

## SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES

## OCTOBER 2025 BRIEFS INDEX

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## SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES

## OCTOBER 2025 BRIEFS INDEX

#	PDR	TITLE	DIVISION/GROUP
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**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**BUDGET****2025–26 SERVICES AUSTRALIA BUDGET OVERVIEW****Subject/Issue**

Following the 2025–26 Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Outlook (PEFO) announcement and other adjustments, the budget position for Services Australia (the Agency) in the 2025–26 financial year is \$5.8 billion.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Agency's 2025–26 Budget is \$5.8 billion.
- The Agency's 2025–26 Budget measures total \$53.2 million in the 2025–26 financial year and \$171.3 million from the 2024–25 to 2028–29 financial years.
- The 2025–26 PEFO included measures of \$3.5 million in 2025–26 and \$3.9 million from the 2024–25 to 2028–29 years.
- The Agency also has other budget adjustments of \$46.1 million in the 2025–26 financial year, comprising:
  - Adjustments in the 2025–26 Budget of \$99.4 million
  - Adjustments in PEFO of \$4.4 million
  - Whole-of-government savings of \$57.7 million.
- The Agency's Average Staffing Level (ASL) is 29,612.

**Key Points**

- The Agency received additional measures funding in the 2025–26 financial year of \$56.7 million, driven by the following key measures:
  - Strengthening Medicare – \$53.3 million, which comprises:
    - Restoring bulk billing for all Australians
    - MBS New and Amended listings
    - Medicare eligibility for MRI machines at three sites
  - Strengthening Medicare – Women's Health – \$2.9 million
  - Closing the Gap – further investments – a decrease of \$2.8 million in the 2024–25 financial year and \$7.1 million in the 2025–26 financial year as funding moves to the 2026–27 financial year (\$11.8 million increase in the 2026–27 financial year).

## BUDGET

- The Agency will receive additional funding of \$46.1 million for other budget adjustments and section 74 changes in the 2025–26 financial year, which is primarily due to a movement of \$88.9 million from the 2024–25 financial year to the 2025–26 financial year for Aged Care Reforms and a whole-of-government savings measure of \$57.7 million.
- The Agency's ASL in the 2025–26 financial year is 29,612, this is a decrease of 606 from the approved 2024–25 financial year ASL cap of 30,218.
- The major cost driver of expenditure within the Agency is workforce, which includes both Australian Public Service staff and contractors.
- The Agency's workforce budget in the 2025–26 financial year is around \$3.9 billion, which represents 67 per cent of the Agency's overall budget.
- The Agency's remaining budget of just under \$2.0 billion relates to:
  - \$1.6 billion in supplier expenditure, which includes ICT maintenance, leases, property costs, communications, and other minor expenditure
  - \$0.4 billion in purchased capital.

### If asked

#### ***Why do Budget measure values in the Social Services Portfolio Budget Statements for Services Australia not align to Budget Paper No. 2?***

- Funding under the following measures includes amounts that were previously allocated under the Contingency Reserve and the values in Budget Paper No.2 take this into account:
  - Strengthening Medicare – Women's Health
  - Strengthening Medicare – Health Workforce
  - Strengthening Medicare – Expanding Medicare Urgent Care Clinics.

#### ***Why is the Agency's ASL reducing from 2024–25 to 2025–26?***

- In the 2024–25 Budget, the Agency's ASL included an increase of 4,753 ASL in the 2024–25 financial year and 4,241 ASL in the 2025–26 financial year for the *Services Australia – additional resourcing* budget measure.
- The decrease in funded ASL under this measure is the primary driver of the reducing ASL between the 2024–25 and 2025–26 financial years, as reflected in the 2025–26 Social Services Portfolio Budget Statements.

## Background

### Whole-of-government savings

#### Savings measure

Subsequent to the 2025–26 PEFO the Government has applied a savings measure of \$57.7 million for the Agency to reduce expenditure on consultants, contractors and labour hire.

### Budget Measures led by the Department of Health and Aged Care

#### Strengthening Medicare

The measure will expand eligibility for all GP bulk billing incentives to all Australians, supporting GPs to bulk bill an additional 15 million people. The measure is expected to increase the GP bulk billing rate.

The measure will also implement the Stronger Medicare Bulk Billing Clinics Program, which provides an additional payment valued at 12.5 per cent of MBS benefits for GP non-referred attendance services if practices commit to bulk bill all of these services.

This measure will provide MRI licences to 3 hospitals from 1 July 2025:

- Lakeview Private, Norwest NSW
- Barwon Health North, Geelong VIC, and
- Sandringham Hospital, Sandringham VIC.

This measure will also list new and amended services on the MBS.

Services Australia will receive \$214.5 million from the 2025–26 to 2028–29 financial years to implement this measure.

#### Strengthening Medicare – Women's Health

This measure increases access to long-acting reversible contraception MBS items, including:

- Increase the MBS fee for 4 existing MBS items.
- Create 3 new MBS items for nurse practitioners to use for long-acting reversible contraception items.
- Create 2 new MBS items that provide a percentage additional fee loading (at 40 per cent) to encompass the existing 4 long-acting reversible contraception items.

Services Australia will receive \$2.9 million in the 2025–26 financial year and \$3.8 million from the 2025–26 to 2028–29 financial years to administer this measure.

#### Strengthening Medicare – Expanding Medicare Urgent Care Clinics

The measure will boost the Medicare Urgent Care Clinics program with a further 50 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics (bringing the total to 137 nationally).

The measure will also extend MBS billing for 10 state-funded urgent care sites in Victoria and extend the Batemans Bay Medicare Urgent Care Clinics opening hours.

**BUDGET**

Services Australia will receive \$2.4 million from the 2025–26 to 2027–28 financial years to cover MBS flow-on costs associated with the additional clinics.

### **Strengthening Medicare – Health Workforce**

The measure will help attract more doctors to vocational GP training by allowing more leave types for GP registrars.

This includes:

- 5 days of paid leave per year to prepare for exams and assessments
- 20 weeks of paid parental leave for eligible GP registrars
- A \$30,000 incentive payment to first-year GP registrars on Commonwealth-funded pathways, paid in monthly instalments, and
- Indexation of existing National Consistent Payments, consistent with Wage Cost Index.

Services Australia will receive \$1.3 million from the 2025–26 financial year through to the 2028–29 financial year to support the implementation of this measure.

### **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) – New and Amended Listings**

The PBS provides subsidised access to medicines to Australian residents and overseas visitors from countries under Reciprocal Health Care Agreements.

The Agency will receive \$0.9 million from the 2024–25 financial year through to the 2028–29 financial year to list new medicines on the PBS and expands access to others. It will provide better treatment and improved health for Australians.

### **Improving Access to Medicines and Pharmacy Programs**

The measure will strengthen pharmaceutical services within Australia through:

- Changing the wholesale mark-up tiers of pharmaceutical benefits
- Continuing the mandate to use an electronic prescribing system for all dangerous and high-cost drugs.

The wholesale mark-up is paid directly to community pharmacies, who then pass on to their relevant wholesaler.

The mandate for electronic prescribing was introduced in the 2023–24 Budget to increase patient safety and reduce inappropriate access to dangerous drugs. This measure continues this mandate to 30 June 2026.

This measure builds on the 2024–25 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) measure New Government Offer for a Pharmaceutical Wholesaler Agreement.

The Agency will receive \$0.8 million in the 2025–26 financial year to implement this measure.

**Cross Portfolio Budget Measures****Savings from External Labour – Further Extension**

This measure extends the 2024–25 Budget measure Savings from External Labour – extension to the 2028–29 financial year.

The measure will harvest \$54.4 million from the Services Australia Budget in the 2028–29 financial year as a result of savings from external labour utilised by the Agency.

**Budget Measures led by the National Indigenous Australians Agency****Closing the Gap – Further Investments**

The measure will re-profile funding for the Community Development Program.

The Agency will receive \$2.0 million from the 2024–25 to 2026–27 financial years for this measure.

The re-profile of funding is \$2.8 million in the 2024–25 financial year and \$7.1 million in the 2025–26 financial year as funding moves to the 2026–27 financial year (\$11.8 million increase in the 2026–27 financial year).

**Budget Measures led by the Department of Education****Building Australia's Future – Improving Outcomes in Australian Schools**

This measure is for the Agency to update websites and systems for the new 3-day guarantee of the Child Care Subsidy.

Families will get 3 days of Child Care Subsidy per week without needing to complete an activity test.

The Agency will be partially funded via a section 74 arrangement with the Department of Education for this measure.

**PEFO measures led by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts****Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme**

The measure provides the Agency with \$3.5 million in 2025–26 and \$4.0 million from 2025–26 to 2026–27 for the Agency to implement the increase in the rate for the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme.

**PEFO measures led by the Department of Health and Aged Care****Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme New and Amended Listings**

The measure provides the Agency with minor funding adjustments for new, amended and temporary listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

## Supporting information

### Questions on Notice

- No QoNs asked.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs asked.

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- Nil.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
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**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000240

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY****SPEND****CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY SPEND****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) predominantly relies on its Australian Public Services (APS) staff to deliver outcomes, in line with the Strategic Commissioning Framework to reduce inappropriate outsourcing and strengthening the capability of the APS workforce.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Agency has contractors and very few consultancies to supplement its workforce for expertise and requirements that are not readily available.
- The Agency's total contractors and consultant spend over the last three financial years is as follows:

Description	2024–25 \$ million (ex GST)	2023–24 \$ million (ex GST)	2022–23 \$ million (ex GST)
Total Contractors and Consultants	588.39	425.04	763.89

**Contractors**

- The use of contractors allows for the Agency to supplement its workforce to meet operational requirements by assisting with:
  - project work where the need only spans the life of the project, including transformational projects such as Health Delivery Modernisation and Veteran Centric Reform
  - Service Delivery Partners (SDPs) and labour hire to complement the Agency's workforce to meet operational requirements
  - regular business tasks where there is a temporary shortage of ongoing staff to meet business demands, and
  - expertise that is not readily available or accessible across the Agency.

## CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY SPEND

The Agency's total contractors spend over the last three financial years is as follows:

Description	2024–25 \$ million (ex GST)	2023–24 \$ million (ex GST)	2022–23 \$ million (ex GST)
Contractors (incl labour hire)	522.35	366.87	634.45
Service Delivery Partners	57.96	52.60	121.12
<b>Total Contractors</b>	<b>580.31</b>	<b>419.47</b>	<b>755.57</b>

- SDPs are engaged to provide outsourced frontline customer service delivery and claims processing capability.
- The Agency is engaged with two providers for SDP arrangements, Concentrix Services Pty Limited and Telco Services Australia Pty Ltd, down from four providers in 2022-23.
- The key driver of total contractor expenditure in years prior to the 2023-24 financial year was the COVID-19 pandemic and surge response.

### Consultants<sup>1</sup>

- The Agency's total consultants spend over the last three financial years is as follows:

Description	2024–25 \$ million (inc GST)	2023–24 \$ million (inc GST)	2022–23 \$ million (inc GST)
Total Consultants	8.89	6.13	9.15

- The Agency only engages consultants where it requires specialised professional services, independent research, review or assessment, or other necessary skills to supplement the Agency's capabilities. This has been particularly important to help the Agency deliver on key projects.
- Consultants have predominantly been engaged to support the programs, projects and initiatives undertaken across the Agency to transform the way we work and improve service delivery for customers.

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<sup>1</sup> Consultancy costs are shown as GST inclusive to align with published data in the Annual Report.

# CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY SPEND

## Key Points

### Contractors

- Total contractor expenditure to 30 June 2025 of \$522.35 million (2024: \$366.87 million) was driven by expenditure against the following:
  - IT contractors in Technology and Digital Programs of \$416.86 million (2024: \$268.52 million).
  - Child Support and Tailored Services to meet telephony and processing services of \$30.77 million (2024: \$27.95 million).
  - Other contractor expenditure consisting of low value contracts across the Agency to meet operational requirements of \$74.72 million (2024: \$70.4 million).
- Funding of significant ICT projects resulted in higher levels of contractor expenditure to deliver major transformation projects in prior years, which has reduced in the 2023–24 and 2024–25 financial years.
- The Agency continues to review its workforce mix, to reduce the outsourcing of core work in line with the Strategic Commissioning Framework, with an increased surge in workforce requirements in the prior years needed in response to COVID-19 and natural disasters.

### Consultants

- Consultants are engaged by the Agency when:
  - certain skill sets are required that are not available within the Agency
  - there is a need for an independent review or advice
  - a temporary increase to existing specialised or professional skills is required.
- The engagement of consultants fluctuates annually depending on programs, projects and initiatives being undertaken.
- The Agency applies the Department of Finance consultancy guidance criteria when assessing and reporting consultancies.
- Consultancy expenditure in the 2024–25 financial year was \$8,890,223 (GST inclusive) relating to 21 consultancy contracts.

# CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY SPEND

## Background

### Contractors and Consultants

Total contractor and consultant expenditure is outlined in the following table:

Description	2024–25 FY \$ million	2023–24 FY \$ million	Change \$ million	Change %	2022–23 FY \$ million
Contractors <sup>1</sup>	507.54	355.85	151.69	43%	614.17
SDP	57.96	52.60	5.36	10%	121.12
Labour Hire	14.81	11.02	3.79	34%	20.28
Consultants	8.08	5.57	2.51	45%	8.32
<b>Total expenditure contractors only</b>	<b>588.39</b>	<b>425.04</b>	<b>163.35</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>763.89</b>

<sup>1</sup> Contractors includes capitalised amounts of \$182.17 million in 2024–25, \$138.31 million in 2023–24 and \$297.60 million in the 2022–23 financial year.

Labour hire panels provide administrative functions from vendors such as Chandler Macleod, Compas and Hays.

SDPs outsource providers such as Concentrix Services and Telco Services Australia.

Contractors providing professional skills are from vendors such as Akkodis Australia Talent, IBM Australia and FinXL Professional Services.

Expenditure for the top 10 vendors in the current and previous financial year are as follows:

Current financial year	
Vendor	2024–25 \$ million
Akkodis Australia Talent	32.77
Concentrix Services Pty Ltd	32.42
TELCO SERVICES AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	25.54
Compas Pty Ltd	22.75
Talent International (ACT) Pty Ltd	16.54
IBM Australia Ltd	15.09
FinXL Professional Services Pty Ltd	14.16
INDUE LTD	13.55
INDEX Consultants Pty Ltd	12.48
Peoplebank Australia Ltd	12.30
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>197.60</b>

# CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY SPEND

Current financial year	
Vendor	2024–25 \$ million
Other contractors expenditure	390.79
<b>Total Contractors expenditure</b>	<b>588.39</b>

Prior financial years		
Vendor	2023–24 \$ million	2022–23 \$ million (rank)
Akkodis Australia Talent	28.22	45.08 (2)
Concentrix Services Pty Ltd (SDP)	26.76	36.65 (4)
TELCO SERVICES AUSTRALIA (SDP)	22.34	
Ernst & Young	18.97	42.10 (3)
Compas Pty Ltd	17.65	24.93 (6)
FinXL Professional Services Pty Ltd	13.35	20.77 (8)
Talent International (ACT) Pty Ltd	10.28	20.55 (10)
INDUE LTD	9.21	
INDEX Consultants Pty Ltd	8.96	
ONCALL Language Services	8.39	
Serco Citizen Services Pty Ltd (SDP)		48.12 (1)
Probe Asia Pacific Pty Ltd / Stellar Asia Pacific Pty Ltd (SDP)		29.67 (5)
Infosys Technologies Limited		24.66 (7)
SAP Australia Pty Ltd		20.57 (9)
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>164.13</b>	<b>313.10</b>
Other contractors expenditure	260.91	450.79
<b>Total Contractors expenditure</b>	<b>425.04</b>	<b>763.89</b>

# CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY SPEND

The Agency also uses contractors for projects. Programs/projects with contractor expenditure include:

Current financial year	
Program/Project Name	2024–25 \$ million
Support at Home Program	26.22
ICT to Enable Reform - New Aged Care Act	13.10
Essential Eight Maturity	11.89
Health Delivery Modernisation	11.36
Technology and Digital Programs	9.01
NDIS National Care & Support Worker Screening Check	8.06
Services Australia Enterprise Resource Planning	4.93
DVA Modernisation Program	3.66
MyMedicare (VPE/MyGP)	3.38
Other Projects	90.56
<b>Total Capitalised Contractor Expenditure</b>	<b>182.17</b>

Prior financial years		
Program/Project Name	2023–24 \$ million	2022–23 \$ million
GovERP Program	23.64	72.60
Technology and Digital Programs	21.20	
Health Delivery Modernisation	18.52	8.05
Support to Home Program	11.15	
DVA Modernisation Program	11.02	
VPE/MyGP	6.60	7.15
NDIS National Care & Support Worker Screening Check	6.14	
DSS Redress Scheme Enhancements	2.36	5.64
Places to People: Embedding Choice in Residential Aged Care	4.75	
24x7 Registered Nurse Supplement	4.10	
Welfare Payments Infrastructure Transformation		67.83
Enhanced myGov and Digital Identity		52.63
Residential Aged Care Funding Reform		31.33
Veteran Centric Reform		13.21
GP Training Payments - Base System		4.56
Other Projects	28.83	34.60
<b>Total Capitalised Contractor Expenditure</b>	<b>138.31</b>	<b>297.60</b>

# CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY SPEND

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- SQ21-000163. Expenditure on contracts and contractors. Budget Estimates – 4 June 2021. Tabled 4 August 2021.
- #1095, PQ20-000001. External Contractors. Parliamentary QoN. Tabled 24 February 2020.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs asked.

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [Rebuilding and rebalancing public service critical for Australia's future | Ministers' media centre](#), Minister Gallagher media release, 6 May 2024.
- [Labor to achieve an additional \\$1 billion in savings from consultants and contractors | Ministers' media centre](#), Minister Gallagher media release, 5 May 2024.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Is Services Australia's workforce rebuild complete?](#), Dan Holmes, The Mandarin, 9 April 2025
- [Why cut thousands of public service jobs? Who came up with the idea?](#), Gareth Hutchins, The ABC, 23 March 2025
- [Public service cuts lead to outsourcing and poor service delivery, report says](#), Emma Partis, The Accounting Times, 28 February 2025
- [Gov agencies to bring \\$49m tech delivery back in-house - Strategy - Training & Development](#), Eleanor Dickinson, iTnews, 4 November 2024
- [Services Australia dumps \\$343 million Serco call centre deal, 610 staff to be sacked](#), Julian Bajkowski, The Mandarin, 16 June 2023
- [Services Australia revises IT contractor cuts to "around 1245" - Training & Development - iTnews](#), Ry Crozier, iTnews, 15 February 2023.
- [Services Australia contractor cull cuts 1,000 positions](#), Julian Bajkowski, The Mandarin, 30 November 2022
- [Labour hire bill soars but Katy Gallagher promises she will fix Coalition's 'systemic dismantling' of APS](#), Sarah Basford Canales, The Canberra Times, 19 September 2022.
- [Warning over Centrelink call centres as Services Australia slashes contracts](#), Luke Henriques-Gomes, The Guardian, 12 June 2022.
- [Labour won't cancel big four consulting contracts](#), Tom McIlroy and Edmund Tadros, Financial Review, 25 May 2022.
- [Public Sector contracts set to be scrutinised under Albanese government](#), Tom Ravlic, The Mandarin, 23 May 2022

# CONTRACTOR AND CONSULTANCY SPEND

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
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**PDR Number:** SB25-000241

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**WORKFORCE SIZE AND STRUCTURE****WORKFORCE SIZE AND STRUCTURE (INCLUDING WFH)****Subject/Issue**

The majority of Services Australia's (the Agency's) workforce are Australian Public Service (APS) employees, with a mix of ongoing, non-ongoing and casual employment.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The total headcount of the Agency as at 30 June 2025 was 37,501 which comprised:
  - 35,203 (93.9 per cent) APS, and
  - 2,298 (6.1 per cent) non-APS.
- Service Delivery Partners (SDPs) make up an additional workforce headcount of 668 and are not included in above headcount.
- The Agency's non-APS workforce (comprising of labour hire personnel, contractors, and outsourced providers) provide additional flexibility to engage short-term specialist or surge services.
- The Agency is focused on workforce affordability and stability, ensuring recruitment of the Agency's service delivery workforce is keeping pace with separations to maintain staffing levels, and in turn the quality of services to customers.
- Between 1 December 2020 and 30 June 2025, approximately 4,500 non-APS employees, including labour hire, contractor and SDP staff, have transitioned to APS employment in the Agency.
- In the last 12 months (1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025), 158 APS employees (non-ongoing and intermittent/irregular) have transitioned to APS ongoing employment. This figure has significantly declined over the past 12 months (from 1,048) as the Agency prioritised the recruitment of ongoing staff over non-ongoing and intermittent/irregular, removing the need for conversion.

**Key Points**

- The Agency's APS employee headcount increased by 1,649 between 30 June 2024 (33,554) and 30 June 2025 (35,203); with the largest increase in the ongoing workforce (from 32,737 to 34,766).

## WORKFORCE SIZE AND STRUCTURE

- The Agency's current and historical workforce headcount data is at Attachment A.
- An overview of the Customer Service Delivery Group is provided at Attachment B.

### Working from Home

- The total headcount of the Agency's workforce (APS and non-APS) with some type of flexible work arrangement in place, working from home for part of their duties, was 14,801 (39.5 per cent).

### Commencements

- The Agency has seen significant growth in ongoing commencements, which can be attributed to the targeted recruitment in Customer Service Delivery Group.
- Over the last 12 months the Agency had 6,530 (6,375 ongoing and 155 non-ongoing and casuals) APS commencements.
  - Of the 6,530 commencements, 75.8 per cent (4,951) were APS3s and APS4s commencing in Customer Service Delivery Group (CSDG) in customer contact roles.

### Separtations

- Over the last 12 months, the Agency had 4,868 separations, of which 4,491 were ongoing and 377 were non-ongoing and casuals.
- Over the last 12 months the Agency's ongoing<sup>1</sup> separation/attrition rate was:
  - 12.9 per cent ongoing or, if moves to other APS agencies are excluded, 9.3 per cent.
  - When comparing the Agency separation rates with other APS agencies we are well within normal rates.
  - The Agency's results were more favourable when compared to the Australian industry standard.

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<sup>1</sup> Ongoing employees only as non-ongoing are for specified period or task and may distort figures.

## WORKFORCE SIZE AND STRUCTURE

### Background

As part of the Budget 2024–25, the Agency received \$1.8 billion over 3 financial years to 2025–26 to: maintain a customer service workforce to deliver timely services and payments to Australians experiencing vulnerability in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis; sustain emergency response capability; and support other aspects of the Agency's operations.

This has improved claim processing times, and shorter call wait times for customers.

Headcount represents the number of individual employees on the HR Information System at a point in time, irrelevant of whether they are full-time, part-time or on leave without pay.

Total headcount will always be higher than Average Staffing Level (ASL) or paid Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) (data provided by the Chief Financial Officer). This is because paid FTE and ASL are financial approaches. It reviews employees, their worked/paid hours over a period, and excludes any periods not worked or not being paid a salary. For example, if an employee commences or leaves part way through a month, or if an employee was on unpaid leave for the entire month. Paid FTE and ASL are based on a defined period. ASL does not currently capture the Agency's non-APS workforce.

The Agency's other workforce includes non-APS labour hire, which is a subset of contractor expenses, engaged under specific panel and contract arrangements. From 7 August 2023, labour hire is engaged by using the Department of Finance People Panel.

The Agency supports Indigenous business and economic development, by contracting with several Indigenous enterprises for the provision of labour hire services.

Customer Service Delivery Group utilise SDPs to help deliver services to the community through a fee-for-service arrangement, whereby they provide workload seconds. SDPs determine the workforce required to deliver their contracted workloads.

### Working from Home

As at 30 June 2025, the Agency's working from home (WFH) status is outlined in the table below.

APS Headcount WFH	Non-APS Headcount WFH	Total APS and Non-APS Headcount
13,657 (38.8 per cent) Of these 637 (4.7 per cent) WFH 100 per cent	1,144 (49.8 per cent) Of these 54 (4.7 per cent) WFH 100 per cent	14,801 (39.5 per cent) Of these 691 (4.7 per cent) WFH 100 per cent

## WORKFORCE SIZE AND STRUCTURE

### Commencements and Separations

The Agency has seen significant growth in ongoing commencements, which can be attributed to the targeted recruitment in Customer Service Delivery Group.

	Ongoing Commencements and Rate	Ongoing Separations and Rate
1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024	7,187 (22.0 per cent)	4,971 (15.2 per cent) 1,837 (5.6 per cent) ongoing separations are due to employees taking up roles in other APS Agencies.
1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025	6,375 (18.3 per cent)	4.491 (12.9 per cent) 1,246 (3.6 per cent) ongoing separations are due to employees taking up roles in other APS Agencies.

### Longitudinal Ongoing Separation Rates and Benchmarking

When comparing Agency separation rates with other APS agencies (which excludes those employees that leave the Agency to join another APS agency), the ongoing separation rate for the Agency is well within normal separation rates for Australia when compared to the overall APS<sup>2</sup>, which was 6.6 per cent, and on average 6.8 per cent for other APS extra-large agencies<sup>3</sup>.

