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Minister for Families and Social Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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Guaranteeing essential social services Australians rely on

The Morrison Government's plan for a stronger economy is delivering essential social services Australians depend on, with the 2019-20 Budget backing people with disability and their families and carers, keeping women and their children safe from the scourge of domestic violence and bringing down welfare dependence to record lows.

Our Government's first priority is to keep Australians safe and that is why we committed \$328 million over four years from 2018-19 for the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 to fund prevention, response and recovery initiatives to keep women and their children safe. This is the largest ever Commonwealth contribution to the National Plan.

The Budget also extends the successful cashless debit card scheme and builds on the Morrison Government's actions to get people off welfare and into work - actions which have reduced the level of working age welfare dependency to a record 30-year low.

The Morrison Government will provide an \$84.3 million funding boost for new carer services being progressively rolled out to Australia's 2.7 million carers in 2019. This represents one of the biggest reforms to carer services in more than a decade and includes new online educational resources, peer support, coaching and phone based counselling services. It also includes financial support packages valued at up to \$3,000 to cover supports such as planned respite and participation in education and training. Additional funding will focus on young carers and ensuring appropriate support is available.

In line with our commitment to work towards the establishment of a Royal Commission, into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, the Morrison Government has committed \$527.9 million over five years. This is subject to the finalisation of the terms of reference and consideration by the Governor-General. This includes \$148.8 million to provide advocacy and support services to people with disability, their families, carers and supporters who may be impacted by the Royal Commission. All violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability is abhorrent and the establishment of the Royal Commission builds on the Morrison Government's strong actions to provide safe and quality services to people with disability through the establishment of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

The Budget will provide more than 3.9 million Australians with a one-off Energy Assistance Payment to help with their next energy bill and cost of living expenses. The payment of \$75 for singles and \$125 for eligible couples will be exempt from income tax and will be paid

automatically before the end of the current financial year, subject to the passage of legislation.

This Budget continues the Morrison Government's strong record of investment in social services and support for vulnerable Australians including children, youth, Indigenous students, migrants and refugees, with measures including;

- \$22.6 million to extend and expand the National Community Hubs Program and establish the National Youth Hubs Program across the country. These will provide valuable services and support for vulnerable groups such as migrant and refugee women and children to help them integrate and participate in their local communities. Thirty two additional National Community Hubs will be created, bringing the total number of funded Hubs to 100. A further 25 new Youth Hubs will be established.
- \$36.4 million to help Indigenous students stay in boarding school, by ensuring that families of ABSTUDY recipients who need to live away from home to study continue to receive Family Tax Benefit until the end of Year 12.
- \$14.1 million to establish three Social Impact Investment (SII) payment by outcome trials, funding organisations based on the social outcomes they achieve. Organisations will partner with the Government to participate in the trial design, implementation and outcome measurement. In addition, the Government has committed \$5.0 million for the establishment of a Social Impact Investing Taskforce that will develop the next stage of the Government's strategy for its role in this market, including how investments can provide solutions for entrenched disadvantage. This funding builds upon the Government's 2017-18 and 2018-19 Budget commitments to support the SII market in Australia.
- \$25.5 million towards the establishment of the National Centre for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse. Establishing the National Centre, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, highlights the importance the Government places on ensuring the safety of children and young people and its commitment to taking significant steps to prevent future abuse and supporting victims and survivors.

Improvements in technology that enable a more accurate reporting of income for Social Security income support recipients will achieve savings to the Budget and to taxpayers of \$2.1 billion. Importantly, neither eligibility criteria nor maximum payment rates for Social Security income support recipients will change. Under this measure, income support recipients who are employed will report income that is received during the fortnight, rather than calculating and reporting gross earnings. This measure will reduce overpayments of income support payments, and produce a better user experience for income support recipients.

Minister Fletcher said the Morrison Government is committed to improving the wellbeing of individuals and families in Australian communities by guaranteeing the essential services on which they rely. The Budget delivers a range of initiatives to advance this goal.

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