively engaged on NDIS matters, including addressing the interface with mainstream.
<p>Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government will protect the NDIS and get it back on track, so it works for people with disability and their families, carers, disability service providers and workers. • Criticism, most recently through consultations on the NDIS Amendment Act in 2021, that people with disability and people with lived experience of disability are not sufficiently represented on the NDIA Board.
<p>Related commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other commitments contained in “A Better Future for the NDIS”
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<p>Shared governance with participants and their families and the states and territories</p> <p><i>Shared governance with participants and their families</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to the NDIS Act in March 2022 change criteria for NDIS Board appointments enabling greater representation of people with disability and people with lived experience of disability on the NDIA Board. • Currently there is the opportunity to make up to three new appointments to the NDIA Board. • A further two appointments could be made when the terms of two current board members expire on 31 December 2022.

- There is a discussion of the appointments process to the NDIA Board in the Corporate section of this IGB.
- Placing participants at the centre of the Scheme and enhancing their outcomes through co-design processes gives participants a role in scheme governance.

States and territories

- States and territories, as co-stewards of the Scheme, have a critical role to play in the governance of the Scheme and in ensuring their enduring responsibility for mainstream service delivery to people with disability does not diminish over time.
- s47E, s47C [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The Disability Reform Ministers Meeting (DRMM), chaired by the Commonwealth Minister with the disability minister of each state and territory as members, is a key forum in which policy issues can be discussed and resolved.
- It is proposed you convene an early DRMM to share your vision for broader Scheme improvements and to hear from states and territories on opportunities to collaborate to get the NDIS and mainstream services working together.
- States and territories also have a key role in NDIS legislation as their agreement is required for the making of most NDIS Rules, other than those relating to the NDIS Commission. Many rules require unanimous support from states and territories to be made, some require only a majority of jurisdictions (including the Commonwealth), and some require only consultation.

State and territory agreement will be sought to three Rules in the near future, which are required to follow through on amendments to the NDIS Act, passed with bipartisan support in March 2022, and commencing from 1 July 2022.

NDIS Data

- While the NDIA currently publishes significant amounts of information on the NDIS, we will work with participants and the sector to ensure the information addresses their specific needs.
- The NDIA CEO is able to facilitate greater release of data in accordance with section 60 of the NDIS Act, including for research, actuarial analysis and policy development.
- More granular data may be required to inform scheme performance and evaluation and in this respect the NDIA will consider implications for its current practices of the recent passage of the *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022*, which commenced on 1 April 2022, enabling greater sharing of NDIS data.
- Amendments to the NDIS Act in 2021 enabled disclosure of protected Agency information to the NDIS Commission which has enhanced co-operation and joint activities between the Agency and the NDIS Commission.
- s47E, s47C [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

	<p>s47E, s47C</p> <p>[Redacted]</p> <p>Make proposed changes to the scheme transparent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new principle under the amendments to the NDIS Act passed in March 2022 with bipartisan support is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (9A) People with disability are central to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and should be included in a co-design capacity. • Putting people back at the centre of the NDIS. • Through co-design will improve transparency of scheme changes and build trust in the NDIS for participants, their families and carers, and the sector. • A focus on transparent and empowering communication with participants combined with the new requirement under the amended NDIS Act from 1 July 2022 to provide reasons for decisions as a matter of course, should assist in reducing matters where a participant sees the need to go to the AAT. s47E, s47C <p>[Redacted]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the 2022 amendments to the NDIS Act, the Commonwealth Ombudsman will report annually on the NDIA's progress toward compliance with the Participant Service Guarantee including in relation to five key engagement principles: transparency, responsiveness, respect, empowerment and connectedness.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to subordinate legislation (Rules made under the NDIS Act) are necessary to follow through on the amendments to the NDIS Act passed in March 2022 with bipartisan support.
<p>Further briefing required:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are ready to brief you on NDIA Board membership and appointments and NDIS Rules and recommend it be done within the first 30 days

<p>Contact Officer</p>	<p>Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers</p>	<p>Phone:</p>	<p>s47F</p>
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NDIS pricing, markets, remote services and workforce

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of NDIS pricing, markets and compliance. • The development of a comprehensive NDIS workforce strategy. • The appointment of a senior officer within the NDIA to tackle the barriers to service delivery in remote areas of Australia and other areas.
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 April 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil funding was attached to these election commitments. • The 2023-24 Budget process could be used to seek funding for initiatives in these areas.
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no set timeframe attached to these commitments. • The timetable to commence the review and strategy will depend on its agreed scope and implementation approach.
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review of NDIS pricing, markets and compliance and the development of the NDIS workforce strategy will help identify options to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve pricing and payment models to ensure people get the supports needed to achieve their goals. ○ Improve the quality of NDIS spend, including recovering NDIS funds lost to provider fraud/overcharging and addressing ‘cowboy’ providers delivering sub-standard services. ○ Reduce barriers to service delivery in remote areas of Australia and other areas. ○ Address worker shortages in the sector and reduce worker turnover. ○ Improve pay and conditions for NDIS workers. ○ Make all proposed changes to the scheme (including to pricing and markets) transparent to rebuild trust between the NDIS and the people who rely on it for support. • An augmented focus on tackling service delivery barriers in remote Australia and other areas will ensure people with disability can get the supports they need, irrespective of where they live.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are barriers to service delivery in remote areas of Australia and other areas. • Market gaps have continued to mean that people with disability and their families cannot get the support they need to care for them at home. • Up to 10 per cent of the scheme is being lost to fraudulent service providers, while other areas of the NDIS market struggle with unworkable pricing models. • The NDIS workforce needs to grow by 83,000 workers by 2024, and turnover continues to be high (note: ~210,000 workers are also expected to turnover during this period).
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIS accommodation and supported independent living.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review NDIS design, operation and sustainability.
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department will develop and brief you on a proposed scope and implementation approach for the review and workforce strategy development. Subject to your endorsement, this scope could be further tested (including with your state and territory counterparts at the Disability Reform Ministers meeting or out of session) ahead of commencement of the review and development of the strategy. • Ahead of announcements in June, the department and the NDIA will jointly brief you on the outcome of the NDIA’s recent Annual Pricing Review, which examines market data and research and engages with industry and other stakeholders to inform changes to pricing arrangements and price limits in the NDIS. • We also suggest briefing you on a fraud and compliance improvement program being led by the NDIA, in collaboration with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, to improve its capability to prevent error, claiming non-compliance and address fraud risk as the Scheme continues to grow and is exposed to more complex and opportunistic fraud. \$30 million was provided in the 2021-22 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook for the NDIA and NDIS Commission to develop and test new compliance capabilities, targeting fraudulent and unethical provider behaviours. • A recent internal review of the NDIA’s fraud intelligence and investigation functions can be used to inform the next steps to detecting and responding to fraud and potential sharp practice, including sharing information with the NDIS Commission and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) so that more education, prevention and, where necessary, punitive action, can be undertaken. • The NDIA will clarify and enhance the responsibilities of the senior official already responsible for remote and very remote region operations to strengthen responses to access and service delivery issues in remote Australia and other areas. There is potential for more significant commissioning of services on behalf of participants where the market is not responding. On many remote barriers, we recommend a whole-of-government and cross-jurisdictional approach and close engagement with First Nations communities, given many NDIS service delivery barriers are common with barriers experienced in aged care, primary health care and other services. As an early step, the NDIA and DSS propose to work internally and across government to develop options to make system improvements that can be presented to you for consideration and potential engagement with other Ministers.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative changes may be required in relation to pricing, depending on the outcome of review.
<p>Further briefing required:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department will brief you at your convenience. Given the significance of these issues and as the review/strategy

	development process itself will take some time, we would recommend you are briefed before the end of July 2022 to enable the outcome of these processes to be considered in Budget 2023 as appropriate.
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Contact Officer	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers	Phone:	s47F
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Measuring Progress on a National Disability Strategy

Stated Commitment:	<p>The Government is committed to “make sure all 4.4 million Australians living with disability get the action and support they need by measuring progress on a National Disability Strategy”. (Media release titled “An Albanese Labor Government will defend and fix the NDIS”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government is committed to “build evidence with \$15 million for a National Disability Research Partnership and consider continued support for a National Disability Data Asset to ensure future changes to the NDIS are based on proper evidence.” (‘Better support for people living with disability’ announcement: https://www.alp.org.au/policies/people-living-with-disability)
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 April 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$15 million for a National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) No additional funding attached to this commitment for measuring progress on a National Disability Strategy or for the National Disability Data Asset (NDDA)
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No funding profile or deadline attached in announcement
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a better future for the 4.4 million Australians with disability by providing equal opportunities to access the community and gain employment. Making sure Australians living with disability get the action and support they need by measuring progress on a National Disability Strategy. The intended outcome is to ‘build evidence’ in regards to the NDRP and ‘to ensure future changes to the NDIS are based on proper evidence’ in regards to the NDDA.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes and opportunities for 4.4 million Australians living with disability are lagging behind and have even gone backwards in important areas like employment and health due to a lack of accountability. The former Government’s media release ‘Landmark strategy to support Australians with disability’ (3 December 2021) stated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “\$12.5 million to fully establish a National Disability Research Partnership to translate research into policy and implement a national disability research agenda.” “\$40 million to extend the National Disability Data Asset to facilitate more comprehensive measurement and assessment of the impact of services and programs accessed by people with disability, with necessary and appropriate safeguards.”
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ‘No one left behind’ commitment includes developing a National Autism Strategy, backing research, and a central coordination point for disability, and forms part of the ‘Defend and Fix the NDIS’ announcement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Better support for people living with disability’ announcement includes related commitments on NDIS governance and operations.
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<p>ADS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of mechanisms will be used to monitor and report progress against Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031 (Strategy), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An annual report on the Targeted Action Plans will show the progress achieved against individual actions that each government has publicly committed to deliver. ○ An annual Outcomes Framework report and webpage is under development to publish progress against each of the Strategy’s policy priorities, including measuring community attitudes and experiences, system measures and population measures. ○ A biennial implementation report, which will document what action has been taken and what progress has been made. On 3 December 2021, the former Minister committed to table this report in Parliament. Considering the responsibilities sit at all levels of government it would be advantageous for all state and territory governments to table this report in their parliaments. • Additionally, a review of the Strategy will need to be undertaken following the release of the final report of the Disability Royal Commission, due in September 2023. Two major independent reviews of the Strategy are also due to be conducted in 2025 and 2029. • The Commonwealth, state and territory governments are required to develop a data improvement plan by the end of 2022 that will set out when data for future measures of the Strategy’s Outcomes Framework will become available. • This relies on state and territory governments supporting the National Disability Data Asset (\$40 million has been allocated to develop this asset). • It also relies on conducting the Australia’s Disability Strategy Survey, which will capture data on community attitudes and possibly other measures (\$12.5 million has been allocated to the Survey). • The next Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), due to occur in 2025. Conducting an SDAC in 2025 would provide a major data source to measure progress against a number of priorities for people with disability, including progress of outcomes under Australia’s Disability Strategy. <p>NDRP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department is funding the Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) to deliver, by June 2022, a national disability research agenda and recommendations for governance arrangements to oversee the operation of an NDRP. • As part of supporting Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031 (ADS), \$12.5 million was provided in the 2021-22 –Mid-Year- Economic and Fiscal Outlook to establish an National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) over 2022-23 to 2023-24.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s47E, s47C <p>[Redacted]</p> <p>NDDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NDDA is intended to be an enduring national asset comprising a collection of linked, de-identified data from across multiple Commonwealth, state and territory service systems. • The NDDA is expected to provide a powerful basis for understanding how well or badly a broad range of general government services, payments and programs support people with disability. • Following a March 2022 out-of-session paper to the Disability Reform Ministers’ Meeting, Ministers have endorsed the first three national priority areas for the NDDA (South Australia is yet to formally respond as a result of the impact of their caretaker period and change in government): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reporting obligations for the Australia’s Disability Strategy Outcomes Framework 2. Health outcomes for people with disability, and 3. Employment outcomes for people with disability. <p>This does not explicitly include NDIS policy evaluation. However, NDIS data is expected to be included in the asset to inform these three priorities.</p> • s47E, s47C, 47B <p>[Redacted]</p>
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This commitment can be implemented without legislative change.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are ready to brief you and recommend it be done within the first 30 days.

Contact Officer	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers	Phone:	s47F
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Double Disability Advocacy Funding

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government committed to <i>“Increase advocacy funding: Labor will double existing support for disability advocacy, investing an additional \$10 million over four years and match existing provider advocacy funding for AAT appeals”</i> (Media release titled <i>“An Albanese Labor Government Will Defend and Fix the NDIS”</i>, 19 April 2022).
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 April 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10 million over four years for DRO program; \$9.2 million per annum to double NDIS Appeals program funding.
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined. Based on the media release, timing is proposed to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing an additional \$10 million in the DRO program over four years. Doubling of existing provider funding for the NDIS Appeals program which would equate to a minimum of an additional \$9.2 million per annum Early clarification will be sought as to whether this is time-limited supplementary funding or an ongoing increase in base funding.
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased access to advocacy and legal supports for the NDIS Appeals process. Improved capacity of systemic advocacy organisations to work with people with disability and to provide advice to government.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Disability Royal Commission, recent media reports and Senate Estimate hearings have focused on funding adequacy for individual and systemic advocacy, especially the NDIS Appeals program. The NDIS Appeals program is experiencing increased levels of client demand. Based on the AAT Caseload Report for the period of 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2021, the number of applications lodged to the AAT in 2020-21 was 2,160, a 21 per cent increase over the previous year. In the period 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, the AAT has already received 4,656 applications. This is a 115 per cent increase on 2020-21, noting the 2021-22 financial year is not yet complete.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is related to several NDIS commitments announced as part of the media release.
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will brief you regarding the allocation of funding, including understanding the intended scope and timing of the commitment. A proposal will then be developed for the budget process, this commitment could be implemented through variations to existing grant agreements or new grant agreements through DRO and NDIS Appeals Programs. Early clarification will be sought as to the scope of the commitment as it is interpreted as comprising of two discrete components to double existing support for disability advocacy:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to double funding for the Disability Representative Organisations (DRO) program (systemic advocacy) by investing an additional \$10 million over four years; and 2. to double existing funding for the NDIS Appeals program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The election commitment components would result in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investing an additional \$10 million over four years in the DRO program, bringing the total funding from \$2.6 million per annum to at least \$5.1 million per annum.* 2. s47E, s47C <div style="background-color: #cccccc; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>*If the intention is to 'double' funding for the DRO program then the additional investment required would be \$10.4 million. s47E, s47C <div style="background-color: #cccccc; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: #cccccc; height: 80px; width: 100%;"></div></p>
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This commitment can be implemented without legislative change.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are ready to brief you and recommend it be done within the first 60 days.

Contact Officer	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers	Phone:	s47F <div style="background-color: #cccccc; height: 15px; width: 40px;"></div>
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Develop a National Autism Strategy

<p>Stated Commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has committed to the development of a National Autism Strategy as part of its commitment to support all Australians living with disability. • The commitment includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ funding to the Autism Cooperative Research Centre (Autism CRC) to continue autism research, coordination, collaboration and advice; ○ funding for the creation of a National Roadmap to specifically target health and mental health outcomes; ○ lifting the age cap for people seeking autism assessment from 13 to 25 years so they can access diagnosis and support; and ○ a specific autism focus to ensure no person with disability is behind in the ongoing pandemic response, and in a plan to develop a comprehensive NDIS workforce strategy.
<p>Date announced:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 April 2022 media release titled “An Albanese Labor Government will Defend and Fix the NDIS” was published on the Hon Anthony Albanese MP website (initial announcement). • 18 May 2022 (follow up announcement).
<p>Funding Amount (if stated):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1 million over the next 12 months (National Autism Strategy). • \$2 million (Autism CRC). • \$300,000 (National Roadmap for health and mental health).
<p>Funding Profile / Timeframe:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding profile to be determined. • Timeframe commencing immediately and following through over the next 12 months
<p>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Autism Strategy - develop a coordinated national approach between all levels of government and service areas. • Autism CRC to continue as Australia’s leading organisation for autism research, coordination, collaboration and advice. • Improved health and mental health outcomes • Young adults can access diagnosis and support. • No one with autism is left behind in the pandemic response.
<p>Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to three per cent of Australia’s population has autism and it is the largest primary disability category in the NDIS. • People with autism experience some of the poorest outcomes of any cohort and a 20 year gap in life expectancy compared with the general population. • Experiences shared with the recent Senate Select Committee on Autism revealed urgent and targeted action is needed.
<p>Related commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-31. • Central Coordination of Disability. • A better future for the NDIS
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe the development of a National Autism Strategy, and investment in the Autism CRC would be best led by the Department

	<p>of Social Services (the department) given its general alignment with Australia’s Disability Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department will work closely with the Department of Health (Health) to implement the related measures; creation of a National Roadmap for health and mental health outcomes, lifting the age cap for people seeking autism assessment, and the autism focus in the pandemic response. • Development of a National Autism Strategy should be co-designed with the autism community and sector to ensure it incorporates the views of autistic people and their families. • Development of a strategy should also be undertaken in consultation with a number of, Commonwealth, state and territory government departments. • Development of a strategy could be progressed through a similar process undertaken by Health to develop the National Roadmap for Improving Health Services for People with Intellectual Disability. • This could be achieved by hosting roundtable discussions with relevant Commonwealth, state and territory departments and key sector stakeholders to inform outcomes, recommendations and an outline for the roadmap. Consultations would include targeted group discussions involving people with autism and their families and carers, to ensure the strategy addresses the principles for a strategy outlined in chapter 5 of the Senate Committee report. • Learnings from the development of Australia’s Disability Strategy would also be taken into account in developing the approach.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Further briefing required:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department propose to provide you with further briefing as required or within the first 60 days.

<p>Contact Officer</p>	<p>Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers</p>	<p>Phone:</p>	<p>s47F</p>
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Central Coordination of Disability

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government has committed to “Introduce central coordination of disability to ensure real action and recognition for all disabled Australians, not just those on the NDIS”. (Media release titled “An Albanese Labor Government Will Defend and Fix the NDIS”).
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 April 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No funding commitment has been made.
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No funding/timeframe commitment has been made.
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring real action and recognition for all disabled Australians, not just those on the NDIS. Ensuring people with disability are not at the back of the queue in relation to the pandemic or a future emergency response.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes and opportunities for all 4.4 million Australians living with disability are lagging behind and even going backwards in important areas like employment and health due to a lack of accountability. At every stage of the pandemic, the experience of Australians with a disability has been disregarded leaving them, their families, carers, service providers and workers without the support they need.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The No one left behind commitment also includes: making sure all 4.4 million Australians living with disability get the action and support they need by measuring progress on a National Disability Strategy, developing a National Autism Strategy, and backing research. No one left behind forms part of the ‘Defend and Fix the NDIS’ announcement of 19 April 2022. The ‘Better support for people with disability’ policy is related to the ‘A Better Future for the NDIS’ policy.
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s47E, s47C The central coordination point, which we propose be anchored in the department, will help people to navigate the supports they need, and play a key role in driving a more integrated and seamless experience for people with disability as they access disability specific, community and mainstream services. Initial steps for developing Central coordination for disability would require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of a clearly defined and agreed scope for the initiative, including roles and responsibilities across governments.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ working with people with disability, their families and carers, and the disability support sector, to understand what they want the central coordination point to deliver, what this will look like, and how they want the central coordination point to work. • Secondary phases of work could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ review of existing tools, resources, programs, services and supports are aligned to this measure - initially, this will include reviewing the role of the ILC, Partners in the Community and the Disability Gateway. ○ working with state and territory governments, and across the Commonwealth government to clearly define and agree the service offers of all parties and pathways to access supports. ○ developing a roadmap to drive mainstream services to deliver for people with disability through Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031. • This initiative has the potential to address a number of issues identified in recent reports investigating the impact on people with disability accessing appropriate supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Royal Commission into the Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Interim Report highlighted the need for greater coordination and integration of supports for people with disability across disability-specific and mainstream systems. ○ The Senate Select Committee on Autism identified the lack of integration across service sectors and between levels of government (including the intersection of NDIS and mainstream supports and poor service coordination support) as one of the most common barriers to the provision of adequate services and supports. ○ A 2018 review of the implementation of the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (the Strategy) by UNSW found that a dedicated central unit was needed to improve the implementation of a new Strategy.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new item may be required in Schedule 1AB to the <i>Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997</i> (the FF(SP) Regulations) to establish legislative authority for government spending.
<p>Further briefing required:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are ready to brief you and recommend it be done within the first 30 days.

<p>Contact Officer</p>	<p>Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers</p>	<p>Phone:</p>	<p>s47F</p>
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Centre of Excellence to Generate Employment for People with Disabilities

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve employment outcomes with a Disability Employment Centre for Excellence that will provide a clearinghouse for ideas and increase capacity among employment services.
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 April 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No funding stated.
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No funding profile or timeframe stated.
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government is committed to ensuring that no Australian with a disability is left behind – from getting the NDIS working properly for those that need it, to coordinating support for all 4.4 million Australians living with disability. Disability will no longer be an afterthought, and policies will be informed by evidence and co-designed with the people they affect. The government will ensure that people with disability have equal opportunities to access the community and gain employment. Extra advocacy support will ensure they have a voice.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes and opportunities for all 4.4 million Australians living with disability are lagging behind and even going backwards in important areas like employment and health due to a lack of accountability.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better support for people living with disability – Protecting the NDIS and getting it back on track.
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are options for the Centre of Excellence to be developed and delivered within the Commonwealth as a unique entity or delivered through an independent not for profit organisation or consortia across the disability and academic sectors. The Centre of Excellence could be pursued separately or as part of broader reforms to disability employment services.
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This commitment can be implemented without legislative change.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing will be provided on delivery options for the Centre of Excellence. Early indications of preferred options and implementation timelines would be useful.

Contact Officer	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers	Phone:	s47F
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Supported Employment Workplaces

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Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Albanese Labor Government will work with disability workplaces (supported employment organisations) which have been impacted by Government cuts to find solutions to the issues they are facing. Commitment stated in The West Australian article: <i>Bill Shorten: Why the Activ Foundation closing its supported employment worksites is devastating.</i>
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 May 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government is committed to ensuring that no Australian with a disability is left behind. The government will work with Activ, its clients and their families to find a solution to funding and viability issues facing supported employment organisations.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders and the Supported Employment sector have raised concerns about ongoing viability under NDIS funding arrangements. On 16 May 2022, the largest provider of supported employment in Western Australia, Activ Foundation, announced it would close seven of its supported employment sites, making around 780 supported employees redundant. s47E, s47C
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve employment outcomes with a Disability Employment Centre of Excellence that will provide a clearinghouse for ideas and increase capacity among employment services.
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The former government allocated \$67 million to support organisations to transition to a new wage-setting environment once a final decision on the Supported Employment Services Award has been reached by the Fair Work Commission. s47E, s47C
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This commitment can be implemented without legislative change.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are ready to brief you and recommend it be done within the first 30 days.

Contact Officer	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers	Phone:	s47F
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Support for People with Disability - s47C, s47G, s47E

Stated Commitment:	s47C, s47E
Date announced:	
Funding Amount (if stated):	
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring people with disability have equal opportunities to access the community and gain employment.
Implementation Response:	s47C, s47G, s47E
Legislative impacts:	
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are ready to brief you and recommend it be done within the first 30 days.

Contact Officer	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers	Phone:	s47F
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NDIS accommodation and supported independent living

<p>Stated Commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause the current changes to Supported Independent Living (SIL). • Review to investigate solutions to excessive red tape and the mounting queues stopping people with disability accessing appropriate housing. • Investigate the \$500 million Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) underspend to ensure people with disability can access appropriate housing. • Progress against the Younger People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) targets. • \$638,000 to support the expansion of Jindelara Cottage to provide greater residential accommodation for people with disabilities on the south coast of NSW.
<p>Date announced:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 April 2022 • 7 May 2022
<p>Funding Amount (if known):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding requirements will depend on the approach to next steps. Currently only funding of \$638,000 is attached to the expansion of Jindelara Cottage.
<p>Funding Profile / Timeframe:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no deadlines currently attached to these commitments, with the exception of YPIRAC targets.
<p>Key outcomes or outputs to measure success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased community and provider confidence in SIL design parameters including around any changes. • Reasonable and necessary decisions about NDIS accommodation and SIL supports are defensible and effectively communicated and reflected in participant plans and are achieved within the existing parameters of the Participant Service Guarantee. • Clearer, earlier signals to the market around accommodation demand to inform market supply responses. • A clearer position for the participants and the market in relation to the circumstances where shared living or individual living is considered to be a reasonable and necessary support under the NDIS. • Younger people are diverted from entering residential aged care and those within aged care are supported to move to more suitable accommodation (which may or may not be NDIS-funded accommodation) where this is their wish, consistent with commitments made in the response to the Aged Care Royal Commission. • Jindelara Cottage is repurposed and construction of a new, specialised two-story facility adjacent to the home, providing additional respite accommodation and permanent accommodation for nine people with disability is completed.

<p>Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing housing prices, reduced vacancy rates and increased pressure on previously low cost options, including in regional areas, is placing significant pressure on affordable housing systems. • For people with disability this is leading to increased expectations that the National Disability Insurance Scheme will bridge the gap (beyond current NDIS housing parameters) and provide affordable housing that would normally be sourced from the state and territory managed public and community housing systems. • SIL providers have claimed that the NDIA is making cuts to SIL plans that are not defensible. Some providers are concerned about their ability to recover costs, potentially putting service provision at risk. • Stakeholders have raised concerns about delays with NDIA approval processes for SDA, home modification and other housing supports. • Scheme experience has not matched the 2011 Productivity Commission forecast that expenditure on SDA would be approximately \$700 million per annum at full scheme. SDA expenditure as at 31 March 2021 was \$248 million. • Stakeholders have publicly raised concerns about the progress made against the targets to prevent entry and support exit of younger people from residential aged care. • Stakeholders have identified a lack of respite accommodation for people with disability on the south coast of NSW.
<p>Related commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These commitment relate to the broader commitments made by the Government including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of NDIS pricing, markets and compliance ○ Tackle barriers to service delivery in remote areas of Australia ○ Make all proposed changes to the Scheme transparent ○ Fix the planning pathway ○ Housing Australia Future Fund ○ Improving Remote Housing ○ Help to Buy Scheme ○ Housing and Homelessness Plan ○ National Housing Supply and Affordability Council.
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We propose to brief you on changes to SIL that have been implemented by the NDIA and changes currently under consideration, to ensure we understand the concerns raised by Government in this area. We propose to then brief you on options to address those concerns including an approach to consultation and co-design of future changes with stakeholders, including NDIS participants. • We suggest briefing on current demand and supply for the SDA market, the process for how 'reasonable and necessary' home and living decisions are made, data on where participants are currently in the process and recent efforts to accelerate those decisions. This would include analysis and policy clarification in relation to the circumstances where shared living or individual living is considered to be reasonable and necessary. Briefing will also detail options for investigating lower than expected SDA expenditure and solutions to

	<p>for activating housing options for NDIS participants. s47C</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDIA recommend briefing on the review of SDA pricing which is being progressed by the NDIA and is expected to be finalised by the end of 2022, in close consultation with the department and SDA sector, to take account of the significant changes in the market, including land, housing and construction costs across Australia to ensure settings remain appropriate. This review is highly anticipated by the sector and would be an important interim step towards the Government's broader commitment to review NDIS pricing. • We also recommend briefing on the progress made against the Younger People in Residential Aged Care targets and future actions that would be needed to maximise the prospects of meeting targets recommended by the Aged Care Royal Commission. • We can also brief on mechanisms to provide capital funding to Jindelara Cottage.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These commitments can be implemented without legislative changes.
<p>Further briefing required:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department stands ready to brief you on these issues at your convenience. We suggest this would be of benefit within the first 30 days noting that decisions on SIL and SDA will need to continue to be made in accordance with Participant Service Guarantee timeframes.