Additionally, when benchmarking the Agency's separations to the Australian Industry<sup>4</sup> and Contact Centre Industry<sup>5</sup>, the Agency's results were more favourable than the industry standard. The Australian Human Resource Institute Quarterly Australian Work Outlook<sup>3</sup> reported the turnover rate remained unchanged at 16 per cent, with high workloads being the main cause.

The Contact Centre Industry Best Practice Report<sup>4</sup> states the average attrition across Australian contact centres had increased to 29 per cent in 2024 with financial reasons being the top reason for leaving.

<sup>2</sup> [APS sourced from APS Employment Release Tables – 31 December 2024](#). The APS data for 30 June 2025 data is expected to be published in October 2025

<sup>3</sup> Extra-large APS agencies: Services Australia, ATO, Home Affairs, Defence

<sup>4</sup> [AHRI's Quarterly Australian Work Outlook – March 2025 | Australian HR Institute](#).

<sup>5</sup> [2025 Australian Contact Centre Industry Best Practice Report](#), [2024 Australian Contact Industry Attrition statements](#) and [2023 Australian Contact Industry Attrition statements](#).

## WORKFORCE SIZE AND STRUCTURE

Below is a summary of the CSDG results when comparing to the Australian Contact Centre Industry Benchmarks:

Australian Contact Centre Industry Benchmarks	Agency's data for APS3 and 4s in CSDG Customer Contact roles
<p>29 per cent is the average attrition rate for contact centres in Australia (an increase of two per cent from 2024) and similar to rates seen before the year of the great resignation in 2023.</p> <p>Contact Centre Attrition is significantly higher at 43.1 per cent for contact centres over 1,000 seats.</p>	<p>17 per cent is the ongoing APS3 and APS4 Customer Service Delivery Group, customer contact roles 12 monthly attrition rate.</p>
<p>79 per cent of front-line staff say they don't see their Executive enough, and 27 per cent say they've never seen them at all.</p>	<p>For the 2025 Census, of the APS3 and APS4 cohort in CSDG:</p> <p>56 per cent said the SES are sufficiently connected in Services Australia (e.g. actively engages with staff).</p> <p>65 per cent said their manager communicates effectively, and 63 per cent said their SES work as a team.</p>
<p>87 per cent said they feel well equipped to do their job to a high standard.</p>	<p>For the 2025 Census, of the APS3 and APS4 cohort in CSDG:</p> <p>72 per cent responded that they are overall satisfied with their job.</p>
<p>29 per cent said they feel very connected to their organisation's purpose</p>	<p>For the 2025 Census, of the APS3 and APS4 cohort in CSDG:</p> <p>84 per cent believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of my Agency.</p>

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- SQ24-000997. Working from Home (WFH) Flexible Work Arrangements, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 12 December 2024.
- SQ24-000992. Headcount of each group/division in Services Australia, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 12 December 2024.
- SQ24-000954. Working From Home – Multiple Questions, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 12 December 2024.
- SQ24-000840. Service Delivery Staff – Headcount, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 12 December 2024.
- SQ24-000830. APS and Non-APS Headcount - by Group, Division, Branch 31 July 2024, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.

## WORKFORCE SIZE AND STRUCTURE

- SQ24-000833. APS and Non-APS Headcount - by Group, Division, Branch 1 July 2024, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000837. APS Headcount, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000786. External Professional Development Training, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000793. APS Academy Training, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000769. Internal Recruitment, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000771. Longer than 90 days Acting, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000772. Longer than 90 days Vacant, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000806. Staff Turnover Rate, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000811. APS Departures, Supplementary Budget Estimates, 6 November 2024, Tabled 19 December 2024.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Services Australia's multicultural mojo, APSC CALD out for diversity](#), Julian Bajkowski, The Mandarin, May 6 2024.
- [Tax Office the most CALD APS agency](#), Julian Bajkowski, The Mandarin, May 2 2024.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
**Cleared by (SES):** Michelle Kinmonth, General Manager  
**Telephone No:** **s47F(1)**  
**Group/Division:** Corporate Enabling Group / Workforce Capability Division  
**Contact Officer:** **s22**  
**Telephone No:** **s22**  
**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000238

## Agency Current and Historical Workforce Headcount Profile

	WHOLE OF AGENCY 30 June 2021		WHOLE OF AGENCY 30 June 2022		WHOLE OF AGENCY 30 June 2023		WHOLE OF AGENCY 30 June 2024		WHOLE OF AGENCY 30 June 2025		WHOLE OF AGENCY 30 June 2025 Compared to 30 June 2024	
APS Ongoing Headcount	26,932	70.1%	27,547	74.6%	27,849	81.3%	32,737	92.8%	34,766	92.7%	2,029	6.2%
APS Non-Ongoing Headcount	3,897	10.1%	1,321	3.6%	2,491	7.3%	158	0.4%	137	0.4%	-21	-13.3%
APS Irregular/Intermittent Headcount	3,220	8.4%	3,442	9.3%	2,072	6.0%	659	1.9%	300	0.8%	-359	-54.5%
<b>TOTAL APS Headcount (excluding Secondees)</b>	<b>34,049</b>		<b>32,310</b>		<b>32,412</b>		<b>33,554</b>		<b>35,203</b>		<b>1,649</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
Total Secondees (Commonwealth employees including APS and non-APS)	91	0.2%	34	0.1%	18	0.1%	45	0.1%	17	0.0%	-28	-62.2%
Non-APS Labour Hire	967	2.5%	1,090	2.9%	47	0.1%	23	0.1%	13	0.0%	-10	-43.5%
Non-APS Contractor	3,302	8.6%	3,517	9.5%	1,780	5.2%	1,642	4.7%	2,268	6.0%	626	38.1%
<b>TOTAL End of Period Headcount Secondees and Non-APS</b>	<b>4,360</b>		<b>4,641</b>		<b>1,845</b>		<b>1,710</b>		<b>2,298</b>		<b>588</b>	<b>34.4%</b>
<b>TOTAL End of Period Headcount APS and non-APS</b>	<b>38,409</b>		<b>36,951</b>		<b>34,257</b>		<b>35,264</b>		<b>37,501</b>		<b>2,237</b>	<b>6.3%</b>
Not included in workforce totals > Non-APS Outsourced - Service Delivery Partners	5,350		3,603		1,321		719		668		-51	-7.1%

## Agency APS Workforce Engagements and Separations

Rolling 12 Months	1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021		1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022		1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023		1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024		1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025		WHOLE OF AGENCY 30 June 2025 Compared to 30 June 2024	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate								
Ongoing Engagement Rate	896	3.3%	1,613	5.9%	1,950	7.0%	7,187	22.0%	6,375	18.3%	-812	-11.3%
Non-Ongoing Engagement Rate	5,945	83.5%	2,558	53.7%	4,043	88.6%	153	18.7%	155	35.5%	2	1.3%
<b>TOTAL APS Engagements (excluding Secondees)</b>	<b>6,841</b>		<b>4,171</b>		<b>5,993</b>		<b>7,340</b>		<b>6,530</b>		<b>-810</b>	<b>-11.0%</b>
Ongoing Separation Rate	2,076	7.7%	2,854	10.4%	3,707	13.3%	4,971	15.2%	4,491	12.9%	-480	-9.7%
Movements to other APS Agencies	520	1.9%	863	3.1%	1,244	4.5%	1,837	5.6%	1,246	3.6%	-591	-32.2%
Ongoing Separation Rates (excluding APS Transfers)	1,556	5.8%	1,991	7.2%	2,463	8.8%	3,134	9.6%	3,245	9.3%	111	3.5%
<b>TOTAL APS Separations (excluding Secondees)</b>	<b>4,511</b>		<b>5,885</b>		<b>5,871</b>		<b>6,188</b>		<b>4,904</b>		<b>-1,284</b>	<b>-20.7%</b>

### Agency Ongoing separation headcount and rates for the last 10 years

	1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015		1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016		1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017		1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018		1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019		1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020		1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021		1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022		1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023		1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024		1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025	
oing	1,818	5.8%	2,231	7.1%	2,338	7.7%	2,546	8.5%	2,838	10.1%	2,019	7.3%	2,076	7.7%	2,854	10.4%	3,707	13.3%	4,971	15.2%	4,491	12.9%
ments to other APS es ONLY	217	0.7%	620	2.0%	347	1.1%	392	1.3%	421	1.5%	496	1.8%	520	1.9%	863	3.1%	1,244	4.5%	1,837	5.6%	1,246	3.6%
mark > Overall APS g Separation excluding APS ) from APSC Data	10,666	7.8%	9,797	7.1%	9,756	7.1%	10,308	7.6%	12,109	9.2%	9,847	7.4%	8,509	5.8%	11,142	7.3%	11,856	8.2%	11,280	7.1%	11,782 <sup>2</sup>	6.6%

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from APSC Statistical Bulletins. Note that retrospective adjustments may have been made to previously published figures.

<sup>2</sup> APSC data is based on 31 December 2024 as 30 June 2025 data is yet to be released.

## Customer Service Delivery Group Current and Historical Workforce Headcount Profile

			CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY GROUP 30 June 2021		CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY GROUP 30 June 2022		CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY GROUP 30 June 2023		CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY GROUP 30 June 2024		CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY GROUP 30 June 2025		CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY GROUP 30 June 2025 Compared to 30 June 2024	
APS Ongoing Headcount	17,354	71.5%	16,699	76.1%	17,066	79.3%	22,549	96.6%	23,631	98.3%	1,082	4.8%		
APS Non-Ongoing Headcount	2,725	11.2%	778	3.5%	2,236	10.4%	73	0.3%	57	0.2%	-16	-21.9%		
APS Irregular/Intermittent Headcount	3,153	13.0%	3,425	15.6%	2,072	9.6%	658	2.8%	300	1.2%	-358	-54.4%		
<b>TOTAL APS Headcount (excluding Secondees)</b>	<b>23,232</b>		<b>20,902</b>		<b>21,374</b>		<b>23,280</b>		<b>23,988</b>		<b>708</b>	<b>3.0%</b>		
Total Secondees (Commonwealth employees including APS and non-APS)	30	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Non-APS Labour Hire	506	2.1%	923	4.2%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	-1	-100.0%		
Non-APS Contractor	487	2.0%	126	0.6%	141	0.7%	67	0.3%	62	0.3%	-5	-7.5%		
<b>TOTAL End of Period Headcount Secondees and Non-APS</b>	<b>1,023</b>		<b>1,049</b>		<b>142</b>		<b>68</b>		<b>62</b>		<b>-6</b>	<b>-8.8%</b>		
<b>TOTAL End of Period Headcount APS and non-APS</b>	<b>24,255</b>		<b>21,951</b>		<b>21,516</b>		<b>23,348</b>		<b>24,050</b>		<b>702</b>	<b>3.0%</b>		
Not included in workforce totals > Non-APS Outsourced - Service Delivery Partners	5,350		3,603		1,321		719		668		-51	-7.1%		

Customer Service Delivery APS Workforce Engagements and Separations														
Rolling 12 Months			1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021		1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022		1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023		1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024		1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025		CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY GROUP 30 June 2025 Compared to 30 June 2024	
Ongoing Engagement Rate	299	1.7%	679	4.1%	1,396	8.2%	6,519	28.9%	5,290	22.4%	-1,229	-18.9%		
Non-Ongoing Engagement Rate	4,638	78.9%	2,407	57.3%	3,846	89.3%	54	7.4%	55	15.4%	1	1.9%		
<b>TOTAL APS Engagements (excluding Secondees)</b>	<b>4,937</b>		<b>3,086</b>		<b>5,242</b>		<b>6,573</b>		<b>5,345</b>		<b>-1,228</b>	<b>-18.7%</b>		
Ongoing Separation Rate	1,202	6.9%	1,661	9.9%	2,318	13.6%	3,423	15.2%	3,445	14.6%	22	0.6%		
Movements to other APS Agencies	120	0.7%	288	1.7%	525	3.1%	893	4.0%	751	3.2%	-142	-15.9%		
Ongoing Separation Rates (excluding APS Transfers)	1,082	6.2%	1,373	8.2%	1,793	10.5%	2,530	11.2%	2,694	11.4%	164	6.5%		
<b>TOTAL APS Ongoing Separations (excluding Secondees)</b>	<b>1,202</b>		<b>1,661</b>		<b>2,318</b>		<b>3,423</b>		<b>3,445</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>0.6%</b>		

Customer Service Delivery Ongoing APS separations headcount and rates for the last 10 years																						
	1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015	1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016	1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017	1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018	1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019	1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020	1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021	1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023	1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024	1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025											
All Ongoing	1,019	5.1%	1,112	5.4%	1,340	6.9%	1,540	8.1%	1,696	9.6%	1,196	6.4%	1,202	6.9%	1,661	9.9%	2,318	13.6%	3,423	15.2%	3,445	14.6%
Movements to other APS agencies ONLY	72	0.4%	88	0.4%	88	0.5%	127	0.7%	142	0.8%	150	0.8%	120	0.7%	288	1.7%	525	3.1%	893	4.0%	751	3.2%
Benchmark > Overall APS Ongoing Separation Rate <sup>1</sup> (excluding APS transfers) from APSC Data	10,666	7.8%	9,797	7.1%	9,756	7.1%	10,308	7.6%	12,109	9.2%	9,847	7.4%	8,509	5.8%	11,142	7.3%	11,856	8.2%	11,280	7.1%	11,782 <sup>2</sup>	6.6%

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from APSC Statistical Bulletins. Note that retrospective adjustments may have been made to previously published figures.<sup>2</sup> APSC data is based on 31 December 2024 as 30 June 2025 data is yet to be released.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN****MATTERS****COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN MATTERS****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) works closely with the Commonwealth Ombudsman to address customer complaints.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Agency has a productive working relationship with the Commonwealth Ombudsman and their Office.
- The Agency appreciates the Commonwealth Ombudsman's advice in relation to investigations and other matters, as this supports the Agency's continual efforts to improve services to our customers.
- In the 2024–25 financial year, the Commonwealth Ombudsman has notified the Agency of:
  - 55 formal Section 8 investigations
  - 323 preliminary inquiries under Section 7A of the *Ombudsman Act 1976 (Cth)* (the Act), and
  - 4 Ombudsman own motion investigations.
- In the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency received 292 complaint transfers. There is an agreed protocol for complaint transfers where the Commonwealth Ombudsman declines to investigate and refers customers back to the Agency to resolve the matter.

**Key Points**

- The Commonwealth Ombudsman may investigate customer complaints or administrative action of the Agency. When this occurs, the Agency is formally notified of the investigation in accordance with the requirements of the Act.
- The Agency promptly provides comprehensive responses to inquiries and questions during investigations by the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- In the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency has provided 96 per cent of responses within the Commonwealth Ombudsman's timeframes.
- Enquiries about investigations of the Commonwealth Ombudsman should be directed to that Office as it would be inappropriate for the Agency to comment further on any ongoing investigation.

# COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN

## MATTERS

### **Customer complaint investigations and themes**

- In the 2024–25 financial year, there was a decrease in formal complaint investigations and an increase in preliminary inquiries from the Commonwealth Ombudsman compared to the previous financial year.
- Most preliminary inquiries sent to the Agency do not progress to a formal complaint investigation.
- In the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency received:
  - 55 formal Section 8 investigations
  - 323 preliminary inquiries under Section 7A of the Act.
- In the 2023–24 financial year, the Agency received:
  - 85 formal Section 8 investigations
  - 118 preliminary inquiries under Section 7A of the Act.
- The Commonwealth Ombudsman’s Statement of Commitments published in August 2024, states it will “consider carefully whether and when to act informally or formally, including whether and when to use coercive powers” in the exercise of their discretion.

### **Commonwealth Ombudsman Reports published about Services Australia in the 2024–25 financial year**

- In the 2024–25 financial year, the Commonwealth Ombudsman published 5 reports relevant to the Agency:
  - *Keeping myGov Secure (6 August 2024)*.
    - This report was published following own motion investigations conducted into Agency activities in 2023–24.
  - *Learning from Merits Review (13 December 2024)*.
    - This report was published following own motion investigations conducted into Agency activities in 2023–24.
  - *Actions Speak: Did they do what they said they would? (16 December 2024)*.
    - This is the Commonwealth Ombudsman’s status report on recommendations that his office is monitoring across Commonwealth agencies.

# COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN MATTERS

- *Without Judgement – Services Australia – Improving the interface between Child Support and victim – survivors (17 March 2025).*
  - This report follows a Commonwealth Ombudsman investigation of a member of the public's complaint about their experience with the Child Support Program.
- *Weaponising Child Support – when the system fails families (3 June 2025)*
  - This report was published following the own motion investigation conducted into financial abuse in the Child Support Program in the 2024–25 financial year.

## Commonwealth Ombudsman Reports published about Services Australia in the 2025–26 financial year

- *Automation in the Targeted Compliance Framework: when the law is changed but the system isn't (6 August 2025).*
  - This report follows an own motion investigation initiated in 2024–25.

## Engagement with the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office

- The Agency engages with the Commonwealth Ombudsman in accordance with the Statements of Expectations and Commitments, and the investigative powers and functions as outlined in the Act.
- The Agency and the Commonwealth Ombudsman hold bi-annual liaison meetings at the SES Band 2 level, and monthly meetings at officer level. These meetings focus on key administrative issues and customer complaint themes relevant to the Agency's delivery of services.
- Questions on specific investigations currently being conducted by the Commonwealth Ombudsman are best directed to their office

## COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN MATTERS

### Background

Often, the Commonwealth Ombudsman makes inquiries and may investigate complaints from customers who believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably by the Agency.

Only a small proportion of complaints received by the Commonwealth Ombudsman are investigated. Generally, customers are referred back to the Agency and we are able to resolve the complaint.

### Media coverage of recent investigation reports

The two most recently published investigation reports, namely *Weaponising Child Support* (3 June 2025) and *Automation in the Targeted Compliance Framework* (6 August 2025) have both attracted significant media attention.

The Agency accepted all 8 recommendations in the *Weaponising Child Support* report. Some recommendations cannot be solely implemented by the Agency (or are dependent on significant amendments to legislation). In December 2024, the Agency released its new Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Strategic Commitment.

The Ombudsman's recommendations are assisting the Agency to tailor this work further, through the development of a specific strategy to address financial abuse within the Child Support Program.

The Agency accepted all 5 recommendations relevant to Services Australia in the *Automation in the Targeted Compliance Framework* report.

The Agency is working with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to ensure cancellation decisions made under the Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF) are lawful, fair and reasonable.

Work on documenting the approach and processes to identify, assess key risks and remediate issues in the TCF are well-advanced.

The Agency will provide further updates to the Commonwealth Ombudsman on implementing the recommendations in these reports.

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- Nil

#### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil

#### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

## COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN MATTERS

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Commonwealth Ombudsman investigation report #1 on Targeted Compliance Framework investigation](#), Commonwealth Ombudsman, 6 August 2025
- <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/breaking-news/employment-minister-amanda-rishworth-urged-to-release-secret-report-following-unlawful-jobseeker-cancellations/news-story/e4e867a220a77ce7352375be9180f310?btr=575f74014d85aecd2d3a3f0503d3f31f>, *The Australian*, 6 August 2025
- <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/aug/05/hundreds-of-jobseeker-payments-cancelled-illegally-by-government-it-system-watchdog-finds>, *The Guardian*, 6 August 2025
- [https://www.acoss.org.au/media-releases/?media\\_release=damaging-compliance-system-must-stop-immediately-after-damning-ombudsman-report-acoss](https://www.acoss.org.au/media-releases/?media_release=damaging-compliance-system-must-stop-immediately-after-damning-ombudsman-report-acoss), ACOS, 6 August 2025
- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-06/commonwealth-ombudsman-finds-payment-cancellation-unlawful/105616010>, ABC News, 6 August 2025
- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-06-25/child-support-payments-avoid-parents-submit-tax-returns-ato-/104006544>, ABC News, 25 June 2025
- [Commonwealth Ombudsman media release on Weaponising Child Support](#), Commonwealth Ombudsman, 3 June 2025
- <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/8982483/child-support-weaponised-against-parents-report/>, *The Canberra Times*, 3 June 2025
- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-06-03/centrelink-services-australia-child-support-ombudsman-report/105365544>, ABC News, 3 June 2025
- [Without Judgement report – Services Australia – Improving the interface between Child Support and victim-survivors](#), Commonwealth Ombudsman, 17 March 2025
- <https://aapnews.aap.com.au/news/how-agency-staff-put-abuse-survivor-through-the-wringer>, AAP, 17 March 2025

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
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**Consultation:** GM, Families and Participation  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000208

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**ANAO AUDITS****OVERVIEW OF ALL ANAO AUDITS****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) values the independent assurance provided by the Auditor-General through the Australian National Audit Office's (ANAO's) program of financial statements, performance statements and performance audits.

**Key Facts and Figures****ANAO performance audits**

- There are currently 3 ANAO performance audits underway at the Agency.

<b>Performance Audit</b>	<b>Designated entities</b>	<b>Scheduled tabling date</b>
Administration of the Age Pension	Services Australia and the Department of Social Services	October 2025
Managing the Privacy of Client Information in Services Australia	Services Australia	November 2025
Compliance with Domestic and International Travel Requirements in Services Australia	Services Australia	January 2026

- Two ANAO performance audits involving the Agency have been tabled so far in 2025.

<b>Performance Audit</b>	<b>Designated entities</b>	<b>Tabling date</b>
Ministerial Statements of Expectations and responding Regulator Statements of Intent	Cross entity performance audit	28 May 2025
Management and oversight of compliance activities within the Child Care Subsidy Program	Services Australia and the Department of Education	16 June 2025

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**ANAO AUDITS****ANAO financial statements audit**

- The Agency's 2024-25 financial statements were signed on 5 September 2025 with the ANAO issuing an unmodified audit opinion.
- Following the final phase of the 2024-25 financial statements audit, the Agency has 24 unresolved audit findings, categorised as follows:

Category A (significant)	Category B (moderate)	Category C (minor)	L1 (significant legislative)
1	4	18	1

**ANAO performance statements audit**

- The Agency's 2024-25 performance statements audit were signed on Friday 26 September 2025 with the ANAO issuing an unmodified audit opinion.
- Following the final phase of the 2024-25 performance statements audit, the Agency was working to remediate 4 unresolved audit findings, categorised as follows:

Category A (significant)	Category B (moderate)	Category C (minor)	L1 (significant legislative)
1	1	2	-

**Key Points**

- The ANAO's work contributes to improved public sector administration and accountability.
- The Agency takes on lessons from ANAO performance audits to improve its governance, compliance and performance monitoring frameworks, as part of its commitment to continuous improvement.
- The ANAO, through its financial statements audit, obtains reasonable assurance whether an entity's annual financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, to inform the Auditor-General's opinion on whether they accord with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.
- The ANAO, through its annual performance statement audit, aims to drive improvements in the transparency and quality of performance reporting,

## **ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

### **Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025**

## **ANAO AUDITS**

increasing accountability to Government and the public by assessing the completeness of Agency performance information.

