



SENATOR THE HON ANNE RUSTON

Minister for Families and Social Services
Manager of Government Business in the Senate

THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

29 April 2020

Supporting isolated older Australians during Coronavirus

The Morrison Government will provide \$1 million in grants for community organisations to provide digital devices to older Australians through the Be Connected program.

Minister for Families and Social Services Anne Ruston said the Government was committed to support older Australians stay digitally connected during these difficult times.

“One-off payments of up to \$5000 would allow existing Be Connected Network Partners to purchase and loan digital devices and sim cards to Australians aged over 50 years,” Minister Ruston said.

“We expect these grants will help provide devices such as a laptop or iPad and data plans to up to 3500 older Australians who would otherwise be at risk of disconnecting during the Coronavirus pandemic.

“Access to devices and the internet is essential to support people to continue their learning and remain connected with their family, friends, community and online services.”

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts Paul Fletcher said these grants would help support older Australians to access free daytime webinars hosted by professional eSafety Commissioner trainers that were launched last week.

“These webinars are now available to help improve the online skills of senior Australians who are increasingly turning to the internet to access online services and connect with loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Minister Fletcher said.

The grants will be managed by Good Things Foundation Australia in their role as Be Connected Network and Grants program manager.

Be Connected empowers older Australians to develop the skills needed to thrive in a digital world and its website provides a range of interactive resources and courses that can be accessed and completed at home.

For more information about the program visit beconnected.esafety.gov.au or call the Be Connected Helpline 1300 795 897.

ENDS

Media contact:

Minister Ruston

Tom Edwards 0438 791 913 | Tom.Edwards@aph.gov.au

Minister Fletcher

Brad Hatch 0448 162 679 | Brad.Hatch@communications.gov.au

Rebecca Papillo 0439 892 771 | Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au