<p>Contact Officer</p>	<p>Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers</p>	<p>Phone:</p>	<p>s47F</p>
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Women’s Safety commitments including investment of \$1.3 billion

<p>Stated Commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government will match the coalition’s FY 22-23 budget commitment of \$1.3 billion in funding for women’s safety initiatives, to provide the national leadership needed to help end family, domestic and sexual violence. • The Government has announced a Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) Commission to act as a strong voice for victim-survivors and funding for 500 new community sector workers to support women experiencing FDSV, in addition to a number of cross government initiatives such as paid family and domestic violence leave, crisis and transitional housing options, Indigenous justice and respectful relationships in schools. 								
<p>Date announced:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 November 2021 (MR) and 24 November 2021 (radio) • 4 March 2022 • 17 March 2022 • 9 May 2022 								
<p>Funding Amount (if stated):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall funding commitment to match the previous Government’s 2022-23 budget commitment of \$1.3 billion(source: Women’s Budget Statement 2022) • Funding of \$157.8 million over four years has been announced for 500 additional community workers (source: ALP Election Costing 2022). 								
<p>Funding Profile / Timeframe:</p>	<p>500 new community workers:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="512 1227 1385 1339"> <thead> <tr> <th>2022-23</th> <th>2023-24</th> <th>2024-25</th> <th>2025-26</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>\$19.3m</td> <td>\$38.3m</td> <td>\$49.4m</td> <td>\$50.8m</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	\$19.3m	\$38.3m	\$49.4m	\$50.8m
2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26						
\$19.3m	\$38.3m	\$49.4m	\$50.8m						
<p>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased accountability and transparency through establishment of the Commission. • Increased responsiveness for women experiencing violence through investment in 500 additional community sector workers. 								
<p>Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Issue to be resolved:</u> It is hard to get information about whether prevention activities are happening, about whether emergency response activities are happening or even recovery activities for women. • <u>Commitment:</u> Establish a Domestic Violence commissioner, who will have a role in keeping government accountable and tracking progress against the National Plan. • <u>Issue to be resolved:</u> Every two minutes, police receive a call out to attend a domestic violence incident. But all around the country services have had to turn away as many as half of the women who come to them looking for support. • <u>Commitment:</u> Invest to generate 500 new jobs for community organisations, new workers on the ground on the frontline, who can stand with women when they reach out for support. 								

<p>Related commitment:</p>	<p><u>\$100 million in crisis accommodation and build 4000 homes for women and children fleeing violence and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness.</u></p>
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<p><u>FDSV Commissioner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the FDSV Commissioner is well progressed with Executive Order dated 17 March 2022 establishing the Commission as an Executive Agency under the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i>. You could set out further direction to the Commissioner on priorities for the first year of work through a tasking letter and regular meetings. • s47E, s47C [Redacted] <p><u>500 community sector workers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options to provide funding for an additional 500 workers could include a National Partnership agreement with states and territories or a competitive grant round. • s47B, s47E, s47C [Redacted] <p><u>\$1.3 billion investment in women’s safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s47E, s47C [Redacted] • The department will work across relevant agencies to support a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to deliver the investment.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the FDSV Commission as an Executive Agency under the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> has already occurred. The next step is to seek agreement from the Finance Minister to amend the PGPA Rule 2014, listing the FDSV Commission as a non-corporate Commonwealth entity. This process is underway and the Office of Parliamentary Counsel is drafting the amendment, noting we will brief you on any required engagement with the Finance Minister to support finalisation. Amendments to the PGPA Rule are subject to a 15 sitting day disallowance period in both houses of Parliament. Should you have a different preference on establishment arrangements, we will brief on options.

Further briefing required:

- You will be provided further briefing on key decisions to support implementation of commitments.

Contact Officer

Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities

Phone:

S47F



Abolish the Cashless Debit Card program

<p>Stated Commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abolish the privatised Cashless Debit Card (CDC) program and instead support First Nations communities to make their own decisions about the way forward. Remove compulsory, broad-based cashless welfare programs involving privatised financial organisations. Maintain the Income Management (IM) program where it is deemed appropriate, for example, where domestic violence orders are in place, and in a voluntary only capacity.
<p>Date announced:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was announced by Anthony Albanese on 23 May 2021 (interview with 2SM Radio). https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/may/23/labor-promises-to-scrap-privatised-cashless-welfare-card-if-elected Abolishing the CDC is outlined in Labor’s First Nations Policy (noting that the CDC program is not an Indigenous policy). https://www.alp.org.au/policies/first-nations Labor vows to end compulsory use of basics card https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/apr/19/cashless-welfare-labor-vows-to-end-compulsory-use-of-basics-card https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-20/federal-labor-scrap-compulsory-income-management/101001642
<p>Funding Amount (if stated):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unspecified
<p>Funding Profile / Timeframe:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unspecified
<p>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abolishing the CDC program and moving to a voluntary Income Management scheme. Consultation with communities on ways forward to inform options for the alternatives to cashless welfare.
<p>Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Prime Minister has previously questioned the privatised nature of the CDC program. The Minister has previously stated that there is not enough evidence to suggest that compulsory cashless welfare programs have met their objectives. Income management may be relevant in certain circumstances and they will consult of these, however it should not be compulsory.
<p>Related commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While there is likely majority support from participants for the cancellation of the CDC, there will be criticism from some First Nations Leaders S47F who have advocated for the CDC.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• s47E, s47C [Redacted]• Services Australia is responsible for implementation of most transition arrangements and will be a key partner in implementing this commitment.• The CDC program has a legislated sunset date of 31 December 2022.• The current card provider contracts for the CDC, with Indue and Traditional Credit Union, are due to cease on 31 December 2022.• Employment-related packages and support services currently funded to complement the CDC program may be affected.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repealing CDC, and introducing new legislation outlining CDC transitional arrangements would be preferable to ensure clarity and certainty for transitional support. s47E, s47C [Redacted]• Changes may also be needed to the legislation supporting the Income Management program depending on consultations.• IM legislative instruments support the operation of the program and sunset after 10 years. There are six instruments due to sunset on 1 October 2022, which enable more than 80 per cent of existing IM participants to be engaged in the program. s47E, s47C [Redacted]

	s47E, s47C
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">s47E, s47C

Contact Officer	Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities	Phone:	s47F
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Royal Commission into the Income Compliance Program (‘Robodebt’)

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Royal Commission (RC) into the Income Compliance or ‘Robodebt’ scheme will be established before the end of 2022. • Policy reference: Robodebt Royal Commission Policies Australian Labor Party (alp.org.au).
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 April 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The announcement specified funding of \$30 million.
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RC will be established before the end of 2022 with funding allocated over the forward estimates.
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine and report on the ‘Robodebt’ scheme, consistent with these key objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To establish who was responsible for establishing ‘Robodebt’ scheme. ○ To establish what advice, and what process or processes, informed the design and implementation of the ‘Robodebt’ scheme. ○ To investigate the handling of complaints about the ‘Robodebt’ scheme – including in relation to the scheme’s legality – by Services Australia, the Department of Human Services, other relevant Commonwealth agencies and Ministers. ○ To determine how much the implementation, suspension and wind-back of the ‘Robodebt’ scheme cost taxpayers. ○ To investigate the harm caused to law-abiding Australians by the ‘Robodebt’ scheme. ○ To investigate the use of third-party debt collectors under the ‘Robodebt’ scheme.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the origins of the ‘Robodebt’ scheme to ensure future Commonwealth Government programs avoid similar mistakes that caused harm to citizens.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s47E, s47C 

	<p>s47E, s47C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The announcement included funding of \$30 million. • As a comparison, the Bushfire RC had a budget of \$30 million, which was significantly lower than other RCs and ran for 6 months. This did not include premises for the commission, travel for consultations (due to COVID). The RC into Defence and Veteran Suicide was allocated an initial budget of \$145.3 million over two years. • A RC budget typically includes resourcing for accommodation and facilities, ICT, staffing, legal support for the RC and witnesses and Commonwealth representation costs.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This commitment can be implemented without legislative change.
<p>Further briefing required:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further briefing will be provided on proposed arrangements within the Social Services portfolio to support the establishment and operation of the RC.

<p>Contact Officer</p>	<p>Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream</p>	<p>Phone:</p>	<p>s47F</p>
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Increase to Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) income limits

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An additional 50,000 older Australians will be eligible for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) from 1 July 2022. The income test for access to a CSHC will increase to \$90,000 a year for singles (up from \$57,761) and to \$144,000 a year for couples (up from \$92,416).
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 May 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of \$70.5 million over four years to 2025-26
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022-23: -\$16.4 million 2023-24: -\$16.7 million 2024-25: -\$18.1 million 2025-26: -\$17.6 million
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure more Australians will qualify for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, easing some of the cost-of-living pressures that people are facing.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of living are rising strongly, with many Australians cutting back on essentials in order to make ends meet.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two year freeze to social security deeming rates (deemed income from account-based income streams is included in the CSHC income test).
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The commitment will be implemented by Services Australia, which is responsible for assessing CSHC eligibility and distributing physical cards. Implementation will require legislative amendments to be passed, and a further two weeks for system and business processes to be deployed. It is likely this will be difficult to achieve before the announced implementation date of 1 July 2022. s47E, s47C
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor technical amendments to the <i>Social Security Act 1991</i> are required, and drafting is underway.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department is ready to provide additional briefing. We recommend this occur within the first 30 days.

Contact Officer	Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream	Phone:	s47F
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Restoring Respect for the Community Sector

Stated Commitment:	<p>The Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen engagement with community sector organisations build stronger partnerships for service delivery have longer grant agreement terms provide sufficient funding for wages to ensure quality outcomes ensure grant funding flows to a greater diversity of not-for-profits have a renewed priority of partnering with trusted community organisations with strong local links remove gag clauses.
Date announced:	15 March 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	Not applicable
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	Not applicable
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a stronger partnership between government and the community sector. Realistic costs and longer contract terms will support funded organisations to plan for the future, and to provide workers with greater certainty. There will be a greater diversity of not-for-profits funded and more with strong local links.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The statement notes that the community sector has been cut out of government processes, and that many community sector organisations have been working with less money, less funding certainty and increased stress.
Related commitment:	Senator Jenny McAllister delivered a related speech to the Australian Services Union in Blaxland on 15 March 2022.
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021-22 the department is providing \$1.23 billion in grant funding to 6625 organisations. The department will work in collaboration with the community sector and other Commonwealth agencies to develop detailed policies and guidance for your approval, to ensure that the department’s grants reinforces these commitments for all forthcoming grant rounds. The department maintains regular, senior officer level, engagement with a range of sector representatives including the Australian Council of Social Services, Economic Justice Australia and the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Council of Australia (as well as other peak and representative bodies). The department currently convenes a Community Sector Advisory Group, comprising representatives across the community sector. This Group would provide a useful vehicle to co-design these rules and guidelines, and an implementation strategy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department’s grants currently vary widely in terms of their cost structure, length of contract, and level of detail in contracts, with some (such as Disability Employment Services) operating partially on a fee-for-outcomes basis. The implementation strategy would outline key milestones and stages for transition, including a tiered approach to risk. • This would include integration of Closing the Gap principles related to greater levels of funding being provided to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). • s47E, s47C <div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 80px; margin-top: 5px;"></div> • The department is responsible for the Community Grants Hub, a shared-service provider for cross-portfolio grants administration. The Community Grants Hub is one of two major hubs for the Commonwealth (the other is the Industry Grants Hub). • If this role continues, the Community Grants Hub will also work closely with client agencies to ensure this commitment is embedded in the design of other agency grants, noting that client agencies have policy responsibility for their grants. • The Finance portfolio is responsible for the grants policy framework, including the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines. The framework includes the Whole of Australian Government grant opportunity guidelines and grant agreement templates used across agencies. Changes to the way grants are designed and delivered may require changes to the broader policy framework.
<p>Legislative impacts:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This commitment can be implemented broadly without legislative change. Changes to the CGRGs may be required.
<p>Further briefing required:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further briefing will be provided on a detailed implementation strategy.

<p>Contact Officer</p>	<p>Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities</p>	<p>Phone:</p>	<p>s47F</p>
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Two Year Freeze to Deeming Rates

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The social security deeming rates will be frozen at current levels for two years. The lower deeming rate will be frozen at 0.25 per cent for financial investments up to \$53,600 for single pensioners and \$89,000 for pensioner couples. The upper deeming rate will remain at 2.25 per cent on investment assets over the amount of \$53,600 or \$89,000 respectively.
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 May 2022.
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater certainty for older Australians with deemed income who receive social security payments.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of living.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase to Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) income limits (as deemed income is included in the income test for the card).
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action is required. The deeming rates are set by Ministerial determination under the Social Security Act 1991 and current settings do not need to be changed to deliver the commitment.
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide further briefing as required.

Contact Officer	Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities	Phone:	s47F
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Incentivising Pensioners to Downsize

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 1 January 2023, extend the assets test exemption for principal home sale proceeds from 12 months to 24 months. Apply only the lower deeming rate (0.25 per cent) to principal home sale proceeds when calculating deemed income, for the period the proceeds are exempt from the assets test.
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimated cost of \$61.5 million over four years to 2025-26.
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage pensioners to downsize.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce potential barriers to downsizing.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freezing Deeming Rates for Two Years (as asset test exempt home sale proceeds will continue to be deemed, but only at the lower deeming rate).
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services Australia is responsible for implementation and will ensure the required changes to systems and business processes are in place for 1 January 2023 implementation.
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires amendments to the <i>Social Security Act 1991</i>.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department is ready to provide additional briefing. We recommend this occur in the first 100 days.

Contact Officer	Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream	Phone:	s47F
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Food Relief Loaves and Fishes

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government has announced \$1.3 million to support Loaves and Fishes' ongoing operation of emergency food relief within Tasmania.
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 May 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1.3 million
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no timeline detailed in the announcement, including what financial years the funding will be available. Clarification on the Government's preferred timeframe will be sought as a priority.
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The announcement of funding for Loaves and Fishes will assist in securing food security for the state of Tasmania.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increased cost of living is resulting in Tasmanians struggling to make ends meet, with the demand for emergency food relief increasing.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil as at 16 May 2022.
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department can implement this commitment by funding Loaves and Fishes under an ad-hoc Food Relief grant arrangement. The current annual base funding for the Food Relief program is \$1.3 million per annum, however over the past three financial years additional funding has been provided through COVID and flood related funding. s47E, s47C [REDACTED] The department currently funds three providers under the Food Relief program: Foodbank Australia, OzHarvest and SecondBite. Of the three Commonwealth-funded Food Relief providers, Foodbank Australia and SecondBite (through subcontracting arrangements with Loaves and Fishes) have a physical presence within Tasmania. The department will work with Loaves and Fishes to develop a proposal to complement the activities of these providers. s47E, s47C [REDACTED]
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This commitment can be implemented without legislative change.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will be provided with a briefing within the first 30 days.

Contact Officer	Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities	Phone:	s47F
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Playgroup Australia and Toy Libraries

Stated Commitment:	<p>The Government will invest \$11 million over the forward estimates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Playgroups Australia and Toy Libraries Australia to grow their membership, offer free playgroups and set up new playgroups in regional and remote areas. • Upgrade facilities and purchase new materials, like toys and books, for playgroups and toy libraries across the country. • Help expand intergenerational playgroups – like those seen in the television series ‘Old People’s Home for 4 Year Olds’ – many of which are yet to return to normal after COVID.
Date announced:	4 May 2022, 8 May 2022, 9 May 2022, 10 May 2022 and 16 May 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<p>\$11 million in total for Playgroups Australia and Toy Libraries Australia. Commitment stated in this Media release</p> <p>Commitments also made to individual playgroups and toy libraries via twitter and Facebook. It is not clear if these commitments are part of the overarching funding commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bayswater Playgroup \$5,000 • Little Possums Playgroup \$5,000 • Gailes Community House Playgroup \$5,000 • Humpty Dumpty Toy Library \$5,000 • Blue Mountains Toy Library \$15,000 • Bayswater Toy Library \$5,000 • Wyndham Vale and Manor Lakes Toy Library \$20,000 • Wayraparattee Toy Library \$5,000
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding commitment is \$11 million over the forward estimates. • No timelines stated.
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding will help new parents connect with others, build support networks and learn more about raising children. It will assist children to boost social, emotional and physical development. • The funding will help playgroups recover from COVID to allow more families to be part of playgroups and connect with other parents, children and community members. • The funding will establish new intergenerational playgroups, more groups in regional and remote areas, assist playgroups to discount fees, upgrade facilities and buy new toys.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgroups shut down around the country during the pandemic, removing an important source of connection, community and support for new mums and kids.
Related commitment:	<p>The Government’s Early Years Strategy would create a new integrated, holistic, whole of government approach to the early years and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a Cheaper Child Care for Working Families plan, making child care cheaper for 97 per cent of families in the system; • Task the Productivity Commission to review the early learning sector, with the aim to implement a universal 90 per cent Child Care Subsidy for all families;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) with designing a price regulation mechanism to drive down child care costs for good; and • Improve transparency in the child care sector, by forcing large providers to publicly report revenue and profit, provide real time fee data and quality ratings to families, and ban non-educational enrolment inducements.
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to implement this commitment we would propose to build on existing funding arrangements. • Playgroups Australia is currently funded \$5.85 million per year to 30 June 2026 under the Children and Parenting Support (CAPs) activity, so we would propose to undertake a variation to this funding agreement. • At present, individual toy libraries are primarily funded under the Budget Based Funded (BBF) Activity. New ad hoc funding arrangements would be offered to fund new toy libraries. • This would require additional funding to be allocated to CaPs and BBF programs in the Budget process, or for reprioritisation within the programs. Reprioritisation would involve some activities that are currently funded to cease being funded. We will brief you shortly to confirm your preferred approach to implementation.
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This commitment can be implemented without legislative change. Item 40 of the Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997 provides legislative authority.
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further briefing will be required to gain authority for grant variations or grant processes. We will test your preferences around timing of funding through this briefing.

Contact Officer	Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities	Phone:	s47F
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User audit of myGov (Services Australia)

Stated Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government committed to undertaking a user audit of the myGov government services digital portal.
Date announced:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 April 2022
Funding Amount (if stated):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not known
Funding Profile / Timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not known
Key outcomes sought or stated success measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The user audit will help identify what changes and improvements are needed and assist the Government in strengthening the portal.
Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services Australia is committed to using customer data to improve services and is open to changing services to create positive interaction experiences for customers.
Related commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil.
Implementation Response:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The myGov audit will be conducted at arm's length from Services Australia and myGov but will be led by a senior public servant from within departmental resources. Services Australia understands that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) will work with the Prime Minister's Office to progress this commitment. Services Australia will provide any required support to PM&C. Services Australia is committed to creating seamless digital experiences for customers, and is currently making significant progress to improve customer experiences through enhanced myGov. A broader review of myGov functionality and user experience within the context of a large and complex whole-of-government digital ecosystem would support future shaping of the myGov platform. Services Australia is currently making progress to improve the experience for Australians through enhanced myGov. Enhanced myGov will not replace all the various systems across government. These digital services, and the underlying systems, have been developed at different times and are based on a variety of technologies. This underlying complexity, together with the diversity of policy and program settings across government, creates complexity and levels of risk when integrating government services. Improvements to the system are being made through enhanced myGov will commence in the coming months.
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No



Boosting shopfront services around the nation for Centreline offices (Services Australia)

<p>Stated Commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has committed to boost Services Australia face-to-face services across Australia, including stopping closures of face-to-face offices, and hiring 200 new Services Australia staff. • During the election campaign the Government also committed to hiring 100 Services Australia staff in Cairns, Queensland, and an additional 5 face-to-face staff members in Sorell, Tasmania.
<p>Date announced:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 April 2022
<p>Funding Amount (if stated):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average cost of a Services Australia staff member is currently \$102,000 per annum. Recruiting an additional 200 staff would therefore require additional resourcing of around \$20.4 million in 2022-23. • There would also be additional ongoing lease and one-off capital costs related to the development of new face-to-face sites.
<p>Funding Profile / Timeframe:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Services Australia will work with the Minister for Government Services and the Department of Finance on any required changes to budget and staffing levels, including if any new face-to-face sites are required to be developed.
<p>Key outcomes sought or stated success measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Service delivery staff are in place to deliver an improved customer experience that is accessible, efficient, flexible and responsive to changing customer needs. • No net closures of face-to-face service centres.
<p>Stated Issues that have led to the Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring more Services Australia staff will provide 'humane customer service' for Australians.
<p>Related commitment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil
<p>Implementation Response:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services Australia will recruit 200 new service delivery staff and place them in roles to support complex needs and to deliver vital services, including aged care support. • Services Australia has workforce management strategies to ensure service delivery continuity, including undertaking bulk recruitment processes to ensure a supply pipeline of service delivery officers to support service delivery from face-to-face offices. • As at 31 March 2022, Services Australia was providing face-to-face services in Sorell, Tasmania in a Service Tasmania service centre. There is one staff member and two self-service terminals available at the Sorell Service Centre. Services Australia is working to explore a suitable property in Sorell to accommodate an increased number of face-to-face staff. • As at 30 April 2022, Services Australia has 334 staff operating in the Cairns City Service Centre. These staff work across both service

	<p>delivery (e.g. face-to-face and processing) and non-service delivery roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The additional Services Australia staff will need to be considered in the context of the Agency's 2022-23 allocated budget and resources.
Legislative impacts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nil
Further briefing required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No

Key Matters for Attention before 30 June 2022

Election and Budget Commitments

As a priority, the department will provide briefings on election [and 2022-23 Budget commitments] as you require within 30 days. The department will also brief you on establishing legislative priorities, including issues relating to legislation that was before the previous parliament.

The following table provides an indicative timeline of key matters that will need your attention prior to 30 June 2022. The department will provide you with detailed briefings on these items over the coming weeks.

Key Matters for Attention before 30 June 2022		
Issue	Additional Information	Contact
Escaping Violence Payment (EVP)	To update you on options to amend policy and implementation parameters to improve Escaping Violence Payment service delivery. Briefing will include an update on providing an additional \$40 million in funding before 30 June 2022 (as announced in the 2022-23 Budget) to address demand above original forecast.	Liz Hefren-Webb Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities s47F
National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032	A decision on your priorities for the next National Plan will be required to progress negotiations with states and territories given current plan concludes on 30 June.	Liz Hefren-Webb Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities s47F
Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence National Partnership	Delegation to approve project plans and progress payments is currently with the department. We will confirm your preferred approach in relation to this delegation to support any further payments being made in 2022-23. s47B, s47E, s47C	Liz Hefren-Webb Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities s47F
Cashless Debit Card (CDC) and Income Management (IM)	Early guidance required on CDC and IM processes, including consultation and legislative requirements, noting CDC sunset date of 31 December 2022 and sunset of 6 IM instruments on 1 October 2022.	Liz Hefren-Webb Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities s47F
Grant opportunity for seed funding for distribution body for financial counselling industry funding model	Decision required on authority to expend the allocated \$1.5 million in seed funding to establish an independent body for the distribution of industry funding announced in the Budget for 2022-2023. Timing Imperative:	Liz Hefren-Webb Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities s47F

Key Matters for Attention before 30 June 2022		
Issue	Additional Information	Contact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet a 1 July 2022 commencement, authority to proceed is required from the Minister. <p>If authority to proceed is not approved in time, seed funding will not be available on 1 July 2022. This will delay set-up of the new body and may attract criticism from key stakeholders, including contributing industries and the financial counselling sector.</p>	
Community Support Package for ER Emergency Relief/Food Relief (ER/FR) for COVID-19 and flood funding and extension of the National Coordination Group (NCG)	<p>Decision Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> s47E, s47C 	Liz Hefren-Webb Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities s47F
Settlement Distribution Scheme under the Income Compliance (Robodebt) class action – Payment Commencement	s47E, s47C	Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream s47F
Royal Commission into Income Compliance ('Robodebt')	This election commitment will be led from an APS perspective by AGD. As required we are ready to brief you on proposed arrangements within the portfolio.	Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream s47F
On 1 July 2022 family payments, deeming thresholds and means test thresholds for pensions and Parenting Payment Single will be indexed	We will brief you on the impact of the indexation changes and the option to issue a media release.	Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream s47F
Sunsetting of the Social Security Regulation 2012 on 1 October 2022 (the Regulation gives para-	The Regulation sunsets on 1 October 2022. Without it, DSP recipients and other payment recipients will not be able to access additional portability to travel	Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream

Key Matters for Attention before 30 June 2022		
Issue	Additional Information	Contact
athletes additional portability for the Disability Support Pension if they are travelling overseas for the Paralympic Games and other qualifying competitions)	overseas for humanitarian reasons (eg for Paralympics, attendance at a memorial service). Given it is a regulation it is required to go through Executive Council to be signed off by the Governor-General. The last Council meeting this could occur is at the meeting of 1 September 2022. Your early views will be sought to enable the instrument to be remade (with appropriate consultation) should that be your preferred option.	s47F
s47B, s47C, s47E		Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream s47F
Disability Reform Ministers' Meeting (DRMM) tentatively scheduled for 17 June 2022. Decision required to confirm or postpone and advise states.	Decision required to confirm or postpone and advise states. NDIS Minister chairs DRMM. Papers need to be circulated to states 10 days before meeting.	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, s47F
NDIA Annual Pricing Review (APR)	NDIA in consultation with the department will brief you on NDIA board decisions relating to the Annual Pricing Review to take effect from 1 July 2022 ahead of any public announcements in June 2022.	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, s47F
Submission to agree sharing NDIS Rules with states and territories and the sector prior to seeking formal agreement of states and territories.	Recent amendments to the NDIS Act on the Participant Service Guarantee commenced on 8 April 2022, but legislated timeframes for making Rules could not be met before caretaker. As the rules were prepared prior to the election, guidance is needed on the content of proposed NDIS Rules to ensure you as Minister are comfortable prior to informally releasing the draft rules to the disability sector and states and territories. Informal circulation needs to be done before seeking formal agreement of states and territories as required under the NDIS Act. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the NDIS can continue to be administered without these Rules, it 	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, s47F

Key Matters for Attention before 30 June 2022		
Issue	Additional Information	Contact
	<p>is desirable for them to be in place close to the commencement of related changes in the Act on 1 July 2022, taking into account the timeframes for further consultation and jurisdictional agreement</p>	
<p>National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) - Minister will need to be briefed on the NDDA to confirm it will proceed (make the case, set out timelines, update on state on territory negotiations) prior to formal negotiations with states and territories commencing.</p>	<p>The ALP policy <i>Better support for people living with disability</i> commits to “consider continued support for a National Disability Data Asset to ensure future changes to the NDIS are based on proper evidence”.</p> <p>Confirmation that the Commonwealth will continue to support the NDDA and on what terms is needed prior to commencing formal negotiations with the states and territories.</p> <p>For the NDDA to proceed, in addition to Commonwealth commitment, states and territories need to sign up to contribute data to and co-fund the NDDA.</p> <p>Negotiations were due to commence prior to the election being called, with only factual information about the project able to be provided to states and territories during the caretaker period.</p> <p>s47E, s47C</p>	<p>Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, s47F</p>
<p>Minister will be briefed on the National Early Childhood Program to approve the opening of two grant opportunities, for the families and children components, by June 2022, for grants to commence in November 2022, and agree to fund the outreach component for Indigenous children from the ILC program</p>	<p>To ensure no service gaps for families and children when existing providers cease delivering services by end 2022, it is planned grant opportunities for the families and children components of the new program will open in June, be finalised by October for grants to commence by November 2022. New providers will need time to establish their programs before existing providers cease delivering services.</p>	<p>Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, s47F</p>

Key Matters for Attention before 30 June 2022		
Issue	Additional Information	Contact
<p>Ministerial agreement will be required to allow interim extensions on 23 ILC grants that are due to cease between June and October 2022 with a value of \$3 million. Additionally, further authority for approximately 412 remaining ILC funded extension variations that are due to cease between November 2022 – February 2023 with a value up to \$192 million will be sought in coming months</p>	<p>Authority to proceed to an expression of interest was provided by the previous Government. Given the full two year financial commitment of up to \$195 million is approximately two thirds of your principal discretionary disability funding source, the department will seek your authority to approve funding variations in two tranches.</p> <p>The department wrote to all current ILC grant recipients (498) in March 2022 to seek their interest in an extension of time and additional funding to continue to deliver current activities and projects. 387 have expressed interest, 87 have declined the offer and 25 are yet to respond. Importantly, 23 have a current activity end date between 9 June 2022 and 31 October 2022, requiring agreement to an interim extension until 31 December 2022 valued at \$3 million. Negotiations and extension executions for up to 412 grant agreements will then occur prior to the agreement end dates, which range from November 2022 to February 2023. Not all funded extensions will be approved, with funding decisions based on continued need for an activity alignment of deliverables with policy priorities. If authority to proceed is not received for the first tranche of 23 in the first 30 days, some grant agreements will end and those disability projects and activities will cease in the community.</p> <p>The department is developing a new ILC strategy policy and investment framework to commence from mid 2024. The department will brief you on the consultation approach.</p>	<p>Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, s47F</p>
<p>Ministerial agreement is needed to announce the outcomes of the ILC's Building Employer Confidence in Disability and Inclusion (BEC) grant round.</p>	<p>This was an open competitive grant round. Applications closed on 9 March 2022 with the Grant Opportunity Guidelines, published on the Community Grants Hub public website, indicating an Activity Start date of June 2022. There is now an expectation from the sector and the jurisdictions (who were involved in the assessment process) that the outcomes of the BEC round will be</p>	<p>Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, s47F</p>

Key Matters for Attention before 30 June 2022		
Issue	Additional Information	Contact
	announced soon after Caretaker and implementation will commence soon after. Activity start dates are now expected to be July/August 2022.	
Ministerial agreement is needed to approve the spending and approach to implement two 2022 ILC Budget commitments.	These proposals form the budget measure - Support for People with Disability, published as part of the 2022 Budget. s47C, s47E [Redacted]	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, s47F [Redacted]

Significant Issues Briefs

Outcome	Topic
Outcome 1	Reform of Social Security System
Outcome 1	Social Security Debt & Compliance
Outcome 2	Income Management and Cashless Debit Card
Outcome 2	Family, domestic and sexual violence
Outcome 2	National Agreement on Closing the Gap
Outcome 2	National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
Outcome 2	National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced Institutional Child Sexual Abuse
Outcome 3	Australia's Disability Strategy
Outcome 3	National Disability Insurance Scheme
Outcome 3	Disability Employment
Outcome 3	Supported Employment
Outcome 3	Unpaid Carers
Outcome 3	Portfolio COVID-19 response to support people with disability
Outcome 4	National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA)



SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Reform of Social Security System

Summary

The social security system is broadly operating effectively, but there are opportunities to improve fairness and equity to better assist people who cannot fully support themselves.