## Background

### ANAO performance audits currently underway

#### Administration of the Age Pension

Designated entities	Services Australia and the Department of Social Services
High-level criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the Department of Social Services have effective oversight of the age pension?</li> <li>• Does Services Australia have fit for purpose processes for assessing eligibility of age pension applicants and recipients?</li> <li>• Does Services Australia effectively communicate and manage engagement with age pension applicants and recipients?</li> </ul>
Scheduled tabling date	October 2025

#### Managing the Privacy of Client Information in Services Australia

Designated entities	Services Australia
High-level criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has Services Australia developed appropriate arrangements to manage the privacy of client information consistent with the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> and other legislative requirements?</li> <li>• Has Services Australia effectively implemented arrangements to manage the privacy of client information?</li> </ul>
Scheduled tabling date	November 2025

#### Compliance with Domestic and International Travel Requirements in Services Australia

Designated entities	Services Australia
High-level criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has Services Australia developed appropriate arrangements to manage domestic and international travel in accordance with whole of Australian Government requirements?</li> <li>• Has Services Australia implemented effective controls and processes for domestic and international travel in accordance with its policies and procedures?</li> </ul>
Scheduled tabling date	January 2026

## ANAO AUDITS

ANAO performance audits tabled so far in 2025

## Ministerial Statements of Expectations and responding Regulator Statements of Intent

Designated entities	Cross-entity performance audit
Scheduled tabling date	28 May 2025
Audit findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective support is not being provided to ensure Ministerial Statements of Expectations (SOE) and responding Regulator Statements of Intent (SOI) are in place.</li> <li>The Department of Finance's regulator stocktake is not complete or accurate in relation to the regulatory functions that exist (and therefore who should have an SOE and SOI), or the SOE and SOI that are in place.</li> <li>Most of the regulator SOE and SOI that are in place have content that is consistent with guidance from the Department of Finance.</li> </ul>
Audit recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four recommendations were directed to the Department of Finance to improve the implementation of the regulator performance framework.</li> <li>No recommendations were directed to Services Australia.</li> </ul>

## Management and oversight of compliance activities within the Child Care Subsidy program

Designated entities	Services Australia and the Department of Education (Education)
Scheduled tabling date	16 June 2025
Audit findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The management and oversight of compliance activities within the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) program is partly effective.</li> <li>Governance arrangements are partly effective. Education's oversight of CCS compliance activities in Services Australia is not sufficient.</li> <li>The approach to compliance activities is partly effective. Both entities have effective approaches to prevention, but deficiencies were identified in monitoring and enforcement arrangements.</li> </ul>
Audit recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven recommendations were made to improve the management and oversight of compliance activities within the CCS — 4 to the Department of Education and 3 to both Education and Services Australia.</li> <li>Education agreed to all 7 recommendations, and Services Australia also agreed to the 3 joint recommendations.</li> </ul>

## ANAO AUDITS

ANAO financial statements audit

Details of the significant and moderate findings are as follows:

Category	Finding	When initially raised
A (significant)	<p><b>Medicare Compensation Recovery Scheme</b></p> <p>Finding was raised in relation to non-compliance with legislation, which resulted in revenue not being collected on behalf of the Commonwealth.</p>	Upgraded from a C finding initially raised in 2022-23
B (moderate)	<p><b>IT Governance</b></p> <p>Finding was raised following an increasing number of issues in IT governance within the Agency, particularly around weaknesses in the implementation of a large-scale IT rollout for residential aged care and the re-emergence of individual issues on change and access management, and computer operations.</p> <p>The Agency is committed to uplifting issue identification in IT, through enhanced first line compliance assurance, education and awareness.</p> <p>The Agency submitted a closure pack to the ANAO on 27 June 2025, which will be considered during the interim phase of the 2025-26 audit. The ANAO has advised that this finding will be closed once assurance activities demonstrate that IT controls are operating effectively, evidenced through a reduction in IT findings.</p>	Downgraded from an A finding initially raised in 2022-23
B (moderate)	<p><b>RACF – Monitoring of super users' activity (Medicare, Child Support and Health)</b></p> <p>Finding relates to the effectiveness of monitoring of privileged user activities within Medicare, Child Support and Health.</p>	Upgraded from a C finding initially raised in 2020-21
B (moderate)	<p><b>ACF2 and M204 – Monitoring of super users (Centrelink)</b></p> <p>Finding relates to the effectiveness of monitoring of privileged user activities within Centrelink.</p>	Upgraded from a C finding initially raised in 2020-21
B (moderate)	<p><b>New Residential Aged Care System – Access Management</b></p> <p>Finding relates to the effectiveness of general controls associated with access management in the roll-out of the new residential aged care system.</p>	Initially raised in 2023-24
L1 (significant legislative)	<p><b>Significant legislative matters in Services Australia's program delivery</b></p> <p>Finding was raised in relation to the Agency's response to program compliance with legislative requirements.</p>	Finding initially raised in 2023-24

## ANAO AUDITS

**ANAO performance statements audit**

Details of the significant and moderate findings are as follows:

Category	Finding	When initially raised
A (significant)	Appropriateness – reliability and verifiability of data sources and methodologies	2022-23
B (moderate)	Omission of performance measures on Services Australia's regulatory functions	2023-24

**Supporting Information****Questions on Notice**

- No QoNs asked.

**Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests**

- No FOIs requested.

**Recent Ministerial Comments**

- Nil.

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- Nil.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.

**Cleared by (SES):** Teresa Blair

**Telephone No:**

**s47F(1)**

**Group/Division:** Corporate Enabling Group/Corporate and Cross Government Services Division

**Contact Officer:** Sally Bond

**s47F(1)**

**Consultation:** Angela Diamond, Chief Financial Officer

**Consultation:** Adrian Bernroider, National Manager

**Consultation:** Pauline O'Neill, acting General Manager

**Consultation:** Brian Birt, acting National Manager

**Consultation:** Lisiane Barao Macleod, General Manager

**Consultation:** Vandana Singh, National Manager

**PDR Number:** SB25-000237

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**CENSUS AND CULTURE****CENSUS AND CULTURE****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia participates in the Australian Public Service Employee Census each year. The results inform the Australian Public Service Commission's State of the Service Report.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- Services Australia (the Agency) continues to embed meaningful employee experiences, to understand what matters most to staff across the employee lifecycle from attraction and onboarding to development and retention.
- The 2025 Australian Public Service (APS) Employee Census (Census) was conducted between 5 May and 6 June 2025. The Agency had a staff response rate of 87 per cent, with over 30,000 employees taking part. This was an increase of one percentage point since the 2024 Census.
- The results will be made publicly available on the Agency website in November 2025 in line with requirements under the *Public Service Amendment Act 2024*. This release date aligns with tabling of the State of the Service Report (SOSR) in Parliament.
- The Agency has seen an improvement in all index scores from the 2024 results. The Agency results are similar to the overall APS and extra-large agencies.
- Whilst we celebrate this success, we understand the challenge we face to build on last year's actions to sustain these results.

Index	2024 Census Services Australia	2025 Census Services Australia	2024 Census APS Overall	2025 Census APS Overall	2024 Census APS Extra-large Agencies <sup>1</sup>	2025 Census APS Extra-large Agencies <sup>1</sup>
Employee Engagement	72	74	74	75	73	75
Leadership - Immediate supervisor	77	78	77	77	76	77
Leadership - SES Manager	67	70	70	71	68	70
Communication	69	72	69	70	69	70

## CENSUS AND CULTURE

Index	2024 Census Services Australia	2025 Census Services Australia	2024 Census APS Overall	2025 Census APS Overall	2024 Census APS Extra-large Agencies <sup>1</sup>	2025 Census APS Extra-large Agencies <sup>1</sup>
Enabling Innovation	64	69	65	68	64	68
Wellbeing Policies and Support	69	71	70	72	69	71

**Key Points - Census**

- The Agency's Census is the main tool used to gauge employee sentiment and provides opportunities for employees to share their thoughts, opinions, and suggestions. The Census contains several index scores that relate to staff satisfaction.
- The 2025 Agency Census Highlight Report is at [Attachment A](#).
- The 2024 Census Highlight Report and Action Plan is available on the Agency's website.
- The 2024 Census actions focused on Health and Wellbeing, Innovation and Change, Leadership and Culture and Values. The Agency is developing the Agency Action Plan for the 2025 results, which will be published on the Services Australia website once finalised.
- The initial review of our 2025 results show staff have responded well to the 2024 census action planning, with an 11 percentage point increase in satisfaction on actions to address the 2024 results.
- Since 2021 Bullying and Harassment has decreased 3.2 percentage points, from 12.7 per cent to 9.5 per cent and Discrimination has decreased 1.7 percentage points, from 11.4 per cent to 9.7 per cent. Although the percentage points seem small, this is a huge achievement.
- The Agency's Census results for 2025 show positive results in many areas underpinned by a strong commitment to delivering services for customers including:
  - 92 per cent of staff are committed to our vision of making government services simple so people can get on with their lives.
  - 94 per cent of staff help create an environment that feels safe for staff and customers (an increase by one percentage point from 2024).
  - 94 per cent of staff understand how their role contributes to achieving an outcome for the Australian public (2 percentage points above the overall APS result).

## CENSUS AND CULTURE

- When comparing Agency staff attitudes to remaining in their current position, staff in the APS overall and extra-large agencies are more likely to want to stay for one to 2 years.
  - In Services Australia, staff are more likely to want to stay for at least the next 3 years.

Census Questions	2025 Census Services Australia	2025 Census APS Overall	2025 Census APS Extra-large APS Agencies
<i>My Agency supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace culture.</i>	85% (2024 82%)	84%	83%
<b>Staff attitudes to remaining in their <u>current position</u></b>			
<i>Leave current position as soon as possible</i>	7% (2024 9%)	8%	9%
<i>Leave current position within the next 12 months</i>	17% (2024 18%)	21%	20%
<i>Stay in current position for next one to 2 years</i>	32% (2024 30%)	39%	36%
<i>Stay in current position for at least the next 3 years</i>	44% (2024 44%)	31%	35%

**Key Points - Culture Employee Experience**

- Listening strategies are essential to a meaningful employee experience, supporting staff engagement across the lifecycle—from attraction to retention.
- The Agency promotes structured listening mechanisms, for example through surveys, feedback loops and census action planning, to ensure staff feel heard and valued.
- Between March–April 2025, the Agency conducted a listening campaign with 500+ employees, at all levels and groups including diversity groups, to refresh its Employee Value Proposition. These sessions captured staff sentiment around their experience as an employee to inform attraction and recruitment initiatives.
- The SES Leadership Reference Group, established in mid 2025, aims to address findings from the Services Australia Capability Review and outcomes identified in the Services Australia 2030 Strategy.

## Background

The 2025 State of the Service Report (SOSR) is due to be released in November 2025 by the Australian Public Service Commission.

The 2024 SOSR was released on 26 November 2024. The SOSR is informed by the results of the APS Census<sup>1</sup> and draws on the APS Employment Data.

The Agency is referenced in the SOSR in the following areas:

- Proudly represent nearly one in five APS employees across the country, encompassing 19 per cent of ongoing employees and 5 per cent of non-ongoing employees. This notable presence underscores our influence and the important role we play within the APS community and represent 31 per cent of the total APS ongoing commencements, which highlights the Agency's dynamic and evolving environment.
- Services Australia is leading the way; current statistics<sup>2</sup> show the Agency is far surpassing the overall APS percentages for disability and Indigenous representation. As at 30 June 2024, the overall APS rate of employees self-identifying as Indigenous was 3.4 per cent compared with the Agency's rate of 5.5 per cent, and self-identifying with a disability was 5.4 per cent compared with the Agency's rate of 8.3 per cent.
- The overall APS has 63 per cent of staff located outside the ACT; 87 per cent of Agency staff are spread throughout various regions. This diverse representation not only strengthens the Agency's presence but also enhances the ability to cater to different communities' needs effectively.
- Additionally, the SOSR evaluates performance in comparison to other 'extra-large' agencies with over 10,000 staff. The Agency has shown improvements across all Census indices.
- The Agency's results either match or come within a percentage point of the average for these large agencies. When comparing to these extra-large APS agencies:
  - Employee Engagement index was 73 per cent – the Agency (72 per cent) ranked above Home Affairs (70 per cent), and behind the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) (75 per cent) and Defence (74 per cent).
  - Enabling Innovation index was 64 per cent – the Agency (64 per cent) ranked above Home Affairs (60 per cent), equal with Defence (64 per cent) and behind the ATO (67 per cent).
- Perceptions of SES Leadership was 68 per cent – the Agency (67 per cent), ranked above Home Affairs (66 per cent), and behind the ATO (70 per cent) and Defence (68 per cent).
- Perceptions of Immediate Supervisors index was 76 per cent – the Agency (77 per cent) ranked above Home Affairs (74 percent) and Defence (75 per cent) and behind the ATO (79 per cent).

<sup>1</sup> Noting some index per cent figures may not match Agency highlight reports/results as the SOSR includes APS only and the Agency reports/results include both APS and non-APS workforce.

<sup>2</sup> Noting data figures provided may not match Agency percentages in the SOSR, this is due to differences in APSED data compared to Agency reporting. Figures provided are based on the Agency's Annual Report.

## CENSUS AND CULTURE

- Perceptions of harassment and bullying was 11.1 per cent – the Agency (11.0 per cent) was behind the ATO (8.5 per cent), with less than Home Affairs (15.0 per cent) and Defence (11.4 per cent).
- Wellbeing Policies and Support index was 69 per cent – the Agency (68 per cent) ranked equal with Defence (68 per cent), above Home Affairs (66 per cent) and behind the ATO (73 per cent).

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- SQ25-000011. NIDA Training Course – Number of Staff. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 11 June 2025
- SQ25-000012. NIDA Training Course – Selection Process. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 11 June 2025
- SQ25-000015. Executive and Training Development Organisation Memberships. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000025. External Retreats. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000032. Staff Turnover Rate. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000041. SES Departures. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000042. APS Departures. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000045. Current ASL. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000046. WFH Arrangements. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000063. CN4110843. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 11 June 2025
- SQ25-000064. CN4110844. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 11 June 2025
- SQ25-000066. Flexible Work Arrangements. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 11 June 2025
- SQ25-000076. Conflict of Interest. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000077. CEO Leave. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000080. Current Vacancies. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000081. Internal Recruitment. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000082. Longer than 90 days Acting. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000083. Longer than 90 days Vacant. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025

## CENSUS AND CULTURE

- SQ25-000085. Three or more Days Working from Home. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 11 June 2025
- SQ25-000087. Percentage of ACT Staff Working from Home. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 11 June 2025
- SQ25-000093. Staff working on Public Holidays. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000096. External Professional Development Training. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000097. Comcare Referrals. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ25-000101. APS Academy Training. Additional Estimates, 27 February 2025, tabled 24 March 2025

**Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests**

- Request for all agencies that participated in the 2024 APS Employee Census in relation to specific questions comparing respondents with and without an ongoing disability. Requested on 27 September 2024.

**Recent Ministerial Comments**

- Nil

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- Nil

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
**Cleared by (SES):** Michelle Kinmonth, A/g General Manager  
**Telephone No:** **s47F(1)**  
**Group/Division:** Corporate Enabling Group / Workforce Capability Division  
**Contact Officer:** **s22**  
**Telephone No:** **s22**  
**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000239



# 2025 APS Employee Census

5 May - 6 June

## Highlights Report SERVAU

Responses:  
30,213 of 34,820

Response rate:  
87%



# Exploring your results



Take time to understand your report. Consider your response rate to determine how representative your results are of the views of your colleagues.



Most questions in this report have information about the proportion of colleagues responding positively, neutrally or negatively.



Identify the areas where you are performing well. These will tend to be high results which are notably above any comparative results. Celebrate these results.



Identify areas that need improvement. These tend to be the low results, which are notably below comparisons.



Generally a difference of -/+ 5 percentage points is worthy of attention, but the size of the group is important. Changes in small groups can be unreliable.

# Employee Engagement: Say, Stay, Strive



## Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is more than simply job satisfaction or commitment to an organisation. It is the extent to which employees are motivated, inspired and enabled to improve an organisation's outcomes.



### Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

Positive Neutral Negative

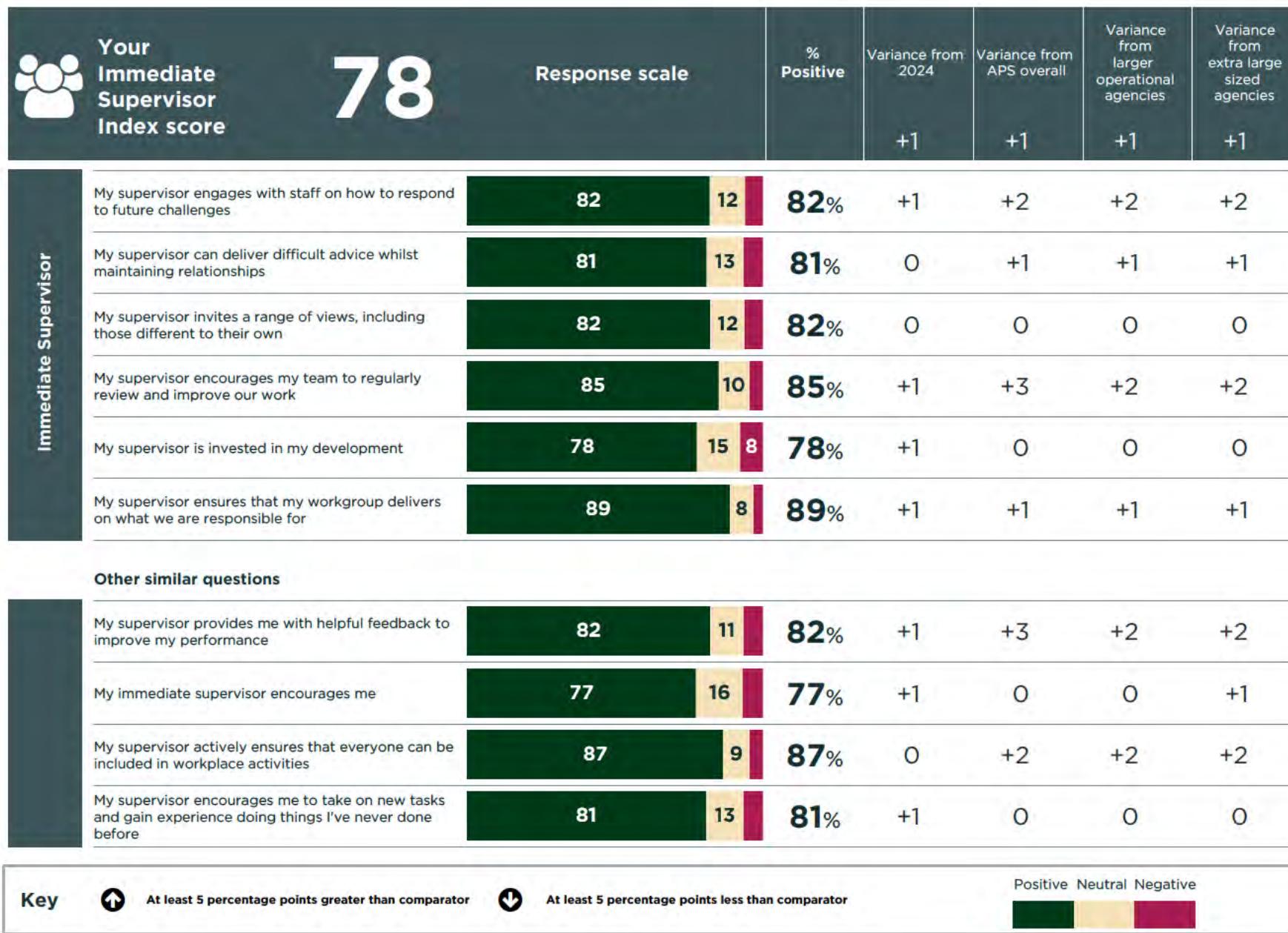


# Leadership - Immediate Supervisor



## Immediate Supervisor

The Immediate Supervisor Index assesses how employees view the leadership behaviours of their immediate supervisor in line with the *APS Leadership Capability Framework*.

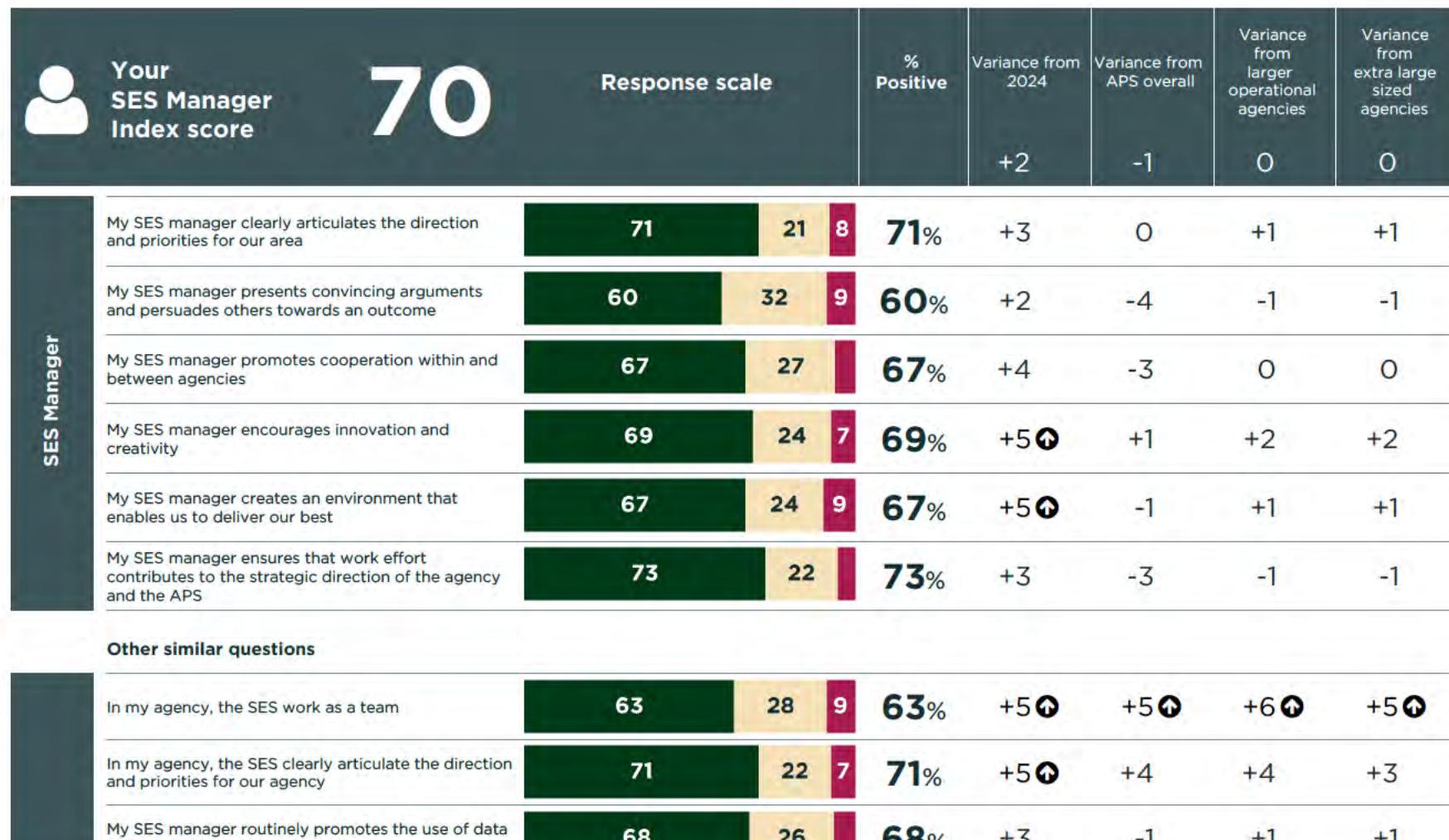


## **Leadership - SES Manager**



## SES Manager

The SES Manager Index assesses how employees view the leadership behaviours of their immediate SES manager in line with the *APS Leadership Capability Framework*.

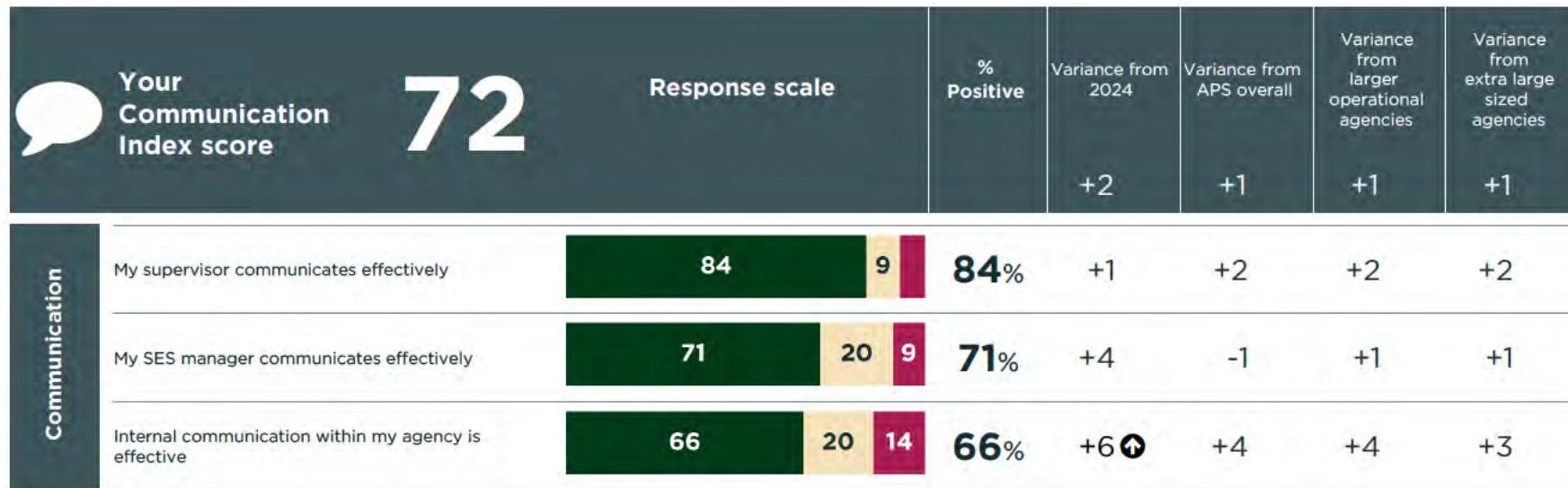


# Communication and change



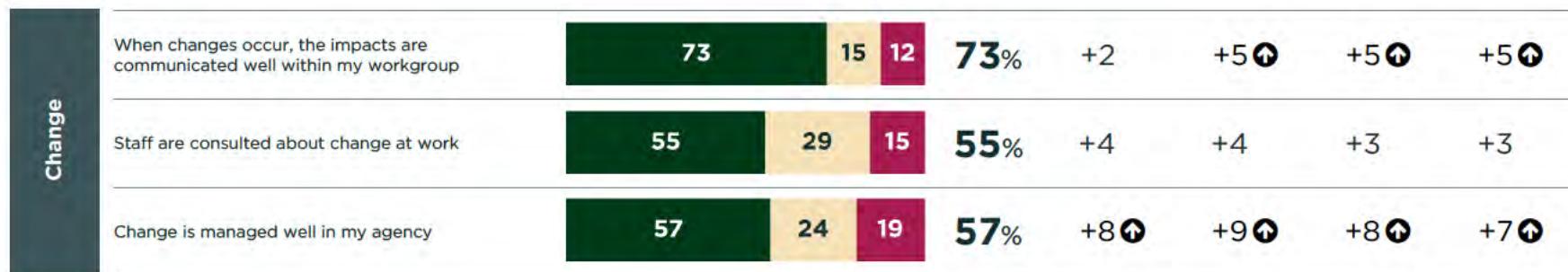
## Communication

The Communication Index measures communication at the individual, group and agency level.