Key points:

A comprehensive system targeted to those in need

- Australia has one of the most targeted social security systems in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The system supports Australians in a variety of circumstances who are unable to fully support themselves.
- The system has a range of payments such as Age Pension for older Australians, JobSeeker Payment or Youth Allowance (other) for unemployed people of working age, Disability Support Pension for those with a permanent disability that stops them from working and Family Tax Benefit to support the costs of raising children.
- The higher payment rate of pensions reflects their role of providing financial support for those not expected to work, while the objective of working age payments is to provide appropriate support and incentivise labour market participation.
- The system is generally working well at directing greater levels of support to those most in need. Centrelink supported over nine million Australians in 2019-20, making almost \$160 billion of payments. The system was able to adapt and respond effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it could be enhanced to achieve better outcomes for recipients.
- Labour market pressures (particularly a skills shortage and the lowest unemployment level since the 1970s) will likely increase the focus on those not working and lead to scrutiny about whether the system's incentives and supports for joining or returning to the workforce are appropriate. Further actions will be informed by the Australian Jobs Summit and the White Paper on Full Employment.

Complexity comes with some challenges

- The system has been incrementally changed over decades. These changes have often targeted particular payments, recipient cohorts or aspects of the system.
- These changes, combined with its targeted nature, mean the system has become highly complex for recipients to navigate and for government to administer. However, while adding complexity, targeting is important for ensuring the sustainability of the system and enabling continued support to the most vulnerable.
- An example of targeting which results in complexity is that the system currently includes three separate schemes designed to incentivise work: Working Credit for working age income support recipients (such as JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance (other)), Student Income Bank for students and Australian apprentices, and Work Bonus which primarily targets Age Pension recipients. Despite the similar purpose of the schemes, their design varies considerably, with Working Credit being the most complex and offering significant scope for improvement. The complexity means recipients often find it difficult to navigate their entitlements.

Fairness and equity could be improved

- The complexity and size of the system means some inequities have developed which are worth highlighting and possibly addressing over time.
- s47E, s47C

[Redacted content]

Some aspects could be modernised

- While some aspects of the social security system have been the subject of significant change, there has been long-term inaction in other aspects. This has meant that some aspects of the system are dated, and do not reflect the contemporary needs or expectations of the Australian community or the broader economic context.
- s47E, s47C

[Redacted content]

Some aspects are becoming less fit for purpose

- s47E, s47C
- s47E, s47C
- Currently 42 per cent of JobSeeker Payment recipients have an assessed partial capacity to work of fewer than 30 hours per week because of a physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment. s47E, s47C

Upcoming opportunities for improving disability support

- s47E, s47C [Redacted]
- s47E, s47C [Redacted]

Consistent data reporting would accurately capture demand on the system

- s47E, s47C [Redacted]

Sensitivities:

- Payment rates, particularly for JobSeeker Payment, are regularly criticised as being inadequate to support a reasonable quality of life. The rate of working age payments were significantly increased in 2021. The Grattan Institute, cross bench representatives and peak social services agencies have continued to call for permanent increases to rates of payment based on a proportional relationship to wages, to the pension, or to measures of poverty.
- s47E, s47C [Redacted]
- Reforms to the social security system require legislative amendment and need to be thoroughly considered within the broader context to ensure they are fit for purpose, consistent, modern and straightforward to access and administer.
- s47E, s47C [Redacted]
- The fiscal s47E, s47C costs of reforming some aspects of the social security system may be seen to outweigh the benefits the reforms would deliver.

Background:

- Pensions provide income support to people who are not expected to work due to age, disability or caring responsibilities. Working age payments provide a safety net for people who need financial assistance, while maintaining incentives for them to join or return to work.
- The social security system is a subject of significant commentary, with the most recent comprehensive review released in 2014-15 (*A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, also known as the McClure review).

Next Steps:

- The department can provide further briefing on improving the design and operation of the social security system. This can help inform this portfolio's contribution to the Jobs Summit being led by the Treasurer, which will inform the White Paper on Full Employment.

Contact Officer	Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream	Phone:	s47F
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SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Social Security Debt & Compliance

Summary

The Government has committed to establishing a Royal Commission into the Income Compliance Program (also known as 'Robodebt'). However, emerging debt and compliance matters are likely to need consideration before the findings of the Royal Commission are finalised.

s47E, s47D

A reduction in compliance activities and payment integrity controls expedited access to payments for a large number of new recipients during the pandemic. This approach has contributed to increased outlays as a result of declining payment accuracy. s47E, s47C

There are opportunities to shift the focus of the compliance program to payment accuracy and debt prevention, rather than debt raising, through improved communication and education, early intervention for high-risk activities and increased opportunities for data matching.

Key points:

- The Attorney-General has lead portfolio responsibility for the establishment of a Royal Commission into 'Robodebt'.
 - s47E, s47C
 - The Social Services portfolio will work closely with the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to support the establishment of the Royal Commission.
- The Royal Commission will broadly: identify who established the 'Robodebt' scheme and its overall cost; the origins of its design, how complaints were handled, the scheme's legality and harm and debt collection elements. The Royal Commission will be established by the end of 2022 and likely report around the end of 2023 (to be confirmed). s47E, s47C
- s47E, s47C
 - s47E, s47C

- s47E, s47C [Redacted]

- s47E, s47C [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Background:

- Under the *Social Security Act 1991*, *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999* and the *Student Assistance Act 1973* where a person has not received their correct entitlement and it is determined to be a debt to the Commonwealth, there is a statutory obligation to recover it.
- s47E, s47C [Redacted]
 - s47E, s47D [Redacted]
- Where recipients are unaware of payment inaccuracies and compliance activity is reduced, this can result in larger future debts accumulating. Older debts are typically more difficult for

recipients to contest as relevant evidence can be from many years prior. Debt recovery efforts are also more difficult and costly for government.

- s47E, s47C
[Redacted]
- s47E, s47D, s47C
[Redacted]
- s47E, s47C
[Redacted]

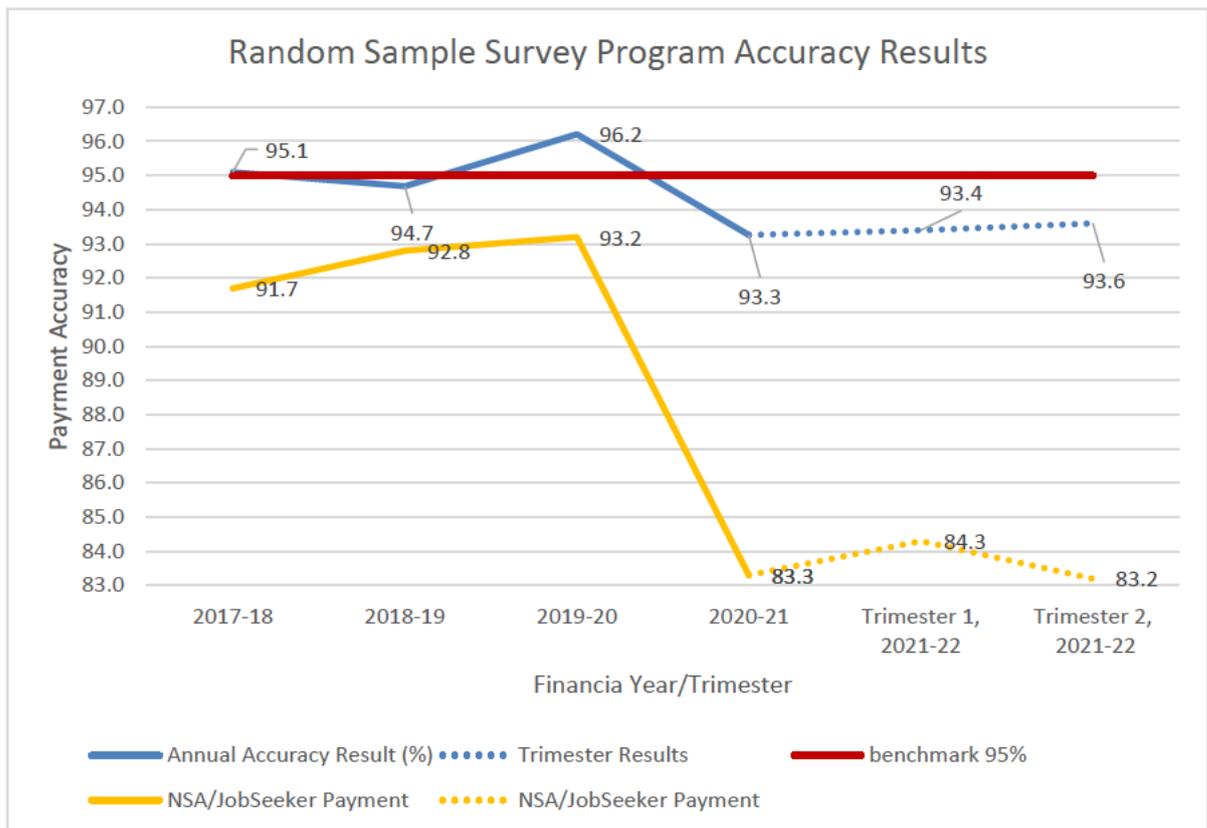
Sensitivities:

- Centrelink’s former Income Compliance (or ‘Robodebt’) Program, continues to be contentious and conflated with debt policy. The implementation of the Royal Commission, coupled with resolution of refund and settlement of the class action will help to rebuild trust with the public on the government’s management of future debt matters. Most ‘Robodebt’ refunds have been completed and the class action settlement is expected to be fully implemented by the end of 2022. These actions together with the options suggested above present an opportunity to refocus debt policy to be fairer and more efficient.
- s47E, s47C
[Redacted]

Additional information:

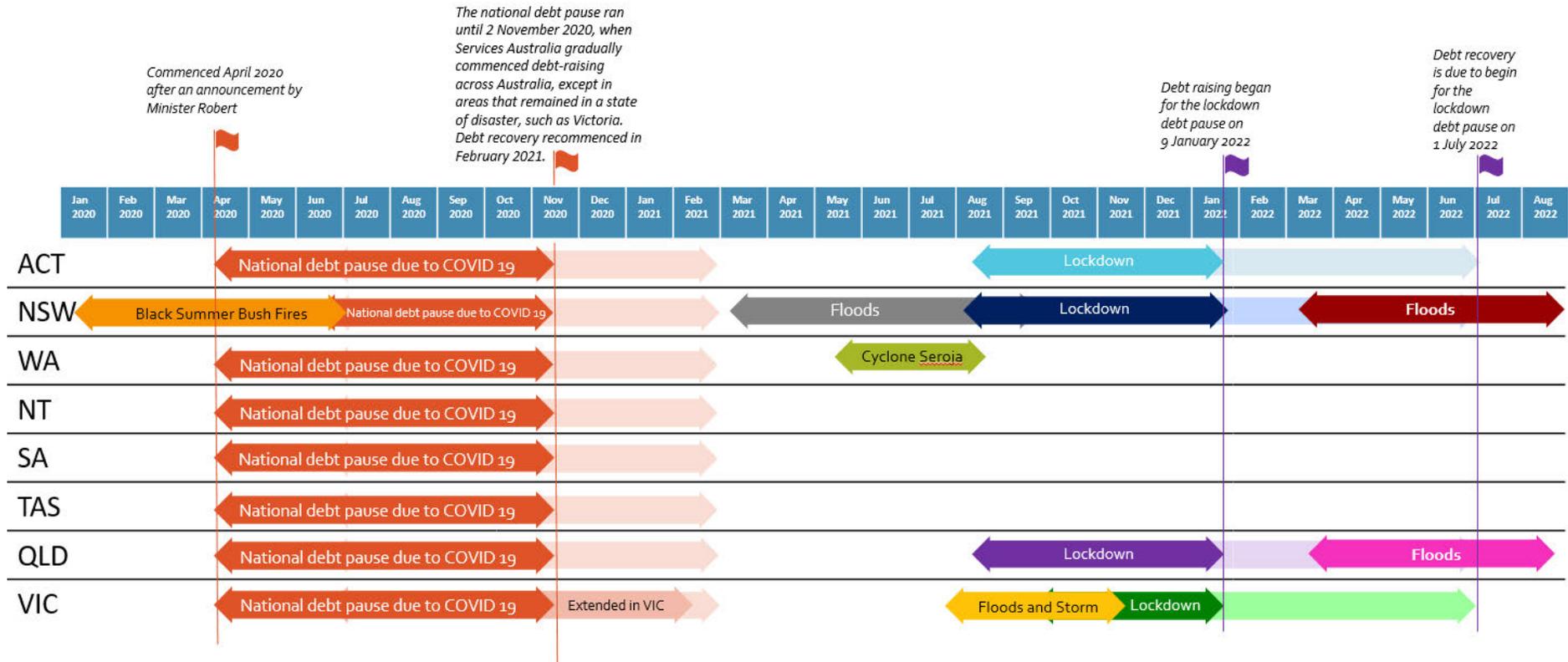
- Services Australia has routinely introduced ‘debt pauses’ to respond to exceptional, disaster-related circumstances, including COVID-19, bushfires and floods across Australia. Some areas have seen extended debt pauses for the better part of the last two and a half years. Refer to **Attachment B** for further detail.
 - s47E, s47C
[Redacted]

- The debt pauses typically involve not raising new debts, ceasing recovery of newly raised debt, ceasing recovery of some existing debts and significantly reducing or ceasing compliance related activity in affected areas.
- NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT were subject to a debt pause in 2021, with debt raising activity gradually recommenced from January 2022 and debt recovery from July 2022. Following flooding events in 2022 around 50 per cent of the debt book is currently paused, with recovery recommencing in September/October 2022.
- Compliance activity remains at levels below pre-COVID due in part to redirecting resourcing to payment processing in emergencies - activity is not expected to increase until 2022-23.
- Over the last two years, there has been a noticeable reduction in payment accuracy results for social security outlays administered through Services Australia as showing in the chart below.



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s47E, s47C



LGAs affected:





SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Income Management and Cashless Debit Card

Summary

There are currently two cashless welfare programs in operation; Income Management (IM) which uses the BasicsCard and the Cashless Debit Card (CDC).

Independent evaluations of these initiatives have had mixed findings. ^{s47E, s47C}

[Redacted text block]

You have committed to abolish the CDC and to work in partnership with First Nations people on the future alternatives to cashless welfare. This includes consideration of maintaining IM in some form in a community where there has been thorough consultation and it is the decision of that community. Community leaders have requested further detail from government about what a future state could look like. There are six legislative instruments which enable IM to operate which will sunset on 1 October 2022. The IM program does not have a sunset date. In the absence of any other action, the majority of existing IM participants will remain on the program until they cease to be eligible. Legislation for the CDC program will sunset on 31 December 2022. In the absence of any other action, CDC would cease at this point.

We will seek your early consideration of options for a staged and supportive transitional arrangement.

Key points:

- There are currently 25,890 participants on IM and 17,404 participants on the CDC program. Of these, nearly 4 in 5 IM participants identified as First Nations peoples and nearly 1 in 2 CDC participants. The highest proportion of IM participants is in the Northern Territory.
- The department will provide early briefings on options to consult and support impacted communities and First Nations peoples to best meet your commitment to abolish the CDC and to provide a voluntary approach to IM.
- Briefing will include options for stakeholders for consultation, timeframes for decision-making based on upcoming legislative sunset dates and advice on the most suitable transitional timeframes for participants that exit the program.

- s47E, s47C
[Redacted text block]

- The CDC program is not fully funded beyond 31 December 2022. Transitional arrangements, including alternative support strategies, will require new or reprioritised program funding. The Department will prepare a CDC cessation plan to ensure the proper closure of the program.
- IM involves the active management of a participant’s finances, with Services Australia providing intensive financial assistance including putting in place arrangements for rent and other bills.

s47E, s47C

- s47E, s47C

Sensitivities:

- s47E, s47C

- A suite of wrap-around support services are currently funded in CDC and IM sites to build individual and community capability, financial security and economic opportunities. This includes supports for drug and alcohol rehabilitation, mental health services, family counselling and financial counselling and capability services. s47E, s47C

Background:

- The department currently operates two welfare quarantining programs: the CDC and IM. They have similar objectives but different service models.

Eligibility

- Income Management applies to people who are on eligible income support payments, live in an IM location, and who would benefit from assistance in managing their budget, based on individual circumstances. IM measures are:
 - Voluntary measure, participants have 50 per cent of their payments quarantined.
 - Vulnerable measure; aimed at helping vulnerable youth or at-risk individuals and their families. Participants have 50 per cent of their payments quarantined.
 - Long-Term Welfare Payment Recipients and Disengaged Youth measure; currently only people in the Northern Territory who have been out of work or study for some time. Participants have 50 per cent of their payments quarantined.
 - Child Protection measure; an additional tool for child protection authorities to ensure income support payments are spent in the best interest of children and families. Participants have 70 per cent of their payments quarantined.
 - Supporting People at Risk measure; currently used by the Northern Territory Registrar of the Banned Drinker Register for people needing help with alcohol abuse. Participants have 70 per cent of their payments quarantined.

- Cashless Debit Card eligibility is:
 - Those who live in the Ceduna region, South Australia, and Goldfields and East Kimberley regions, Western Australia and are in receipt of working age payments (for example JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance) are eligible for the program. Participants have 80 per cent of their payments quarantined.
 - Those in the Bundaberg and Hervey Bay region, Queensland who are aged 35 years and under and in receipt of JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance (JobSeeker), Parenting Payment (Single) or Parenting Payment (Partnered) are eligible for the program. Participants have 80 per cent of their payments quarantined.
 - Cape York region, Queensland. A person on an eligible income support payment is only placed onto the CDC by the Families Responsibilities Commission (FRC) when a valid notice is given. The quarantined proportion can range from 50 to 90 per cent.
 - People on eligible income support payments can volunteer to participate in all CDC sites, and IM participants in the Northern Territory (NT) can choose to move onto the CDC if they wish. Volunteers have 50 per cent of their payments quarantined and participants transitioning from IM in the NT maintain the same quarantined amount on CDC.

Community consultation

- IM has been in place since 2007 as part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. While community consultation has taken place, it was a number of years ago and in the context of the reinstatement of the Racial Discrimination Act after the Emergency Response.
- With the exception of the NT (where IM participants can volunteer to transition to the CDC), the CDC only operates in locations where it has been requested by community leaders, and was developed in partnership with local community leaders.
- Any transition to a new system will need co-design with communities.

Evaluation findings

- The Government has undertaken two evaluations of the CDC program. Both evaluations provided mixed findings, which indicated that the CDC had positive impacts on alcohol consumption and gambling, but also that most participants did not want to be on the program or reported feeling stigma using the CDC.
- These evaluations were constrained by limitations to available data. To address these limitations the department has commenced new data analytics work, which includes securing data held by state and territory agencies.

Audit of the program

- The ANAO has undertaken a performance audit on the *Implementation and Performance of the Cashless Debit Card Trial* - follow-on. The report is expected to be tabled by the end of May 2022.
- Two recommendations are made throughout the Report, both of which are directed at the department.
 - **Recommendation 1:** The Department of Social Services develops internal performance measures and targets to better monitor CDC program implementation and impact.
 - **Recommendation 2:** The Department of Social Services undertakes an external review of the second impact evaluation of the CDC.
- The department has agreed with Recommendation 1 and not agreed to Recommendation 2. The department is of the view that an external review of the second impact evaluation would not represent value for money, and an external review would encounter the same significant constraints regarding data accessibility which limited the second impact evaluation. The department's response flagged that further work to mature the data asset will inform the timing and utility of any further evaluation efforts, which would include an independent review.

Voluntary Program

- A voluntary program would require similar supports, financial services, merchants and product level blocking to support participant needs and protect the integrity of the program.
- Alternatives to existing support will need consideration following consultation with First Nations people. Supports for a new program can then be tailored to any new policies and program parameters.
- Timeframes for transition arrangements and alternative policies will be dependent on consultation and legislation.

Cashless Debt Card and Income Management expenditure

- s47D, s47E, s47C [Redacted]

Authority

- IM is authorised by Part 3B of the Social Security (Administration) Act 1999 (Administration Act) and is operationalised by a number of legislative instruments, made by the Minister, that declare or specify that persons within certain areas may be subject to income management.
- Cashless welfare arrangements for the CDC are authorised by Part 3D of the Administration Act. Unlike Income Management, the Administration Act itself prescribes persons who are subject to cashless welfare arrangements rather than relying on legislative instruments.
- IM and cashless welfare arrangements are administered by Services Australia. Private financial institutions issue the cashless debit cards, the authority for which is provided under the Administration Act and a legislative instrument.

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SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Family, domestic and sexual violence

Summary

Violence against women – which is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men – is both a symptom and a cause of gender inequality and a barrier to its eradication.

While there has been some positive change under the first National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2022 (first National Plan), economic and social costs of violence are high and in some areas the trends are worsening.

For example, while homicides as a result of intimate partner violence have been decreasing, the prevalence of sexual violence (where the perpetrator may be known or unknown to the victim) is increasing.

While a detailed draft of the new National Plan has been developed closely with stakeholders, there is still opportunity to reflect your key policy priorities, including housing and gender equality, more strongly throughout before its expected launch mid-year.

Key points:

- The current National Plan effectively ends in June 2022 and while finalising the next National Plan is a priority, current funding commitments mean that there will be no service or delivery gaps should the National Plan not be finalised by this time.
- The draft architecture and general content of the National Plan – which focuses on the four pillars of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery (**Attachment A**) - received broad support through consultation. s47E, s47C



- s47E, s47C [REDACTED]
- In addition to options for new community workers, the department will brief you on current implementation arrangements for the \$1.3 billion in expenditure on women's safety in the 2022-23 Budget, and seek advice on any new or re-purposed existing investment you may wish to make.
 - This will include working with other portfolios and Ministers on issues such as legislating for 10 days' paid domestic violence leave, taking into account any decision from the Fair Work Commission's review, and respectful relationships education.
 - The Budget package included no specific funding to support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, or for continuation of the current National Partnership Agreement with states beyond 30 June 2023. These matters will need to be considered for future funding bids.
- The Escaping Violence Payment, a high profile initiative which has five years of funding, has had implementation issues since launching in October 2021, relating to higher than anticipated demand and demand for more case management support, leading to a lack of timely responses to applicants. The department has been working closely with UVT to reset the EVP service model to address timeliness of delivery, streamlining of processes, finalisation current open applications, improved sector engagement to promote consistent information exchange and address sector concerns. We will brief you in detail shortly on proposed next steps for addressing these issues.

Sensitivities:

- Of the \$1.3 billion announced for women's safety initiatives in the 2022-23 Budget, around \$1 billion was new money to support continuity (including expansion in some case) of existing programs. s47E, s47C [REDACTED]
- Depending on the Government's preferences, adjustments could be made to the Commission's current functions through updating the Executive Order establishing the Commission. Alternatively, primary legislation could be drafted to establish the

Commissioner as an independent statutory office. This would require passage through Parliament.

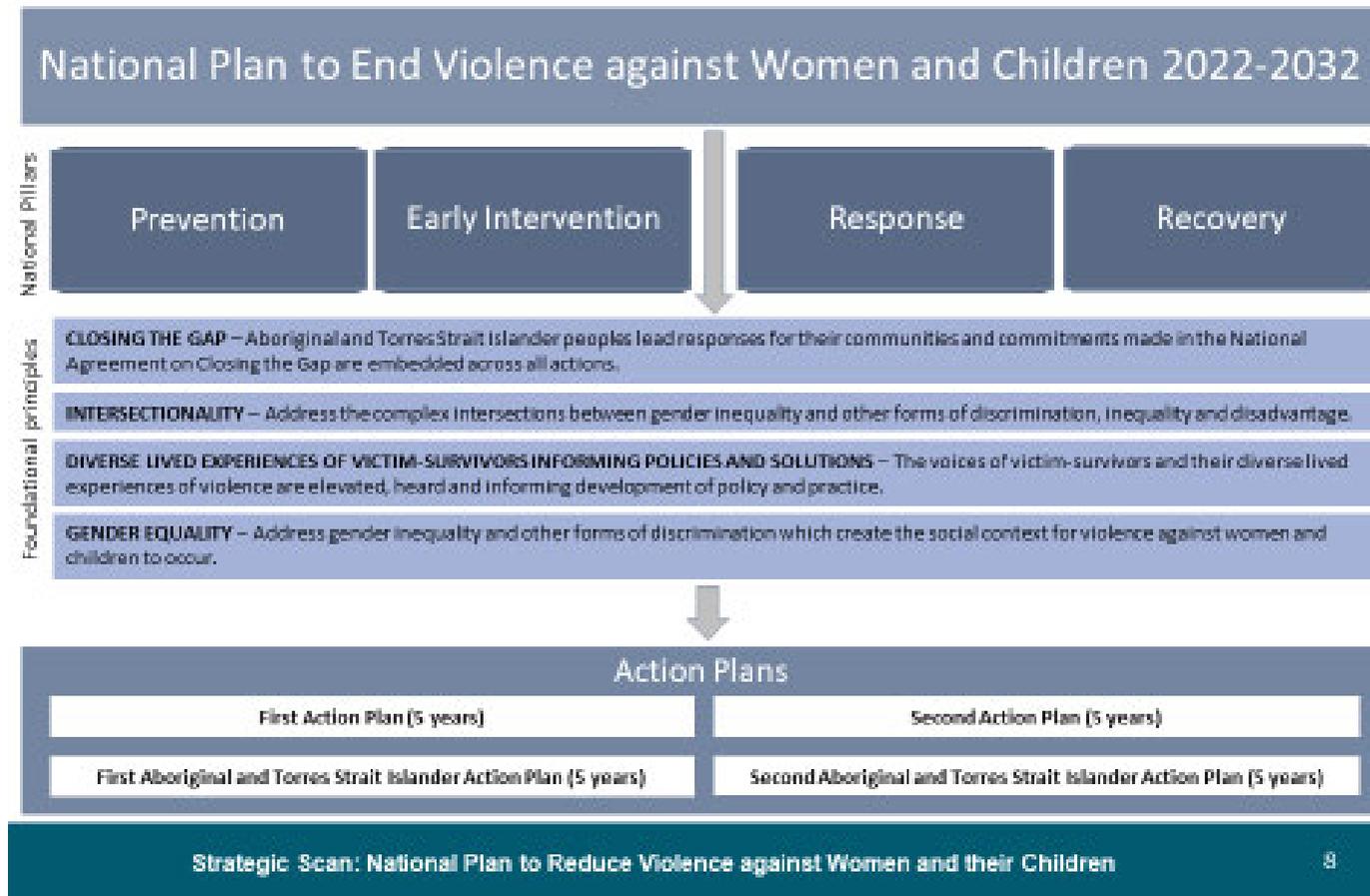
Background:

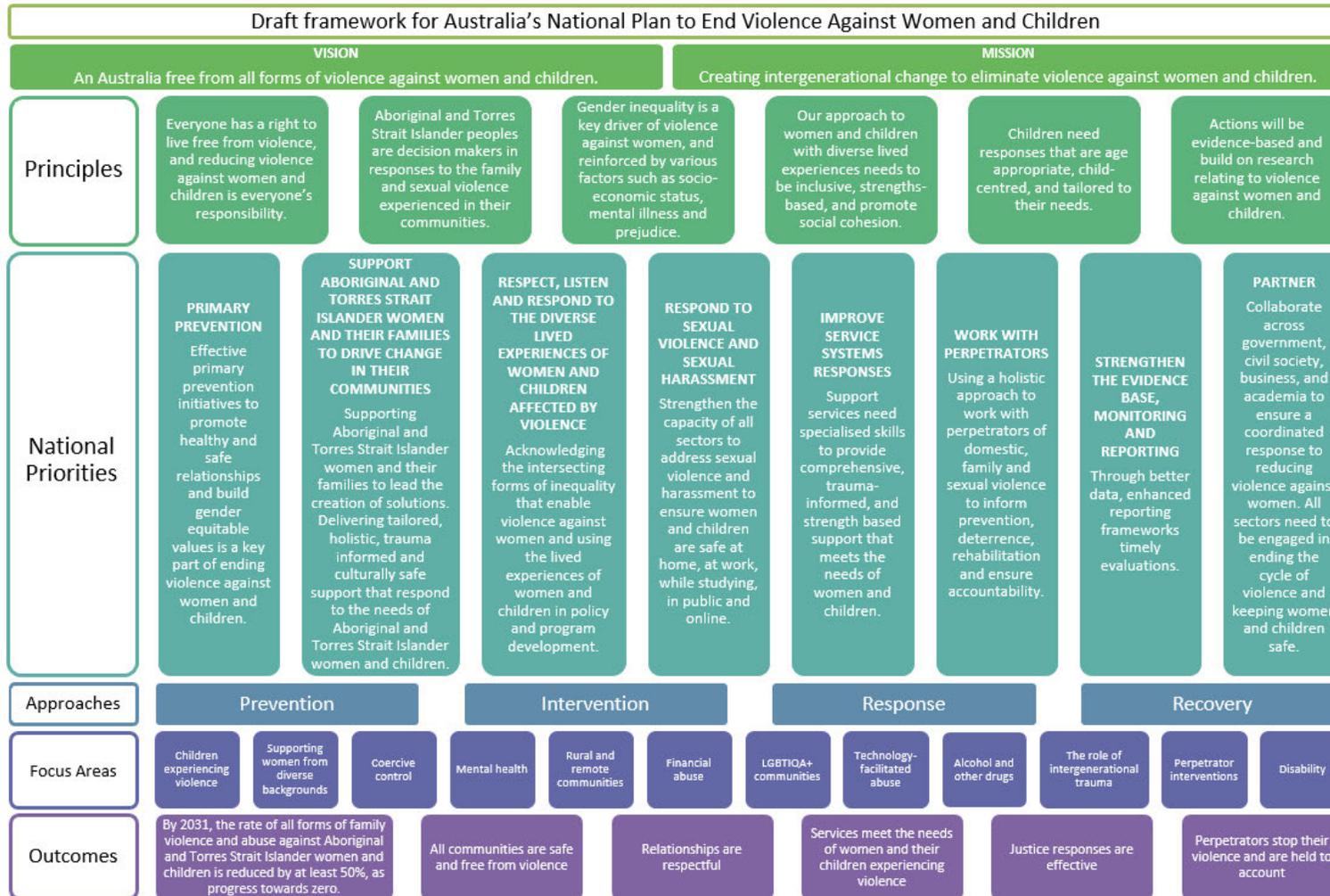
- A draft National Plan was released for public consultation from 14 January to 25 February 2022 and stakeholders will call on the incoming Minister provide a pathway to finalise the document for release.
- Under the current National Plan, governments worked together to establish infrastructure and initiatives including: Our Watch, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS), 1800RESPECT, the ‘Stop it at the Start’ campaign.

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Attachment A – Architecture of the next National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032

Architecture of the next National Plan







SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Summary

The Social Services portfolio is responsible for achieving three targets under the National Agreement, Targets 9 (Overcrowded housing), 12 (Out-of-home care) and 13 (Family violence), embedding the four priority reform areas (see background), and is the Commonwealth lead for the cross cutting outcome of disability.

s47B, s47E, s47C

Key points:

- A concerted working approach with the Coalition of Peaks, other relevant First Nations organisations and all levels of government is necessary to align and maximise efforts to achieve these targets, given the states' key role in the delivery of systems for child protection, housing and domestic violence.
- Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 (the National Framework) will set out actions to achieve Target 12 in an Indigenous-specific Action Plan in mid-2022, developed in partnership with a First Nations Leadership Group.
- The development of a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan under the new National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032 (National Plan), commencing in July 2022, will include actions aimed at achieving Target 13.
- The Housing and the Disability Sector Strengthening plans, which were co-designed with peak organisations, are due for Joint Council endorsement by mid-2022. Commonwealth Ministerial endorsement will be sought post-election.
- The Annual Report and the second Commonwealth Implementation Plan are expected to be tabled in the 2022 spring sitting period following consideration by the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, which is jointly chaired by the Minister for Indigenous Australians and the Chair of the Coalition of Peaks.
- The priority reforms (see background) are being embedded in the portfolio, for example increasing the funding to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and developing formal partnerships and shared decision making approaches. Work is underway around priority reform three in particular where enhancing the service delivery experience for First Nations people is crucial to transforming the relationship with Government.
- In August 2021, the Commonwealth committed more than \$1 billion in funding under the first Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. The department is implementing

four new measures totalling \$98.5 million to address Targets 12 and 13. No specific funding was allocated to housing or disability initiatives.

Sensitivities:

- The rate of First Nations children in out-of-home care has trended upwards over the past 10 years and continues to worsen. A reduction of the rate from 57.6 per 1,000 children in 2021 to 29.8 per 1,000 children in 2031 is required to meet the target.iii
- The following table shows First Nations children aged 0-17 years in out-of-home care as at 30 June, rate per 1000 First Nations children.iv

	National	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
2021	57.6	59.5	103.0	43.4	64.7	90.0	34.4	66.8	34.5

- The Department is working closely with the ABS and AIHW to develop new data sources to measure Targets 9 and 13. Success in achieving both targets will require meeting ambitious trajectories.

- s47E, s47C

Background:

- The department’s main mechanisms for contributing to achieving the Targets are:
 - Target 9: Supporting housing and homelessness outcomes (including overcrowding) by providing \$1.6 billion per year to jurisdictions through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a priority homelessness cohort under the NHHA.
 - Target 12: The National Framework has a key focus on reducing the over-representation of First Nations children in out-of-home care. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Advocate and a Centre of Excellence were funded in the 2022-23 Budget.
 - Target 13: An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan under the new National Plan is being developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence (Advisory Council).
- At the centre of the National Agreement are four Priority Reforms to:
 - Strengthen and establish formal partnerships and shared decision-making
 - Build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector
 - Transform government organisations to work better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - Improve and share access to data to enable communities make informed decisions.

Commonwealth Investment

- The Commonwealth’s \$98.5 million investment to address Targets 12 and 13 includes:
 - \$49.0 million over 5 years to work with jurisdictions to redesign multidisciplinary responses to better support First Nations families with multiple and complex needs

- \$7.7 million over 3 years to develop the cultural competency of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous child and family sector workforce funded by the department
- \$3.2 million over 2 years to assess the needs and increase the involvement of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in the child and family sector
- \$38.6 million over 3 years to support innovative proposals initiated by ACCOs and other service delivery partners that address Target 12 and Target 13.
- More than \$290 million in 2021-22 is allocated under the Families and Children Activity for early intervention and prevention services. The department is working with the service sector to increase the role of ACCOs and to achieve greater cultural competency where services are delivered to First Nations children and families.

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* Productivity Commission, (2022), Closing the Gap Information Repository, Dashboard, Socioeconomic Outcome Area 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system, accessed via [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission \(pc.gov.au\)](#) on 7/4/22

^{iv} Source: table CtG12A.1, State and territory governments (unpublished), Derived from State and territory governments (unpublished). Accessed via [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission \(pc.gov.au\)](#) on 29/4/22.



SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031

Summary

Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031 (the National Framework) was launched in December 2021. The Framework aims to support systems changes to improve the safety of Australia's children, with a key focus on:

- Children and families with multiple and complex needs
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people experiencing disadvantage or who are vulnerable
- Children and young people and/ or parents/ carers with disability experiencing disadvantage or who are vulnerable
- Children and young people who have experienced abuse and/ or neglect, including children in out-of-home care and young people leaving out-of-home care and transitioning to adulthood.

Action Plans detailing the activities to be conducted during the first five years of the National Framework are expected to be considered by Community Services Ministers (CSM) for endorsement in September/October 2022.

Key points:

- The department is engaging with states and territories, First Nations stakeholders and the non-government sector to develop two Action Plans, a General Action Plan and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific Action Plan, which will detail the action and activities to be conducted during the first five years of the National Framework.
- The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Child Protection report (report) stated that, during 2019-20, 174,700 (31 per 1,000) Australian children received child protection services (investigation, care and protection orders and/or were in out-of-home care).
- As at 30 June 2021, 19,480 First Nations children were in out-of-home care, a rate of 57.6 per 1,000 Indigenous children.^v This is 11 times the rate of non-Indigenous children.
- The National Framework and its Action Plans will be focused on driving change through collective effort, where a national approach would be beneficial, with each state and territory to also embed reforms.
- To move the dial, and reduce the proportion of children in out-of-home care, the National Framework and its Action Plans will also be focused on early, effective and targeted support for children and families who have experienced, or are at risk of, harm.
- This is the first National Framework to be negotiated since the signing of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. As such, meeting the expectation of rapid progress has to be balanced with the commitment to developing and agreeing the Action Plans in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group (Leadership Group).
- There is an expectation amongst First Nations stakeholders that the Action Plans should be ambitious, and achieve transformative change.
- The achievements of the previous National Framework were modest. A Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) evaluation published in June 2020 noted that, although the previous

National Framework implemented a number of key initiatives, it did not achieve the high-level goal of a substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse and neglect.

- Through the 2022-23 Federal Budget process, \$30 million was allocated (as part of the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032 package*) to deliver 5 key actions under the National Framework. This includes a National Advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, a National Child and Family Investment Strategy, and improving support for non-parent carers.
- SNAICC - National Voice for our Children (SNAICC),^{vi} the peak body for children, has welcomed some of the Budget measures as a sign of progress. SNAICC also stated, however, that there is a considerable short fall in the commitment needed to meet the ambitious targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

- s47E, s47C
[Redacted]

- Once all stakeholders reach agreement on the Action Plans, a CSM meeting will be scheduled to formally endorse the Action Plans in September/October 2022. The timing of the CSM meeting, however, is dependent on gaining the Leadership Group's endorsement of the Action Plans.
- So far, stakeholders have been broadly supportive of the draft actions and activities for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan. Further work with the non-government sector is required to progress the General Action Plan.
- As the framework document was launched in December 2021, stakeholders have an expectation that the Action Plans will be delivered shortly. The department suggests that decisions on the development and launch of the Action Plans be made shortly after the Government takes office, to ensure stakeholder goodwill and momentum is maintained.

Sensitivities

- s47B, s47E, s47C
[Redacted]
- Some sensitivities need to be managed between stakeholders due to differences in roles under the new National Framework and how this is reflected in the governance structure.
- Indigenous stakeholders now have a shared decision making role in the governance of the Action Plans, while the non-Indigenous, non-government sector continues with the advisory role it held in the previous National Framework. s47B, s47E, s47C
[Redacted]

Background

- The National Framework's goal is to make significant and sustained progress in reducing the rates of child abuse and neglect, and its intergenerational impacts. Its vision is that children

and young people in Australia reach their full potential by growing up safe and supported, free from harm and neglect.

- The National Framework is the key national initiative to support achieving Target 12 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (by 2031, reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent).

Contact Officer	Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities	Phone:	s47F
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⁹ Source: table CtG12A.1, State and territory governments (unpublished), Derived from State and territory governments (unpublished). Accessed via [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission \(pc.gov.au\)](#) on 29/4/22.

¹⁰ SNAICC is the abbreviation of the organisation's previous name, "Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care". The organisation is now called "SNAICC - National Voice for our Children"



SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

Summary

National Redress Scheme operational and reform matters require early awareness and/or attention by the incoming government to ensure the Scheme meets its core objectives and survivor needs.

The National Redress Scheme was established in 2018 as a key outcome of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. As an alternative to civil litigation, the Scheme operates with a survivor and trauma informed focus, recognising the impacts of institutional child sexual abuse on survivors, and vulnerability of this population.

Operation of the Scheme has matured significantly since its inception. However, as set out in the independent Second Year Review of the Scheme (the Review), stakeholder concerns persist. Many relate to slow application processing and a perceived lack of transparency of decision-making.

46 per cent of applicants to date have indicated they have a disability, and 35 per cent have indicated they are First Nations people.

Key points:

- The Scheme operates under legislation and an Intergovernmental Agreement with states and territories; the Commonwealth Government cannot make major changes to the Scheme unilaterally.
- An initial priority is progressing action on recommendations from the Review. A meeting of the Ministers' Redress Scheme Governance Board, which you Chair, is required on outstanding recommendations and to negotiate final agreed positions with states and territories. Consultation with stakeholders including institutions may also be necessary.
- The Secretary of the Department of Social Services is the Scheme Operator.
- It is essential the Scheme can sustainably meet its objectives and provide timely and trauma informed redress to survivors.

Immediate Priorities:

The department will provide you with detailed briefing on the immediate priorities. Briefs can be provided on specific proposals/topics, including likely state government and stakeholder views, at your request.

Second Year Review of the Scheme

A legislated review of the Scheme was conducted by Ms Robyn Kruk AO, and publicly released in June 2021. Ms Kruk consulted extensively, hearing from the full range of Scheme stakeholders. Two legislative packages have passed in response to Review recommendations, introducing an advance payment for elderly or terminally ill applicants, among other measures. The department has also progressed improvements that did not require legislative change or agreement by states and territories.

s47B, s47C, s47E

s47B, s47C, s47E

The Government has previously indicated support for implementing all Review recommendations, and for lifting the maximum redress payment from \$150,000 to \$200,000 (not a recommendation of the Review) through Parliamentary speeches during debates on Redress related bills and references in the Joint Select Committee on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme. s47E, s47C

The Government (and the Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme) previously indicated support for expanding Funder of Last Resort arrangements to all applications where the named institution has not joined (not a recommendation of the Review). Unanimous support by states and territories will be required to implement this change.

Pending agreement with states and territories, a legislative package will be required to implement changes to Scheme design. A future Budget package is expected to be required to implement further action in response to the Review.

Scheme Performance

Scheme performance is publicly reported, including via the Scheme website and various corporate publications. The average processing time from the date the Scheme receives an application until notifying an outcome is 12 months. Around 7.8 months are within the department's purview. Processing times have improved over the Scheme's life, with increased resourcing playing a central role. Applications lodged have dramatically increased over recent months, from around 90-100 per week in February 2022 to around 180 a week lodged over March-May. This will likely see flow on impacts to processing times, particularly if resourcing does not meet increased demand.

Survivor feedback suggests timeliness in finalising an application, while important, is less important than how the Scheme interacts with applicants during the process. Trauma informed engagement with applicants is an ongoing focus and the subject of constant management attention.

A range of measures to maximise institutional participation are seeing results, including public naming, becoming ineligible for Commonwealth grant funding, and the risk of losing charitable status if an institution declines to join the Scheme (only five institutions have declined at present). These efforts, along with recent expansions to Funder of Last Resort arrangements (whereby government/s cover the redress liability for certain institutions) is increasing access to the Scheme.

The Scheme has been more complex to administer than anticipated. Additional time-limited resourcing has been provided beyond the initial allocation, which has been essential for the Scheme's ability to finalise applications in a timely and survivor centred way. This supplementary funding runs out at the end of June 2023. The Service Delivery element of the Scheme is currently staffed by 150 APS staff and 106 contractors, down from 261 contractors and around 40 APS in June 2020. While some surge capacity through contractors is necessary, there has been a concerted effort to change the staffing profile to APS staff, especially in any leadership positions. The tight labour market in Canberra and other capital cities has seen the footprint of Redress service delivery expand into the regions – currently Batemans Bay, Wollongong and Wagga Wagga. Ongoing sustainability is critical to ensuring the Scheme's core objectives and public expectations can be met, including to meet increasing demands. s47E, s47C

Other Issues:

- s47E, s47C
[Redacted]
- An external actuarial provider recently estimated the number of eligible applications over the life of the Scheme at 35,676, decreasing from the previous estimate of 41,250. These figures (not public) are less than the very early Royal Commission estimates of 60,000. The decrease is likely driven by amendments to state based laws to increase access to civil litigation. The Scheme is intended to give survivors an alternative option for redress, rather than to replace civil litigation. April 2022 saw the highest monthly intake of applications since the Scheme's inception. Actuarial estimates will continue to be sourced to assist in life of Scheme projections.
- Redress payments are not counted as income for the purposes of social security payments and aged care fees/subsidies, but are counted as assets. As a result a redress payment can reduce social security payments for survivors with substantial other assets, or increase aged care fees.
s47E, s47C
[Redacted]
- To date, approximately 35 per cent of applicants have identified as First Nations peoples; this proportion is currently steadily increasing. The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) is administering the Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme and the department has been working closely with NIAA to share learnings and resources. There is likely to be significant crossover of eligibility between the redress schemes given institutional involvement in both and possible linkages are being explored for the benefit of survivors (e.g. cross referrals and promotion).
- Given institutionalised settings in the disability sector and increased vulnerability of people with a disability, it was anticipated applications from this cohort would have been in higher numbers than seen to date. The department is considering ways to increase awareness of the Scheme. The possible impact of the current Disability Royal Commission on people's choices around the Scheme bears consideration, noting people can only apply for redress until June 2027.
- Additional funding for Redress Support Services was provided until 2023-24 to ensure trauma-informed support is available for survivors to engage with the Scheme. Ongoing sustainability of these services is critical to the Scheme and meeting survivor needs.
- Privacy breaches are reported to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner ^{s47E, s47C} [Redacted]. These breaches relate to disclosures of protected information contrary to the Scheme's legislation. The department has taken a range of actions to reduce the risk of future privacy breaches. We will brief you in detail on this issue shortly.

Sensitivities:

- Stakeholders are expecting a final government response to the Review.
- Survivors are a vulnerable population and at risk of re-traumatisation. Interaction with, and communication about, the Scheme needs to be delivered in a trauma informed manner. This includes risks of expectation raising of Scheme changes, unless there is a genuine sense that all governments will agree to pursue a particular direction.
- The vulnerability and sensitivities are further exacerbated due to the Commonwealth and state and territory governments' involvement in abuse and institutionalisation.
- The Scheme requires the voluntary participation of institutions in order to provide redress to survivors. Any policy changes affecting this cohort and the terms on which they entered the Scheme may potentially result in institutions withdrawing from the Scheme.

- Scheme stakeholders can be vocal and have diverse interests ranging from survivor advocacy organisations (e.g. the Care Leavers Australia Network) and support services (e.g. knowmore) through to large religious bodies and other non-government institutions (e.g. various sporting bodies). Some stakeholders may seek early engagement with the incoming government.

Contact Officer	Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities	Phone:	s47F
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SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Australia's Disability Strategy

Summary

Australia's Disability Strategy (the Strategy) addresses systemic issues beyond the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and focuses on areas where people with disability are seeking changes to make Australian life more inclusive. This includes improving employment, education, health, housing, safety, community infrastructure and protection of human rights.

Key points:

- Making progress against the Strategy will drive action and deliver needed supports for people with disability. This includes action through Targeted Action Plans, agreed by Commonwealth and state and territory governments, focusing on employment, community attitudes, early childhood, safety, and emergency management and across the Policy Priorities in the Strategy.
- Ensuring services and supports are available to people with disability outside of the NDIS is essential for both NDIS participants and non-participants.
- Achieving outcomes against the Strategy will help reduce pressure on the NDIS. To the extent public and private housing, transport, education, health services and, critically, employers are not responsive and inclusive of people with disability, it will fall to the NDIS and to income support programs to try to meet the costs of the shortfall. For non-participants achieving outcomes under the Strategy ensures the NDIS does not operate as the only option for getting support and appears like an oasis in the desert.
- The disability community expect effective Strategy implementation across all levels of governments and expect this will shape all areas of Australian life, so it is more inclusive. This includes having mainstream services and systems operate more effectively to improve outcomes for people with disability. Having effective implementation under the Strategy will improve the way the central coordination function will operate to assist people with disability.
- Making progress against the Strategy will also position the government positively ahead of the release of the final report from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.
- With responsibilities for the Strategy sitting across portfolios, it is essential ministers in other Commonwealth portfolios focus on delivering on their policy responsibilities under the Strategy and that they adopt a disability focus across their work, as set out in the Strategy and its Guiding Principles.
- It is also important to keep working with state and territory governments and disability ministers, to ensure all governments make progress against the Strategy and deliver on their responsibilities.

The Strategy Advisory Council

- The Council is one of the mechanisms set-up under the Strategy to make sure all levels of government are working with people with disability to get guidance on and to deliver on implementation commitments. This will help governments to deliver on the needed changes sought by people with disability.
- s47E, s47C

s47E, s47C

- The Secretary will provide further information on this issue.
- s47E, s47C

The proposed next steps to respond to this are:

- July 2022 - the department will provide a brief for the Minister's decision, recommending a response to the Council's proposed terms of reference.
- July/August 2022 – Minister to seek agreement from state and territory disability ministers to Council terms of reference at the Disability Reform Ministers Meeting.
- July/August 2022 – Minister meets with the Council to set out the Minister's priorities for 2022.

Sensitivities:

- s47E, s47C
- The disability advocacy community has high expectations for the Council's role in enabling people with disability and their representatives to have visibility and influence with governments on disability issues.
- s47E, s47C
- Due to the small size of the Council, there is no member from Western Australia or the Australian Capital Territory. This is something jurisdictions would like rectified, even though for Western Australia there is a special adviser appointed to provide the Council with a Western Australian perspective.

Background:

- In developing the Strategy, all disability ministers agreed on a high level design for the Council, with its role being to advise governments on implementation of the Strategy's main elements and products such as its Targeted Action Plans and Outcomes Framework.
- Key disability community stakeholders, including Dr Gauntlett and CEOs of the all Disability Representative Organisations, were closely engaged on the Council's design as the Strategy was developed throughout 2020 and 2021.
- The Council has held two meetings in March and April 2022. The next meeting of the Council is expected to be held in June 2022.
- Funding for the Council totals around \$1.3 million a year. This includes an operational budget of \$0.7 million from the Social Services portfolio plus around \$0.6 million 'in-kind' funding for departmental secretariat support.

- The budget includes \$160,000 for member sitting fees, travel and Council sub-groups and \$120,000 for commissioning third-party advice and analysis, consulting with people with disability, representatives and other advisory groups. It also includes funding of \$400,000 for two research officers to work directly to the Chair to support the Council.
- Dr Gauntlett was appointed as Disability Discrimination Commissioner in 2019 after the previous Commissioner vacated the role to join the Disability Royal Commission.
- The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) recently conducted its five-yearly accreditation review of the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).
- The GANHRI deferred reaccrediting the AHRC as an A-status national human rights institution primarily due to concern the AHRC has not fully addressed previous recommendations around ensuring merit-based selection and appointment processes for Commissioners, including that of Dr Gauntlett.
- The Commonwealth Government now has approximately 15 months to address this matter before a final decision on the AHRC's status is taken by the GANHRI in October 2023.

Membership

Advisory Council Member	Position	Appointment Term
Ben Gauntlett (Chair)	Disability Discrimination Commissioner	December 2025
Seriako Stephen	Board member, First Peoples Disability Network Australia	December 2025
Cindy Liu	Founder and Co-Chair, Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network/s Youth Disability CaLD Collective	December 2025
Liz Reid	Executive Officer, YouthWorX NT	December 2025
Carolyn Frohmader	Chief Executive Officer, Women with Disabilities Australia	December 2023
Natalie Wade	Principal Lawyer, Equality Lawyers	December 2023
Jane Spring	Chair University of Sydney Sports Foundation and Co-opted Councillor Institute of Public Administration Australia	December 2023
Kathy Hough (special advisor)	Chief Executive Officer, Far North Community Services	December 2023
Second advisor TBC		

Next steps:

- To maintain progress under the Strategy, the department will provide a brief for the Minister's decision on delivery of further action under the Strategy. This will include advice on delivering on public commitments in the Strategy, which include a National Forum due to occur in November 2022 and public consultations on the Guide to the Guiding Principles. This Guide will help inform all levels of government on how they should develop and implement policies, programs, services and systems in line with human rights commitments under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Contact Officer	Debbie Mitchell, Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers	Phone:	s47F
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SIGNIFICANT ISSUES BRIEF

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Summary *The Government has a range of concerns regarding the operation of the NDIS and has made a series of commitments during the election campaign. This brief covers the key issues from a portfolio perspective.*

Key points:

- The Commonwealth Government is committed to protecting and fully funding the NDIS in a sustainable way with participant centred practices, a strong and fair NDIA market that provides high quality and safe supports and reduced waste.
- The table below shows estimates for the scheme over the current year and four forward years, with the contributions from states and territories and the Commonwealth identified.