## Change

Effective communication is an important part of any change process. Note these questions do not contribute to the above Index score.



### Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

Positive Neutral Negative

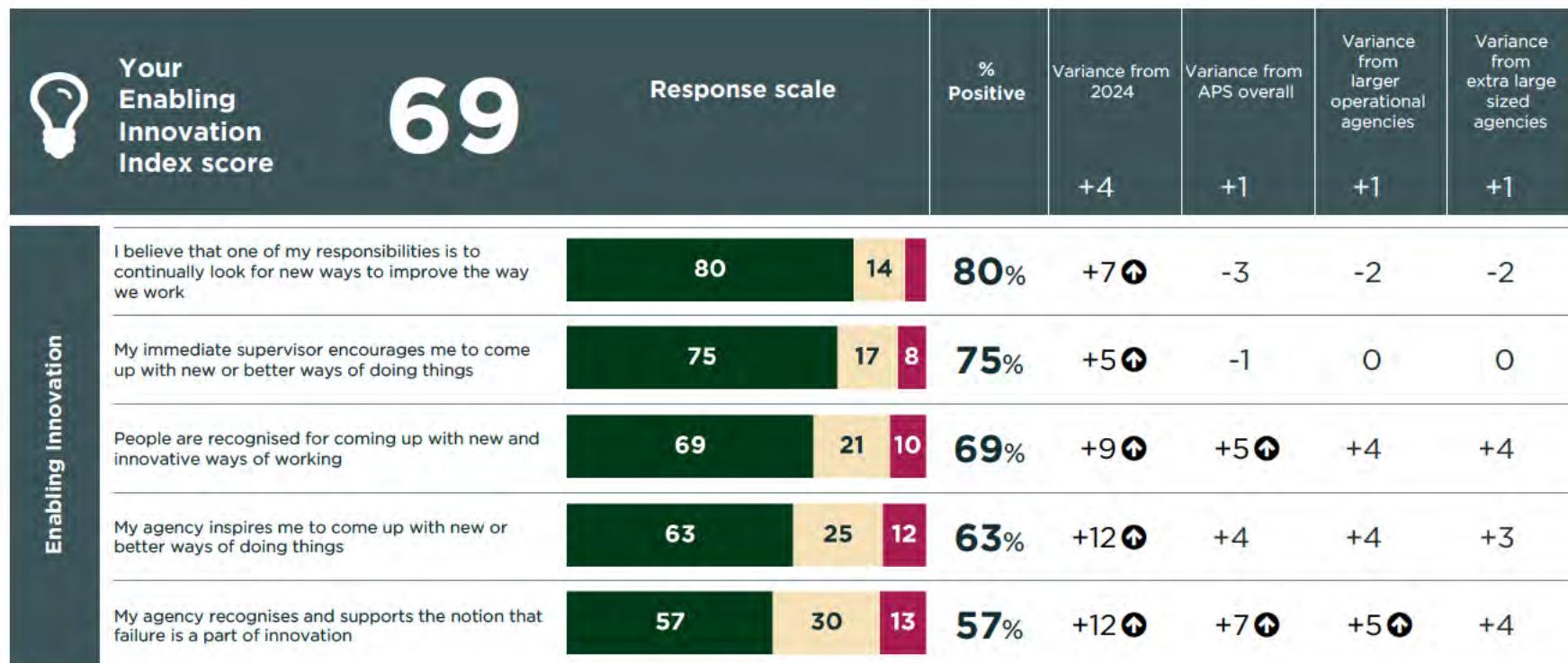


# Enabling Innovation



## Enabling Innovation

The Enabling Innovation Index assesses both whether employees feel willing and able to be innovative, and whether their agency has a culture which enables them to be so.



Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

Positive Neutral Negative

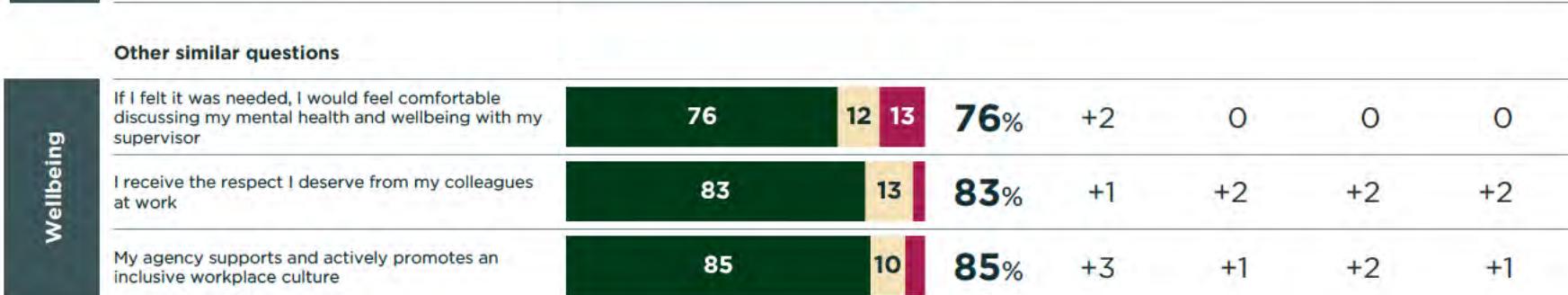
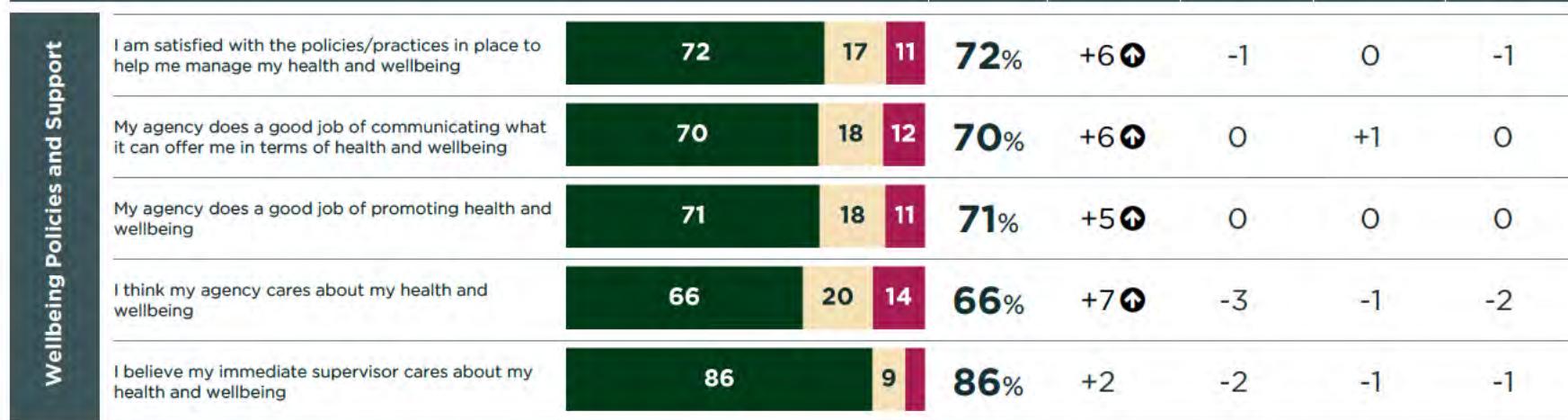
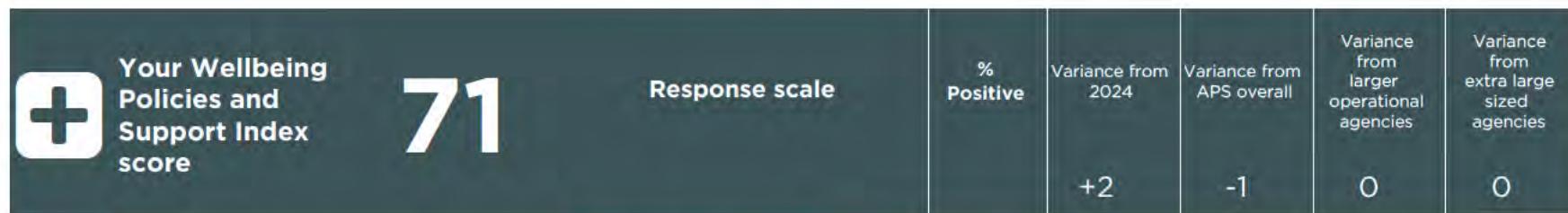


# Wellbeing Policies and Support



## Wellbeing

The Wellbeing Policies and Support Index provides a measure of the practical and cultural elements that allow for a sustainable and healthy working environment.



# Wellbeing

	Response scale	%	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
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In general, would you say that your health is:

Excellent		<b>11%</b>	0	0	0	0
Very good		<b>33%</b>	+1	-2	-1	-1
Good		<b>38%</b>	0	+1	0	0
Fair		<b>14%</b>	-1	+1	+1	0
Poor		<b>3%</b>	0	0	0	0

What best describes your current workload?

Well above capacity – too much work		<b>14%</b>	-8	-3	-2	-2
Slightly above capacity – lots of work to do		<b>40%</b>	0	0	0	0
At capacity – about the right amount of work to do		<b>43%</b>	+8	+6	+4	+4
Slightly below capacity – available for more work		<b>3%</b>	0	-3	-2	-2
Well below capacity – not enough work		<b>1%</b>	0	-1	-1	-1

## Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

# Wellbeing

	Response scale	%	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
<b>How often do you find your work stressful?</b>						
Always		<b>7%</b>	-1	+2	+1	+1
Often		<b>26%</b>	-1	+3	+3	+3
Sometimes		<b>48%</b>	0	-3	-2	-2
Rarely		<b>17%</b>	+1	-3	-2	-2
Never		<b>2%</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>To what extent is your work emotionally demanding?</b>						
To a very large extent		<b>11%</b>	-1	+3	+3	+2
To a large extent		<b>25%</b>	0	+6	+4	+4
Somewhat		<b>39%</b>	+1	0	-1	-1
To a small extent		<b>18%</b>	0	-6	-4	-4
To a very small extent		<b>7%</b>	0	-3	-2	-2
<b>I feel burned out by my work</b>						
Strongly agree		<b>8%</b>	-1	+1	+1	+1
Agree		<b>23%</b>	-1	+2	+1	+1
Neither agree nor disagree		<b>34%</b>	+1	+2	0	0
Disagree		<b>27%</b>	+1	-4	-2	-2
Strongly disagree		<b>7%</b>	0	-1	-1	0

## Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

# Flexible work



	Response scale	%	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
I am confident that if I request a flexible work arrangement, my request would be given reasonable consideration	81 10 9	81%	+8 ↑	-5 ↓	-3	-3

## Do you currently access any of the following flexible working arrangements? [Multiple Response]

Part time	███████████	19%	+1	+6 ↑	+6 ↑	+6 ↑
Flexible hours of work	███████████	23%	+4	-7 ↓	-7 ↓	-7 ↓
Compressed work week	███	4%	+1	-1	-1	-1
Job sharing		0%	0	0	0	0
Working away from the office/working from home	███████████	47%	+15 ↑	-21 ↓	-17 ↓	-15 ↓
None of the above	███████████	32%	-11 ↓	+13 ↑	+10 ↑	+9 ↑

## Working away from the office

All of the time	██	2%	+1	-5 ↓	-4	-3
Some of the time as a regular arrangement	███████████	39%	+14 ↑	-13 ↓	-11 ↓	-10 ↓
Only on an irregular basis	██	5%	+1	-3	-3	-3
None of the time	███████████	53%	-15 ↓	+21 ↑	+17 ↑	+15 ↑
Did not disclose their arrangement		0%	0	0	0	0

### Key

↑ At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator

↓ At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

Positive Neutral Negative



# Working in the APS

	Response scale	% Positive	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
I am supported to use my expertise to provide frank and fearless advice	70 19 11	70%	+6 ↑	+1	+1	+1
The people in my workgroup demonstrate stewardship	76 19	76%	+1	0	+1	+1
The culture in my agency supports people to act with integrity	81 12 7	81%	+7 ↑	0	+1	0
I believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of the APS	89 10	89%	+2	0	0	0
I feel a strong personal attachment to the APS	70 22 8	70%	+4	+2	0	0
My workgroup considers the people and businesses affected by what we do	84 12	84%	0	0	+1	+2
The people in my workgroup value others' individual skills and talents	84 11	84%	-	+1	+2	+2
People in my workgroup are comfortable checking with each other if they have questions about the right way to do something	89 11	89%	-	+1	+1	+1
The people in my workgroup are able to bring up problems and tough issues	80 13 7	80%	+1	0	+1	+1
If you make a mistake in my workgroup, it tends to be held against you (reverse scored : positive scores represent those who disagreed, or strongly disagreed with this statement)	61 23 15	61%	-	-6 ↓	-3	-2

## Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

Positive Neutral Negative

## Job satisfaction

	Response scale			% Positive	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for doing a good job	66	19	15	66%	+2	-3	-1	-1
I am fairly remunerated (e.g. salary, superannuation) for the work that I do	60	18	22	60%	+3	-6 ↓	-2	-1
I am satisfied with my non-monetary employment conditions (e.g. leave, flexible work arrangements, other benefits)	79	12	9	79%	+5 ↑	-6 ↓	-5 ↓	-4
I am satisfied with the stability and security of my job	86	9	1	86%	+2	0	-1	-2

## Clarity and autonomy

	Response scale			% Positive	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
I understand how my role contributes to achieving an outcome for the Australian public	94	1	1	94%	0	+2	+1	+1
I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are	90	8	1	90%	+5 ↑	+6 ↑	+5 ↑	+5 ↑
I have a choice in deciding how I do my work	51	28	21	51%	+3	-17 ↓	-13 ↓	-12 ↓
Where appropriate, I am able to take part in decisions that affect my job	68	18	14	68%	+4	-4	-3	-3

### Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

Positive   Neutral   Negative

# Performance

	Response scale	%	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
--	----------------	---	--------------------	---------------------------	---	--

In the last month, please rate your workgroup's overall performance

Excellent		<b>26%</b>	-2	+1	+2	+2
Very good		<b>57%</b>	+2	0	0	0
Average		<b>15%</b>	0	-1	-2	-2
Below average		<b>2%</b>	0	0	0	0
Well below average		<b>0%</b>	0	0	0	0

	Response scale	% Positive	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
My workgroup has the appropriate skills, capabilities and knowledge to perform well		<b>80%</b>	+2	+2	+2	+3
My workgroup has the tools and resources we need to perform well		<b>69%</b>	+3	+9↑	+7↑	+7↑
The people in my workgroup use time and resources efficiently		<b>78%</b>	+1	+4	+4	+4
My job gives me opportunities to utilise my skills		<b>77%</b>	+1	-2	-1	-1
During the last 12 months, the formal learning I have accessed has improved my performance		<b>63%</b>	+3	+4	+2	+2

Key	At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator	At least 5 percentage points less than comparator	Positive	Neutral	Negative

# Retention



Employees who indicated that they wanted to leave their current position as soon as possible or within the next 12 months were asked what their plans were.

	Response scale	%	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
<b>Which of the following statements best reflects your thoughts about working in your current position?</b>						
I want to leave my position as soon as possible		<b>7%</b>	-1	-1	-1	-1
I want to leave my position within the next 12 months		<b>17%</b>	-1	-5	-3	-3
I want to stay working in my position for the next one to two years		<b>32%</b>	+2	-8	-5	-5
I want to stay working in my position for at least the next three years		<b>44%</b>	+1	+13	+9	+9
<b>What best describes your plans involved with leaving your current position?</b>						
I am planning to retire		<b>7%</b>	-1	+2	+1	+1
I am pursuing another position within my agency		<b>46%</b>	+11	0	-6	-7
I am pursuing a position in another agency		<b>24%</b>	-8	-1	+4	+5
I am pursuing work outside the APS		<b>8%</b>	-3	0	0	+1
It is the end of my non-ongoing, casual or contracted employment		<b>1%</b>	0	-1	0	0
Other		<b>13%</b>	0	0	+1	+1

## Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

# Retention



Employees who indicated that they were pursuing another position within their agency, another agency, or outside the APS were asked for the primary reason behind their desire to leave. They could select one response from a list of 18 items.

Only the five reasons for leaving with the highest proportion of responses are presented here. These may vary between agencies, work units and with results for the APS overall, therefore those comparisons are not included.

	Response scale	%	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
<b>What is the primary reason behind your desire to leave your current position? (5 highest responses):</b>						
I wish to pursue a promotion opportunity		<b>21%</b>	-	-	-	-
I am looking to further my skills in another area		<b>13%</b>	-	-	-	-
I want to try a different type of work or I'm seeking a career change		<b>13%</b>	-	-	-	-
I can receive a higher salary elsewhere		<b>7%</b>	-	-	-	-
There are a lack of future career opportunities in my agency		<b>6%</b>	-	-	-	-

## Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

# Unacceptable behaviour



Employees who had perceived discrimination in the last 12 months in the course of their employment were asked where the discrimination came from and if they reported it.

## Discrimination

### Response scale

%

Variance from 2024

Variance from APS overall

Variance from larger operational agencies

Variance from extra large sized agencies

During the last 12 months, and in connection with your work, have you experienced discrimination on the basis of your background or a personal characteristic?

Yes		10%	-1	+1	+1	+1
-----	--	-----	----	----	----	----

No		90%	+1	-1	-1	-1
----	--	-----	----	----	----	----

Did this discrimination occur in your current agency?

Yes		93%	0	0	0	0
-----	--	-----	---	---	---	---

No		7%	0	0	0	0
----	--	----	---	---	---	---

The discrimination came from: [Multiple Response]

Within my agency		90%	-	-2	-2	-2
------------------	--	-----	---	----	----	----

Another agency		2%	-	-2	-2	-2
----------------	--	----	---	----	----	----

A customer, stakeholder or member of the public		14%	-	+6	+5	+4
---	--	-----	---	----	----	----

Other		5%	-	+1	0	0
-------	--	----	---	----	---	---

Did you report the discrimination?

I reported the discrimination in accordance with my agency's policies and procedures		22%	-	+3	+2	+2
--	--	-----	---	----	----	----

It was reported by someone else		4%	-	0	-1	-1
---------------------------------	--	----	---	---	----	----

I did not report the discrimination		74%	-	-3	-2	-1
-------------------------------------	--	-----	---	----	----	----

### Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

# Unacceptable behaviour



In 2025, the survey used an expanded definition of harassment. Comparing results to 2024 should take this change in definition in context.

Employees who perceived bullying or harassment in the last 12 months were asked what type of bullying or harassment they experienced. Employees could select one or more responses from a list of items.

Only the three options with the highest proportion of responses are presented here. These may vary between agencies, work units and with results for the APS overall.

## Bullying and harassment

### Response scale

%

Variance from 2024

Variance from APS overall

Variance from larger operational agencies

Variance from extra large sized agencies

During the last 12 months, have you been subjected to bullying or harassment in your current workplace?

Yes		<b>10%</b>	-1	0	0	-1
No		<b>85%</b>	+2	-1	0	0
Not sure		<b>5%</b>	-1	+1	0	0

Types of bullying or harassment experienced (3 highest responses):

Verbal abuse (e.g. offensive language, derogatory remarks, shouting or screaming)		<b>40%</b>	-	-	-	-
Inappropriate and unfair application of work policies or rules (e.g. performance management, access to leave, access to learning and development)		<b>30%</b>	-	-	-	-
Interference with work tasks (e.g. withholding needed information, undermining or sabotage)		<b>27%</b>	-	-	-	-

Did you report the bullying or harassment?

I reported the behaviour in accordance with my agency's policies and procedures		<b>40%</b>	+3	+3	+1	+1
It was reported by someone else		<b>7%</b>	0	0	0	-1
I did not report the behaviour		<b>52%</b>	-2	-3	-1	-1

### Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

# Unacceptable behaviour



## Corruption

### Response scale

%

Variance from  
2024

Variance from  
APS overall

Variance from  
larger  
operational  
agencies

Variance from  
extra large  
sized agencies

In 2025, the survey used an updated definition of corruption to align with the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* and the Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework.

Comparing results to 2024 should take this change in definition in context.

During the last 12 months, excluding behaviour reported to you as part of your duties, have you observed a public official engaging in conduct in your agency that you would consider to be corruption?

Yes		<b>2%</b>	-2	0	0	0
No		<b>91%</b>	+2	-1	-1	-1
Not sure		<b>5%</b>	0	+1	+1	+1
Prefer not to answer		<b>2%</b>	-1	0	0	0

Which of the following reflects the conduct you witnessed? [Multiple Response]

Abuse of office		<b>55%</b>	-	-	-	-
Adversely affecting the honesty or impartiality of a public official		<b>36%</b>	-	-	-	-
Misuse of information or documents		<b>27%</b>	-	-	-	-
A breach of public trust		<b>20%</b>	-	-	-	-

Did you report the conduct?

I reported the behaviour in accordance with my agency's policies and procedures		<b>27%</b>	+6	+2	-1	-2
It was reported by someone else		<b>16%</b>	-3	-1	-2	-2
I did not report the behaviour		<b>57%</b>	-3	-1	+3	+4

### Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

# Demographics

How do you describe your gender?	Responses
Man or male	32%
Woman or female	64%
Non-binary	1%
I use a different term	0%
Prefer not to say	3%

Do you identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person?	Responses
Yes	6%
No	94%

Do you have an ongoing disability?	Responses
Yes	13%
No	87%

Do you have carer responsibilities?	Responses
Yes	48%
No	52%

Do you identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Questioning and/or Asexual (LGBTIQA+)?	Responses
Yes	7%
No	93%

Do you identify as culturally or linguistically diverse?	Responses
Yes	29%
No	71%

How would you describe your cultural background? [Multiple Response]	Responses
Australian (excluding Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)	63%
Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	5%
New Zealander (excluding Maori)	1%
Maori, Melanesian, Papuan, Micronesian, and Polynesian	1%
Anglo-European	10%
North-West European (excluding Anglo-European)	2%
Southern and Eastern European	5%
South-East Asian	16%
North-East Asian	3%
Southern and Central Asian	6%
North American	0%
South and Central American and Caribbean Islander	1%
North African and Middle Eastern	2%
Sub-Saharan African	1%

Do you consider yourself to be neurodivergent?	Responses
Yes	9%
No	71%
Maybe	10%
I am unsure what neurodivergent means	10%

# Agency position

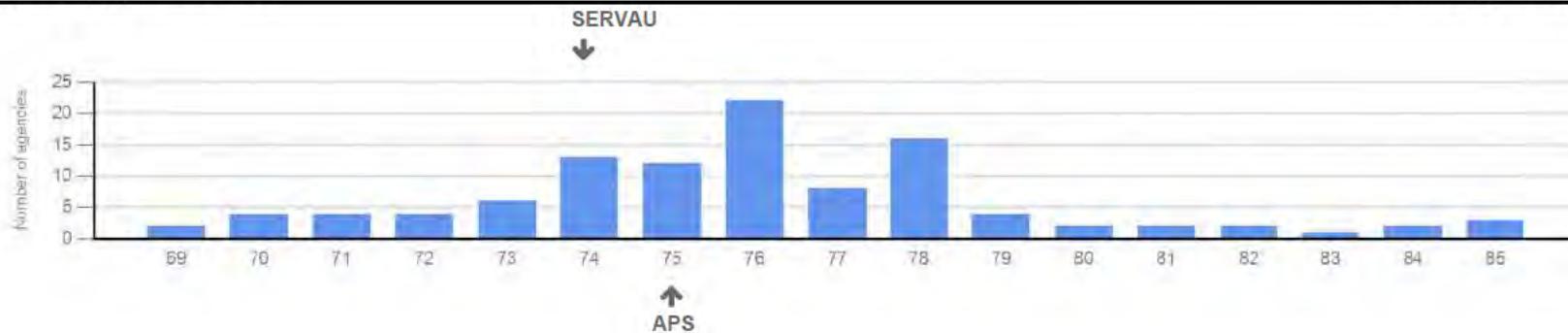


## Agency position

These graphs display the overall index score of each agency for the Employee Engagement, Immediate Supervisor, SES Manager, Communication, Enabling Innovation and Wellbeing Policies and Support indices. These are to assist you to see where your agency sits in comparison to the overall APS index score and the scores of other agencies.