Expenses (\$m)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Commonwealth	18,253	22,341	25,870	28,788	31,464
States and territories (incl. in-kind)	11,050	11,545	12,102	12,584	13,086
total participant supports	29,303	33,886	37,972	41,372	44,550
NDIA operating costs (100% C'wealth)	1,669	1,672	1,287	1,347	1,377
Total	30,972	35,558	39,259	42,719	45,927

- The Government has proposed a review of the NDIS which will examine NDIS design, operation and sustainability. This review will inform a number of government commitments including improving the planning pathway and identifying areas of focus for research and data analysis.
- We believe there are a number of election commitments which can commence before the review of the NDIS is concluded. These would include s47E, s47C [redacted] enhancing the responsibilities of the senior official already responsible for remote and very remote region operations so as to address barriers to remote NDIS service delivery, and increasing the representation of people with disability on the NDIA board.
- To place participants at the centre of the NDIS there must be enhanced and more timely feedback established between participants and carers, the NDIA, and providers to understand what works and what doesn't for participants in terms of NDIS funded supports. This is also critical for a sustainable and effective Scheme.
- For the NDIS to work as originally intended, participants must have access to a skilled and reliable workforce when and where they need them. The Department stands ready to work with stakeholders and other Commonwealth portfolios to deliver a comprehensive NDIS workforce strategy to build and train Australians to deliver high quality supports that meet participant needs, including in specialist and remote areas. We believe this work should be closely aligned with the Government's commitments to strengthen the aged care workforce given the intersections between the disability and aged care workforce and providers.
- The NDIS market must be strong, offering participants a choice of providers that are incentivised to innovate and are always focused on supporting participant goals. To enable this, further work on approaches to NDIS pricing, markets and compliance is required. Work will also be

undertaken to ensure the right regulatory settings for providers are in place to drive quality, safeguard participants and address sharp practices. This is in concert with the existing regulatory alignment work that is underway between the Aged Care, Veterans and Disability sectors.

- Our work going forward must be co-designed with people with disability, their families, carers, service providers and workers, and informed by evidence. We have more work to do to ensure there is greater transparency around data, research, findings and any recommendations formed.

Next Steps:

A Review the Scheme

Our understanding is that the Government will seek the review to focus on NDIS **design, operation and sustainability** and to examine the operationalisation of the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (the Act, NDIS Act) and the Rules by the NDIA to assess alignment to the original intention and design of the Scheme, including in relation to mainstream service systems.

Concerning **design**, the review could consider the emerging issues, in light of the past six years of full-Scheme experience, of determining access to the Scheme in the context of other service delivery systems, including those related to age, chronic health conditions, mental health, and childhood development. It could also consider the determination of reasonable and necessary supports for participants so as to maximise the objects of the Scheme including improved social and economic participation and other outcomes, and choice and control, for participants.

Concerning **operation**, the focus could be on the processes for gathering necessary information, and then the making, communicating and reviewing of decisions by the Agency. Other opportunities may include addressing service provider sharp practice and fraud, consideration of the use of external lawyers and consultants, and the overall governance, staffing, structure and operations of the Agency itself.

Concerning **sustainability**, the review can build on the December 2021 report by actuarial firm Taylor Fry, Independent Review of the NDIA actuarial forecast model, which found that the baseline estimates (on which the 2022-23 Budget Estimates are based) may represent a modest underestimate of future costs. Building sector and wider community understanding of the drivers of this trajectory, and of the options for altering it if so-decided, is crucial. It is also crucial that there is consideration of the wider economic benefits of the Scheme, other social benefits, and any consequent costs and savings in other areas of government expenditure, as per the original Productivity Commission formulation.

In designing the review, it is recommended the Government consult on terms of reference with people with disability, their families, the sector and state and territory governments. The Government has a number of options as to how the review could be undertaken, including leveraging existing commitment to reviews in full scheme bilateral agreements scheduled to commence before the end of 2023. With agreement of states and territories, this work could be brought forward and commence in 2022.

In reviewing the design of the NDIS an examination of the governance arrangements between the Commonwealth and states and territories is important. As the Commonwealth contribution continues to grow relative to those from states and territories, with the Commonwealth share of participant support costs expected to exceed 70 per cent Commonwealth contribution in 2025-26, an examination of current arrangements is considered vital. Some of the Government's election commitments will only be able to be implemented with state and territory agreement; in some cases, unanimous agreement. These arrangements have made it challenging to achieve at times modest change.

B Placing participants at the centre of the Scheme and enhancing their outcomes

To enhance the focus on participant wellbeing and improved outcomes, stronger engagement is required with people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and workers, and particularly with participants in the NDIS. Understanding NDIS participant outcomes is critical:

- to help participants understand what supports may work best for them given their individual circumstances and what supports may be less effective;
- to provide NDIS service providers with feedback and evidence about what works (or does not work), which can then be used to improve services, develop new ones, and determine the right number of services, based on a good understanding of that evidence;
- to assist the NDIA in determining what an optimum plan for a participant should include and how to shape it over time based on evidence and the participant's changing circumstances and needs; and
- to allow governments (all jurisdictions) to determine if NDIS funding is being well used and delivering results and whether the supports the NDIS provides actually make a difference to people and help them achieve what matters to them.

The NDIA and the sector have made progress on a co-design framework, and the NDIA and the department are working closely on a series of co-design projects to measure and assess NDIS effectiveness **s47E, s47C**



It is too early to fully understand the longer term benefits of the scheme for most participants, given 53 per cent of participants have been supported by the Scheme for only three years or less (as 31 December 2021). Systems and tools to understand participant outcomes and Scheme effectiveness also require more development. Despite this, work to understand what works for people and what is cost-effective is essential to support the success and sustainability of the scheme into the future. It is anticipated the importance of work to understand outcomes and effectiveness will be identified by the review of Scheme design, operations and sustainability, and in the independent review of NDIS costs in 2023 and 2028 as provided for in full scheme agreements with states and territories, to be commissioned by the Ministerial Council.

It is suggested improving understanding of what supports work best for participants should be a focus of research supported by the Government's commitment to provide \$15 million for the National Disability Research Partnership, and consideration of continued support for the National Disability Data Asset.

C Reform the planning pathway, improve the participant experience

Participant experience, as well as the efficiency of the NDIA, would be greatly enhanced by the ability to get the original version of a plan for a participant right. Information participants need to produce for access to the scheme and to inform planning decisions is not always well understood. Reform in this area should be co-designed with the sector to support a shared understanding of the pain points and determine their resolution. There is a current formal co-design project underway with the sector addressing exactly this question.

To increase confidence in plan reassessment outcomes, the Government has proposed there be expert review of reductions of annual plan funding of 20 per cent or more (not including one-off amounts such as capital items). To implement this within the current legislative framework, we would propose that a plan with such a proposed reduction be referred to a higher-qualified Agency

delegate for expert review before finalisation. Expert review will consider the proposed plan and supporting evidence, and may request more information and/or further discussion with the participant. On current experience this would see around 4,500 plans per months (225 plans per working day) subject to expert review. The staffing implications of this process will need to be considered in settling the overall Agency resourcing.

Decisions from expert review will be monitored so trends and patterns can be identified to foster continuous improvement in operational guidance to NDIA planners.

This “20 per cent expert review” approach will be further supported by improvements the Agency is already trialling for the section 100 internal review process, which occurs after the original plan decision is finalised, to increase the level of direct participant engagement and discussion.

Amendments to the NDIS Act to improve the participant experience were passed with bipartisan support in March 2022. New NDIS Participant Service Guarantee Rules are required to follow through on the recent changes to the Act to ensure the NDIA is responsive to participants. These are among several Rules which need to be made or amended with the agreement of, or in consultation with, states and territories (as required by the NDIS Act).

These reforms, as well as the new requirement under the Act to provide reasons for decisions to participants as a matter of course (amongst the amendments to the Act passed in March 2022), will assist in improving the participant experience and reduce matters where a participant sees a need to request review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The NDIA proposes that it review its spending on external lawyers and consultants to identify where these can reduce or cease including where the work is better done by permanent NDIA staff, thus lifting the NDIA’s capacity and corporate knowledge.

The Government has committed to investigating the NDIA call centre operation so participants and their families get the best possible service. We believe that to improve the service experience of participants and their nominees, it is important that they can very easily engage with the NDIA to receive information or discuss their circumstances. This includes the ability to receive high quality advice over the phone. s47E, s47C

Finally, barriers to remote NDIS service delivery need to be addressed. We will clarify and enhance the responsibilities of the senior official already responsible for remote and very remote region operations to strengthen responses to access and service delivery issues in remote Australia and other areas. This includes the potential for more significant commissioning of services on behalf of (and with the consent of) participants where the market is not responding and work with the Department of Social Services (the department) and other agencies to address common market gaps and workforce supply challenges across the NDIS, aged care and primary health. As an early step, the NDIA and DSS propose to develop options to make system improvements for your consideration. The revised First Nation’s Strategy and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse strategy will specifically refer to this role.

D Addressing barriers to accessing appropriate housing

An already identified concern is the availability of housing for people with disability and associated daily living supports. There is an opportunity to build on more recent NDIA actions to reduce timeframes for home and living decisions and engage with the sector on practical improvements to SIL that address a number of pain points experienced by providers. A timely review of SDA pricing arrangements will include consideration of increased land and construction costs. We propose to brief you on options to review and improve the availability of disability accommodation and effectiveness of associated supports within and outside the NDIS, including leveraging the Housing

Australia Future Fund and the Productivity Commission's review of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.

E Take action to address staffing and governance of the NDIA

Most recent APS Employee Census Data (2021) indicates that 19 per cent of Australian Public Service (APS) employees and 12 per cent of Senior Executive employees at the NDIA self-identify as having a disability. While this is above the target of 7 per cent of APS staff by 2025, the NDIA continue to seek to further increase this number.

In line with broader Government commitment for the whole of the APS, the staffing cap will be removed at the NDIA. The NDIA proposes to examine its existing labour hire arrangements and consider areas where these arrangements would more appropriately be undertaken by public servants. In addition to improving staff retention and culture at the NDIA, this activity will contribute to the Government's commitment to reduce spending on labour hire across the public service by 10 per cent in its first year. Early action by the NDIA to replace 380 contracted positions with public servants, and to make a proportion of these identified positions for a person with disability, would make clear the Government supports a different approach. s47E, s47C

There has been criticism that the NDIA Board does not have sufficient representation of people with disability or lived experience of disability. The current NDIA board includes two directors who identify as a person with disability and at least three directors who have lived experience of being a carer to a person with disability. The NDIA Board has three current vacancies and two additional positions become vacant from 31 December 2022. The Secretary would like to discuss the approach you would like to take and the potential for using the existing vacant positions to increase the proportion of people with disability on the board further.

States and territories, as co-stewards of the Scheme, have a critical role to play in the governance of the Scheme and in ensuring their enduring responsibility for mainstream service delivery to people with disability does not diminish over time. One of the ways to avoid the Scheme becoming the 'oasis in the desert' is to ensure that all people with disability, including NDIS participants, have continuing and timely access to mainstream services, and that private and non-government organisations meet their obligations to make reasonable adjustments for people with disability and are encouraged to be as inclusive as possible in the work they do, the services they offer and the people they employ s47E, s47C

The Australian Disability Strategy, endorsed by all governments, is an essential element of ensuring all services and sectors are inclusive and responsive to the needs of people with disability. This requires transparent reporting on progress under the Australian Disability Strategy.

Based on data provided by states and territories, over half of NDIS participants in public hospitals at a given time are medically ready for discharge but experience barriers to integrating back into the community. The number has remained above 1100 participants over the six months to March 2022. At 1 May 2022, 1,302 participants were medically ready for discharge. Of these, 509 had an approved plan in place but faced a barrier to being discharged. Of those, 28 per cent were awaiting a housing solution (NDIS or mainstream), 29 per cent were awaiting sourcing of provider supports, 14 per cent were long-stay mental health patients in need of a "step down" transition from hospital, 4 per cent faced guardianship issues and 25 per cent faced 'other' issues (as reported by states and territories).

To resolve these issues the NDIA has introduced a Senior Executive position with oversight of hospital discharge, adopted an improved approach to home and living decision making for this cohort, increased engagement with states and territories and employed additional Health Liaison Officers. Commonwealth and state and territory officials are working together to expedite nationally consistent reporting and communication between hospitals and the NDIA so that the NDIA knows a scheme participant or potential participant is in hospital as early as possible to facilitate appropriate planning. These steps will support some improvement, but on their own will not be sufficient to address all barriers to timely discharge NDIS participants are facing.

One of the largest contributors to a delay in discharge is securing appropriate housing, either disability specific housing funded through an NDIS plan, specialised rehabilitation or step-down transition placements, or social housing for those not eligible for disability specific housing.

The department and the Department of Health will further explore opportunities for transitional care arrangements, looking at successful models such as the Transition Care Programme, introduced in 2005 and cost shared with states and territories to reduce inappropriate extended hospital stays for older people and premature admission to residential aged care. s47E, s47C, s47B

The Disability Reform Ministers Meeting (DRMM), chaired by the Commonwealth Minister with the disability minister of each state and territory as members, is a key forum in which policy issues can be discussed and resolved. It is proposed you convene an early DRMM to share your vision for broader Scheme improvements and to hear from states and territories on opportunities to collaborate to get the NDIS and mainstream services working together.

F Enact reform to create a strong and fair market for disability support

The NDIA has finalised its current Annual Pricing Review (APR) and you will be briefed by the NDIA and the department within the first 14 days on the outcomes and impacts of changes to price limits that are proposed to be implemented from 1 July 2022.

The department and NDIA propose a joint brief for you on options to frame the Government's review of pricing, markets and compliance, including opportunities to support the building of market capability to deliver high quality and innovative supports, address poor provider practices and to initiate public consultation on potential alternative approaches to pricing and payments in the NDIS, consistent with commitments made in Full Scheme Bilateral Agreements between the Commonwealth and Victoria and Queensland. s47C

The Government has committed to develop a comprehensive NDIS Workforce Strategy which we suggest could include initiatives to address attraction and retention of workers, training and skills development, more secure work and enhanced career pathways, and better utilisation and distribution of workers. A proportion of the committed 465,000 fee free TAFE places (including 45,000 new places) could be allocated to those pursuing formal care and support sector training. Work could be undertaken to implement a portable leave and training entitlement scheme for NDIS workers, working closely with the sector and unions to expand and enhance on-the job and micro-credential training. The Strategy would seek to closely link to the Government's workforce initiatives in aged care and health care given the intersection of providers and workforce across the disability, aged care and veterans care sectors. It would also be able to examine the best way to support providers and employers to transition to new arrangements under planned industrial reforms for gig and casual workers and to key insights from the hearings of the Disability Royal Commission.

With regards to the Government's commitment to reduce provider fraud and linked to the compliance review above, a recent internal review of the NDIA's fraud intelligence and investigation functions can be used as a starting point to inform the next steps to detecting and responding to fraud and potential sharp practice, including sharing information with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) and the Australian Federal Police so that more educative, preventative and punitive action can be taken. Collaboration with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will also be pursued where sharp practices by providers distort markets and disadvantage participants as consumers.

On this issue, in the 2021-22 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, \$30 million was provided to the NDIA and the NDIS Commission to develop and test new compliance capabilities, targeting fraudulent and unethical provider behaviours. The outcomes of this testing can also be applied to inform these next steps.

G Ensure the right regulatory settings are in place to deliver high quality and safe supports

A critical component of ensuring the Scheme is operating as originally intended is that supports provided to participants are of high quality and safely delivered.

Preparations are well advanced to commission a review of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework in 2022, as envisaged when the framework was established in 2016, subject to your approval of the suggested scope and final testing with state and territory disability ministers. The review will enable detailed engagement with stakeholders around issues identified through key reviews and the first few years of the Commission's operation and will help inform a long term view of the NDIS Commission resourcing and capability requirements. Key themes that are proposed to be examined include:

- the adequacy of the Framework in providing appropriate protections for participants;
- provider compliance requirements to support participant protection;
- effective service provision and participants rights as informed consumers;
- intersection of the Framework with market development and policy settings for the scheme;
- the interface between Commonwealth regulatory functions and state and territory functions under the Framework; and
- the effectiveness of the implementation of the Framework, including building the capacity of the sector and the ability to identify systemic quality and safeguarding issues.

It is essential the regulator is appropriately resourced to educate providers and workers around better practice, adequately monitor the market, investigate complaints and reportable incidents and take compliance and enforcement action against unfit providers and workers in a timely way. ^{s47E, s47C}



In addition, there is an opportunity to continue the program of joint work underway with the Departments of Health and Veterans Affairs to improve the harmonisation of regulatory arrangements across the care and support sector (disability, aged care and veterans care) to drive better outcomes for participants and better practice by providers. This work seeks to improve protections for NDIS participants, older Australians and veterans, and has the potential to make it easier for service providers and staff to work across different types of care and support, enhancing competition and choice of services for consumers. This work will also support the sharing of regulatory intelligence between the NDIS and aged care regulators to identify and take appropriate action in relation to unscrupulous providers and workers operating across the sector. The Government's plan to introduce tough penalties, stronger investigative powers and new

transparency measures to protect Australians in aged care provides a further opportunity for aligned approaches across programs.

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SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Disability Employment

Summary

Labour market participation for people with disability is generally about 30 per cent lower and the unemployment rate for people with disability is roughly twice that of the broader population. The gap has been expanding.

The end of the current Disability Employment Service (DES) in June 2023 provides you with an opportunity to deliver improvements for those who need the most assistance to engage with the labour market including your proposed Centre of Excellence in Disability Employment.

Key Points:

- The department has been reviewing current supports for people with disability to find and maintain employment. We have found current services are not fit for purpose in today's labour market. The DES has not kept up with changes across various Commonwealth employment and disability services, including the establishment of the NDIS and changes to mainstream employment services and the DSP.
- We have been consulting with stakeholders, particularly people with disability, who agreed that DES was no longer fit for purpose and needs an overhaul. We have heard concerns about the complexity of the system and the difficulty people experience navigating across the various disconnected systems.
- Changes will also be required to the *Disability Services Act 1986* to ensure sound legislative authority for the new model, as well as consistency with regulatory alignment work across the Care and Support sector.
- The contracts for DES expire on 30 June 2023. This provides an opportunity for your Government to make much needed improvements to disability employment support services. There are opportunities to achieve greater co-ordination with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and mainstream employment programs. These will complement your Centre of Excellence.
- Boosting employment for all people with disability who want to work, and ensuring they get into long-term jobs will require measures which increase the disability confidence and awareness among employers, and highly targeted support services that make sure people with disability receive what they need to achieve their employment goals.
- Employers are eager to be involved. The current labour market conditions have driven business to look at segments of the workforce that they have previously overlooked, including people with disability. The department has begun work with the Business Council of Australia (BCA) to maximise this opportunities for people with disability within their member organisations. The Department will join BCA members in a Round Table forum in June to lay the ground for tangible action.
- We anticipate that BCA members will commit to taking specific actions and setting goals to support the increased employment of people with disability within their organisations, similar to the BCA Raising the Bar initiative for First Nations people. There is an opportunity to ensure Government policies support and drive this momentum.

Centre of Excellence

- The Government has proposed a Centre of Excellence to facilitate boosting employment by being a central resource to support employment of all people with disability. It would do this by providing tools, resources and sharing best practice examples to support employers and providers to maximise employment and training opportunities for people with disability.
- There are options for the Centre of Excellence to be developed and delivered within the Commonwealth as a unique entity or delivered through an independent not for profit organisation or consortia across the disability and academic sectors.
- The Government has been clear that the Centre of Excellence should be co-designed with people with disability, the disability sector, employment services providers, disability experts and academics and employers. The department will brief you on co-design and delivery options for your early consideration.
- s47E, s47C [REDACTED]
- An initial step in developing the Centre of Excellence, the department will undertake a stocktake of existing tools and resources and identifying best practice examples for inclusion in the Centre of Excellence. You can then work with stakeholders as part of the co-design process to address any gaps.

Greater Coordination with the NDIS and Mainstream Employment Programs

- There is opportunity to improve the interaction between the supports provided by DSS, NDIS and the mainstream employment programs delivered by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.
- There are currently around 101,000 NDIS participants with employment goals in their plans and only 15,000 participants who also received support through the DES program, representing approximately 6 per cent of the total DES caseload. For those people with disability who receive NDIS funding, the planning process will now include a greater focus on identifying employment goals and the support needed to achieve them. This new approach will see some increases in the number of NDIS participants with employment goals in their plans and a clearer understanding of support needs.
- The mainstream employment program, jobactive, currently supports around 150,000 people with disability and partial capacity to work. The supports people with disability receive can differ substantially between jobactive and DES, despite there often being little difference between the participants in each program. From 1 July 2022, jobactive will be replaced by a new model, Workforce Australia. Workforce Australia has been designed to have specialised providers to support particular cohorts, including: indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse, refugees and ex-offenders. This may provide an opportunity for the Government to consider options to ensure the mainstream services are genuinely inclusive and tailored to the needs of people with disability.

Increasing Employment of all People with Disability

- In late 2021, the former government released Employ my Ability – the Disability Employment Strategy. It seeks provide a framework to create inclusive workplace cultures where people with disability thrive in their careers. The Strategy was developed in consultation with the sector and well received. This framework provides an opportunity for your Government to put in place tangible policies and actions. The high level priority areas provide an opportunity for you to shift and mould the Strategy to drive real and much needed reform for disability employment. The

department has identified a number of opportunities across the priority areas to operationalise the Strategy including reforming the DES program and options to build employer confidence and capacity in partnership with the BCA.

- In addition, the Job Summit could provide an opportunity to ensure the issues faced by people with disability in finding and keeping a job are included in the broader conversation about employment. The department will work with the Treasury to seek to create an opportunity for people with disability, advocates, service providers, community organisations and employers to contribute to the summit. The disability sector is eager to see action.
- The Government should lead by example through a range of actions and opportunities to support disability employment in the public sector. In addition to the existing APS Disability Employment Strategy, targets for disability employment could be included in the Commonwealth procurement framework which would require providers to meet predetermined disability employment targets. s47E, s47C

Better Assistance for those People with Disability who need More Support

- There is also a need to ensure employment services better support people with disability. The current DES is due to end on 30 June 2023 which provides an opportunity to introduce reforms.
- DES is a demand driven program. Total DES expenditure for financial year 2020-21 was \$1.258 billion and estimated to be \$1.4 billion for 2022-23.
- Despite a range of program changes in 2018, and acknowledging that some DES providers are achieving good employment outcomes for people with disability, the DES is no longer fit for purpose. Stakeholders and advocacy groups have raised significant concerns and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has highlighted poor practices among some service providers.
- s47E, s47C

Sensitivities:

- s47E, s47C
- Employment of people with disability has been an area of focus of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability s47E, s47C

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SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Supported Employment

Summary

The supported employment sector largely operates in organisations formerly known as Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs)¹³. The sector is currently undergoing a period of significant change. Peak body National Disability Services indicates that many ADEs are struggling to adapt to the changes. Most recently, this has seen Western Australia's largest ADE, Activ Foundation (Activ), announce the closure of seven of its supported employment sites.

The vast majority of funding for supported employment is now provided through NDIS plans. The Supported Employment Services Award 2020 (the Award), under which most supported employees are paid, is under review by the Fair Work Commission (FWC). There are expectations that the Government will subsidise the sector for any increase in wages.

Key points:

- ADEs have been undergoing a period of transition, moving from block grant to case based funding, to more recently receiving funding through their participant's NDIS plans. The NDIS funding model is positive for participants, who now have greater choice and control about where they work. There has also been changing community attitudes, with growing calls to end segregated employment.
 - In April 2022, the Royal Commission into Violence Abuse Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (DRC) heard evidence of the experience of people with disability in ADEs, bringing issues of low wages and segregated employment settings to public attention.
 - It is anticipated the issue will maintain public attention with the DRC's public hearing from 6 to 10 June expected to canvass the issue of the "polished pathway" which sees some young people transitioning straight from segregated education into segregated employment.
- On 16 May 2022, the largest provider of supported employment in Western Australia, Activ, announced it would close seven of its supported employment sites, making around 780 supported employees redundant. Activ claims the move to the NDIS funding model has made their operations unviable. Of the 161 ADEs operating nationally, all but Activ successfully transitioned to the NDIS funding model and continue to provide supported employment opportunities to people with disability.

¹³ Feedback from the sector indicates many supported employment providers no longer call themselves ADEs. For the purpose of this brief, the term ADE will be used.

- s47E, s47C [REDACTED]
- Both the NDIA and the department continue to work closely with Activ to support impacted participants to transition to alternative arrangements. We will brief you in the first 30 days on what has been done to support Activ and what further actions could be taken.
- Of the ADEs that have successfully transitioned, many are concerned an expected decision from the Fair Work Commission on the *Supported Employment Services Award 2020* (the Award) will make them unviable.
- The former government allocated \$67 million to support organisations to transition to a new wage-setting environment once a final decision on the Award has been reached by the FWC. This funding has been appropriated to the department, but no commitment has yet been made on how the funding would be used.
- s47E, s47C [REDACTED]
- Where possible, this should strive to give employees greater choice and opportunity to work in open employment at mainstream award wages.
- The FWC is holding a directions hearing in July 2022 and a full hearing in August. The department will brief you on this issue following the directions hearing and in advance of the full hearing.
- s47E, s47C [REDACTED] you may wish to consider longer term measures that build the quality and opportunity for ADEs into the future. This could include measures to leverage the purchasing power of the Government, through preferential procurement policies, (similar in nature to the very successful Indigenous Procurement Policy), to incentivise greater procurement of services offered by ADEs, especially targeting those that provide training and upskilling of employees and pathways through to open employment and mainstream award wages.

Sensitivities:

- There are conflicting views on ADEs with strong negative sentiment from some disability advocates who are of the view that the very concept of ADEs are inconsistent with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see background).

Background:

- ADEs are typically not-for-profit organisations that mostly employ people with disability and support them in their job. They play a role providing supported employment opportunities to people with moderate to severe disability who need substantial ongoing support to maintain their employment.
- Historically, the purpose of ADEs has not been to support people into open employment. Supported employment services (as described in the *Disability Services Act 1986*), have played a

role providing services to persons who with disability for whom employment at or above the relevant award wage is unlikely.

- There are currently around 16,000 people with disability working for supported wages in ADEs and 4,000 people with disability working for supported wages in open employment.
- The Supported Wage System (SWS) is a Commonwealth Government assessment tool that can be used in both ADEs and open employment settings to assess productivity of employees with disability. Under the SWS, employees are entitled to a percentage of the relevant pay rate for their classification, depending on their assessed work capacity. For example, someone with an assessed work capacity of 70 per cent is entitled to 70 per cent of the relevant pay rate in their award or registered agreement. This assessment can only be carried out by a qualified independent assessor.

Fair Work Commission Review

- On 3 December 2019, the FWC handed down a decision on the proposed wage structure in the Award. The proposed changes to the Award included introducing a minimum wage of \$3.59 per hour and would see an increase in wages across the sector by an estimated \$76.1 million annually, promoting viability concerns from 90 per cent of ADE CEOs.

United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- In October 2019, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities made the following recommendation in the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:
The Committee recommends that the State party undertake a comprehensive review of the [ADEs] to ensure that they adhere to article 27 of the Convention and provide services to enable persons with disabilities to transition from sheltered employment into open, inclusive and accessible employment, ensuring equal remuneration for work of equal value.
- Article 27 relates to ensuring people with disabilities have the right to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.
- A comprehensive review of ADEs did not occur in response to the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This decision was taken because when the recommendation was made (15 October 2019), ADEs were undergoing a period of significant change, largely due to the transition to the NDIS and subsequent increase in choice and control for supported employees.

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SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

Unpaid Carers

Summary

An estimated 2.65 million Australians care for someone with disability, a medical condition, mental illness or someone who is frail due to age.

Carer Gateway is the national carer support service system, providing access to carer specific supports and services for all carers, no matter the age of the person they are caring for.

Approximately \$9.7 billion in financial support was provided to carers in 2021-22, primarily through Carer Payment and Carer Allowance.

Carers Australia (the national peak body for carers) is strongly advocating for a new National Carer Strategy to replace the previous strategy, which lapsed in 2015, and a review of the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*.

Key Points:

- Carers Australia has been consistently calling for a national strategy for carers and a review of the *Carer Recognition Act 2010*.
- The object of the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* is to increase recognition and awareness of carers and to acknowledge the valuable contribution they make to society. Currently, the legislation only imposes limited obligations for agencies subject to the Public Service Act 1999. None are legally enforceable, limiting the utility of the Act.
- A new National Carer Strategy would provide the opportunity to develop a committed, shared agenda that cuts across multiple portfolios and sectors including health, aged care and disability portfolios in both the Commonwealth and state and territory governments.
- Carers Australia have also strongly advocated for a dedicated Minister for Carers, the appointment of a Commissioner for Carers and the establishment of an Office for Carers (which they believe is integral to the success of a National Carer Strategy).

Financial Support for Carers

- Carer Payment and Carer Allowance are the two main payments supporting carers. Both payments have eligibility requirements.
- Carer Payment is an income support payment to assist carers who, due to the care they provide, are unable to support themselves through paid employment, and is paid up to a rate of \$987.60 per fortnight.
- Carer Allowance is a supplementary payment for carers who provide a certain level of daily care and attention to people who need significant additional care, and is paid at a rate of \$136.50 per fortnight.
- Carer Payment and Carer Allowance recipients are eligible for the annual \$600 Carer Supplement paid each July.
- The Young Carer Bursary Program is available to assist eligible carers aged 25 years and under to continue or return to study and offers bursaries of \$3,000 per young carer per year through an application process.

Carer Gateway

- Carer Gateway service providers commenced in April 2020 and provide carers with access to a range of tailored services, including support planning, targeted support packages (with a focus on employment, education and respite), coaching, counselling, peer support, emergency respite, and advice.
- The introduction of Carer Gateway was a major shift from the previous crisis-driven carer support system to an early intervention and preventative model designed to improve a carer's wellbeing, skills and knowledge.
- Policy settings for Carer Gateway are good – the design is the result of four years of research, analysis and extensive consultation with the sector, including carers. But more needs to be done on implementation - uptake of Carer Gateway has been low. Primarily, the low uptake is due to low brand awareness and a need to help carers self-identify as a carer and understand when to seek help. The latter is particularly important across some communities, such as CALD and First Nations communities, where caring is embedded into their cultural and family responsibilities and not perceived as a separate duty.
- More work is needed to help carers identify as a carer and to take up available support early rather than waiting until they reach a crisis point.
- This is particularly important for those carers who don't typically identify as a carer and therefore don't reach out for support (for example CALD and First Nations carers).
- In your first 100 days you may wish to progress a targeted campaign to increase awareness of the issues carers face and the supports available. The Department will brief you on options.

Sensitivities:

- A national communications campaign was scheduled to commence in March 2022 to raise awareness of Carer Gateway and the importance of carers. This was paused to allow for more time to consult with both the disability and carers' advocacy sector.
- The department will consult further with both sectors about the creative approach of the campaign and brief you with options.
- Current carer assessment processes can create inequities between carers. A new assessment process would ensure payments go to carers based on the care they provide. It could also take into account modern care requirements and arrangements, including changes to the broader system such as NDIS and aged care. The department will brief you on this area of reform.

Stakeholders:

- Carers Australia is the national peak body representing Australia's carers and is publicly supportive of Carer Gateway. The Department maintains a close and collaborative working relationship with Carers Australia.

Background:

- As part of 2013 Machinery of Government changes, aged care carer policy and programs moved into the Social Services portfolio which provided the opportunity to review all carer programs and associated grant funding.
- The review identified service duplication, administrative waste, no national consistency in service delivery and mainly crisis driven support which is short term and expensive with no long term benefit for carers from these types of services.
- The development of the Carer Gateway service delivery model streamlined and integrated carer support and grant funding from nine programs into one program.

Key Facts

- Number of informal carers **2.65 million** (ABS data, 2018)
- Carer Gateway funding commitment **\$770 million** over four years to 2024-25
- Funding to Carer Gateway providers **\$632 million** (2019 to 2023-24)
- Carers registered with Carer Gateway **78,750** (as at 31 December 2021)
- Number of calls to Carer Gateway **345,260** (as at 31 December 2021)
- Services provided through Carer Gateway **744,462** (as at 31 December 2021)
- Carer Gateway website views **3,421,392** (as at 31 December 2021)

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SIGNIFICANT ISSUES BRIEF

Portfolio COVID-19 response to support people with disability

Summary

The Government has committed to step up the national strategy to reduce COVID-19 related deaths and ensure Australians have the information to inform the decision to get booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines. This brief covers the contributions the Department, NDIA and NDIS Commission are making to the Department of Health-led response to COVID-19 in relation to people with disability

Key points:

- The Department of Health leads the health response to COVID-19 for all Australians, including people with disability, including the vaccination program and other public health measures.
- The Social Services portfolio is playing a critical support role using its policy and program levers, data holdings and well established relationships with disability representative organisations, disability peaks, NDIS providers and states and territories, to help ensure people with disability can access the information and critical health supports they need to stay safe.
- The response continues to be adjusted based on ATAGI advice and in response to the evolving needs of people with disability. We remain focused on protecting the most vulnerable people with disability from severe illness, hospitalisation and death, including NDIS participants in shared/congregate settings, people with disability who are immunocompromised and those who have barriers to accessing health supports.
- Through concerted effort, third dose rates for eligible NDIS participants in residential disability and aged care settings are now materially ahead of the national vaccination rate (18.3 per cent and 22 per cent ahead respectively) and NDIS participants aged 16+ and disability support pension recipients aged 15+ are also slightly above the national vaccination rate.
- Vaccination rates in 5-11 and 12-15 year olds are 1.8 per cent and 5.7 per cent behind the general population and the portfolio is actively providing factual information, sharing communication on lived experiences and other targeted product to parents and carers of these NDIS participants.
- Around 95 per cent of NDIS workers linked to registered NDIS providers have received the required number of doses under state and territory public health orders (in most jurisdictions 3 doses).
- Infection and mortality rates for NDIS participants, as reported to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission by registered NDIS providers, also remain well below that of the broader population (88 per cent and 42 per cent lower since the emergence of Omicron variants – 5 January to 23 May).
- The portfolio has taken a very proactive approach to winter preparedness, kicking off in March 2022 with a series of coordinated activities aimed at ensuring all portfolio programs and policy levers are focused on influencing people with disability to be prepared for an expected rise in both COVID-19 and influenza infection this winter. Work includes:
 - data-informed approaches to targeting of vaccination and winter preparation messaging to lower socio-economic, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Indigenous communities including through local community groups, including collaborative efforts with the states and territories;

- active engagement with NDIS providers around facilitation of access to the Winter booster dose for eligible participants, including through community channels and in-reach to participant homes; and on maintaining a safe environment through strong infection prevention and control, including use of personal protective equipment; and
 - the development of a new emergency reserve workforce of registered NDIS workers that could be activated by the NDIA, should it be required, to support continuity of critical supports to NDIS participants over the winter period.
- The NDIA has put in place a number of COVID-19 supports for supported independent living providers. This includes support for providers helping participants and workers to access vaccination, funding for one-off cleaning services, additional supports for participants required to self-isolate, a clinical first response service to assist providers to respond to COVID-19 incidents such as an outbreak, and workforce advice and supports around workforce disruption and continuity of services, including a deployable workforce where necessary (note deployment has not been required to date).
 - Around 4.5 million Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits have been distributed to Supported Independent Living settings since February 2022, and this will continue to the end of July under current arrangements. The portfolio is actively engaging with the Department of Health on the whole-of-government response to provision of Personal Protective Equipment and RAT kits beyond this period, including through the National Medical Stockpile.
 - We have been working with the Department of Health, the disability community, academics and provider peaks since mid- 2021 to understand the range of hesitancy factors that impact various disability cohorts and how to best address those factors. While some sources of hesitancy have been addressed, there is no doubt that others continue to be a primary barrier to achieving even higher vaccination outcomes. Addressing this hesitancy remains a key area of focused work.
 - The portfolio actively seeks out and uses all available communication levers to provide the latest information on the pandemic and reinforce the facts about COVID-19. This includes regular, timely and factual updates to the Disability Gateway, Carers Gateways and their association social media pages as well as three text message campaigns in September / October 2021, February / March 2022 and again right now to more than 1 million welfare recipients who receive the Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment and /or Allowance and their nominees to provide short, sharp messages on how to seek assistance or information related to COVID-19 vaccinations. This has resulted in significant uplift in vaccination rates for people on the Disability Support Pension in particular.

Next Steps:

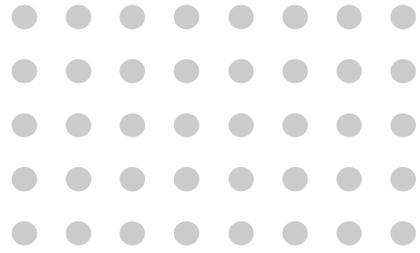
We can you at your convenience on our detailed efforts to date towards protecting Australians with disability from COVID-19 and options to further augment those efforts.

Where helpful, we can also rapidly convene a virtual roundtable with key disability stakeholders to facilitate direct engagement with you around the issues important to the disability community in this area.

Background:

Please refer to – **DSS Portfolio COVID-19 Response Taskforce Situation Report.**

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Portfolio COVID-19 Disability Response

Weekly Situation Report

DATE OF ISSUE: 31 MAY 2022

VERSION: 1.0

PREPARED BY: JODI CASSAR

CLEARED BY: LUKE MANSFIELD



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Vaccination results by cohort

Cohort	One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) Doses	Eligible participants who have received three doses	NDIS % compared to eligible national population
NDIS participants 16 years and over	86.6%	85.0%	62.7%	16.4%	74.6%	4.6% ahead (3 doses)
Residential disability accommodation	88.9%	87.5%	76.7%	15.5%	88.3%	18.3% ahead (3 doses)
Residential Aged care (NDIS)	86.6%	85.2%	78.0%	44.6%	92.1%	22.1% ahead (3 doses)
NDIS participants 12-15 years	75.9%	71.6%	3.3%	1.2%	n/a	8.5% below (2 doses)
NDIS participants 5-11 years	49.7%	36.6%	0.7%	0.6%	n/a	3.0% below (1 dose)
DSP recipients (at 30 May 2022)	86.2%	84.8%	60.7%	6.2%	72.6%	2.6% ahead (3 doses)

Focus of effort this week

Vaccination

- Increasing vaccination for 5-11 year olds with disability including exploration of engagement opportunities with the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative in Logan, Queensland.
- Following a recent workshop with the Department's Getting Better Outcomes team, the portfolio is exploring new opportunities to increase vaccination for this cohort. This includes improved data analysis to target specific Local Government Areas.
- Department's social media content is targeting parents of children aged 5-11yrs during May - June 2022.
- Messaging Kit developed for Services Australia Indigenous Services Officers, Multicultural Services Officers and Community Engagement Officers and Home Affairs Multicultural Officers to talk about COVID-19 and flu vaccines on the ground.

Winter preparedness

- Identifying and progressing strategic opportunities within Departmental programs to raise awareness of the importance of COVID-19 and influenza vaccination ahead of winter. This includes an address to community organisations represented at the [National Coordination Group](#) meeting and the Disability Advocacy Network Australia.
- A text message campaign to reach more than a million Disability Support Pension and Carer recipients is almost complete with over 875,000 text messages sent to date. The campaign will finish at the end of next week. This message will help people be winter-ready and access COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations.
- Information and resources on person-centred emergency preparedness, infection prevention and control and mental health are being promoted through future Disability Provider Alerts.

Key issues

- Vaccination rates have slowed for NDIS participants aged 5-11 years**
 - Jurisdictional feedback indicates that increasing infections are influencing timing of vaccinations, as well as ongoing hesitancy among parents.
- Key populations of unvaccinated people with disability are:**
 - Low socio economic status, First Nations and Cultural and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds; and
 - Autism, Intellectual Disability and Other Neurological (e.g. stroke, dementia and epilepsy).
- Ventilation for people with disability**
 - There is currently no Commonwealth avenue for funding improved ventilation in disability settings and jurisdictions have raised that Commonwealth funding is provided [for Aged Care settings](#).

Workforce vaccination results

Reported percentage who are fully vaccinated	Reported percentage who are part vaccinated
94.9%	3.4%

'Fully vaccinated' means in accordance with requirements under state and territory public health orders, some of which now require a third (booster) dose, once eligible, to be fully vaccinated.
Some registered NDIS providers are yet to report on the vaccination status of their workforce. The NDIS Commission is working with those providers around reporting requirements.
Remaining workers not included include those exempt from vaccination requirements, workers whose vaccination status is not yet verified by the provider (such as workers on leave) and provider reporting anomalies.

Infections, hospitalisations and deaths

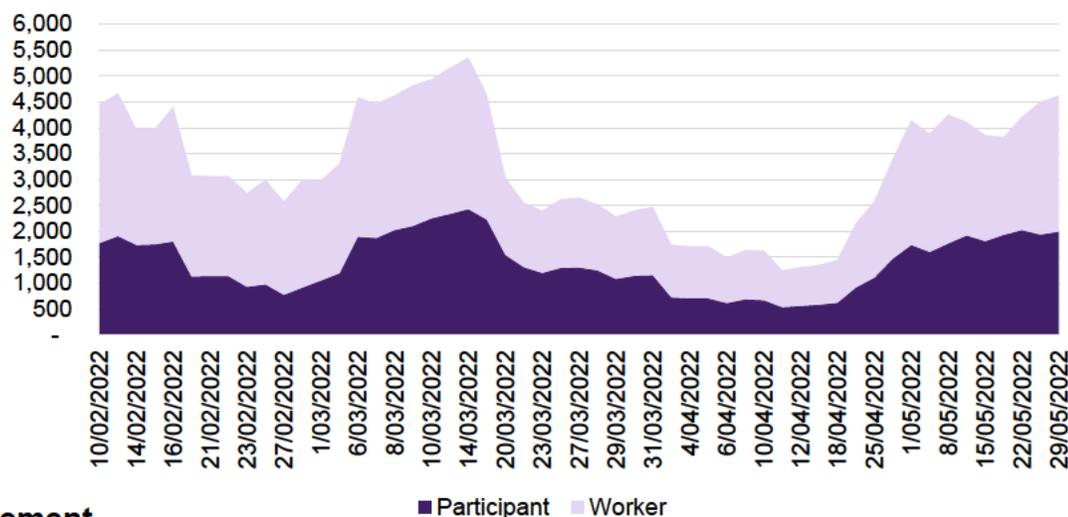
	Date range	Provider reported positive cases and deaths	Cases/Deaths per 100,000 NDIS participants	Rates per general population	Percentage variance
Infections since start of pandemic	1 March 2020 – 30 May 2022	16,837 COVID-19 positive cases reported to Commission	3,365 cases per 100,000 NDIS participants (3.4%)	28,179 locally acquired cases per 100,000 people (28.2%) among the broader population	88% lower infection rate than the general population
Deaths since start of pandemic	1 March 2020 – 30 May 2022	77 COVID-19 positive participant deaths reported to the NDIS Commission.	25.5 deaths per 100,000 NDIS participants aged 16+ 15.4 deaths per 100,000 total participants	41.1 deaths per 100,000 people aged 16+ 33.0 deaths per 100,000 people	38% lower than the general population aged 16+ 53% lower than the total general population
Infections Omicron period only	5 January 2022 – 30 May 2022	15,442 COVID-19 positive cases reported to Commission	3,086 cases per 100,000 NDIS participants (3.1%)	25,796 locally acquired cases per 100,000 people (25.8%) among the broader population	88% lower infection rate than the general population
Deaths Omicron period only	5 January 2022 – 30 May 2022	49 COVID-positive participant deaths reported to the NDIS Commission.	16.2 deaths per 100,000 NDIS participants aged 16+ 9.8 deaths per 100,000 total participants	30.0 deaths per 100,000 people aged 16+ 24.1 deaths per 100,000 people	46% lower than the general population aged 16+ 59% lower than the total general population

Active COVID-19 cases

Participant	1,998
Worker	2,626
In Hospital	12
Cumulative Covid-19 Cases	
Participant	16,837
Worker	23,721

Only registered NDIS providers are required to notify the NDIS Commission, as soon as is practicable, of certain changes and events that significantly impact their provision of services regulated by the NDIS Commission, including COVID-19 impacts such as infection of participants. These figures do not represent all NDIS participants.

Daily active COVID-19 cases reported



Workforce shortage requests/referrals

Workforce assistance requests and referrals to the NDIA (as at 26 May 2022)	13 Dec - 26 May	19 May - 26 May
	No. requests / referrals for workforce assistance	151
No. resolved by NDIA without referral to GenU (the organisation providing NDIS workforce support through the pandemic)	117	2
No. referred to GenU for follow up	38	1
No. resolved by GenU	38	1
No. where resolution involved deployment of physical workforce	0	0

Frequency of stakeholder engagement

Active and frequent engagement with jurisdictions and the disability sector enables sharing of vaccination results and an opportunity to gather insights to inform the Commonwealth response and drive vaccination acceleration activities. A total of 146 engagements have taken place this year. This is in addition to regular engagement across Commonwealth government.

4 January – 30 May 2022	State and Territory engagement	Disability Sector representative engagement	Total
Engagements this year	115	31	146

Total NDIS Participants aged 16 and over

Jurisdiction	Total NDIS participants who have received:				Total Doses	Total NDIS participants aged 16 and over	Percentage of NDIS participants who have received:				Percentage of eligible participants who have received three doses	Estimated percentage of eligible coverage (three doses) for national population ¹
	One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses			One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses		
NSW	1,287	21,490	39,406	17,822	233,773	91,820	87.1%	85.7%	62.3%	19.4%	73.0%	67.3%
VIC	1,177	16,458	39,171	12,599	202,002	79,068	87.8%	86.3%	65.5%	15.9%	76.4%	72.2%
QLD	974	15,916	25,547	9,174	146,143	60,963	84.7%	83.1%	57.0%	15.0%	69.5%	63.1%
WA	517	5,018	14,911	4,496	73,270	28,388	87.9%	86.0%	68.4%	15.8%	82.4%	83.3%
SA	507	5,316	12,426	3,090	60,777	25,341	84.2%	82.2%	61.2%	12.2%	75.6%	73.3%
TAS	155	1,680	3,660	1,038	18,647	7,516	86.9%	84.9%	62.5%	13.8%	74.8%	72.5%
ACT	68	876	3,100	884	14,656	5,548	88.8%	87.6%	71.8%	15.9%	82.3%	78.3%
NT	67	532	1,197	466	6,586	2,919	77.5%	75.2%	57.0%	16.0%	77.0%	77.4%
National	4,752	67,286	139,418	49,569	755,854	301,563	86.6%	85.0%	62.7%	16.4%	74.6%	70.0%

Total Disability Support Pension recipients (as at 30 May 2022)

Jurisdiction	Total DSP recipients who have received:				Total Doses	Total DSP Recipient	Percentage of DSP recipients who have received:				Percentage of eligible participants who have received three doses	Estimated percentage of eligible coverage (three doses) for national population
	One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses			One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses		
NSW	2,884	61,465	126,693	14,721	564,777	235,883	87.2%	86.0%	60.0%	6.2%	70.2%	67.3%
VIC	2,303	44,148	103,813	11,824	449,334	182,977	88.6%	87.3%	63.2%	6.5%	73.0%	72.2%
QLD	2,660	41,065	82,576	9,216	369,382	162,351	83.5%	81.8%	56.5%	5.7%	70.2%	63.1%
WA	1,042	10,639	35,465	3,498	142,707	57,777	87.7%	85.9%	67.4%	6.1%	82.7%	83.3%
SA	1,304	13,109	36,057	3,604	150,109	65,174	83.0%	81.0%	60.9%	5.5%	76.6%	73.3%
TAS	538	6,032	14,837	2,080	65,433	27,273	86.1%	84.1%	62.0%	7.6%	75.0%	72.5%
ACT	122	1,578	5,196	677	21,574	8,502	89.1%	87.6%	69.1%	8.0%	78.3%	78.3%
NT	204	1,718	3,552	524	16,392	8,095	74.1%	71.6%	50.4%	6.5%	71.3%	77.4%
National	11,057	179,754	408,189	46,144	1,779,708	748,032	86.2%	84.8%	60.7%	6.2%	72.6%	70.0%

NDIS participants living in disability accommodation

Jurisdiction	Total NDIS participants who have received:				Total Doses	Total NDIS participants aged 16 and over in disability accommodation ¹	Percentage of NDIS participants who have received:				Percentage of eligible participants who have received three doses
	One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses			One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses	
NSW	108	911	5,201	1,518	23,605	8,636	89.6%	88.4%	77.8%	17.6%	88.3%
VIC	68	290	3,119	916	13,669	4,907	89.5%	88.1%	82.2%	18.7%	93.6%
QLD	65	742	2,369	593	11,028	4,270	88.3%	86.7%	69.4%	13.9%	80.8%
WA	22	153	1,336	221	5,220	1,941	89.2%	88.1%	80.2%	11.4%	93.5%
SA	38	258	1,296	193	5,214	2,040	87.5%	85.6%	73.0%	9.5%	86.3%
TAS	15	103	521	82	2,112	828	87.1%	85.3%	72.8%	9.9%	86.5%
ACT	7	36	332	60	1,315	478	91.0%	89.5%	82.0%	12.6%	92.0%
NT	12	33	181	64	877	369	78.6%	75.3%	66.4%	17.3%	88.4%
National	335	2,526	14,355	3,647	63,040	23,469	88.9%	87.5%	76.7%	15.5%	88.3%

NDIS participants living in residential aged care

Jurisdiction	Total NDIS participants who have received:				Total Doses	Total NDIS participants aged 16 and over in residential aged care	Percentage of NDIS participants who have received:				Percentage of eligible participants who have received three doses
	One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses			One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses	
NSW	31	114	585	664	4,670	1,598	87.2%	85.3%	78.2%	41.6%	91.8%
VIC	13	70	416	696	4,185	1,388	86.1%	85.2%	80.1%	50.1%	94.6%
QLD	13	73	331	349	2,548	889	86.2%	84.7%	76.5%	39.3%	91.2%
WA	7	53	67	193	1,086	361	88.6%	86.7%	72.0%	53.5%	85.0%
SA	4	19	108	112	814	289	84.1%	82.7%	76.1%	38.8%	92.4%
TAS	1	6	43	45	322	103	92.2%	91.3%	85.4%	43.7%	95.7%
ACT	0	1	10	23	124	38	89.5%	89.5%	86.8%	60.5%	97.1%
NT	0	3	11	17	107	42	73.8%	73.8%	66.7%	40.5%	90.3%
National	69	339	1,571	2,099	13,856	4,708	86.6%	85.2%	78.0%	44.6%	92.1%

Total NDIS Participants aged 12-15 years

Jurisdiction	Total NDIS participants who have received:				Total Doses	Total NDIS participants aged 12-15 years old	Percentage of NDIS participants who have received:			
	One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses			One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses
NSW	672	11,290	399	248	25,441	16,919	74.5%	70.6%	3.8%	1.5%
VIC	530	10,473	326	159	23,090	14,078	81.6%	77.8%	3.4%	1.1%
QLD	553	7,698	217	129	17,116	12,427	69.2%	64.7%	2.8%	1.0%
WA	318	3,697	135	52	8,325	5,370	78.2%	72.3%	3.5%	1.0%
SA	289	4,171	99	56	9,152	6,181	74.7%	70.0%	2.5%	0.9%
TAS	48	920	46	15	2,086	1,269	81.1%	77.3%	4.8%	1.2%
ACT	19	845	28	8	1,825	1,029	87.5%	85.6%	3.5%	0.8%
NT	37	335	10	8	769	503	77.5%	70.2%	3.6%	1.6%
National	2,466	39,429	1,260	675	87,804	57,776	75.9%	71.6%	3.3%	1.2%

Total NDIS Participants aged 5-11 years

Jurisdiction	Total NDIS participants who have received:				Total Doses	Total NDIS participants aged 5-11 years old	Percentage of NDIS participants who have received:			
	One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses			One dose	Two doses	Three doses	Four (or more) doses
NSW	4,988	14,294	37	298	34,879	41,797	46.9%	35.0%	0.8%	0.7%
VIC	5,466	15,327	44	224	37,148	39,376	53.5%	39.6%	0.7%	0.6%
QLD	3,770	9,124	20	180	22,798	30,659	42.7%	30.4%	0.7%	0.6%
WA	1,570	4,124	14	78	10,172	10,534	54.9%	40.0%	0.9%	0.7%
SA	1,784	4,683	16	61	11,442	12,353	53.0%	38.5%	0.6%	0.5%
TAS	384	1,233	2	11	2,900	2,659	61.3%	46.9%	0.5%	0.4%
ACT	240	1,414	2	13	3,126	2,328	71.7%	61.4%	0.6%	0.6%
NT	227	412	1	8	1,086	1,366	47.4%	30.8%	0.7%	0.6%
National	18,429	50,611	136	873	123,551	141,072	49.7%	36.6%	0.7%	0.6%

Data Notes – Total NDIS Participant number last obtained 30 May 2022

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) – COVID-19 Vaccinations – Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) data notes:

- Eligible participants for the third dose are those who are due to receive it because it has been 3 months since their 2nd dose, and those who have received their 3rd dose early for medical reasons.
- Total National NDIS participants eligible for three doses as at date of report is **253,000**.
- Data matching between the NDIA and AIR is limited as there is no unique common identifier between data sources.
- Participant data sources have been matched on the following criteria:
 - Last name
 - Date of birth
 - At least one of first name or postcode.
- The lack of unique identifiers can lead to false matches, omissions or other errors. This means that the data in this report is subject to a margin of error, which should be taken into consideration when interpreting results. It is recommended that published results be rounded to the nearest 100.

NDIS Participants aged 16 and over notes:

¹ Estimated eligible coverage is based on the national population, individuals are assumed eligible 3 months after the date they received their second dose and if aged 16 years today

NDIS Participants aged 5-11 years and 12-15 years notes:

- For these age groups, only children with certain medical conditions are eligible for 3rd and 4th doses.

NDIS Participants living in disability accommodation notes:

¹ Disability accommodation means two or more people with disability living in shared residential accommodation, as per the eligibility criteria of Phase 1a

- Total National NDIS participants in residential settings eligible for more three doses as at date of report is **24,000**.
- 59 vaccinated participants have been identified with both Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Residential Aged Care indicators. Duplicates have been removed from total calculation.

NDIS Participants living in residential care notes:

- Total National NDIS participants in residential settings eligible for more three doses as at date of report is **24,000**.
- 59 vaccinated participants have been identified with both Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Residential Aged Care indicators. Duplicates have been removed from total calculation.

Total Disability Support Pension recipients notes:

- Eligible DSP recipients are those that are due for their 3rd dose (3 months from their 2nd dose date) and those who have received their 3rd dose early for medical reasons.
- Data matching between Centrelink and the Australian Immunisation Register has limited unique common identifiers between data sources. Therefore, probabilistic matching is applied between Centrelink and Medicare data sets to match current DSP recipients and the Unique Common Identifier (UCI). This is an intensive and statistically driven process which considers a large number of personal identifiers and provides a match weighting against variation in those fields. The UCI is then matched against the AIR to determine immunisation status.
- Estimated eligible coverage is based on the national population, individuals are assumed eligible 3 months after the date they were fully vaccinated and if aged 16 years today.
- Disability Support Pension recipients includes individuals currently in receipt of payment who are aged 15 years and 9 months or older.
- Jurisdiction Unknown includes both International individuals vaccinated (as recorded in the AIR) that are currently residing outside Australia and individuals inside Australia with no fixed address details recorded.
- The lack of unique identifiers can lead to false matches, omissions or other errors. This means that the data above is subject to a margin of error, which should be taken into consideration when interpreting results. It is recommended that published results be rounded to the nearest 100.