### Employee Engagement Index

Ranking : 84th of 107



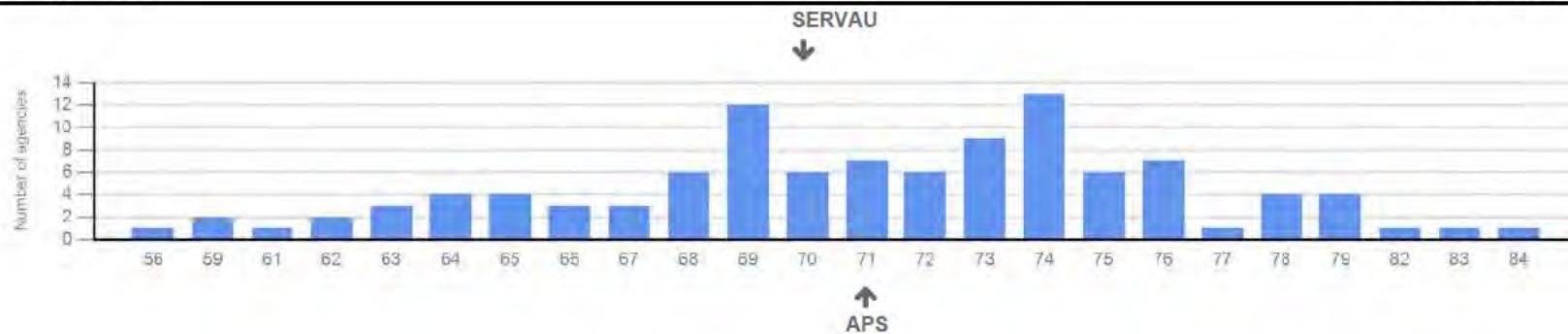
### Immediate Supervisor Index

Ranking : 47th of 107



### SES Manager Index

Ranking : 66th of 107



# Agency position



## Agency position

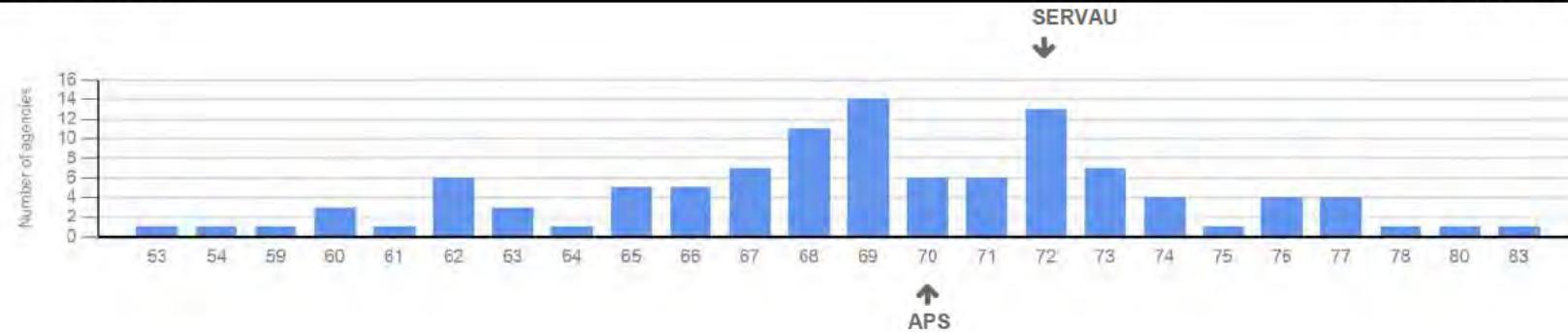
These graphs display the overall index score of each agency for the Employee Engagement, Immediate Supervisor, SES Manager, Communication, Enabling Innovation and Wellbeing Policies and Support indices. These are to assist you to see where your agency sits in comparison to the overall APS index score and the scores of other agencies.

Along the bottom line (x-axis) are the index scores. The height of the bar (y-axis) is how many agencies have that index score.

Please note, the x-axis values are not consecutive as only index scores received by an agency are represented.

### Communication Index

Ranking : 36th of 107

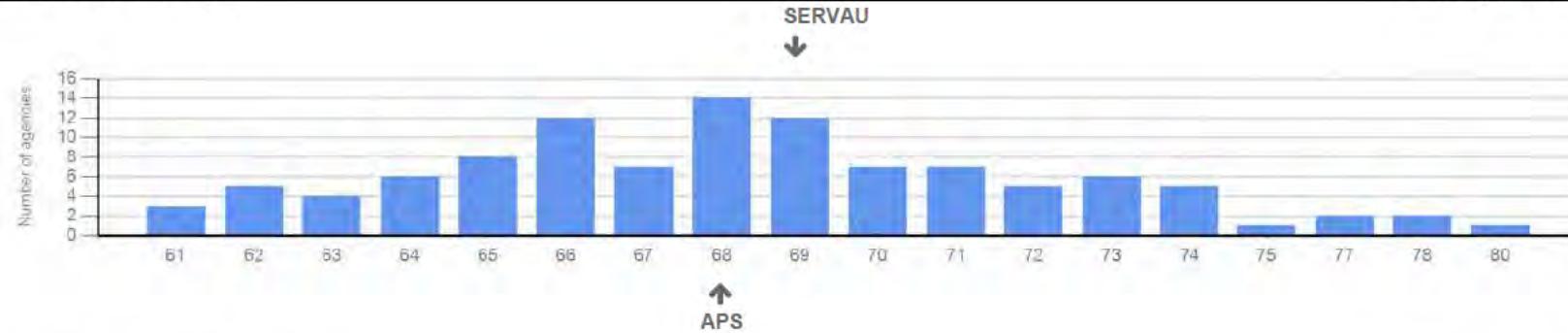


SERVAU  
↓

↑  
APS

### Enabling Innovation Index

Ranking : 45th of 107

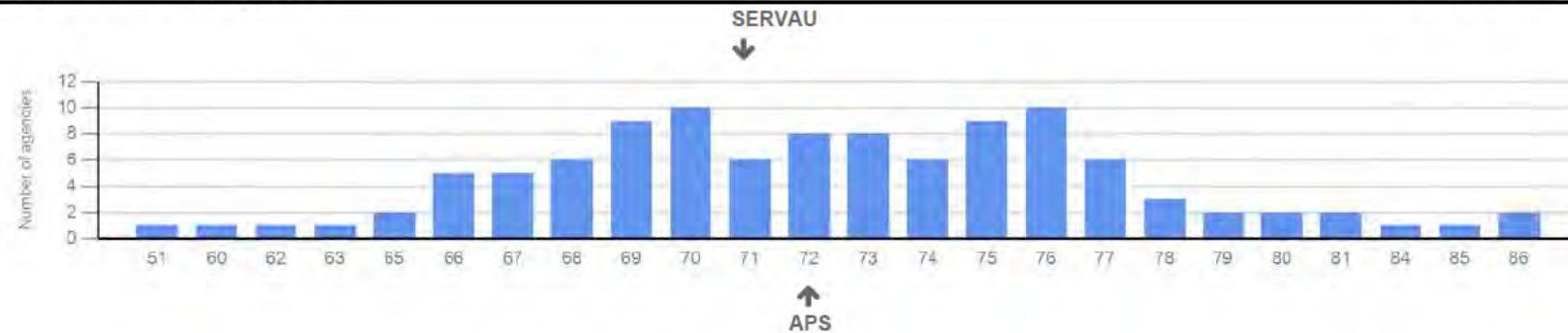


SERVAU  
↓

↑  
APS

### Wellbeing Policies and Support Index

Ranking : 66th of 107



SERVAU  
↓

↑  
APS

# Suggested questions to focus on



## What to focus on?

Through driver analysis, these key questions have been identified as being important to employees in your agency and associated with employee engagement.

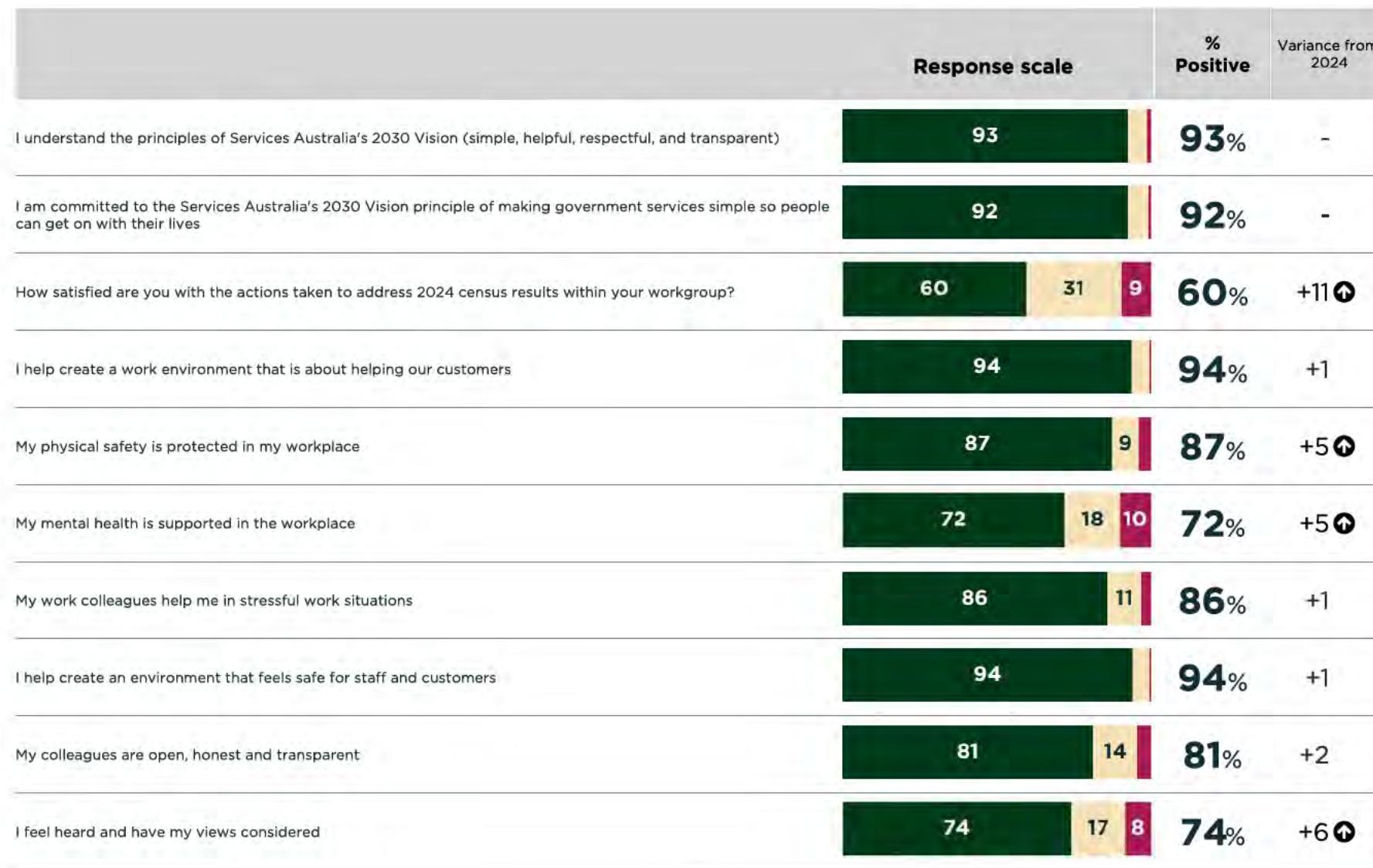
They are not necessarily the questions with the lowest scores.

Some will be areas to improve upon and some will be areas to maintain.

Develop actions and activities to improve upon these, where possible, to drive higher levels of performance.

		% Positive	Variance from 2024	Variance from APS overall	Variance from larger operational agencies	Variance from extra large sized agencies
1	At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator	63%	+12↑	+4	+4	+3
2	At least 5 percentage points less than comparator	66%	+7↑	-3	-1	-2
3	At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator	81%	+7↑	0	+1	0
4	At least 5 percentage points less than comparator	66%	+2	-3	-1	-1
5	At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator	70%	+6↑	+1	+1	+1
6	At least 5 percentage points less than comparator	68%	+4	-4	-3	-3

# SERVAU specific questions



## Key



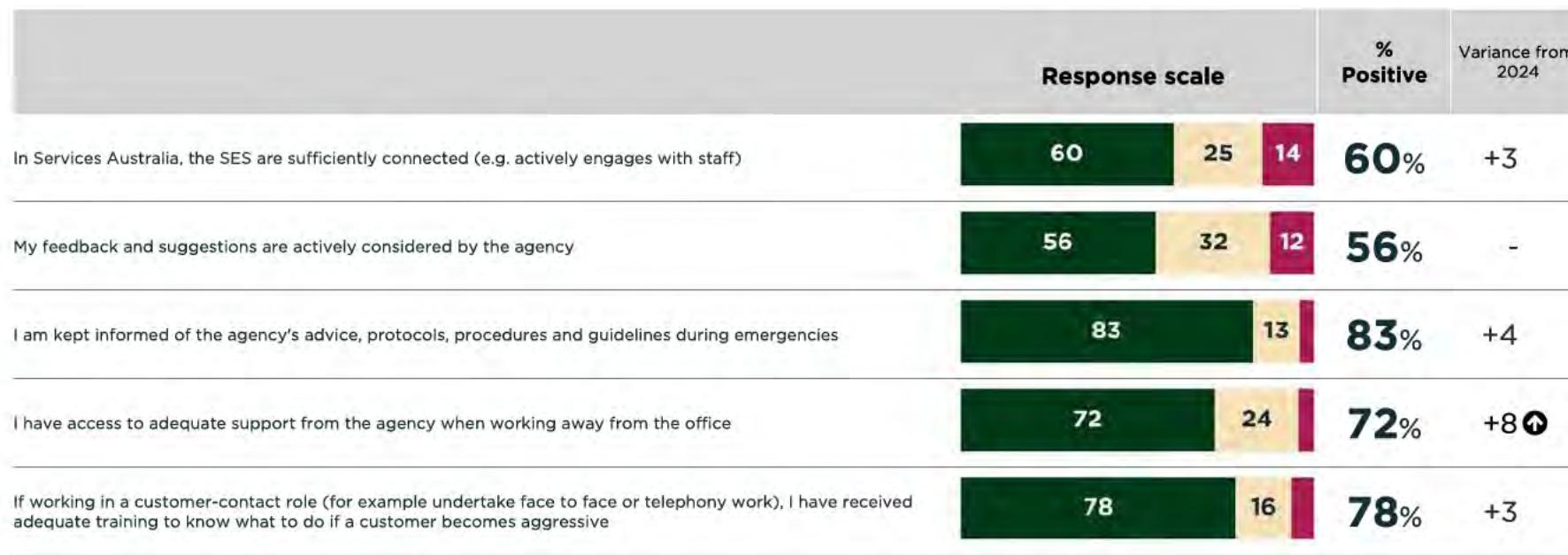
At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

Positive Neutral Negative

## SERVAU specific questions



### Key



At least 5 percentage points greater than comparator



At least 5 percentage points less than comparator

Positive Neutral Negative



# Time to take action



## Celebrate

What things do we do well?

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Think about how we can build on our strengths and learn from what we are good at.



## Investigate further with our teams

Are there any other opportunities coming out of the results that we want to explore further?

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How could we investigate? Through looking at the data in more detail or through discussions with staff?



## Opportunities

Areas we need to focus on and turn into action plans:

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What are the key things we need to improve to make working here better?



**Use this page to start your local action plans**

Identify areas to celebrate, opportunities for improvement and areas which you need to investigate further.

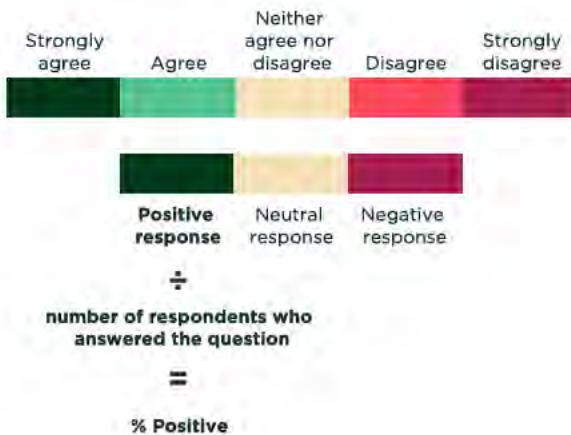
Prioritise 3 areas to take forward

Prioritise 3 areas for action	Timescales	Owner	Resources required	Target/Success measure
1				
2				
3				

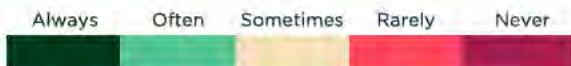
# Guide to this report

## % Positive

Where results are shown as positive percentages (% positive), these are calculated by adding together positive responses ("strongly agree" + "agree" or "always" + "often") and dividing by the number of respondents who answered the question.



For 5 point scale questions not asked on the *agree to disagree* scale the same rules apply, the green percent represents a **positive response** (unless the question is negatively worded).



## Rounding

Results are presented as whole numbers for ease of reading, with rounding performed at the last stage of calculation for maximum accuracy. Values from x.00 to x.49 are rounded down and values from x.50 to x.99 are rounded up. Therefore in some instances, results may not total 100%.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Number of responses	151	166	176	96	24	613
Percentage	24.63%	27.08%	28.71%	15.66%	3.92%	100%
Rounded percentage	25%	27%	29%	16%	4%	101%
Number of positive	$151 + 166 = 317$					
% Positive	$317 \div 613 = 52\%$					

### Anonymity

It is best practice not to display the results of groups of respondents to the extent where the anonymity of individuals may be compromised. Results will not be shown where there are less than 10 respondents in a group.

### Comparisons

Comparisons to other similarly sized agencies are used through this report.

### Comparisons to previous years

The method of analysing and reporting specific results may be periodically reviewed and revised. Such improvements are applied to current data and that of previous years. For this reason the current report is always the most accurate data source for APS Employee Census results, including comparisons with time series data.



**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**PAYMENT ACCURACY****PAYMENT ACCURACY****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is committed to ensuring Australians receive the right payment, at the right time, at the right rate.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Payment Accuracy Review (PAR) program covers 13 social security payments; these payments represent approximately 97 per cent of the Department of Social Services' (DSS) administered appropriation outlays.
- The PAR program conducts approximately 22,500 reviews, delivered across 3 trimesters (4 monthly periods), each financial year.
- Payment Accuracy and Administrative Correctness (formerly Payment Correctness) both have a benchmark key performance indicator of 95 per cent. Results over the last 4 financial years are as follows:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Payment Accuracy</b>	93.57%	94.03%	95.07%	95.01%
<b>Administrative Correctness</b>	98.90%	99.01%	98.95%	99.00%
<b>Benchmark</b>	95%	95%	95%	95%

- Payment accuracy results in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years were shaped by the impact of COVID-19.
- In the 2024-25 financial year, DSS outlays for the 13 social security payments subject to the PAR program totalled \$141.06 billion.
- Failure to Fully Comply (formerly Generic Failure) and Earned Income Self categories remain the 2 highest risks to payment accuracy.
- For the period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025:
  - Around 920,000 unique customers were presented with pre-filled Single Touch Payroll (STP) data.
  - More than 21.19 million STP pay components (for example, salary and wages, allowances, and salary sacrifice) were pre-filled.
  - Approximately 92.8 per cent of STP components were confirmed by the customer.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**PAYMENT ACCURACY****Key Points**

- The Agency's role is to improve the customer experience and payment accuracy through simple, helpful, respectful, and transparent customer interactions.
- This includes the appropriate use of third-party data, pre-filled income information, and targeted communications to assist customers to avoid payment inaccuracy and understand their notification obligations.
- The Agency supports customers through upfront and ongoing prevention, education, and early intervention strategies. These strategies are designed to improve payment accuracy by targeting known risks and embedding an upfront payment accuracy culture.
- Examples of these strategies include:
  - increasing the use of pre-filled information, such as STP, to assist customers to meet their reporting obligation with the Agency, ensuring employment income is reported and assessed correctly
  - proactively nudging customers to support timely updates to changes in circumstance(s). For example, the Manage My Payment phase one initiative commenced in April 2025. It reminds customers via a nudge message (myGov or letter) to update their bank account balance/s when they have not made an update in the last 12 months
  - implementing customer-centric design principles across new initiatives, such as proactive conversations with customers, which are designed to prompt circumstance updates during discussions with our staff based on key drivers of payment inaccuracy relevant to their payment type, and
  - providing greater transparency through implementing online payment explanations and making it easier for the customer to understand overpayments.
- The Agency is developing initiatives to further support customers through timely and proactive engagement and improving digital options that make it easier for people to self-manage their payments where they choose to do so. A more contemporary approach, such as the greater use of pre-filled information, would result in a more holistic experience and better support customers to receive their correct payment rate.

## PAYMENT ACCURACY

### Background

Payment accuracy as a performance measure reflects the Agency's ability to pay the right person, the right amount, through the right program, at the right time.

An inaccurate payment occurs when the Agency pays a customer an incorrect amount or pays someone who is ineligible for a payment.

Payment accuracy is largely impacted by changes to customer circumstances, and the understanding by the customer of their obligation to notify these changes and take appropriate action early.

Key areas of risk to payment accuracy are the reporting of earned income, assets, and unearned income from sources like bank accounts, trusts, and real estate that affect the amount of payment an individual is entitled to under law.

Payment accuracy risks are monitored by the Agency to ensure appropriate action is taken to minimise the occurrence of payment errors.

The PAR program, known until October 2022 as the Random Sample Survey, conducts customer reviews on a sample of the recipient population ([Attachment A](#)). The program is the primary assurance mechanism to measure the integrity of payment outlays administered by DSS and delivered by the Agency.

The 95 per cent target has been a long-standing benchmark agreed between DSS and the Agency. All payments reviewed have an individual benchmark of 95 per cent, with the exception of Age Pension which has a 97 per cent benchmark.

Payment accuracy data addresses inaccuracy caused by both staff and the customer errors that affect payment accuracy of payments made by the Agency.

The outcomes from the PAR program also measure the Agency's ability to pay customers the correct payment, free of administrative errors. This is known as Administrative Correctness.

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- SQ24-000705. Single Touch Payroll/Manage My Payment.  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.

#### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs asked

#### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

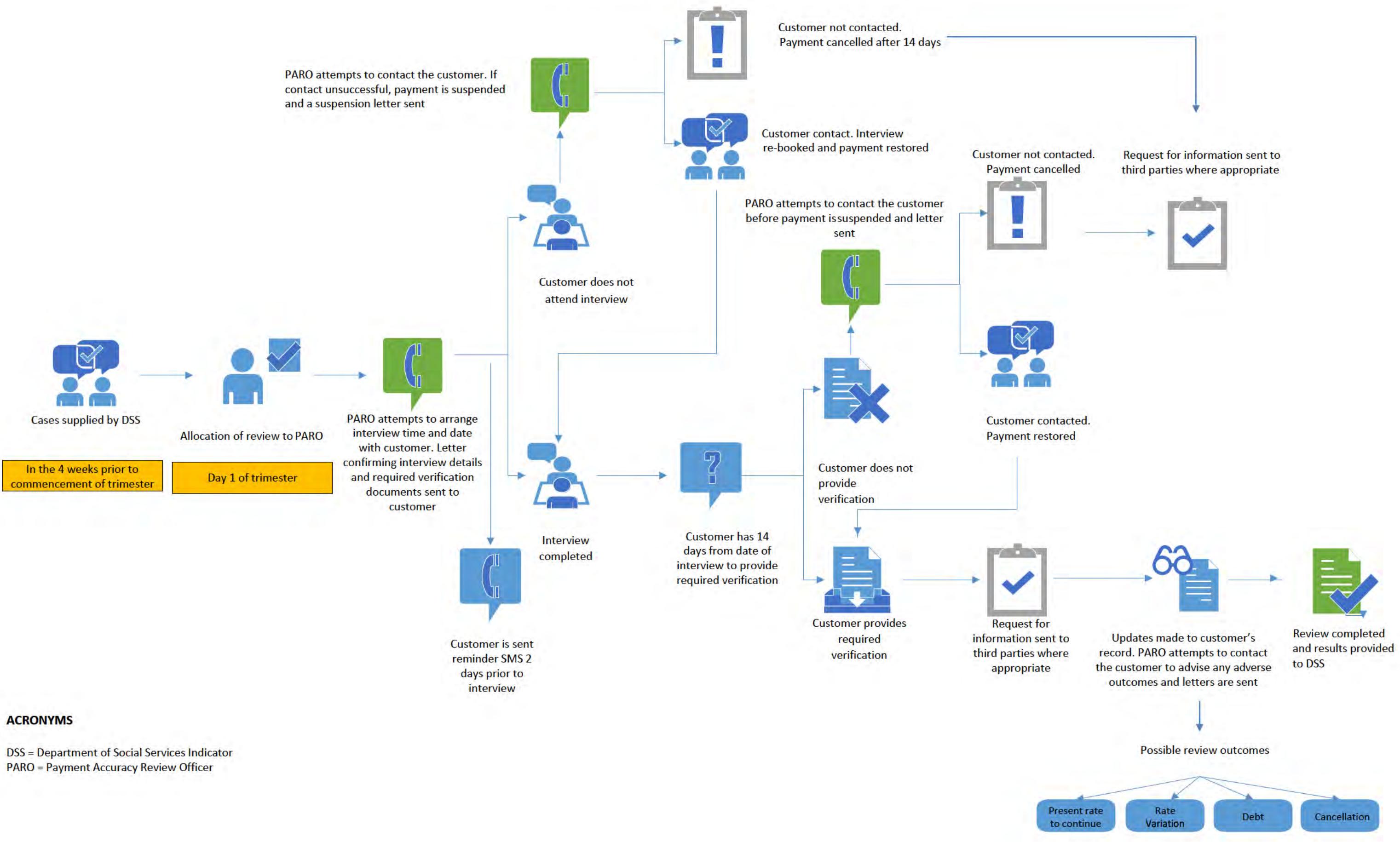
#### Relevant Media Reporting

- Nil

**PAYMENT ACCURACY**

Date sent to MO:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Cleared by (SES):	Chris Birrer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Telephone No:	s47F(1)
Group/Division:	Payments and Integrity Group / Payment Assurance Program and Appeals
Contact Officer:	Matt McMahon, National Manager, Payment Accuracy Branch
Telephone No:	s47F(1)
Consultation:	Nil
PDR Number:	SB25-000216

## **Payment Accuracy Reviews**



**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**INCOME APPORTIONMENT****INCOME APPORTIONMENT****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) are working together to resolve the complex issue of income apportionment. DSS, as the policy department, is taking the lead to resolve outstanding legal and policy matters.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Agency previously paused the raising of undetermined debts (potential debts not yet raised) and reviews relating to income apportionment, while awaiting policy and legal clarity. Debt recovery for debts potentially impacted by income apportionment has also been paused.
- As at 24 August 2025, the Agency has paused:
  - debt recovery on approximately 154,000 debts
  - approximately 88,000 undetermined debts
  - approximately 6,000 explanations of decision, and
  - approximately 15,000 requests for formal reviews.

**Key Points**

- On 15 August 2025, the Full Court of the Federal Court handed down its judgment in the income apportionment matter of *Chaplin v Secretary, Department of Social Services*.
- The majority accepted the Secretary of the Department of Social Services' preferred meaning of the word "earned" and confirmed that employment income may be taken into account when it was received.
- On 27 August 2025, the Government announced the measures to address the issue of income apportionment.

**Government response to the income apportionment issue**

- On 4 September 2025, new legislation was introduced into Parliament by the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, which included:
  1. Legislation to retrospectively validate the use of income apportionment, to apply to historic debts from the early 1990s to 2020. The legislation, if passed, sets out how income earned prior to 7 December 2020 will be

## INCOME APPORTIONMENT

assessed, which includes:

- a) in the entitlement period in which it was earned; or
- b) in the entitlement period worked out using income apportionment; or
- c) in the entitlement period in which it was received.

2. A Resolution Scheme for affected debts between 2003 and 2020 providing a one-off payment of up to \$600. This scheme would be open for applications for 12 months from January 2026 and recognises that using income apportionment to calculate entitlements was invalid.

3. An increase to the small debt waiver to \$250 for new debts across all social security debt, family payment debts (including Child Care Subsidy debts), and debts from income support payments under the *Veterans Entitlement Act 1986*.

- Further details about the Resolution Scheme, including eligibility criteria, will be available following the passage of legislation.
  - The Bill provides that the minister may determine provisions related to the scheme in a legislative instrument following commencement.
- The instrument will detail eligibility criteria, how to apply for the resolution payment, how to accept an offer of a resolution payment, how much the resolution payment will be, and other important administrative details to ensure the effective delivery of the scheme.
- No-one is obliged to participate in this scheme or prevented from exercising any legal right to pursue a claim relating to their debt.
- The instrument will prescribe the amount of resolution payments:

<b>Debt Amount</b>	<b>Resolution Payment Amount</b>
For debts under \$200	The full debt amount will be paid
For debts between \$200 and \$2,000	The payment would be \$200
For debts between \$2,000 and \$5,000	The payment would be \$400
For debts above \$5,000	The payment would be \$600

### **Current Operations**

- On 22 October 2024, and in line with the instructions from the Secretary, DSS, the Agency commenced a re-pause on income apportionment affected debt activities, as well as implementing a resolution pathway for any customers who choose to have their matter progressed despite the pause.

## INCOME APPORTIONMENT

- From 2 December 2024, the Agency wrote to approximately 98,000 customers who had previously received a letter in October 2023 or April 2024 advising them of the Federal Court appeal and that recovery of their debt(s) would remain paused due to potentially having been affected by income apportionment.
- Following the *Chaplin* judgment, customers are still able to request to have their matters progressed. Any recalculation undertaken will be consistent with the findings of the Federal Court.
- On 12 August 2025, Legal Aid NSW, as intervener, applied for special leave to appeal the *Chaplin* judgment to the High Court. On 21 August 2025, Mr. Chaplin, represented by Victoria Legal Aid, also applied for special leave to appeal.
- The Agency's website has been updated to ensure people have access to up-to-date information about income apportionment and the Government's announcement.
- A dedicated phone line is available for the public to contact the Agency with any queries (1800 560 870). The Agency saw an increase to approximately 40–50 calls per day following the announcement. However, this has since reduced back closer to pre-announcement volumes. Approximately 80 per cent of contacts were directly related to the announcement, including querying whether debts will be waived and seeking information about the resolution scheme and timeframes.

### **Impact on prosecuted debts**

- Convictions and prosecutions are matters managed by the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.
- Other implications for historical prosecutions are one of the aspects of income apportionment that the Government is considering.
- The Agency only makes a referral to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions for serious matters that are supported by a brief of evidence and referrals are never for overpayments alone.
- The Agency is working closely with the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions and DSS in relation to historical matters, which may be impacted by income apportionment.

## INCOME APPORTIONMENT

### Background

The Agency and DSS became aware of issues with the use of income apportionment in October 2020.

Prior to changes in legislation from 7 December 2020, people had to report their gross earnings based on what they had actually earned during a Centrelink fortnightly instalment period.

In many cases, a customer's earnings period did not align with their Centrelink instalment period.

Where a customer's earnings period did not align with their Centrelink instalment period, the Agency spread evenly or 'apportioned' their gross earnings over the corresponding Centrelink instalment periods. This could impact a customer's eligibility or payment rate.

A sample of recalculated records has shown that without income apportionment, in almost all cases, a potential overpayment would still exist, but the amount of the overpayment may change both up and down, based on individual circumstances.

From July 2021, the Agency commenced pausing the raising of debts, explanation of decisions, and formal reviews for debts potentially impacted by income apportionment, pending instructions from DSS.

From 30 October 2023, the Agency also paused the recovery of debts identified as potentially impacted by income apportionment.

The Agency, instructed by DSS, worked with the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP) to withdraw all impacted active criminal prosecutions and outstanding warrants. The CDPP advised all impacted matters were withdrawn by 4 December 2023.

From 11 April 2024, the Agency implemented a second pause.

From 29 April 2024, the Agency recommenced activity on a small number of debts impacted by income apportionment, in line with instructions and General Guidance. Debts that have had debt recovery arrangements paused were not part of the recommencement work.

In October 2024, DSS instructed the Agency to again pause these activities, following a decision in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), setting aside a debt that was calculated using the DSS Secretary's preferred method.

On 15 July 2025, the Full Court of the Federal Court of Australia handed down its judgment in the matter of *Chaplin v Secretary, DSS* (before the Tribunal as DSS v FTXB).

The majority accepted the Secretary of the Department of Social Services' preferred meaning of the word "earned" and confirmed that employment income may be taken into account when it was received.

On 15 July 2025, the Secretary publicly stated that as there is certainty on the legal position, paused debt activities involving the assessment of employment income for social security recipients prior to 7 December 2020 could re-commence in line with the Court's decision. At present, the pause of income apportionment affected debts activities remains in place.

On 12 August 2025, Legal Aid NSW, as intervener in the Federal Court proceedings, applied for Special Leave to appeal to the High Court of Australia.

## INCOME APPORTIONMENT

On 21 August, Mr. Chaplin also applied for Special Leave to appeal.

In response to the Legal Aid NSW application for Special Leave, a response from the Secretary of DSS was filed on 4 September. A further response is due to be filed by the Secretary by 18 September 2025 to address a separate application made by Mr. Chaplin.

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Questions on Notice**

- SQ25-000007. Income Apportionment – Recalculation Timeframe. Additional Estimates 27 February 2025. Tabled 24 March 2025.
- SQ24-000717. Income Apportionment. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000823. Income Apportionment – Debts Paused. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000824. Debt Raising in 2024. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000826. Reviews of historical debts. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000474. Income Apportionment – Historical DSP Debt Files. Budget Estimates 4 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000475. Income Apportionment – Proportion Debt for YA. Budget Estimates 4 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000467. Paused Debt Recovery. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000468. Income Apportionment Debts. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000470. Income Apportionment Incorrect Debts. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000471. Ombudsman's Report – Strategy to Manage Income Apportionment. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 2 August 2024.
- SQ24-000472. Ombudsman's Report – Communication Plan. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000473. Ombudsman's Report – Complaints Policy. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ23-000872. Debts. Supplementary Budget Estimates 25 October 2023. 20 December 2023.

#### **Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests**

Nil.

#### **Recent Ministerial Comments**

- [Delivering a fairer, more efficient social security system](#), the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP and Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Joint media release, 27 August 2025.
- [Income apportionment Full Court of the Federal Court decision](#), the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP and Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Joint media release, 15 July 2025.

## INCOME APPORTIONMENT

- [Statement on historic income apportionment | Department of Social Services Ministers](#), the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP and the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Joint media release, 2 August 2023.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Almost 1.2 million social security debts to be waived](#), Region Canberra, Chris Johnson, 31 August 2025.
- [Australian Government to Waive 1.2 Million Welfare Debts](#), Tax and Transfer Policy Institute, Teck Chi Wong, 28 August 2025.
- [Millions of Australians to receive compensation over unlawful Centrelink debt calculation](#), Perth Now, Demi Huang, 28 August 2025.
- [Australian Government to waive 1.2 million social security debts](#), LSJ online, Karl Hoerr, 28 August 2025.
- [Debt no more: Centrelink clears the slate for 1.2 million Australians](#), YourLifeChoices, Floralyn, Teodoro, 28 August 2025.
- [Millions of Australians to receive compensation over unlawful Centrelink debt calculation](#), 7News, Demi Huang, 28 August 2025.
- [Historic welfare debt backlog to be partially wiped](#), The Australian, Kristen Amiet, 28 August 2025.
- [Labour to waive welfare debts for about 1.2m Aussies](#), Daily Telegraph, Jessica Wang, 28 August 2025.
- [Moves to stop people getting hounded over small debts](#), The Canberra Times, Dana Daniel, 28 August 2025.
- [About 3m Australians affected by unlawful Centrelink debt calculation to be eligible for up to \\$600 compensation](#), The Guardian, Dan Jervis-Bardy and Sara Basford Canales, 27 August 2025.
- [Relief at hand for unlawful social service debt victims](#), The Canberra Times, Andrew Brown, 27 August 2025.
- [Fairer, Efficient Social Security System Unveiled](#), The Mirage, 27 August 2025.
- [Greens Hail Welfare Win, Robodebt Fight continues](#), The Mirage, 27 August 2025.
- [Greens celebrate win on welfare debts, say Robodebt work is far from done](#), 27 August 2025.
- [Centrelink's \\$300 million move to wipe debt for 1.2 million Aussies impacted by income apportionment](#), MSN, Stewart Perrie, 27 August 2025.
- [Labor to waive 1.2 million historical welfare debts totalling \\$300m](#), News.com.au, Jessica Wang, 27 August 2025.
- [MPs act on debt recovery 'failure'](#), Herald Sun, Jessica Wang, 25 August 2025.
- [Sitting week won't feature Labor's super bill](#), The Australian, Sarah Ison, 25 August 2025.
- [Labor, Coalition unite to bat down welfare debt probe in Senate](#), The Australian, Kristen Amiet, 31 July 2025.
- [The ghost of Robodebt, Federal Court rules billions of dollars in welfare debts must be recalculated](#), YourLifeChoices, Christopher Rudge, 29 July 2025.
- [The ghost of Robodebt: Federal Court rules billions of dollars in welfare debts must be recalculated](#), The NEWDAILY, Christopher Rudge, 28 July 2025.
- [Welfare recipients owe government \\$3bn, Pilbersek warned](#), Paul Karp, 25 July 2025.

## INCOME APPORTIONMENT

- [Labor mulls debt wipe](#), Hobart Mercury, Brendan Kearns, 19 July 2025.
- [Labour MPs urge time limit on welfare debts after \\$1.1b reboot](#), Financial Review, Paul Karp, 19 July 2025.
- [Welfare debt call, Greens: Write off \\$1bn bill](#), Courier Mail, Brisbane, Ellen Ransley, 19 July 2025.
- [Push for welfare debt time cap](#), Weekend Australian, Kristen Amiet, 19 July 2025.
- [Labour reportedly considering forgiving more than \\$1bn in welfare debts following court ruling](#), The Australian, Brendan Kearns, 18 July 2025.
- [ALP may wipe \\$1b welfare debt](#), Australian Financial Review, Paul Karp, 18 July 2025.
- [Social Services cleared to pursue historical welfare debts](#), The Mandarin, Dan Holmes, 17 July 2025.
- [Federal Court clears way for closer look at historic welfare debts](#), The Australian, Kristen Amiet, 17 July 2025.
- [Federal Court Rules on Income Apportionment](#), The Mirage, 15 July 2025.
- [Income Apportionment Judgment](#), Department of Social Services Secretary, 15 July 2025.
- [Two department heads' issue legal warnings on flaky punitive welfare](#), The Mandarin, Julian Bajkowski, 24 March 2025.
- [Public Statement regarding income apportionment](#) | Department of Social Services Secretary, 21 March 2025.
- [Debt on the file](#), The Saturday Paper, Rick Morton, 8 March 2025.
- [Robo-reflux: more welfare debt calculations face full Federal Court](#), The Mandarin, Julian Bajkowski, 4 March 2025.
- [Services Australia pursuing wrongly calculated debts?](#) | YourLifeChoices, Floranlyn Teodoro, Your Life Choices, 20 January 2025.
- [Services Australia chasing billions in unpaid debt – including some which may have been unlawfully calculated](#) | Centrelink debt recovery | The Guardian, Cait Kelly, The Guardian, 20 January 2025.
- [Serial errors force review](#), Rick Morton, The Saturday Paper, Melbourne, 7 December 2024.
- [Millions of Australians charged \\$4.3bn may be part of debt miscalculation controversy](#) | Australia news | The Guardian, Paul Karp, The Guardian, 30 November 2024.
- [Welfare payments cancelled unlawfully](#), Rick Morton, The Saturday Paper, Melbourne, 30 November 2024.
- [Uncovering the Grim Realities: Excavating Unlawful Income Apportionment](#), Darren Odonovan and Chris Rudge, Welfare Law in Australia, 28 November 2024.
- [Albanese government pauses controversial debt recovery method until appeal resolved](#) | Australian politics | The Guardian, Sarah Basford Canales, The Guardian, 26 October 2024.

## INCOME APPORTIONMENT

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.

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**PDR Number:** SB25-000215

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**ROBODEBT ROYAL COMMISSION****RESPONSE TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO THE ROBODEBT SCHEME -  
POST IMPLEMENTATION****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) has progressed implementing the Government's response to the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme, with work continuing on weaving the lessons learnt into tangible culture changes and practices.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- On 7 July 2023, Commissioner Catherine Holmes AC SC presented the Report of the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme (the Report) to the Governor-General.
- On 13 November 2023, the Australian Government released its response to the Report. The Government accepted (49) or accepted in principle (7) the recommendations made by the Royal Commission.
- The Agency is the lead for 26 recommendations. As at 31 August 2025, the Agency has fully implemented 24 recommendations and partially implemented 2 recommendations (Recommendations 16.2 & 20.1).
- Recommendation 16.2 – Review and strengthen governance of data-matching programs:
  - The Agency continues to work across government, including with the Australian Government Solicitor and the Australian Taxation Office, to fully implement this recommendation.
- Recommendation 20.1 – Administrative Appeals Tribunal cases with significant legal and policy issues:
  - The Agency continues to assess approaches for screening cases flowing from the new Administrative Review Tribunal to fully implement this recommendation.
- Key changes implemented by the Agency to address recommendations include:
  - The Advocates' Channel with Economic Justice Australia has provided opportunities to enhance how advocates can engage with the Agency.
  - Recruited over 160 ongoing Social Workers in 2024. As at 30 June 2025, there were 730 Social Workers employed in 233 locations.

## ROBODEBT ROYAL COMMISSION

- Embedding human-centred design and customer research into core practices, incorporating insights from customers, staff, and peak advocacy organisations.
- Proactive and inclusive staff feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, round table meetings, operational feedback, systematic issues register, and a dedicated staff feedback tool.
- Improvements to debt policy including no longer using external collection agencies to recover debts and enabling customers to self-pause their debts when impacted by disaster or crisis.
- Developed a Debt Management Program, which included an assessment of the Agency's debt management processes against the Guideline for Collectors and Creditors issued by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.
  - The overarching strategic intent and direction of the Debt Management Program is guided by 5 'debt principles' developed in consultation with Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) members.
  - The debt principles are centred on customer-focused debt services, minimising debt, equity and consistency, building trust and confidence, and delivering effective and efficient debt management services.
- The Agency continues to engage with the Department of Social Services (DSS) on Recommendation 18.2 – reinstate the limitation of 6 years on debt recovery through its established forums on debt reform opportunities.
- The Agency continues to work with DSS to identify opportunities that respond to the issues related to debt reform that were addressed in the Royal Commission. This includes new legislation that was introduced into Parliament on 4 September 2025 by the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, which included:
  - an increase to the small debt waiver to \$250 for new debts across all social security debt, family payment debts (including Child Care Subsidy debts), and debts from income support payments under the *Veterans Entitlement Act 1986*, and
  - new measures to reform the special circumstances debt waiver, which will give the Agency extended powers to waive social security debts including those incurred as a result of domestic and family violence.

# ROBODEBT ROYAL COMMISSION

## Background

The Income Compliance Program (the Robodebt Scheme) was initiated in 2015, and was supported through the following measures: 2015–16 Budget (Strengthening the Integrity of the Welfare System); 2015–16 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (Enhanced Welfare Payment Integrity – income data matching and Enhanced Welfare Payment Integrity non-employment income data matching); 2016–17 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (Better Management of the Social Welfare System); and 2018–19 Budget (Social Welfare Debt Recovery).

On 25 August 2025, the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Responding to Robodebt) Bill 2025 was introduced in the House of Representatives by Mr Andrew Wilkie MP, which seeks to respond to a number of outstanding recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- SB24-000699. Robodebt Refunds. Supplementary Budget Estimates
- 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SB24-000831. Robodebt – Personnel. Supplementary Budget Estimates
- 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs asked.

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- New powers to waive social security debts for victim-survivors of coercive control - Minister Plibersek and Minister Gallagher - 31 August 2025
- Delivering a fairer, more efficient social security system – Minister Plibersek and Minister Gallagher - 27 August 2025
- Update on Robodebt Royal Commission Reforms – Minister Gallagher and Minister Shorten – 7 November 2024.
- The Australian Government released its response to the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme – Australian Government – 13 November 2023.
- Don't feel sorry for politicians and bureaucrats who facilitated unlawful Robodebt scheme – Minister Shorten, The Nightly – 26 September 2023.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Millions of Australians to receive compensation over unlawful Centrelink debt calculation](#), Demi Huang, 7News, 28 August 2025.
- [Call to fix 'catastrophic' Robodebt failures](#), Jessica Wang, Yahoo! News, 25 August 2025.
- [NACC investigating itself after not probing Robodebt referrals](#), April Clover, 9News, 27 September 2024.

## ROBODEBT ROYAL COMMISSION

- [Robodebt class action appeal to pursue public office 'malfeasance'](#), Julian Bajkowski, *The Mandarin*, 26 September 2024.
- [Former department bosses Kathryn Campbell and Renee Leon named for breaching duties in relation to Robodebt](#), Jake Evans, ABC News, 13 September 2024.
- [Government formally responds to Robodebt royal commission, revealing 16 public servants being investigated over scheme](#), Jake Evans, ABC News, 13 November 2023.
- [Robodebt report won't fix debacle in policymaking](#), Peter Jennings, *The Australian*, 15 July 2023.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
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**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000213

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**NACC****NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is committed to working with the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) to prevent, detect and address corrupt conduct and promote trust in the public service.

**Key facts and figures**

- The Agency has fraud and corruption controls to detect, investigate, and respond to fraud, corruption, insider threats, and related crime.
- The Agency has an anti-fraud and corruption capability, with experience in undertaking criminal investigations and working closely with external law enforcement stakeholders to ensure matters of corruption, fraud, or information misuse are appropriately investigated and referred for prosecution.
- The Agency has implemented processes and procedures to support referrals and responses from and to the NACC.
- In preparing for the establishment of the NACC, the Agency reviewed and enhanced its operating procedures and policies to achieve the following priority outcomes:
  - To ensure the Agency is equipped to respond to requests from the NACC.
  - That officials comply with mandatory referral obligations.
  - That appropriate delegations and processes are in place to refer matters to the NACC.

**If asked*****Has the Agency referred any matters to the NACC?***

- The Agency has complied with its obligations pursuant to *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (the NACC Act). These obligations include the mandatory reporting obligations relating to serious and/or systemic corrupt conduct but also include the ability for the Chief Executive Officer to voluntarily refer matters to the Commission.

**NACC**

- It would not be appropriate for the Agency to provide any further information on these matters as it may compromise matters under consideration by the NACC.

***Has the Agency responded to any directions or notices?***

- The Agency has responded to directions, notices, and requests received. It would not be appropriate for the Agency to provide any further information on these matters as it may compromise matters under consideration by the NACC.

## Background

The NACC is an independent agency with powers to investigate allegations of serious or systemic corrupt conduct within the Commonwealth public sector under the NACC Act.

The NACC has the power to require agencies to investigate a matter, including under the oversight and direction of the NACC; require the production of information, documents, or things to the NACC; enter premises to inspect, copy, or seize documents or items without a warrant; intercept telecommunications with a warrant; and conduct private hearings (or public hearings in exceptional circumstances) and summon individuals to give evidence at a hearing.

Agency heads, their delegates, and certain officials performing functions under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013*, are required to refer to the NACC issues that concern the conduct of a current or former staff member that they suspect could involve serious or systemic corrupt conduct, once they become aware of the issue.

Any person may make a voluntary referral to the NACC.

## Supporting information

### Questions on Notice

Nil

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

Nil

### Recent Ministerial Comments

Nil

### Relevant Media Reporting

Nil

<b>Date sent to MO:</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.
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<b>Consultation:</b>	Nil
<b>PDR Number:</b>	SB25-000023

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**DEBT REFORM****DEBT REFORM - CHANGES TO THE SMALL VALUE DEBT AND SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WAIVERS****Subject/Issue**

On 27 August 2025, the Government announced it will, for the first time in 30 years, be increasing the threshold for waiving small social security debts to \$250.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- Debt activity during the 2024–25 financial year included:
  - 1.4 million debts raised to the total value \$2.35 billion
  - 886,380 debts raised for recovery, and
  - 513,985 debts raised and waived.
- Debts waived during the 2024–25 financial year included:
  - 494,203 debts waived with a value less than \$50 per debt, and
  - 12,205 debts waived due to special circumstances.
- As at 30 June 2025, there were 792,877 potential debts in the backlog with a value less than \$250, with a total estimated value of \$97.58 million.

**Key Points**

- The Government has also announced that the threshold change will result in around 1.2 million debts being waived or no longer needing to be raised in 2025–26.
- On 31 August 2025, the Government further announced changes to the Special Circumstances Waivers. The new measures will allow Services Australia (the Agency) to consider all the circumstances that led to someone ‘knowingly’ making a false statement in relation to a debt or not complying with the law, including circumstances of coercion or financial abuse.

**Small Debt Waiver**

- The Agency will apply a waiver to social security debts with a value under \$250 across all payment types.
- The increase in the Small Debt Waiver threshold will apply to new or varied debts determined after the new legislation comes into effect. The legislation

**DEBT REFORM**

is expected to take effect 14 days after it receives Royal Assent, or 20 March 2026, whichever is the later.

- This includes potential debts below the new threshold in the debt backlog, as well as those affected by Income Apportionment.
- The Agency works with customers to make sure their details are correct on the system, and they are getting the right payment at the right time.
- The Agency will continue to work with the Department of Social Services to ensure the Small Debt Waiver is not exploited.
- This change will make the Small Debt Waiver threshold consistent and standardised across all payment types and status of customers.