SIGNIFICANT ISSUE BRIEF

National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA)

Summary

The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) is currently the main mechanism to deliver funding to the states to support housing and homelessness outcomes. The bilateral agreements, which contain the funding, expire on 30 June 2023.

s47E, s47C

Key points:

- The NHHA, which commenced on 1 July 2018, is the primary vehicle for providing Commonwealth funding (\$1.6 billion per year) to support states to deliver improved access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing, including to prevent and address homelessness. This funding includes \$131.8 million for homelessness services in 2021-22, which the states must match.
- The NHHA requires states to have publicly available housing and homelessness strategies and contribute to improved data collection and reporting.
 - The housing priority policy areas to be addressed under the NHHA include affordable housing, social housing, encouraging growth and supporting the viability of the community housing sector, tenancy reform, home ownership and planning and zoning reform initiatives.
 - The NHHA priority homelessness cohorts are older people, women and children affected by family and domestic violence, children and young people, First Nations people, people experiencing repeat homelessness, and people exiting institutions and care into homelessness.
- The Productivity Commission (PC) is currently reviewing the NHHA, as part of its reviews of nationally significant sector-wide agreements between the Commonwealth and states and territories. The report is expected by 31 August 2022.
- s47B, s47C, s47E

[Redacted content]

s47B, s47C, s47E

NHHA

- s47B, s47E, s47C

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Sensitivities:

s47E, s47C

NHHA

s47E, s47C, s47B

- s47B, s47E, s47C
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Background:

- The objective of the NHHA is to contribute to improving access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing across the housing spectrum, including to prevent and address homelessness, and to support social and economic participation.
- The NHHA includes a specific allocation (which states must at least match) for specialist homelessness services, which provide frontline crisis support to people at risk or experiencing homelessness.
- The NHHA continues the long history of cooperation between the Commonwealth and states to improve housing outcomes. Compared to previous agreements, the NHHA:
 - brought together housing and homelessness funding under one Agreement;
 - introduced new reporting requirements including annual Statement of Assurances (SoAs), changes to national performance indicators, and an ongoing data improvement plan; and
 - expanded objectives to include the whole housing spectrum supported by a range of National Housing Policy Priorities and National Homelessness Policy Priorities and cohorts, and incorporated state specific bilateral schedules.
- The NHHA acknowledges there are a range of factors outside the scope of the agreement that impact the housing market, including Commonwealth and state and territory tax settings, financial sector regulation, immigration, natural events, income support and rental subsidies.
- The Closing the Gap (CTG) housing target (target 9) is to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent by 2031. The Commonwealth contributes to meeting this target through the NHHA and the National Partnership for Remote Housing Northern Territory (administered by NIAA).
- Under the NHHA, Indigenous Australians are a priority homelessness cohort but the Agreement does not require states and territories to allocate a specific amount of funding for Indigenous housing. The Productivity Commission is reviewing the arrangements under the NHHA for Indigenous housing as part of its review.
- The NIAA also administers the IHOP, delivered through Indigenous Business Australia, which provides low-deposit, low-priced home loans for Indigenous Australians who face barriers to accessing mainstream finance. IBA has assisted over 20,600 Indigenous families into home ownership over the last 40 years.

Next Steps:

- s47E, s47C [Redacted]

Contact Officer	Matt Flavel, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Stream	Phone:	s47F [Redacted]
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The Portfolio

Executive

The department is led by the Secretary and four Deputy Secretaries each overseeing a stream of work.



**Ray Griggs AO, CSC,
Secretary**

Contact

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Ray Griggs commenced as the Secretary of the Department of Social Services on 22 July 2021. He is responsible for policy and program delivery in the areas of Families and Children, Housing Support, Seniors, Communities and Vulnerable People, Disability and Carers.

Ray is chair of the Australian Public Service Indigenous Champions Network, the Secretaries Digital Committee and the Secretaries Committee on Social and Indigenous Policy.

Ray was previously the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of the National Indigenous Australians Agency from 1 July 2019 to 21 July 2021, with responsibility for leading policy, program and delivery reform in line with the Government's commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This included responsibility for the Agency's national footprint and its 1200 staff.

Prior to this Ray was the Associate Secretary of the Indigenous Affairs Group within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet from October 2018 to 30 June 2019. Before joining the Australian Public Service, Ray spent four decades in the Royal Australian Navy, including a range of command and operational roles. His last two positions were as Chief of Navy between 2011-14 and the Vice Chief of Defence Force between 2014-18. Ray has been involved at a senior level in leading a number of significant reform programs including large scale cultural change programs, enterprise wide business reforms and comprehensive reform of Defence's capital investment program.

Ray holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Queensland, a Master of Business Administration from the Australian National University and Master of Science degree from the National Defense University in Washington D.C and a . He is an Officer in the Order of Australia, has been awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross, a Commendation for Distinguished Service and holds awards from the Governments of France, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Spain and the United States of America.



**Matt Flavel,
Deputy Secretary**

Contact

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Matt Flavel is the Deputy Secretary of the Social Security Stream.

Matt joined the department in January 2020. In his current role, he is responsible for income support policies and programs that support families, carers, the aged, people with disabilities, students and apprentices, as well as people of working age.

He oversees the department's centralised data strategy and evaluation functions, as well as housing and homelessness policies and programs.

Matt previously held a number of senior executive positions at the Department of the Treasury, including leading the delivery of the department's corporate support and strategy, as well as key roles in the delivery of the Federal Budget and tax policy. He has also represented the Australian Treasury internationally, including a posting to Australia's Permanent Delegation to the OECD in Paris.

Matt holds a Masters of Financial Management from the Australian National University, and a Bachelor of Economics (Honours) from the University of Adelaide.



**Liz Hefren-Webb,
Deputy Secretary**

Contact

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As Deputy Secretary Families and Communities, Liz Hefren-Webb oversees policy and programs that support vulnerable communities, families and children, and promote family safety.

Liz also has responsibility for the National Redress Scheme which was established in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, as well as problem gambling, financial wellbeing policy and programs and cashless welfare policy.

The Community Grants Hub, which delivers community-based grants funding on behalf of DSS and other Australian Government client departments and agencies, is also in Liz's remit.

Liz joined the department in July 2018. Prior to this, she was a First Assistant Secretary in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, in the Indigenous Affairs Division, responsible for education, community safety, health and wellbeing programs and policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Liz has also held senior executive positions in the former Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. She started her career as a graduate in the former Department of Social Security in 1996

Liz has a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Government from the University of Sydney.



**Debbie Mitchell,
Deputy Secretary**

Contact

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Debbie Mitchell PSM joined the department as Deputy Secretary, Disability and Carers, in November 2021.

Debbie oversees policy and programs providing targeted supports and services for people with disability and carers. This includes policy related to the National Disability Insurance scheme (NDIS), Disability Employment Services (DES) and the Australian Disability Strategy (ADS).

Debbie has previously held senior executive positions in the former Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Services Australia and the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

Prior to joining the APS, Debbie worked in NSW government and the NGO sector in direct service delivery for people with disability and their families. She started her career as a nurse.

Debbie was awarded a Public Service Medal in the 2021 Queens Birthday Honours for outstanding public service to the implementation of Government policy and the delivery of streamlined Job Seeker service to support Australians.

Debbie holds qualifications in Social Science and Nursing.



**Patrick Hetherington,
Deputy Secretary,
Chief Operating Officer**

Contact

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Mr Patrick Hetherington commenced as Chief Operating Officer for Department of Social Services on 19 April 2022. In his current role Pat leads the delivery of the Department's corporate functions.

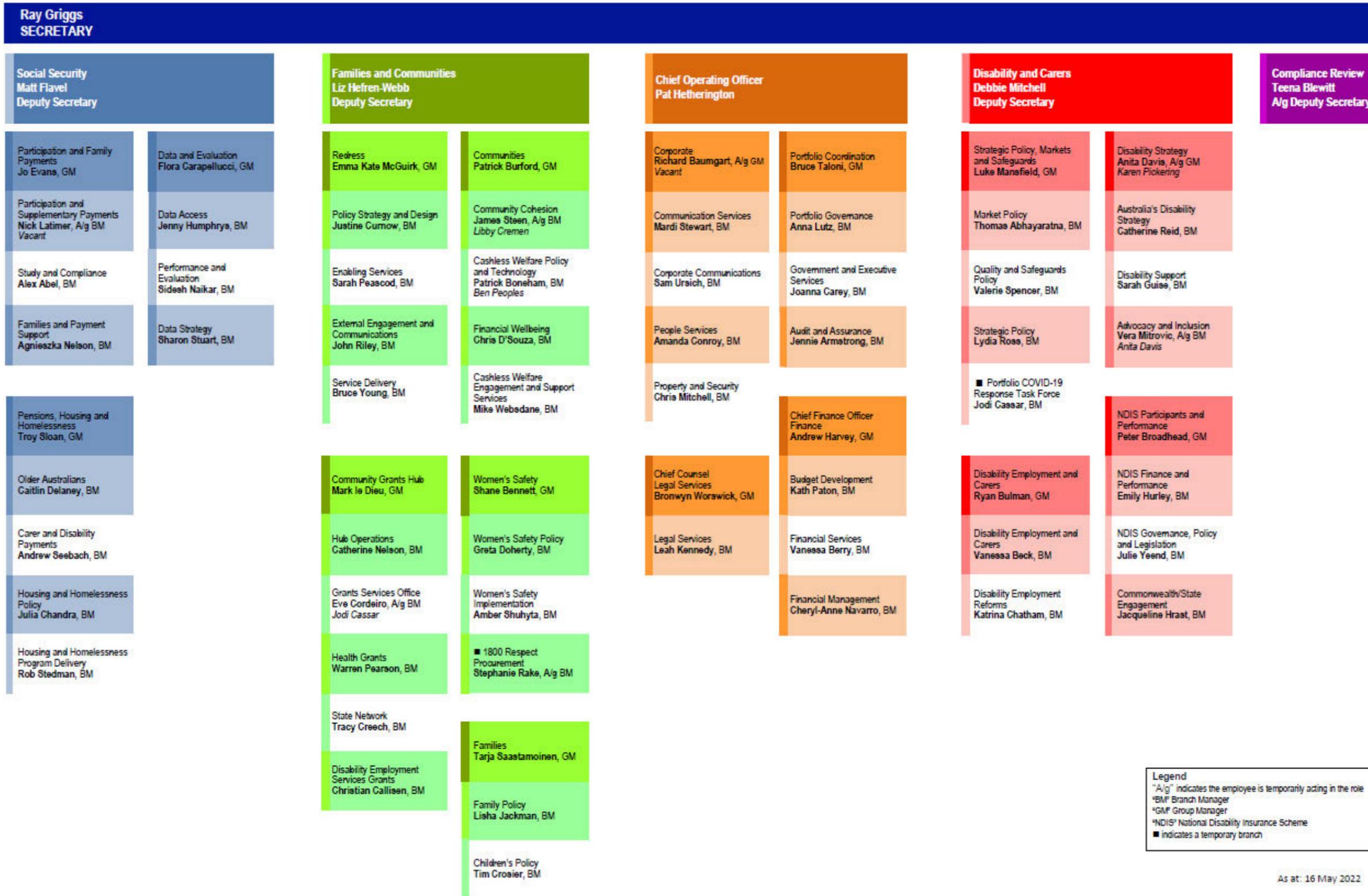
Pat moved to DSS from the Australian Public Service Commission where he was the Deputy Australian Public Service Commissioner and led whole-of-service APS workforce reform. Pat joined the Commission following a secondment to Services Australia where he was involved in mobilising the Australian Public Service in response to COVID-19.

Prior to joining the Australian Public Service Commission, he spent almost 20 years in the Department of Defence holding a number of senior executive positions across the finance, capability and HR domains. His roles included delivery of the Defence budget, employment policy, enterprise cultural reform and management of Defence's Integrated Investment Program.

Pat is a Certified Practising Accountant with a Bachelor of Commerce from the Australian National University.

Organisation Structure and Staffing

Senior Organisation Chart



Legend
 A/g indicates the employee is temporarily acting in the role
 BM Branch Manager
 GM Group Manager
 NDIS National Disability Insurance Scheme
 ■ indicates a temporary branch

As at: 16 May 2022

Department Staffing Profile

As at 30 April 2022, the Department had 2,775 staff and 381 contractors (3,156 total headcount).

The Department has strong diversity with 71.3 per cent female, 5.1 per cent staff identify as First Nations people, 6.0 per cent with disability and 7.5 per cent non-English speaking background.

The map below provides an illustration of department's office locations across Australia.



Department Staff Numbers by location (as at 30 April 2022)

State	Location	APS Employees	Contractors	Total
ACT	Enid Lyons Building	1,686	291	1,977
	Aviation House	335	26	361
NSW	Sydney	157	12	169
	Wagga Wagga	8	1	9
	Wollongong	14	-	14
	Newcastle	8	1	9
	Orange	4	-	4
	Batemans Bay	14	-	14
NT	Darwin	31	3	34
QLD	Brisbane	100	8	108
	Townsville	9	-	9
	Cairns	1	-	1
	Mt Isa	1	-	1
SA	Adelaide	88	21	109
VIC	Melbourne	172	13	185
	Bendigo	6	1	7
WA	Perth	73	4	77
TAS	Hobart	68	-	68
TOTAL STAFFING (HEADCOUNT)		2,775	381	3,156

Summary of Budgeted Average Staffing Level (ASL) and Headcount across Portfolio Agencies (as at 30 April 2022)

Staffing profiles for the portfolio agencies is below:

Portfolio agencies	ASL (Budget)	Headcount <i>20-21 Annual Report</i>
Australian Institute of Family Studies	82	87*
Hearing Australia	1378	1,396**
National Disability Insurance Agency	4,500	4,942***
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission	352	359*
Services Australia	28,869	32,698*

*Australian Institute of Family Studies, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and Services Australia headcounts relate to APS employees only (they do not include seconded workers or non-APS employees)

**Hearing Australia staff are employed under the *Australian Hearing Services Act 1991* therefore are Commonwealth employees, Hearing Australia's systems do not record ASL

*** National Disability Insurance Agency headcount relates to APS employees only (it does not include seconded workers, non-APS employees or partners)

The Portfolio

The Social Services portfolio (the portfolio) is responsible for achieving the Australian Government's social policy outcomes and delivering social security priorities through policy advice, program administration and research.

The portfolio currently comprises the following portfolio bodies:

- Department of Social Services, established as a Department of State under the Administrative Arrangements Order.
- Australian Institute of Family Studies, established under the *Family Law Act 1975*.
- National Disability Insurance Agency, established under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*.
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, established under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*.
- Services Australia, established as an Executive Agency under the *Public Service Act 1999*.
- Hearing Australia, established under the *Australian Hearing Services Act 1991*.
- Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (to commence as an Executive Agency on 1 July 2022).

The Department

The Department of Social Services (the department) is responsible for a diverse range of policies, payments, programs and services that improve the lifetime wellbeing of people and families in Australia.

We fund services and payments that assist families, children and older people, provide a safety net for those who cannot fully support themselves, enhance the wellbeing of people with high needs, assist those who need help with care, help those with injury, disability or illness to overcome barriers to securing employment, and support a diverse and harmonious society.

The portfolio's total expense is \$172 billion in 2022-23, including the department's administered expenses, of \$153 billion in 2022-23.

Budget 2022-23 and Appropriation Funding

On 1 April 2022, the 2022-23 Supply Bill received royal assent and as a general rule, existing recurrent programs across Government were provided interim funding for around five months, being 5/12ths of their total 2022-23 Appropriation Bills 1 and Bill 2 excluding funding for new measures. The 2022-23 Supply Bill provided DSS funding in line with this principle, except the administered programs in Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 which received the full 12/12ths. Generally the outstanding 7/12ths funding will not be required until later in the year but the department will need to carefully monitor cash flow requirements until the full year's appropriations have been received after the October Budget. Please note, this does not impact special appropriations such as for the Age Pension and Job Seekers which are funded as required.

The Supply Bills enable the department to fund business as usual activities. Should the Government wish to proceed to implement new budget measures¹⁵ in the 2022-23 Budget ahead of the planned October budget this may be possible – the department will need to work with your office on a case by case basis to address the funding, spending authority and cash management requirements for such expenditure ahead of parliament passing the remaining appropriation bills for 2022-23 after the October Budget. The most significant new measure that will require consideration on a case by case basis is the Women’s Safety \$1.3 billion package (\$93 million in 2022-23).

A summary of the appropriation status of the department’s administered programs is as follows:

Program	Appropriation Status	2022-23 \$billion
Outcome 1 Special Appropriations	As needed	125.7
Outcome 2 Annual Administered Programs – Recurring	12/12ths	\$0.9
Outcome 2 Annual Administered Programs – New Measures (primarily Women’s Safety)	Pending	\$0.1
Outcome 2 Special Appropriations – Redress Scheme Payment	As needed	\$0.4
Outcome 3 Annual Administered Programs – Recurring	12/12ths	\$2.1
Outcome 3 Annual Administered Programs – New Measures	Pending	\$0.0*
Outcome 3 NDIS Commonwealth Contribution	12/12ths	\$23.8
Outcome 4 Annual Administered Programs – Recurring	5/12ths	\$0.1
Total Administered Programs		153.1

* These measures amount to \$6 million which round to \$nil.

¹⁵ Budget measures which require consideration on a case by case basis are set out in the Social Services Portfolio Budget Statements at pages 23 - 25. The relevant measures are Women’s Safety (2022-23: \$93 million), Building the Long-Term Viability of the Financial Counselling Sector (2022-23: \$5 million), Support for People with Disability (2022-23: \$4 million) and Ageing and Aged Care (2022-23: \$2 million).

Outcome 1: Social Security

Purpose:

A sustainable social security system that incentivises self-reliance and supports people who cannot fully support themselves by providing targeted payments and assistance.

We support those most in need and help people become and remain financially self-reliant. We provide a range of payments through the administration of a social security system including family payments student payments, income support payments, payments for people of workforce age, people with disability and carers, and for seniors. Additional payments and non-cash benefits include Commonwealth Rent Assistance and concession cards.

Programs:

- Family Assistance
- Support for Seniors
- Financial Support for People with Disability
- Financial Support for Carers
- Working Age Payments
- Student Payments

Outcome administered expenditure (\$'000):

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
124,065,999	125,746,618	130,028,238	134,040,792	139,762,064

Outcome 2: Families and Communities

Purpose:

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

Overview:

Outcome 2 comprises policy and programs that support vulnerable individuals, children, families and communities, including Indigenous Australians, and that promote family safety and financial wellbeing. Outcome 2 also includes the National Redress Scheme which was established in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

We support individuals, children and families to improve their lifetime wellbeing by targeting our activities to address specific needs that have been identified by them, using evidence-based approaches. We do this through a range of grants programs, procurements and payments that are delivered directly to individuals, or through non-government providers.

Programs:

- Families and Communities

Outcome administered expenditure (\$'000):

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
1,358,915	1,355,770	1,302,214	1,255,122	1,254,565

Outcome 3: Disability and Carers

Purpose:

Supporting the independence of, and economic participation by, people with disability and carers by providing targeted supports.

We deliver a number of targeted programs and work across the Commonwealth and with state and territory governments and sector stakeholders, to support the independence and wellbeing of children and adults with disability and carers. We also oversee the delivery of the Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031.

Programs:

- Disability and Carers
- National Disability Insurance Scheme

Outcome administered expenditure (\$'000):

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
21,356,850	25,902,637	29,016,178	31,941,144	34,680,230

Outcome 4: Housing

Purpose:

Improving housing affordability, supporting social housing for individuals and preventing and addressing homelessness by providing targeted supports.

We work with other government agencies, and states and territories to improve the supply of social housing and reduce the level of homelessness. We provide incentives to non-government housing providers to deliver housing to low and moderate-income households through the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

Programs:

- Housing and Homelessness
- Affordable Housing

Outcome administered expenditure (\$'000):

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
139,894	102,016	71,423	54,423	40,051 ¹⁶

¹⁶ The reduction in administered expenditure relates to the conclusion of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). NRAS dwellings began exiting the Scheme from August 2018 and will continue to progressively exit through to the Scheme's end in June 2026.

The Social Services Portfolio

Agencies in the portfolio that will report to the Ministers allocated to this portfolio are: the Department of Social Services, Services Australia, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission, Hearing Australia and the Australian Institute of Family Studies. The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner is also due to commence within the portfolio on 1 July 2022.

Services Australia



CEO: Rebecca Skinner

E: rebecca.skinner@servicesaustralia.gov.au

P: s47F

As the Government's primary service delivery agency, Services Australia has responsibility for supporting individuals, families, businesses and communities by efficiently delivering high-quality, accessible services and payments on behalf of Government.

Services Australia makes over \$230 billion in payments on behalf of Government each year, including for Medicare, Centrelink and emergency responses.

The agency collaborates with policy agencies, the community and third parties to improve the systems that support Australians, in line with its vision: making government services simple so people can get on with their lives.

Rebecca Skinner commenced as Services Australia Chief Executive Officer on 16 March 2020. Before coming to Services Australia, Ms Skinner held the role of Associate Secretary of Defence where she was responsible for Defence enterprise planning, performance and risk management, and the integration of all corporate enabling functions across the department. Ms Skinner has also held other senior positions at the Department of Defence including Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy and Intelligence and Deputy Secretary, Defence People.

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)



CEO: Martin Hoffman

E: martin.hoffman@ndis.gov.au

P: s47F

The NDIA is an independent statutory Agency, created to administer and implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and improve economic and social outcomes for NDIS participants, while ensuring the ongoing financial sustainability of the Scheme.

Martin Hoffman was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the National Disability Insurance Agency from 4 November 2019.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission



Commissioner: Tracy Mackey

E: tracy.mackey@ndiscommission.gov.au

P: s47F

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (the NDIS Commission) is an independent agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services. The role of the NDIS Commission is to promote the provision of safe and quality supports and services to people with disability under the NDIS.

The NDIS Commission is responsible for delivering nationally consistent and responsive regulation of all NDIS supports and services. The NDIS Commission commenced in New South Wales and South Australia on 1 July 2018.

It commenced in Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory on 1 July 2019. The NDIS Commission commenced in Western Australia on 1 December 2020.

Ms Mackey was appointed as Commissioner from 10 January 2022 until 9 January 2025.

Hearing Australia



Managing Director: Kim Terrell
E: kim.terrell@hearing.com.au
P: s47F

Hearing Australia operates under the *Australian Hearing Services Act 1991*. The organisation's mission is to provide world leading research and hearing services for the wellbeing of all Australians.

During 2020-21 it helped over 275,000 children, adults, pensioners and veterans through a national network of 170 hearing centres and 330 visiting sites. One third of the organisation's work (some \$100m per annum) involves the delivery of community services funded by the Government. Two thirds of its work (some \$180m per annum) involves the delivery of commercial services in a highly competitive market.

In addition to its day-to-day services, Hearing Australia is developing a National Strategy to reduce the rate of avoidable hearing loss in high-risk communities, especially in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Recent data collected by Hearing Australia indicates that some 25-30 per cent of First Nations' children aged 0-6 have undiagnosed ear disease and hearing loss and face unacceptable wait times to access the clinical help they need.

Mr Terrell was appointed to the role of Managing Director in 2018. He has previously held positions in the Australian Government, including working to establish the Digital Transformation Office, the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority and myGov.

Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)



Director: Dr Sharman Stone
E: sharman.stone@aifs.gov.au
P: s47F

The role of the AIFS is to create and communicate knowledge for policy makers, service providers and the broader community to improve the wellbeing of children, families and communities.

AIFS' research builds evidence about what works for every kind of family to thrive and translates it into information that can be applied in policy and practice.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies is a statutory body established under the *Family Law Act 1975* and includes the Australian Gambling Research Centre established under the *Gambling Measures Act 2012*. The Australian Institute of Family Studies is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The Hon Dr Sharman Stone was appointed to the role of Director AIFS. Dr Stone's appointment from 1 May 2022 and expires on 20 April 2027 (inclusive).

S47F

Legislation

The Social Services portfolio has an active legislative program. The 46th Parliament passed an average of 9 to 10 portfolio related bills each year. The portfolio's legislative program focuses primarily on amendments to various aspects of the social security law, the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act) and the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018*. Legislative reform in the portfolio involves the implementation of new initiatives, but also modifying, updating and clarifying aspects of existing legislation.

The portfolio also administers over 300 legislative and notifiable instruments. The large majority of these instruments clarify or operationalise aspects of the social security law. While most instruments are made by the minister, some instrument making powers are delegated to the Secretary or other senior departmental officials. Some instrument making powers under the NDIS Act are also delegated to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner.

Legislative Instruments due to Sunset 1 October 2022

There are 21 instruments within the portfolio due to sunset on 1 October 2022 (see **Table 1** below). The department has identified that seven of the instruments need replacement and the department has commenced preliminary work on new instruments. The replacement instruments require making before 1 October 2022.

The majority of instruments which will sunset are no longer necessary, as they deal with the effect of payments which are no longer being made.

Delegations and Authorisations

The portfolio administers a range of programs and legislation that confer functions and powers on the Minister for Social Services.

Generally, portfolio Ministers delegate to or authorise officials to perform functions or exercise certain powers for reasons of efficacy. For example, the former Minister authorised the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries of the department to decide applications made under the Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration scheme.

Separately, the Secretary of the Department of Social Services exercises a range of statutory functions and powers under portfolio legislation, including social security laws.

The delegations and authorisations made prior to the election will continue to have legal effect until replaced. As a matter of best practice, the department reviews delegations and authorisations regularly to ensure currency, accuracy and appropriateness.

The department will provide updated Ministerial instruments of authorisation and delegation for consideration within six weeks of your taking office.

Table 1: Legislative Instruments due to sunset October 2022			
No.	Instrument	To be replaced	Maker
1	<i>Social Security (Administration) (Declared child protection State – New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria) Determination 2012</i>	No, pending consultation	Minister
2	<i>Social Security (Administration) (Declared income management area – Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands) Determination 2012</i>	No, pending consultation	Minister
3	<i>Social Security (Administration) (Declared voluntary income management areas – New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria) Determination 2012</i>	No, pending consultation	Minister
4	<i>Social Security (Administration) (Recognised State or Territory – Northern Territory) Determination 2012</i>	No, pending consultation	Minister
5	<i>Social Security (Administration) (Specified income management Territory – Northern Territory) Specification 2012</i>	No, pending consultation	Minister
6	<i>Social Security (Administration) (Vulnerable income management areas) Specification 2012</i>	No, pending consultation	Minister
7	<i>Social Security Regulation</i>	Yes	Governor-General in Council
8	<i>ETR Payments Administrative Scheme (FaHCSIA) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
9	<i>Family Assistance (Clean Energy Advances in Certain Circumstances) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
10	<i>Social Security (Clean Energy Advance – Top-up Payment) (DEEWR) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
11	<i>Social Security (Clean Energy Advance – Top-up Payment) (DIISRTE) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
12	<i>Social Security (Clean Energy Advance – Top-up Payment) (FaHCSIA) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
13	<i>Social Security (Clean Energy – Multiple Qualification Exclusion) (DEEWR) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
14	<i>Social Security (Clean Energy – Multiple Qualification Exclusion) (DIISRTE) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
15	<i>Social Security (Clean Energy – Multiple Qualification Exclusion) (FaHCSIA) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
16	<i>Social Security (Exempt Lump Sum) (Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme WA) (DEEWR) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
17	<i>Social Security (Exempt Lump Sum) (Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme WA) (DIISRTE) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A

18	<i>Social Security (Exempt Lump Sum) (Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme WA) (FaHCSIA) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
19	<i>Social Security (Exempt Lump Sum) (Commonwealth Bank Officers Superannuation Corporation Pty Limited – OSF DB Rectification Project Payment) (DIISRTE) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
20	<i>Social Security (Exempt Lump Sum) (Commonwealth Bank Officers Superannuation Corporation Pty Limited – OSF DB Rectification Project Payment) (FaHCSIA) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A
21	<i>Social Security (Exempt Lump Sum) (Commonwealth Bank Officers Superannuation Corporation Pty Ltd – OSF DB Rectification Project Payment) (DEEWR) Determination 2012</i>	No	N/A

Portfolio Statutory Appointments

There are a number of appointments across the portfolio, with responsibility resting with the Minister responsible for individual agencies. For example, the Minister responsible for Social Services is responsible for appointments relating to the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) and the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission. The Minister responsible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Government Services is responsible for appointments relating to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the Board of the NDIA and Hearing Australia. Further information on specific appointments is below.