Special Circumstances Waiver

- The Agency is committed to supporting customers impacted by family and domestic violence.
- The Special Circumstances Waiver changes will allow the Agency to better account for circumstances like coercion or financial abuse when administering the Special Circumstances Waiver.
- These changes will give the Agency extended powers to waive social security debts where the debt was a result of:
  - The debtor knowingly provided false information or failed to comply with the law, but they were justified in the circumstances for doing so.
  - Another person (other than the debtor) knowingly provided false information or failed to comply with the law, but the debtor either did not know of that act, or they were justified in the circumstances for not correcting the act.
- The changes will take effect the day after the Bill receives Royal Assent. The Agency and the Administrative Review Tribunal will be able to apply the amended waiver in all decisions after that date to all debts (regardless of age or value).
- As stated in the Bill's Explanatory Memorandum, in addition to coercion or financial abuse, these changes will give decision makers the ability to consider whether factors like mental capacity, the impact of natural disasters, and homelessness may have contributed to a person knowingly providing false information to the Agency that caused a debt.

## Background

### Small Debt Waiver

The threshold for waiving a small debt has not changed since 1993. As a comparison, the value of payments has increased by 200 per cent over the same period.

Currently, the waiver of some debts of less than \$200 is permitted under the *Social Security Act 1991* (SSA), *Family Assistance Administration Act 1999*, and the *Paid Parental Leave Act 2010* under the Small Debt Waiver provisions. For example, the SSA states that the Secretary must waive the right to recover a debt if:

- the debt is, or is likely to be, less than \$200
- it is not cost effective for the Commonwealth to take action to recover the debt, and
- unless the debt is at least \$50 and could be recovered through withholdings on the customer's social security payments.

The small debt waiver provisions recognise that in many cases the administrative cost of recouping small debts is higher than the value of the debt itself, making the recovery of the debt uneconomical.

The current provisions also create an inequity between current and former customers as it is easier and more cost effective to recover debts by withholdings from social security payments.

The changes to the Small Debt Waiver provision address the inequity between current and former customers in the current legislation and brings consistency across the various legislation.

### Special Circumstances Waiver

Under the current Special Circumstance Waiver provisions, the debtor or another person must not knowingly have: made a false statement or representation, or failed or omitted to comply with a provision of the relevant Act.

A Special Circumstances Waiver can be considered at any time, including when investigating a potential overpayment or once recovery of a debt has commenced.

All or part of a debt may be waived due to special circumstances.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

• Nil
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### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

• Nil
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### Recent Ministerial Comments

- 27 August 2025 Ministerial announcement by the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP [Delivering a fairer, more efficient social security system | Department of Social Services Ministers](#)
- 31 August 2025 Ministerial announcement by the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP [New powers to waive social security debts for victim-survivors of coercive control | Department of Social Services Ministers](#)

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Greens Hail Welfare Win, Robodebt Fight Continues](#), Australian Greens, Mirage Bews, 27 August 2025
- [Labor to waive 1.2 million historical welfare debts](#), Jessica Wang, News.com.au, 27 August 2025

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**PDR Number:** SB25-000248

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**CENTREPAY****CENTREPAY****Subject/Issue**

The new Centrepay reforms will protect customers, crack down on high-risk goods and services, and introduce important safeguards to ensure businesses do not abuse the system.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The 2024–25 financial year saw:
  - an average of 609,450 customers use the Centrepay service per month
  - 23 million Centrepay deductions worth \$3 billion
  - 81.9 per cent of the value of deductions through Centrepay deductions were for accommodation and utilities
  - 10,969 approved Centrepay businesses
  - 302 Centrepay businesses had reviews undertaken
  - 19 businesses were removed as they were unable or unwilling to comply with the Centrepay contract
  - 1.88 per cent of the value of all Centrepay deductions made were for consumer leases, a decrease from 7.9 per cent in the 2020–21 financial year.

**Key Points****Centrepay Reform**

- On 3 September 2025, the Government announced a range of reforms to Centrepay to reduce the risk of financial harm.
- Improvements will start coming into effect from 3 November 2025.
- These improvements are the result of extensive consultation and co-design with customers, advocates and advisory groups, business and across government over the past 18 months.
- Throughout the reform process, Services Australia (the Agency) heard from people who said the service helps them manage critical expenses like housing costs, regular bills, school fees and medication.

- Extensive consultation has helped the Agency identify areas of concern where improvements were needed to ensure Centrepay continues to meet the needs of customers.
- The improvements will realign Centrepay as a regular bill-paying service, enhance customer protections and minimise the risk of financial exploitation by:
  - Strengthening the application and approval process for businesses wanting to use the service to make sure only the right types of business can access Centrepay.
  - Improving safeguards for customers, including imposing mandatory target amounts and end dates for deductions across most services.
  - Removing high risk services, including consumer leases and basic household goods which cover things like clothing and footwear.
  - Formalising obligations for businesses when managing complaints, including ensuring their complaint processes are accessible and help customers and advocates.
  - Redesigning Centrepay policy and implementing a stronger compliance framework to ensure businesses are accountable for the way they use Centrepay and providing the Agency with stronger powers to suspend or withdraw non-compliant businesses.
  - Introducing a Centrepay Deduction Authority form, ensuring minimum standards for businesses to meet when putting in place arrangements and collecting informed consent from customers.

### Communicating Centrepay Reforms

- The Agency is communicating directly with Centrepay registered businesses and Centrepay customers to outline changes to Centrepay and provide details of the phased implementation. These include:
  - targeted SMS and letters to customers with deductions to the service reasons being removed
  - social media campaigns
  - a range of support materials to assist community and support organisations in their conversations with customers.

## Removing Businesses

- Businesses being removed from Centrepay will start a 12-month transition period from 3 November 2025. During this period, Centrepay customers who already have arrangements in place with these businesses can keep paying through Centrepay, but no new deductions can begin, and existing deductions can't be increased.
- The Agency will work closely with those businesses who will be transitioning off Centrepay. This will ensure they are aware of their obligations, and they support their customers throughout this transition period.
- For remaining businesses, making the transition as smooth as possible is a key focus for the Agency.
- The Agency will assist businesses to transition to the new contract and comply with their new obligations through regular communications and support to ensure all necessary actions are taken to implement these changes within the required timeframes.

## Assurance and Compliance

- To maintain the integrity of the Centrepay program, the Agency conducts regular assurance and compliance checks.
- The Agency acts decisively against businesses found non-compliant with their Centrepay obligations, ensuring customers are safeguarded against financial harm.
- The Agency works closely with regulators, including the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER), regarding Centrepay businesses that may breach regulatory requirements.

## Background

Centrepay is a free and voluntary deduction service provided by the Agency to help customers manage their expenses. It ensures that payments occur on time and protects against late fees.

The service supports access to a range of goods and services and is mostly used by customers to pay for rent and utilities, which account for 81.6 per cent of the total value of Centrepay.

In addition to a requirement to comply with their obligations outlined in their contracts, businesses need to comply with all applicable Australian laws, including consumer protection laws, industry regulations and licensing or accreditation requirements.

## Centrepay Complaints

The Agency has introduced Centrepay Complaints Specialists and strengthened its Centrepay complaint procedures to make it easier for customers and their representatives, including advocates, to get help.

Customers and their representatives can make a complaint through the Agency's website, through their Centrelink online account, or by contacting the Agency's 1800 complaints line.

Starting from 3 November 2025, the Agency has also strengthened the complaint obligations on businesses to support customers when things go wrong. These changes will ensure businesses meet minimum complaints handling practices as determined by the Agency in line with complaints best practice guidelines.

The Agency currently investigates all complaints and feedback received from customers, business, advocates and third-party organisations.

Investigations of complaints that identify non-compliant behaviour by a Centrepay business are referred for compliance action.

Complainants are advised of the progress of the complaint where possible, taking into account privacy or legal limitations.

The Agency's complaint specialists work closely with customers and businesses to investigate and resolve complaints.

## Centrepay Compliance

The Agency continues to undertake compliance activities on existing Centrepay businesses while working towards implementing the reforms.

The Agency has introduced Centrepay Compliance Specialists and strengthened its Centrepay compliance approach to ensure businesses are accountable.

From 3 November 2025, enhanced obligations on businesses will come into effect, which aim to reduce uncertainty and make it easier for them to understand and comply with the rules when using Centrepay.

The Agency will be communicating with businesses and providing education and support to ensure businesses understand the reform changes.

When taking compliance action, the Agency acts in accordance with the relevant contract arrangements in place with the business, while also affording procedural fairness before implementing adverse decisions.

Due to privacy restrictions, the Agency cannot discuss any specific details about individual businesses.

### **Centrepay Incorrect Payments**

As at 26 September 2025, the Agency is working with 8 businesses to return incorrect payments to customers. These businesses are primarily from the utilities and household goods sectors.

These overpayments are at various stages of the return process, including recovering monies from businesses and returning the funds to customers.

The Agency works to support businesses in preventing incorrect payments from occurring through proactive outreach, education, improvements in internal processes, and supporting customers where incorrect payments have been identified.

The new Centrepay Terms of Use add greater clarity around the types and definitions of incorrect payments and what actions businesses are expected to undertake, which has been a consistent point of feedback from businesses. There is a strengthened operational focus around incorrect payments that cater for customers wanting to build an acceptable level of credit to avoid future bill shock and ensure they can continue to use the service to pay for their final bills when they cease a relationship with a provider.

### **Synergy Incorrect Payment**

Following outreach in November 2024 and January 2025, the Agency became aware in March 2025 that energy retailer Synergy held significant Centrepay incorrect payment credits.

Synergy advised a total of 2,845 customers were owed a sum of \$2.29 million.

The Agency has worked with, Synergy, to provide education and support to cancel any active Centrepay deductions from affected customers and prevent any further incorrect payments from occurring.

Synergy commenced remediation in April 2025 to contact affected customers and provide refunds of excess credits.

The Agency is assisting with returns to approximately 1,600 Centrepay customers owed an aggregate sum of \$1.25 million, these figures may increase as Synergy continue to refine their reconciliation and remediation processes.

In August 2025, the Agency commenced returning funds to affected customers in tranches. Approximately \$700,000 has been returned to customers so far, with further tranches to progress over the coming weeks.

### **Darranda Pty Ltd Trading as Rent4Keeps**

Darranda Pty Ltd is a franchise of Rent4Keeps and is a registered and active Centrepay Business in the lease, hire and rent-to-buy of household goods category.

ASIC alleged that between 1 April and 30 June 2019, the business was operating a business model designed to avoid consumer protections and commenced proceedings against the business.

At the time the National Credit Code contained a prohibition on lenders entering into a credit contract where the annual cost rate exceeded 48 per cent, but this cap did not apply to consumer leases.

The matter went to trial in the Federal Court from 5 to 14 February 2024 with closing submissions heard on 18 March 2024.

On 4 September 2024, the Court handed down its judgement, confirming that the business model used by the business breached the *National Consumer Credit Protection Act 2009* (Cth) (Credit Act).

The Federal Court on 12 August 2025, imposed a penalty of \$3.4 million against Darranda Pty Ltd for overcharging consumers on essential household goods, and for failing to comply with their obligations as a credit licensee.

#### **AER court proceedings against AGL**

An AER media release of 16 December 2022 noted AER had instituted proceedings in the Federal Court against AGL Retail Energy Limited (AGL).

AER alleges that AGL did not have appropriate arrangements in place to identify instances where customers have accrued significant excess Centrepay credits on their energy accounts and to refund overcharges.

On 23 August 2024, the Federal Court of Australia passed judgement against AGL for breaching the National Energy Retail Rules where Centrepay deductions have been involved. This is an important signal to the community that the Agency is working with regulators to ensure that customers are not disadvantaged through using the Centrepay service.

The Federal Court found that AGL had overcharged 483 Centrepay customers between 9 January 2017 and 28 October 2021. The Federal Court also found that AGL committed a total of 16,156 breaches by failing to inform and refund these customers within the required timeframes.

The Agency has met with AER to discuss the outcome of the case against AGL, and the action AER intends to progress a further three referrals the Agency sent to AER in early May 2024.

On 19 December 2024, the Federal Court of Australia handed a penalty decision down. AGL have been ordered to pay penalties totalling \$25 million for failing to comply with obligations related to Centrepay payments.

The Agency has implemented mandatory reporting requirements on AGL as part of its remediation direction. This will allow monitoring and ensure protections for Centrepay customers.

On 7 February 2025, AGL appealed against the findings of the Court, the penalties and other orders. The AER has filed a cross appeal and a notice of contention in response to AGL's appeal. The appeal and cross appeal will be heard on a date to be set by the Full Federal Court.

## Working Relationship with the Regulators

The Centrepay Compliance and Regulatory forum was established to support the Agency to strengthen engagement and communication with relevant regulators. The group meets quarterly and provides oversight on improvements to Centrepay to ensure changes align with other regulatory frameworks, are enforceable, ensure greater customer protections and improve accountability of businesses.

The Agency continues to work with regulators including the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, ASIC and AER to enforce actions where a business may be in breach of their regulatory requirements.

The Agency shares data and information with regulators where concerns are identified on individual businesses, and we leverage actions taken by regulators to consider any breaches of Centrepay Policy and Terms, which may include suspending or withdrawing a business from Centrepay.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- SQ24-000945. Ergon Energy Overpayments. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 12 December 2024. Tabled 30 January 2025.
- SQ24-000314. Centrepay - Energy Company Audits. Budget Estimates, 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000305. Centrepay – Energy. Budget Estimates, 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000301. Centrepay – Nominees. Budget Estimates, 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000252. Centrepay – Removed Businesses. Budget Estimates, 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000251. Centrepay – Review Advocacy Group List. Budget Estimates, 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000007. Work to Address Centrepay Compliance Issues. Additional Estimates, 14 February 2024. Tabled 4 April 2024.
- SQ24-000006. Centrepay Compliance Issues. Additional Estimates, 14 February 2024. Tabled 4 April 2024.
- PQ24-000026. Centrepay – Organisations Receiving Overpayments. Senate Question, 5 April 2024. Tabled 3 May 2024.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil.

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- [Labor delivering fairer and safer social security payments](#), Media Release, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Government Services, 3 September 2025.

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- [Drive at 05:08 p.m. - Isentia](#), Radio ABC Darwin include interview from Hank Jongen.
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- [ERA media statement: Compliance enforcement notice issued for licence breach](#), Economic Regulation Authority Western Australia, 14 July 2025.
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- [Centrepay under renewed ombud pressure to reform](#), The Mandarin, 19 May 2025.
- [Energy giant AGL disputes \\$25m fine for wrongly taking welfare money from hundreds as 'excessive'](#) | [AGL](#) | [The Guardian](#), The Guardian, 24 February 2025.
- [Vital service caught up in Centrepay crackdown](#), Northern Territory News, 20 January 2025.
- [Energy company AGL fined \\$25m over welfare rort](#) | [The Advertiser](#), Adelaide Advertiser and multiple other publications, 20 December 2024.
- [Vital service caught up in Centrepay crackdown](#) [Vital service caught up in Centrepay crackdown](#), Northern Territory News, 20 January 2025.
- [Energy company AGL fined \\$25m over welfare rort](#) | [The Advertiser](#), Adelaide Advertiser and multiple other publications, 20 December 2024.
- [AGL fined record \\$25m for wrongly taking welfare money](#), The Age and multiple other publications, 19 December 2024.
- [AGL kept taking money from welfare recipients via Centrepay years after promising to stop](#), court hears | [AGL](#) | [The Guardian](#), The Guardian, 11 December 2024.
- [ASIC kicks second NT clothing shop off Centrepay as rules tightened for use](#) - [ABC News](#), ABC News, 4 December 2024.
- [Shorten takes broom to Centrepay parasites](#), The Mandarin, 4 December 2024.
- [Centrelink changes for Centrepay bill-paying system: 'From 2025'](#), Yahoo Finance, 2 December 2024.
- [Centrepay improvements to protect and empower Australians](#) | [The National Tribune](#), The National Tribune, 2 December 2024.

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**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**Supporting People with FDV****SUPPORTING PEOPLE EXPERIENCING FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is committed to supporting customers and staff who are or have been affected by Family and Domestic Violence (FDV).

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Agency's FDV Strategic Commitment (the Commitment) was launched in December 2024 after wide consultation with peak bodies and advisory groups, reaffirming the Agency's commitment to supporting customers and staff affected by FDV.
- The Agency is operationalising the Commitment through an Action Plan, outlining tangible, and measurable initiatives that will continue to strengthen the Agency's policies, systems and processes to mitigate risk to customers and staff.
- FDV-related training packages have been delivered 49,651 times to staff for the 2024–25 financial year. Core FDV training is mandatory for all staff to complete each year.
- Information products are available to customers on the Agency's website in 30 languages and include a link to the Payment and Service Finder.
- For the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency's FDV web pages were viewed more than 264,926 times.
- System indicators of FDV added as part of the Family and Domestic Violence Support Model, in the 2024–25 financial year:
  - 17,997 indicators of FDV were added to customer records in the Child Support Program
  - 15,900 customer records where notes were added indicating FDV concerns in Centrelink
  - 2,749 indicators of FDV were added to customer records in Medicare.
- The Agency also administers Crisis Payment to people who are experiencing extreme circumstances and are in severe financial hardship. For the 2024–25 financial year, 38,673 Crisis Payment claims were granted.

## Supporting People experiencing FDV

### Key Points

- The Agency offers a range of payments, services, support, and assistance to people experiencing difficult circumstances, including FDV.
- The Agency offers practical support to customers leaving a relationship, including:
  - de-linking a customer's Centrelink record from their partner's when they inform the Agency they have separated, without the need for paperwork
  - assessing if a customer is not to be treated as a member of a couple for Centrelink payments due to FDV (Section 24 assessment)
  - reviewing nominee arrangements
  - transferring customers safely onto their own Medicare card
  - setting up Child Support arrangements (if applicable)
  - connecting customers with Agency social workers for short-term support and intervention
  - providing information on the Agency's website for customers on how to keep their information safe when leaving a relationship or living with violence or abuse.
- The Agency provides a safe and supportive workplace for those affected by FDV. Staff can access:
  - support resources such as the Employee Assistance Program
  - a range of leave and flexibility options
  - a dedicated staff FDV contact line and email service for additional advice and support.
- The Agency has completed a Safety by Design review demonstrating the Agency's intent to improve its systems and processes to better support people impacted by FDV. The review examined how current products, services and payments might be misused by perpetrators of abuse and supports the broader systems abuse audit being led by the Office for Women in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- In response to the Ombudsman's findings in the 'Weaponising Child Support: when the System fails families' report, the Agency is taking coordinated action to address financial abuse risks within the Child Support Scheme – refer to SB25-000228.

## Supporting People experiencing FDV

### Recent decisions

- The Special Circumstances Waiver changes will allow the Agency to better account for circumstances like coercion or financial abuse when administering the Special Circumstances Waiver.
- These changes will give the Agency extended powers to waive social security debts where:
  - The debt was a result of a person impacted by FDV being forced or manipulated to provide false information or not to comply with the law.
  - Another person (other than the person with the debt) knowingly provided false information or failed to comply with the law, but the debtor either did not know of that act, or they were justified in the circumstances for not correcting the act.

# Supporting People experiencing FDV

## Background

The FDV Strategic Commitment (the Commitment) outlines the Agency's approach to supporting customers and staff impacted by FDV, aligning to the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032* and The First Action Plan. The Commitment reaffirms the Agency's vision to deliver simple, helpful, respectful, and transparent services and support customers and staff affected by FDV. It drives the Agency's approach to continually refine and strengthen its systems, processes, and support to reduce risk to customers and staff affected by FDV.

The Agency's commitments are tabled under 2 areas of focus, as a service provider and as a Government Agency employer.

As a **service provider**, at-risk customers are identified and connected safely and quickly to appropriate support. Customer privacy is protected and the ability to use the Agency's systems as a means of financial coercive control is minimised. The Agency takes a co-design approach, partnering with Indigenous communities, and those with lived experience. The Agency also works in partnership with policy agencies, customers, staff, peak bodies, and community groups.

As a **Government Agency employer**, the Agency facilitates a safe and supportive workplace, ensuring staff affected by FDV are provided a safe environment. Staff are trained and aware of FDV and the Agency continues to strengthen staff capability.

The Agency is developing an Action Plan to operationalise the Commitment. The Agency is engaging internal and external stakeholders to drive tangible and practical initiatives to support customers and staff experiencing FDV and develop a framework to measure outcomes.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- SQ23-000971. FDV data on customer records. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 9 November 2023. Tabled 20 December 2023.
- SQ23-000981. Number of referrals to the FDV Pilot. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 9 November 2023. Tabled 20 December 2023.
- SQ23-000481. Rationale for FDV Pilot project and what it is trying to achieve. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 31 May 2023. Tabled 9 August 2023.
- SQ23-000529. FDV support customer model. Budget Estimates, 31 May 2023. Tabled 9 August 2023.
- SQ23-000531. FDV support model social work referral data. Budget Estimates, 31 May 2023. Tabled 9 August 2023.
- SQ23-000067. The percentage of in-person versus online confirmation of FDV. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 15 February 2023. Tabled 5 May 2023.
- SQ23-000066. Occurrences of self-reported instances of FDV. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 15 February 2023. Tabled 5 May 2023.
- SQ23-000065. Why the Agency does not capture data referrals to social workers. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 15 February 2023. Tabled 5 May 2023.

## Supporting People experiencing FDV

- SQ23-000064. The number of victim/survivors who have confirmed they are affected by FDV and reasons for not recording this. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 15 February 2023. Tabled 5 May 2023.
- SQ23-000063. The release of a new Agency FDV strategy and the success/outcomes of the current FDV Strategy. Tabled 5 May 2023.
- SQ23-000283. Update on FDV Pilot and performance metrics established for the pilot. Supplementary Budget Estimates, February 2023. Tabled 5 May 2023.
- SQ23-000105. Status of the FDV pilot funded under the Women's Safety Budget. Supplementary Budget Estimates, 15 February 2023. Tabled 5 May 2023.
- SQ22-000017. Response to Economic Justice Australia report, "Debt, duress and dob-ins: Centrelink Compliance and domestic violence." Additional Budget Estimates, 17 February 2022. Tabled 23 March 2022.
- SQ22-000092. The number of times the Agency's Risk Identification and Referral Model was applied and referrals to Agency social workers in the 2022-23 Financial year. Budget Estimates, 9 November 2022. Tabled 21 December 2022.
- SQ22-000095. The number of staff trained in the Agency's Risk Identification and Referral Model. Budget Estimates, November 2022. Tabled 21 December 2022.
- Inquiry QoNs. Joint Select Committee on Corporations and Finance Social Services Regulatory Framework to Financial Abuse Public Hearing, 20 September 2024. Tabled 18 October 2024:
  - IQ24-000015
  - IQ24-000016
  - IQ24-000018
  - IQ24-000021
  - IQ24-000023
  - IQ24-000024
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  - IQ24-000029
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  - IQ24-000031
  - IQ24-000032

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [NEW POWERS TO WAIVE SOCIAL SECURITY DEBTS FOR VICTIM-SURVIVORS OF COERCIVE CONTROL](#). Minister for Finance, Women, the Public Service and Government Services. 31 August 2025
- [Closing the Gap - Canberra | Prime Minister of Australia](#). The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese Speech. 10 February 2025.
- [Albanese Labor Government building on investments to Close the Gap.](#) The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese media release. 10 February 2025.

## Supporting People experiencing FDV

- [International Women's Day Breakfast](#). The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese Speech. 5 February 2025.
- [World Suicide Prevention Day breakfast](#). The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese Speech. 10 September 2024.
- [Remarks at 30th anniversary of affirmative action](#). The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese Speech. 9 September 2024.
- [Meeting of National Cabinet | Prime Minister of Australia](#). The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese media release. 6 September 2024.
- [Meeting of National Cabinet on gender-based violence | Prime Minister of Australia](#). The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese media release. 1 May 2024.
- [Helping women leave a violent partner payment | Prime Minister of Australia \(pm.gov.au\)](#). The Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese media release. 1 May 2024.

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- [Welfare debts waived for domestic violence survivors](#), T Ikonomou, MSN, 31 August 2025
- [SA royal commission findings into domestic, family and sexual violence released - ABC News](#), J Hayndes, K Birmingham, D Keane, ABC News, 19 August 2025.
- [Domestic violence: Leaving Violence Program offers up to \\$5000 and will be made permanent](#), Millie Muroi, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 June 2025.
- [EJA Briefing: Concerns regarding the intersection of Child Support and Family Tax Benefit | Economic Justice Australia](#), EJA, 18 June 2025.
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- [Family violence is never far from the headlines. What are the major parties doing to solve this national crisis? - ABC News](#) Heidi Davoren and Mary Lloyd, 2 May 2025.
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- [Media Release: Ombudsman's report into weaponisation of Child Support makes clear the need for deeper legislative reform, says EJA | Economic Justice Australia](#), EJA, 3 June 2025.
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## Supporting People experiencing FDV

- [Family violence is never far from the headlines. What are the major parties doing to solve this national crisis? - ABC News](#), Heidi Davoren and Mary Lloyd, ABC News, 2 May 2025.
- [A Centrelink error put Alannah in danger from her abusive partner. Now there's a push for federal platforms to better protect women | Domestic violence | The Guardian](#), Kate Lyons, *The Guardian*, 26 November 2024.
- [NT coroner makes 35 recommendations after landmark inquest into DV deaths of Aboriginal women - ABC News](#), Melissa Mackay, ABC News, 25 November 2024.
- [Government repeatedly ignored foreigner's Medicare fraud, on top of the abuse of his wife | news.com.au — Australia's leading news site](#), Shannon Molloy, News.com.au, 22 October 2024.
- [First update on plan to end violence against women handed to parliament - ABC News](#), Claudia Long and Syan Vallance, ABC News, 21 August 2024.
- [Australia's tax system is an unwitting 'weapon' family violence offenders use against their victims. These people want to stop it. - ABC News](#), Daniel Ziffer, ABC News, 19 June 2024.
- [\\$900m boost for domestic violence survivors - ABC listen](#), Evelyn Manfield, ABC News, 1 May 2024.
- [1800RESPECT launches video counselling for victims | The Canberra Times | Canberra, ACT](#), Justine Landis-Hanley, *The Canberra Times*, 11 March 2024.
- [Domestic violence victims are still being failed by the system — will a new approach help? - ABC News](#), Keane Bourke, ABC News, 16 September 2023.