There are currently several appointments due to expire in the next six months, for example the Chief Executive Officer of the NDIA (3 November 2022), two NDIA board members (31 December 2022) and two Hearing Australia Board members (31 December 2022). Additionally, there are three existing vacancies on the NDIA Board, one vacancy on the NDIS Independent Advisory Council (IAC) and one vacancy on the Hearing Australia Board.

Minister responsible for Social Services

Heads of Agencies	Position	Name	Current Appt. Start Date	Current Appt. End Date
AIFS	Director	Dr Sharman Stone	1/05/2022	30/04/2025
Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner	Commissioner	s47E, s47C, 47F		

Minister responsible for the NDIS and Government Services

Heads of Agencies	Position	Name	Current Appt. Start Date	Current Appt. End Date
NDIA	CEO	Mr Martin Hoffman	4/11/2019	3/11/2022
Hearing Australia	Managing Director	Mr Kim Terrell	1/09/2018	31/08/2023
National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commissioner	Commissioner	Ms Tracy Mackey	10/01/2022	9/01/2025
Services Australia	Chief Executive Officer	Ms Rebecca Skinner	16/03/2020	15/03/2025

NDIA Board <i>*section 127 of NDIS Act - the</i>	Chair	Dr Denis Naphthine	1/04/2022	31/03/2025
	Member	Prof Jane Burns	1/01/2022	31/12/2022
	Member	Mr Glenn Keys AO	1/01/2022	31/12/2022
	Member	Ms Estelle Pearson	1/01/2022	30/06/2023

<i>Board consists of the Chair and up to 11 other members</i>	Member	Mr James Minto	1/01/2022	30/06/2023
	Member	Ms Sandra Birkenleigh	1/01/2022	30/06/2023
	Member	Ms Meredith Allan	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Ms Leah van Poppel	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Dr Peta Seaton	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Vacant x3		

NDIS IAC <i>*Subsection 146 of NDIS Act - the IAC consists of the Principal Member and up to 12 other members</i>	Principal Member	Ms Leah van Poppel	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Ms Tricia Malowney OAM	1/07/2020	30/06/2023
	Member	Ms Sharon Boyce	1/07/2020	30/06/2023
	Member	Ms Sam Paior	1/07/2020	30/06/2023
	Member	Dr Leighton Jay	21/10/2020	30/06/2023
	Member	Mr Mark Tonga	1/07/2020	30/06/2023
	Member	Ms Sylvana Mahmic	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Ms Jennifer Cullen	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Dr George Taleporos	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Mr James Manders	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Ms Liz Reid AM	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Ms Kerry Allan-Zinner	1/01/2022	31/12/2024
	Member	Vacant		

Hearing Australia <i>*part 3, s 15 of the Australian Hearing Services Act the board consists of a chairperson, the managing director and 4 other members and special purpose members</i>	Managing Director	Mr Kim Terrell	1/09/2018	31/08/2023
	Chairperson	Ms Elizabeth Crouch	1/04/2022	31/03/2025
	Director	Ms Jody Currie	3/09/2020	31/12/2022
	Director	Ms Sarah Vaughan	3/09/2020	31/12/2022
	Director	Ms Shirley Liew	3/09/2020	31/12/2023
	Director	Vacant		
	Special Purpose Director	Mr Kim Keogh	2/04/2019	-

Ministerial Powers relating to appointments

The powers of Ministers in respect to the appointments varies depending upon the governing legislation. In summary:

- The National Disability Insurance Agency, established under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*, states that appointments to the board require the support of a majority of jurisdictions. s47E, s47C

s47E, s47C



In general, once the Commonwealth has decided on candidates to propose, the required consultation with states and territories takes a minimum of four weeks, and can extend to several months.

Statement of Strategic Guidance to the NDIA Board

The NDIS Act provides for the Minister for the NDIS to issue a statement of strategic guidance to the NDIA Board setting out expectations and key priorities, provided the statement is agreed to by all state and territory disability ministers.

A statement of strategic guidance was issued in 2013, 2016 and 2017 and is recommended for 2022.

While not legislatively based, the Minister may also set out the government's expectations of the department in a letter.

Ministerial direction to the NDIA Board

The NDIS Act provides for the Minister for the NDIS to issue ministerial directions to the NDIA Board, provided each such direction is agreed by **all** state and territory disability ministers.

A ministerial direction has never been attempted.

NDIA Executive

The NDIA Board appoints the Chief Executive Officer of the NDIA under section 160 of the NDIS Act. Only the Board may terminate the appointment of the CEO, this can only occur in certain circumstance, for example for misbehaviour or if the CEO is unable to perform the duties of the office¹⁸. The Board must notify the Minister of the termination.

While not an appointment made by the Executive, it is considered a significant appointment under the Cabinet Handbook and should be brought to the Prime Minister's attention, or that of the Cabinet, as it involves a 'full-time chief executive officer position where the board selects the CEO, noting the Minister should not signify agreement without the approval of the Prime Minister'.

The CEO is responsible for the appointment of staff.

s47E, s47C



¹⁸ These circumstances are contained in section 167 of the Act.

Increasing appointments of people with disability on the NDIA Executive requires the NDIA CEO to make appointments that do so, noting that the most recent APS census data indicates that 12 per cent of NDIA SES officers self-identify as having a disability and 19 per cent of general staff, both well above the APS average.

Ministerial direction to NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner

The NDIS Act provides for the Minister to issue ministerial directions to the Commissioner about the exercise of her functions and powers. State and territory consultation/agreement is not required.

A ministerial direction has not previously been made.

- The Australian Institute of Family Studies, established under Part XIVA of the *Family Law Act 1975*, allows the responsible Minister to appoint the Director and give directions to the Director as to the performance of her functions. Powers do exist to terminate the appointment of the Director, although the circumstances are quite specific, for example for misbehaviour or physical or mental incapacity.
- The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, established under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*, provides the Minister with the ability to appoint the Commissioner for a period not exceeding 3 years. The Minister may give directions to the Commissioner about the performance of her functions and there are powers to terminate the appointment of the Commissioner, although the circumstances are quite specific, for example for misbehaviour or physical or mental incapacity.
- Hearing Australia is established under the *Australian Hearing Services Act 1991*, with Directors to the Board appointed by the Minister. The responsible Minister may give written directions as to the performance of the agencies' functions and the exercise of its powers.

The Minister must terminate the appointment of all of the Directors if the Minister is of the opinion that the performance of the Board has been unsatisfactory for a significant period of time. The Minister may also terminate an appointed Director's appointment for misbehaviour or physical or mental incapacity.

The Managing Director of Hearing Australia is appointed by the Minister after receiving a recommendation from the Board. The Minister may, on the recommendation of the Board, terminate the Managing Director's appointment for misbehaviour or physical or mental incapacity.

- The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (Commission) was established as an Executive Agency by Order of the Governor-General on 17 March 2022. The Commissioner is the Head of the Commission, and is due to commence in her role on 1 July 2022.

The Minister for Women's Safety is the Minister responsible for the Commission, with the functions of the Commission including:

- i. provide strategic policy advice to the Minister for Women's Safety;
- ii. promote and enhance coordination across Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and the not-for-profit and private sectors;

- iii. promote coordinated and consistent monitoring and evaluation frameworks by all governments for the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (National Plan);
- iv. develop and maintain a supportive and structured approach to victim-survivor engagement;
- v. inform priorities for policy, research and data collection in cooperation with jurisdictions and relevant organisations and agencies; and
- vi. promote the objectives of the National Plan across all parts of Australian society

External Scrutiny

Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) audits

There is currently one ANAO key performance audit underway in the department.

ANAO audit in progress	Next steps
<p>Implementation and Performance of the Cashless Debit Card Trial – follow on</p> <p>The objective of the audit was to examine the effectiveness of DSS’ administration of the Cashless Debit Card program, including implementation of the recommendations made in Auditor-General Report No.1 2018–19, <i>The Implementation and Performance of the Cashless Debit Card Trial</i>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To form a conclusion against the audit objective, the following criteria were applied: 2. Do DSS and Services Australia have effective risk management, procurement and contract management processes in place for the CDC program? 3. Has DSS implemented effective performance measurement and monitoring processes for the CDC program? 4. Was the expansion of the CDC program informed by findings and lessons learned from an effective evaluation, cost–benefit analysis and post-implementation review of the CDC Trial? <p>Contact: Liz Hefren-Webb, Deputy Secretary, Families and Communities Mobile: S47F Phone: 02 6146 0036</p>	<p>The department received the draft section 19 report on 5 April 2022, with the department providing a formal response to the ANAO on 6 May 2022.</p> <p>The report includes two recommendations. The department has formally disagreed with one recommendation, and has included in its response reasons for not agreeing with the recommendation. The department has been advised that the Auditor-General will include in the final report a rejoinder to the department’s formal response.</p> <p>Once the embargoed copy of the final report is provided (two days prior to tabling), you will be briefed on the findings, the department response and any implications for your stated policy position on this program.</p> <p>The final report is anticipated to be tabled in Parliament the week beginning 30 May 2022.</p>

Communication Campaigns

The department has responsibility for developing, implementing and evaluating seven Australian Government advertising campaigns (each at various stages) to support the effective delivery and implementation of policies, programs, payments and services, under the previous Government. Campaign activities seek to inform, educate, or motivate a particular target audience; change levels of awareness, attitudes and behaviours, in order to encourage engagement and dialogue and achieve public policy outcomes.

Stop it at the Start campaign

Campaign Description	Primary prevention campaign aims to help break the cycle of violence against women by encouraging influencers of young people – parents, family members, teachers, coaches and community leaders – to reflect on their attitudes and talk with young people about respectful relationships and gender equality.
Funding profile / Timeframe:	<p>In the 2015-16 Federal Budget, the department was allocated \$15 million (GST excl) for 2015-16 to 2018-19 (Phases one and two). State and territory governments committed an additional \$15 million (GST excl) on a population-level basis. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet subsequently committed an additional \$1 million, bringing the total funding to \$31 million (GST excl).</p> <p>In the 2019-20 Federal Budget, the department was allocated \$16.7 million (GST excl) in administered funding to deliver Phase three (2019-20 to 2021-22). South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania committed additional funding totalling \$2.008 million (GST excl) bringing the total Phase three investment to \$18.727 million (GST excl).</p> <p>In the 2021-22 Federal Budget, the department was allocated an additional \$21.9 million (GST excl) in administered funding to deliver Phase four (2021-22 to 2022-23).</p> <p>The 2022-23 Federal Budget measure (not yet appropriated) was \$43.35 million (GST excl) in administered funding to develop the fifth and sixth phases of the campaign for 2022-23 to 2024-25</p> <p>Total spend to 30 April 2022 - \$55,846,445</p> <p>FY 2021-22 to 30 April 2022 - \$13,636,079</p>
Key outcomes sought:	<p>Phase four advertising launched on Sunday 27 March 2022 and will run until 3 September 2022 on channels including television, cinema, online video, digital, social media, search and out-of-home.</p> <p>The campaign received bi-partisan agreement to continue activities during the caretaker period.</p>
Recommended next steps:	<p>Advertising and public relations activities for mainstream, culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous audiences are due to continue until 3 September 2022.</p> <p>Following completion, the campaign will be evaluated by the whole-of-government evaluation research agency. Following evaluation of Phase four, development of Phase five will commence.</p>
Contact:	<p>Mardi Stewart, BM Campaigns & Strategic Communication Branch s47F</p> <p>Amber Shuhyta, BM Women's Safety Implementation Branch (6146 0719)</p>

Consent campaign

Campaign Description	The department is working to develop a new campaign on consent and respectful relationships, to help keep young people safe from sexual violence.
Funding profile / Timeframe:	In the 2021-22 Federal Budget, the department was allocated \$10.1 million (GST excl) in administered funding for 2021-22 to 2024-25 The 2022-23 Federal Budget measure (Not Yet Appropriated) for the period 2022-2023 to 2024-2025, was an additional \$29.9 million (GST excl), bringing the total administered campaign funding to \$40 million (GST excl). Total spend to 30 April 2022 - \$585,095 FY 2021-22 to 30 April 2022 - \$585,095
Key outcomes sought:	The campaign is currently under development. It was expected to launch in August 2022, however concept testing research and creative development has been delayed due to the caretaker period.
Recommended next steps:	We suggest briefing you on the campaign and, if supported, a new timeline will be developed for a revised launch date, and concept testing and creative development will re-commence.
Contact:	Mardi Stewart, BM Campaigns & Strategic Communication Branch (S47F) Amber Shuhyta, BM Women's Safety Implementation Branch (6146 0719)

Men's campaign

Campaign Description	An early intervention campaign aimed at confronting the violence-supportive attitudes held by some boys and men. This is an initiative under the 2022-2023 Women's Safety Budget package.
Funding profile / Timeframe:	The 2022-23 Federal Budget measure (not yet appropriated) was \$45 million (GST excl) in administered funding for 2023-24 to 2026-27. Total spend to 30 April 2022 - nil (GST excl) FY 2021-22 to 30 April 2022 - nil (GST excl)
Key outcomes sought:	Under the previous Government, the department received departmental funding to commence campaign development in 2023-24.
Recommended next steps:	Confirm this campaign is supported and if so, begin development as planned in 2023-24.
Contact:	Mardi Stewart, BM Campaigns & Strategic Communication Branch (S47F) Amber Shuhyta, BM Women's Safety Implementation Branch (6146 0719)

Disability Gateway

Campaign Description	Raise awareness of the Disability Gateway phone line and website as a trusted service and source of information to people with disability, their families and carers.
Funding profile / Timeframe:	\$11.69 million 2019-20 to 2021-22 Total spend to 30 April 2022: \$9,309,654 FY 2021-22 to 30 April 2022 \$6,801,146
Key outcomes sought:	The campaign launched on 4 July 2021 and included television, print, out-of-home, digital display and social media advertising. Since the launch, the website at www.disabilitygateway.gov.au has been viewed more than 600,000 times, the phone line has received over 35,000 calls and over 3,478, 418 unique users have seen content on the Disability Gateway Facebook page. An additional Disability Gateway COVID-19 themed advertisement went live on 20 March 2022. All campaign advertising ceased on 13 April 2022 due to caretaker.
Recommended next steps:	The campaign is due to cease on 4 June 2022 and post-campaign evaluation will need to occur. There is no allocated funding for this campaign to continue in 2022-2023. Confirm if this campaign is supported to continue.
Contact:	Mardi Stewart, BM Campaigns & Strategic Communication Branch Ph: 6146 3825 Mob: s47F Sarah Guise, BM, Disability Support Branch Ph: 6146 5701 Mob: s47F

Care and Support Workforce

Campaign Description	The campaign aims to raise awareness of the employment opportunities in the care and support sector – specifically disability support, aged care and veterans’ care – and encourage consideration and take-up among potential workers.
Funding profile / Timeframe:	\$13,326,000 2020-21 to 2021-22 Total spend to 30 April 2022 - \$9,211,070 FY 2021-22 to 30 April 2022 - \$7,514,728 In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission, \$9.45 million (GST excl) in additional funding was allocated in the 2021-22 Budget to the Department of Health. These funds were transferred to DSS to continue the campaign. The unpassed Budget allocation for the 2022-23 Federal Budget is \$9.1 million (GST excl) in administered funding.
Key outcomes sought:	<i>A Life Changing Life</i> launched on 15 August 2021 and stopped due to caretaker. Advertising included television, digital and out of home advertising, with the addition of radio for Indigenous and CALD audiences. The site careandsupportjobs.gov.au has been viewed 2.63 million times as at 30 April 2022.
Recommended next steps:	Seek Government approval for the campaign to recommence in the new financial year with the same creative assets.
Contact:	Mardi Stewart, BM Campaigns & Strategic Communication Branch Ph: 6146 3825 Mob: s47F Thomas Abhayaratna, BM Markets Policy Branch Ph: 6146 0339 Mob: s47F

Carer Gateway

Campaign Description	The Carer Gateway national advertising campaign aims to increase awareness of Carer Gateway services and supports, and encourage unpaid carers to access the phone line and website.
Funding profile / Timeframe:	\$15 million over four years (2020-21; 2021-22; 2022-23; 2023-2024)` Total spend to 30 April 2022 - \$2,626,818 FY 2021-22 to 30 April 2022 - \$2,432,502 The previous Government committed a total of almost \$770 million over four years 2021-22 to 2024-25 to deliver carer services including the administration and promotion of the Carer Gateway.
Key outcomes sought:	The campaign is currently under development. If supported, it is recommended the campaign goes live as soon as possible.
Recommended next steps:	Seek Government approval of the creative assets already developed and seek approval of a revised media plan.
Contact:	Mardi Stewart, BM Campaigns & Strategic Communication Branch Ph: 6146 3825 Mob: S47F Vanessa Beck, BM Disability Employment and Carers Branch Ph: 6146 0200

Improving Parenting Practices

Campaign Description	Increase awareness of strengths-based parenting practices and provide supports and resources for parents and non-parent carers. It will build on previous and existing work to enable parents and non-parent carers to understand the importance of child development and learned parenting, and reduce the stigma associated with families seeking support to improve their parenting practices.
Funding profile / Timeframe:	The 2022-23 Federal Budget measure (not yet appropriated) was \$3 million (GST excl) for 2022-23 to 2026-27. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022-23 - \$950,000 • 2023-24 - \$550,000 • 2024-25 - \$450,000 • 2025-26 - \$400,000 • 2026-27 - \$230,000
Key outcomes sought:	Increase awareness among target audiences of the importance of child development and learned parenting.
Recommended next steps:	Seek Government approval of suggested campaign messaging, creative approach and next steps.
Contact:	Mardi Stewart, BM Campaigns & Strategic Communication Branch Ph: 6146 3825 Mob: S47F Tim Crosier, BM Children's Policy Branch Ph:6146 2701 Mob: S47F

State of Parliamentary Committee Inquiries

There are currently **13** Government Responses being led by the department for Parliamentary Committee Inquiries.

As per the Government's tabling guidelines, the department has 3 months in which to provide the Government's response to Senate and Joint Committee reports, and 6 months to respond to House Committee reports.

Inquiry Description	Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Adequacy of Newstart and related payments and alternative mechanisms to determine the level of income support payments in Australia
Responsible Minister	Minister for Social Services
Status of Government Response	Overdue
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled its report on 30 April 2020 and makes 27 recommendations. The Government response was due to be tabled on 30 July 2020.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Matt Flavel

Inquiry Description	House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual violence
Responsible Minister	Minister for Social Services
Status of Government Response	Overdue The Government response has been delayed until after the launch of the next National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. A Government statement was emailed to the Chair of the Committee on 2 September 2021.
Key Timeframes	The Committee released the final report, which was tabled in the House of Representatives on 1 April 2021. The report made 88 recommendations. The Government response was due to be tabled on 1 October 2021.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Liz Hefren-Webb

Inquiry Name	Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Inquiry into Independent Assessments
Responsible Minister	Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Status of Government Response	Overdue
Key Timeframes	The Committee released the final report on 19 October 2021 and makes 6 recommendations. The Government response was due to be tabled on 19 January 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Debbie Mitchell

Inquiry Name	Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System Inquiry into Australia's
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	Child Support System - Third Interim Report
Responsible Minister	Minister for Social Services
Status of Government Response	Overdue
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled the Third Interim Report on 22 November 2021 and makes 19 recommendations. The Government response was due to be tabled on 22 February 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Matt Flavel

Inquiry Name	Joint Select Committee on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme Inquiry into the National Redress Scheme - Second Interim Report
Responsible Minister	Minister for Social Services
Status of Government Response	Overdue The Government response has been delayed to ensure it aligns with the Government's Final Response to the Second Anniversary Review of the National Redress Scheme. A Government statement was emailed to the Chair of the Committee on 10 February 2022.
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled the second interim report on 23 November 2021 and makes 21 recommendations. The Government response was due to be tabled on 23 February 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Liz Hefren-Webb

Inquiry Name	Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Inquiry into the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
Responsible Minister	Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Status of Government Response	Overdue
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled the final report on 30 November 2021 and makes 30 recommendations. The Government response was due to be tabled on 28 February 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Debbie Mitchell

Inquiry Name	Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Inquiry into General Issues
Responsible Minister	Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Status of Government Response	Overdue
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled the final report on 30 November 2021 and makes 2 recommendations. The Government response was due for tabling on 28 February 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Debbie Mitchell

Inquiry Name	Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs Inquiry into Centrelink's compliance program.
Responsible Minister	Minister for Social Services
Status of Government Response	Overdue
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled the Fifth Interim report in November 2021 and makes 3 recommendations. The Government response was due for tabling in February 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Matt Flavel

Inquiry Name	Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Inquiry into the NDIS workforce
Responsible Minister	Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Status of Government Response	Overdue
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled the final report on 15 February 2022 and makes 8 recommendations. The Government response was due for tabling on 15 May 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Debbie Mitchell

Inquiry Name	Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into the Purpose, intent and adequacy of the Disability Support Pension.
Responsible Minister	Minister for Social Services
Status of Government Response	Overdue
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled their report on 18 February 2022 and makes 30 recommendations. The Government response was due for tabling on 18 May 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Matt Flavel

Inquiry Name	Senate Select Committee on Autism inquiry into Services, support and life outcomes for autistic Australians.
Responsible Minister	Minister for Social Services
Status of Government Response	Ongoing
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled their report on 25 March 2022 and makes 81 recommendations. The Government response is due for tabling on 25 June 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Debbie Mitchell

Inquiry Name	Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Inquiry into Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
Responsible Minister	Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
Status of Government Response	Ongoing
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled their report on 31 March 2022 and makes 6 recommendations. The Government response is due for tabling on 30 June 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Debbie Mitchell

Inquiry Name	Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into the Accountability and justice: Why we need a Royal Commission into Robodebt.
Responsible Minister	Minister for Social Services
Status of Government Response	Ongoing
Key Timeframes	The Committee tabled their report on 13 May 2022 and makes 1 recommendation. The Government response is due for tabling on 16 August 2022.
Relevant Deputy Secretary:	Matt Flavel

Supporting Ministerial Offices

Supporting the Minister

You can expect a high level of service in relation to ministerial and parliamentary support functions from the department. The types and levels of service can be tailored to meet your needs and requirements to assist you to perform your portfolio roles within government.

Should you require interim support to assist in establishing your office we have a range of volunteers who would be willing to supplement your staff while you on board permanent staff. The Secretary is happy to discuss this with you.

Government and Executive Support Branch (GES) has day-to-day responsibility for managing the interface and the flow of material between the department, your office, and the Parliament. GES Branch Manager Ms Joanna Carey, phone 02 6146 4061, mobile s47F is available to discuss your requirements with your Chief of Staff.

GES provides a liaison and quality control point between your office and the department for the flow of:

- ministerial correspondence
- ministerial briefings and submissions
- responses to Parliamentary Questions on Notice (QoNs)
- QTBs
- Senate Estimates briefs
- Senate Estimates QoNs
- cabinet documents
- Parliamentary QoNs

There is an automated whole-of-government Parliamentary workflow system called PDMS which is used for the registration and tracking of correspondence and other paperwork.

The department provides Departmental Liaison Officers to assist your office as a day-to-day operational contact point.

The department also assists you and your office in managing the processes in relation to legislative matters; appointments to statutory and non-statutory bodies, including advisory bodies; preparation of responses to parliamentary reports and inquiries; and the tabling of ministerial statements, annual reports and other documents.

The department is able to assist you with speeches, media releases, and information to respond to media inquiries, communications and events. The Secretary will discuss the protocols you want in place in relation to the management of media inquiries with your Chief of Staff. Corporate Communication and Media Relations Branch Manager, Ms Sam Ursich, phone 02 6146 4615, mobile s47F is available to discuss your requirements with your Chief of Staff and Media Relations Officer. For enquires regarding advertising campaigns and strategic communication requirements, please contact Campaigns and Strategic Communication Branch Manager, Ms Mardi Stewart, phone 02 6146 3825, mobile s47F

The department also provides administrative assistance in the authorisation and payment of certain expenses, incurred by you and your staff in accordance with government guidelines.

Setting up your Office

In conjunction with the Department of Finance (DoF), the department also assists in setting up your Ministerial Offices in Parliament House and your home State and provides administrative assistance in the authorisation and payment of certain expenses incurred by you and DoF will supply standard furniture and equipment in your Ministerial Office while the department supplies the following additional equipment to the Ministerial Office:

- Desktop PCs or laptop and docking station
- Printers
- Mobile phones
- Stationery
- Security class shredders
- safes (i.e. B class storage units)
- Photocopy machines
- Video conferencing equipment
- TVs for use by advisers
- Additional office furniture
- Kitchen equipment such as a kettle, coffee jug, toaster.

CabNet+

As the senior Portfolio Minister, your Parliament House office has a CabNet+ terminal provided by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. CabNet+ is a secure system that allows Protected documentation to be electronically transmitted between Ministers and between portfolio departments. The department has access to one CabNet+ terminal in Tuggeranong for Secret level documents, while all departmental staff have access to CabNet+ on the secure network for all other Cabinet documents. All Ministerial offices also have access to a secure facsimile machine which enables confidential documents to be faxed to other offices with the secure network.

Departmental Liaison Officers (DLOs)

It has been standard practice for the department to appoint DLOs to the Parliament House offices of Ministers and Assistant Ministers to facilitate sound operational relationships between Ministers and public sector agencies. All portfolio departments, and some major agencies, provide DLOs.

DLOs perform a range of functions, and are a key link between the Ministers' offices and portfolio agencies, not least in providing a direct point of contact in the office for agency staff. They may also provide quality control in regard to routine matters and a feedback point on agency material sent to Ministers. In the typical situation, much of the paperwork going to Ministers and their offices flows through DLOs.

Although DLOs form part of each Minister's working team, they are not formally members of the staff of Ministers. At all times, DLOs remain departmental (or agency) staff while placed in such positions. Their duties do not extend to assisting in ways that could lead to allegations that public servants are being used for party political purposes or political advocacy. However, because of their location and roles, day to day reporting by DLOs is generally to the head of the office of the Minister.

Preferences for Ministerial Paperwork

An early meeting with your Chief of Staff will allow the department to quickly set up templates and signing arrangements to meet your preferences in managing ministerial paperwork such as correspondence and departmental briefings.

Within GES, the Ministerial Coordination team provides you, your office and the department with support on ministerial business by coordinating ministerial business across the portfolio. The team provides the executive and Ministers with monitoring of and reporting on parliamentary services. The team is responsible for ensuring effective coordination of:

- Ministerial correspondence
- QTBs
- Ministerial minutes and briefings
- Cabinet liaison
- QoNs
- provision and support of DLOs to the Minister's office
- purchasing and administrative support for the Minister, and
- a courier service from the department to Parliament House.