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**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**AGED CARE REFORMS****AGED CARE REFORMS****Subject/Issue**

Budget funding for aged care reforms enables Services Australia (the Agency) to contribute to the implementation of recommendations from the Aged Care Taskforce, including the rollout of the Support at Home (SaH) Program.

**Key Facts and Figures**

	2023-24	2024-25
Total amount paid	<b>\$28.7 billion*</b>	<b>\$32.9 billion*</b>
Provider claims processed	<b>59,801</b>	<b>59,185</b>
– Residential aged care	31,648	31,563
– Home Care	25,588	25,241
– Flexible Care†	2,565	2,381
Means Test Assessments	<b>225,350</b>	<b>229,533</b>

\*Includes \$0.7 billion in 2023–24, and \$0.7 billion in 2024–25 paid for DVA recipients

†Flexible Care includes Short-term Restorative Care and Transition Care

**Completed Aged Care Specialist Officer (ACSO) appointments**

Appointment Type	2023-24	2024-25
ACSO Face to Face (ACSO Initial and Return appts)	25,760	29,241
ACSO Video Conference (video chat appts)	569	908
ACSO Phone Appointment	236	301
Offsite	64	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,629</b>	<b>30,540</b>

**Key Points**

- The Agency has received \$159.6 million over five years to the 2027–28 financial year to deliver key aged care reforms under the new *Aged Care Act 2024* and continue to implement recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission. This includes \$49.56 million for the 2025-26 financial year.
- These reforms build on earlier aged care changes and the Agency's ongoing responsibility in means testing to calculate the cost of care for older Australians, and to pay subsidies and supplements to approved aged care providers.

## AGED CARE REFORMS

- The Agency's work focuses primarily on system upgrades and user functionality to enable elements of the new rights-based *Aged Care Act 2024*, as well as delivering key components to administer the new SaH Program.
- On 4 June 2025, the Government announced deferral of the new *Aged Care Act 2024* from 1 July 2025 to 1 November 2025. The deferment allows:
  - Aged care providers more time to prepare their clients, support their workers and get their systems ready for the changes.
  - DHDA and the Agency to respond to sector feedback, including a request to receive care recipient's contribution rates early to support service conversations with care recipients ahead of the new Act coming into effect.
  - More time to finalise key operational and digital processes.
  - Supporting legislation to be tabled that will enable the new Act to operate effectively.

### **Key Changes**

#### ***New Aged Care Act 2024***

- From 1 November 2025, the new Act will replace existing legislation, including the *Aged Care Act 1997* and the *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018*.
- The Agency is making system enhancements to support the new regulatory framework for services delivering aged care, as well as new means testing arrangements to ensure subsidy payments are based on a person's current personal and financial circumstances.
- This change means providers will be able to register with DHDA in one or more 'registration categories' based on the service types they deliver.

#### ***Support at Home Program***

- From 1 November 2025, SaH will replace Home Care Packages and the Short-Term Restorative Care Program. The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) will become part of SaH no earlier than 1 July 2027.
- The new SaH program is designed to improve access to services, products, equipment and home modifications to help older people to remain healthy, active and socially connected to their community.

## AGED CARE REFORMS

- The Agency will be improving the claiming process (invoicing) for providers, allowing them to claim more regularly (maximum daily) for specific services delivered under SaH.
- Under the new *Aged Care Act 2024*, the Agency will implement new rules for calculating care recipient contributions under SaH, including a full means assessment based on income and assets.
- Over 90 per cent of individuals transitioning to SaH will be protected under the “no worse off” principle in the Act, meaning they will either pay no contributions, or no more than under their current Home Care Package.

### ***Key dates for Support at Home***

Effective Date	Event
1 October 2025	Pre-Transition Contribution Rate released to providers via the portal.
1 November 2025	Support at Home program goes live.
6 November 2025	Official contribution rate letters begin mailing to ~300,000 recipients.
By 30 November 2025	Care recipients will receive transition letters issued by the Agency detailing official determination/contribution rate.  <i>Excludes pre 2014 scheme participants who will receive rate guidance directly from their providers.</i>
1-30 November 2025	Aged care providers continue delivering services; official claiming yet to commence.
1 December 2025	Claiming for Support at Home services commences.

### ***Residential care means test***

- From 1 November 2025, new entrants in residential care will be subject to changes in means testing that includes:
  - Means testing of the hotelling supplement to support costs associated with catering, cleaning and gardening.
  - Introduction of a non-clinical care fee for services like bathing, mobility assistance and provision of lifestyle activities.
  - Abolishment of the means tested care fee.

## AGED CARE REFORMS

- The clinical nursing component of care will be fully funded by the government, aligning with the SaH model where individuals will not pay for nursing care, only for services they would normally pay for.
- A lifetime cap will be applied on the Non-Clinical Care Contribution set at \$130,000 for care recipients who enter care on or after 1 November 2025. There is no change to the current lifetime cap for residential care recipients whose means tested care fee is currently set at \$82,347 (as of 1 July 2025).

### ***Redress exemptions***

- From 1 January 2025, National Redress Scheme payments are exempt from residential aged care means assessment and financial hardship assessments.
- Privacy and sensitivity considerations are central to this initiative, therefore the Agency, DHDA and the Department of Social Services have taken a measured approach to ICT implementation.
- The Agency has processes in place for staff to collect information from a care recipient who self discloses a redress payment so that the exemption can be provided.

### **Status of ICT Readiness**

#### ***Key milestones - In progress projects (as at 30 June 2025)***

Project	Commencement	Build Scheduled for Completion	Project implementation / go-live	Current Status and Dependencies
Support at Home	1 July 2024	31 March 2025	1 November 2025	On track
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enable the new Aged Care Act	1 July 2024	11 April 2025	1 November 2025	On track

## AGED CARE REFORMS

Project	Commencement	Build Scheduled for Completion	Project implementation / go-live	Current Status and Dependencies
Equitable and Improved Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD)/Refundable Accommodation Contribution (RAC) Information	1 July 2024	30 April 2025	1 November 2025	On track
Places to People	1 July 2023	30 May 2025	1 November 2025	On track
Reforming Means testing and Exempt Redress	1 July 2023	30 May 2025	1 November 2025	On track
Care Minutes	1 January 2025	30 May 2025	1 April 2026	On track

**Governance and risk management**

- The Agency is actively involved in various DHDA-led governance initiatives, contributing to the development of design, business specifications, provider readiness and implementation readiness decision-making processes.
- Delivery is monitored and managed through joint governance with DHDA, including both business and ICT engagement. The delivery runway is being closely monitored and downstream impacts for software developers are understood and being managed with the sector.
- The Agency is confident of meeting delivery timeframes based on current discussion and requirements.
- As a Tier 1 investment under the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA), the Aged Care program is subject to independent assurance.

## AGED CARE REFORMS

- The Agency has engaged Sententia to assess delivery confidence, focusing on payment reconciliation and utility solutions, and has aligned assurance activities with the DTA Assurance Framework.

## Background

The Agency's primary responsibility is to support the aged care system by:

- Undertaking means testing and calculating the cost of care for older Australians
- Calculating and paying subsidies and supplements to approved aged care providers, and
- Providing direct support through ACSOs, located in more than 80 service centres, who assist older Australians in navigating the aged care system.

The work led by the Agency will primarily upgrade systems and user functionality to enable elements of the new rights-based Act, as well as achieving the design, development and administration of the SaH Program.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- Nil

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [New Aged Care Act to start from 1 November | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#), Minister The Hon Mark Butler MP, Media release, 4 June 2025.
- [Press conference with Minister Butler and Minister Rae](#), Adelaide, 4 June 2025.
- [Radio interview with Minister Rae](#), ABC Melbourne Drive, 30 June 2025.
- [Release of rules another step towards a new Aged Care Act](#), Minister The Hon Sam Rae, 31 July 2025.
- [Radio interview with Minister Rae](#), ABC Radio Sydney Mornings, 21 August 2025.
- [Television interview with Minister Rae](#), Sky News, 27 August 2025.
- [Doorstop interview with Minister Butler](#), Canberra, 2 September 2025.

## Relevant Media Reporting

- [Providers want govt to 'release the handbrake'](#), Katarina Lloyd Jones, Australian Ageing Agenda, 5 September 2025.
- [Over 121,000 people waiting for ACAT assessment](#), Katarina Lloyd Jones, Australian Ageing Agenda, 1 September 2025.
- [What is the Henry VIII provision in the new aged care Bill?](#), Caroline Egan, The Weekly Source, Other, 13 August 2025.
- [Department releases Support at Home templates for service agreements](#), Caroline Egan, The Weekly Source, 12 August 2025.
- [Providers need confidence says Symondson](#), Natasha Egan, Australian Ageing Agenda, 11 August 2025.
- [Symondson discusses sector's burning issues](#), Natasha Egan, Australian Ageing Agenda, 11 August 2025.
- [Please explain? Aged care sector's digital readiness raises questions three months out from rollout](#), Caroline Egan, The Weekly Source, 31 July 2025.
- [AlayaCare announces Support at Home API Certification](#), Amy Clark, Inside Ageing, 23 June 2025.
- [What more can we do](#), Natasha Egan, Australian Ageing Agenda, 3 June 2025.

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**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000225

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**STILLBORN BABY PAYMENT****STILLBORN BABY PAYMENT****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) pays Stillborn Baby Payment to support families who experience the loss of their baby.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- In the 2024–25 financial year, 805 customers were paid Stillborn Baby Payment for 818 children.

**Key Points**

- The Agency supports families in the tragic circumstances of a stillbirth. A person may be eligible for either Parental Leave Pay or Stillborn Baby Payment.
- In most circumstances, Parental Leave Pay is the most beneficial payment where a person meets the work test before the baby is born. However, they can choose which payment is the best financial decision for their family.
- For multiple births, Parental Leave Pay may be paid for one child and Stillborn Baby Payment for the other child, or children, or Stillborn Baby Payment may be paid for each baby.
- A qualified medical professional, such as a doctor or midwife, is required to provide written evidence that a stillborn child is delivered. This evidence is provided by the applicant to the Agency, and the Agency must rely on this information when assessing claims.
- The Agency has a wide range of services available to support families when a child dies, including Social Workers and referrals to support services such as Stillbirth Foundation Australia. The Agency also has a dedicated Bereavement phone line (1800 118 388).

## STILLBORN BABY PAYMENT

### Background

Stillborn Baby Payment is a non-taxable payment available to families who experience the loss of their baby as a result of stillbirth. It is paid as a \$4,326.57 lump sum payment for each stillborn baby.

A person may be eligible for Stillborn Baby Payment where the definition of a stillborn child is met; they meet residence and income requirements; the child would have been a Family Tax Benefit (FTB) child; and they or their partner did not receive Parental Leave Pay for the same baby.

The family must also have a combined adjusted taxable income \$77,177 or less in the 6-month period beginning on the day of the baby's delivery or be eligible for FTB Part A for another child within 52 weeks of the stillbirth.

A person can claim Stillborn Baby Payment online through their myGov Centrelink online account, or by completing a Claim for Bereavement Payment form issued by the hospital or midwife after a stillbirth.

A qualified medical professional, who was at the birth, must provide written evidence that a stillborn baby was delivered for a family to receive Stillborn Baby Payment.

Alternate proof of birth such as a letter from the doctor or midwife who attended the birth, or another appropriate hospital representative can be supplied.

Under the legislation a stillborn child means a child:

- who weighs at least 400 grams at delivery or whose period of gestation was at least 20 weeks, and
- who has not breathed since delivery, and
- whose heart has not beaten since delivery.

# STILLBORN BABY PAYMENT

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- QoN #201. Stillborn Parenting Payment. Senator Alexander Antic asked the Minister for Social Services on 6 August 2025.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- FOI request #86624 from **s47F(1)** Stillborn Baby Payment. FOI request was withdrawn.

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

### Relevant Media Reporting

- 'Not the intention of policymakers': concerns surrounding stillborn baby payments abuse, Rita Panahi, Skynews.com.au, 1 September 2025.
- Senator Hanson Grills Govt on Stillborn Baby Payment, One Nation website, 26 August 2025.
- Australians receiving \$22,000 to have an abortion, Callum Wood, *The Trumpet*, 11 August 2025.
- Australian government grants stillbirth payments for late-term abortions, *The Catholic Herald*, 25 July 2025.
- Abortion payments, Letter to the Editor, *Geelong Advertiser*, 25 June 2025.

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**PDR Number:** SB25-000226

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**TCF OMBUDSMAN****OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION INTO THE TARGETED COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK****Subject/Issue**

On 6 August 2025, the Commonwealth Ombudsman published a report titled '*Automation in the Targeted Compliance Framework: when the law is changed but the system isn't*'.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- On 4 July 2024, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) paused cancellations of people's income support for 'persistent mutual obligation failures' after they became concerned that the decisions may not be valid.
- On 4 December 2024, the Secretary of DEWR advised the Commonwealth Ombudsman that, contrary to legislative changes in 2022 that required consideration of a job seeker's circumstances before deciding to cancel income support, decisions to cancel income support had occurred automatically.
- On 31 January 2025, the Ombudsman notified Services Australia's (the Agency) CEO of an investigation into DEWR and the Agency's cancellation of income support payments under the Targeted Compliance Framework.
- On 3 June 2025, the Ombudsman notified the CEO he was expanding the scope of his investigation to assess how the Agency and DEWR maintain oversight of the decision-making delegated to employment service providers, and this would be the subject of a second report.
- On 6 August 2025, the first of 2 Ombudsman reports was released and explored why a change in legislation had not been implemented in the Targeted Compliance Framework policies, processes and systems. The report was critical of delays by DEWR and the Agency in addressing these issues.
- The Ombudsman report outlines 7 recommendations, with recommendations 3-7 addressed to the Agency. Both DEWR and the Agency accepted all recommendations and are working together to implement them.
- The Ombudsman's second report arising from this investigation is due to be finalised later this year.

**TCF OMBUDSMAN****Key Points**

- In the report published on 6 August 2025, the Ombudsman found:
  - Since amendments to the *Social Security Administration Act 1999* in April 2022, which introduced discretion into the decision-making process, the cancellation of income support for persistent mutual obligation failures was not lawful.
  - DEWR and the Agency did not ensure their respective processes and computer systems complied with the amended legislation.
  - DEWR and the Agency's quality assurance activities did not identify the unlawful cancellations.
- The 5 recommendations addressed to the Agency call for:
  - Recommendation 3: A legislative “placemat” to support legislative drafting processes, to ensure compliance with administrative law principles.
  - Recommendation 4: Annual training for all staff making delegated decisions and decision-making policy, on administrative law requirements and discretionary decision-making.
  - Recommendation 5: Put systems in place to ensure the administration of the Targeted Compliance Framework complies with the law and has safeguards for automation.
  - Recommendation 6: Implement a plan to identify the scale of the administrative errors in the Targeted Compliance Framework and remediation.
  - Recommendation 7: Proactive and prompt rectification of automated decision-making and timely advice of issues to the Ombudsman’s Office.
- The Agency has accepted all recommendations and in response has established a bilateral working group with DEWR to jointly oversee and implement the recommendations.

**TCF OMBUDSMAN**

- The following work is underway:
  - Recommendation 3: The DEWR-Agency Services Schedule and Bilateral Agreements are under review. A placemat will be jointly developed to capture the roles and responsibilities of each entity, including protocols to support early engagement at the start of a legislative drafting process.
  - Recommendation 4: The Agency is reviewing training modules related to the Targeted Compliance Framework. Training plans will be updated to include material on administrative law requirements for making valid decisions, including exercising discretion.
  - Recommendation 5: The Agency is leveraging existing risk management and program assurance frameworks to develop a risk management plan that is specific to the Targeted Compliance Framework, including the use of automation.
  - Recommendation 6: DEWR and the Agency are working together to document processes to identify, assess and remediate system issues in the Targeted Compliance Framework, including developing a remediation framework to ensure a consistent approach is taken to compensate impacted people.
  - Recommendation 7: DEWR and the Agency have priority work underway to ensure appropriate discretion is applied to decision-making under the Targeted Compliance Framework, where required.

# TCF OMBUDSMAN

## Background

The Targeted Compliance Framework is the compliance system that is used by DEWR and the Agency to ensure that job seekers serviced by Workforce Australia and Disability Employment Services comply with their compulsory mutual obligation requirements in return for receiving a participation payment.

The Targeted Compliance Framework system was built to accommodate the initial legislation that financial penalties must be applied, when the conditions for doing so are met. Amendments to the legislation in April 2022 changed from 'must' to 'may' apply a penalty. The IT system was not changed to reflect the legislation changes.

Following concerns raised by the Australian Council of Social Service and a report from DEWR that income support payments may have been cancelled unlawfully or inappropriately, the Commonwealth Ombudsman notified the CEO (and the Secretary of DEWR) on 31 January 2025 he was commencing an investigation into the Targeted Compliance Framework to consider if cancellation decisions were being made and implemented in a manner that is lawful, fair and reasonable.

Further, on 6 June 2025 the Ombudsman expanded the scope of the investigation to examine how the Agency and DEWR maintain oversight of the decision-making delegated to employment service providers.

The Ombudsman has decided to prepare 2 reports reflecting his findings and recommendations from this investigation.

The first report addressed the implementation of the legislative amendments to the *Social Security Administration Act 1999* in April 2022, and the lawfulness and appropriateness of the resulting decisions and actions.

The second report will consider the fairness and reasonableness of the decision-making process leading to cancellations that result from persistent mutual obligation failures, as well as the appropriateness of the agencies' remediation strategy for those affected by unlawful decisions.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- Nil

### Freedom of Information

- Nil

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

## TCF OMBUDSMAN

## Relevant Media Reporting

[Take pride in fairness? Our welfare system is anything but](#), Zo Wunderberg, *The Canberra Times*, 20 August 2025.

[Government warned over 'legal basis' of welfare system](#) [1116517278 20260816.pdf](#), Rick Morton, *The Saturday Paper* Melbourne, 18 August 2025.

[Lawyer warns Labor after illegal denial of payments](#) [1116301920 20260815.pdf](#), Olivia Ireland, *The Age* Melbourne, 15 August 2025.

[Secret report slams error-prone Jobseeker program](#) [1116256920 20260815.pdf](#), Jessica Wang, *Courier Mail* Brisbane, 15 August 2025.

[Secret Deloitte review into automated JobSeeker system warns of "instability," "unintended impacts"](#) | *The West Australian*, Jessica Wang, *The West Australian*, 14 August 2025.

[Automated Decisions Breached Law for Thousands: Ombudsman](#) | *IDM Magazine*, IDM Magazine, 14 August 2025.

[Breakfast at 08:08 a.m. - Isentia](#), Radio National, 7 August 2025.

['Robodebt 2.0': More than 900 JobSeeker payments unlawfully cancelled](#) - *CathNews*, *CathNews*, 7 August 2025.

Unlawfully cancelled [1113413159 20260806.pdf](#), Miriam Webber, *The Canberra Times*, 6 June 2025.

[Ombudsman expands scope of investigation into JobSeeker cancellations](#), Miriam Webber, *The Canberra Times*, 4 June 2025.

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**Consultation:** Corporate Enabling (Legal Services Division), Service Delivery Excellence (Automation Branch) and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

**PDR Number:** SB25-000227

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**CHILD SUPPORT OMBUDSMAN****OMBUDSMAN OWN MOTION INVESTIGATION AND REPORT INTO CHILD SUPPORT****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is implementing operational and process changes as well as pursing legislative and policy reforms in response to the Ombudsman's recommendations.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Child Support Scheme in Australia supports approximately 1.1 million children, with over 682,000 active cases reported as at 30 June 2025.
- In the 2024–25 financial year, \$2.1 billion in Child Support payments were collected and disbursed.
- As at 30 June 2025, 94,825 Child Support customers had a family and domestic violence (FDV) indicator on their record, representing 7.3 per cent of total Child Support customers.
- As at 30 June 2025, \$1.9 billion in Child Support debt was owed by 221,145 paying parents, with an average debt of \$8,675 each; most paying parents are men, and most receiving parents are women, but both can experience financial abuse.

**Key Points**

- The Child Support Scheme (the Scheme) delivers upon a key social policy objective of ensuring the wellbeing of children when their parents separate.
- For many Child Support customers, the Scheme works well, however, systems and financial abuse erode the foundations of the Scheme (correct assessments, timely and correct payments). This impacts a significant number of customers, and their children.
- It is critical that system vulnerabilities to financial abuse and weaponisation are identified and their impact minimised to safeguard the well-being of children.
- The Agency is committed to supporting customers and staff experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV), including those experiencing financial abuse, and is making improvements to identify, record and escalate cases of financial abuse, actively dealing with weaponisation of Child Support.

## CHILD SUPPORT OMBUDSMAN

- To respond to the Ombudsman's recommendations and address financial abuse risks in Child Support, the Agency implemented its first tranche of targeted operational-level changes in September 2025, including:
  - Clear guidance material for all Child Support staff to help identify, escalate and manage financial abuse risks throughout Child Support interactions with customers.
  - Strengthening the Estimates of Income process by requesting supporting evidence of reported income more often, based on assessed risks. This will improve accuracy and reduce flow-on Child Support overpayments and debts, as well as Family Tax Benefit (FTB) debts.
  - Increasing the capacity and capability of debt management by transitioning 30 experienced Child Support Service Officers to the Intensive Collection team and undertaking data and behaviour analysis.
  - Improved communication and materials about the Maintenance Action Test (MAT) and FTB payment exemptions to help customers and staff understand the available options and ensure eligible customers receive financial support.
  - Reviewing the Child Support Change of Assessment (COA) process to identify operational, policy or legislative changes to reduce financial abuse. Priority is given to removing the mandatory COA Open Exchange of Information requirement, as it poses significant FDV and financial abuse risks due to the sensitive nature of shared information.
- Beyond the immediate operational actions, broader legislative and policy reforms are required to enable the Agency to respond to financial abuse and other forms of family and domestic violence, as identified in the Ombudsman's report.
- The Agency is working closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Australia Taxation Office (ATO) and the Office for Women (OFW) to develop a Child Support reform roadmap that captures priority improvements through to longer-term reform options.
- Five key reform areas have been identified that are vulnerable to weaponisation and financial abuse throughout the life of a Child Support case, including:
  - reviewing COA processes and associated staff and customer facing artefacts
  - reviewing income reporting and estimate processes

## CHILD SUPPORT OMBUDSMAN

- child support collection and debt recovery processes, including opportunities to improve data exchanges across Government where appropriate
- interactions with current FTB policy, and
- the overarching FDV and financial abuse specific policies and processes.
- Further, more complex work is required to improve the Child Support system. Analysis is currently being undertaken to inform future reform priorities.
- Ongoing community and sector engagement are also being undertaken to gain insights, test ideas and seek feedback on proposed operational change and future reform options.

# CHILD SUPPORT OMBUDSMAN

## Background

The Commonwealth Ombudsman published its report 'Weaponising Child Support: when the system fails families' on 3 June 2025, following an own motion investigation into financial abuse through Child Support that commenced in February 2025. The investigation focused on:

- whether the Agency is working in an effective, fair and reasonable way in relation to the identification, escalation, verification and management of suspected or reported cases of financial abuse, and
- internal engagement and cross-agency collaboration with the ATO to prevent financial abuse.

The report found the Child Support Scheme is being used to perpetuate financial abuse and the Agency's current operational settings are not adequate to prevent it. Specifically, the Ombudsman formed the opinion that:

- the Agency's approach was welfare focused (i.e focused on the safety of customer), and it was not helpful in getting money to parents and children when they need it the most
- the Agency was not doing enough to actively deal with weaponisation of Child Support and is not using its enforcement powers effectively or proactively, and
- the Agency's approach was passive, unfair and much more could be achieved within the existing legislative framework.

The Ombudsman also found that there were legislative provisions that were unfair and unreasonable, and the Government, with the assistance of DSS and the Agency, should introduce a Bill to amend the law to address legal limitations outlined in the report.

The Ombudsman made 8 broad ranging recommendations, including:

1. Developing a publicly available strategy to address financial abuse through Child Support.
2. Effectively enforcing payment of Child Support.
3. Recording data so that it is measurable.
4. A comprehensive review of the Lodgement Enforcement Program.
5. Improving staff knowledge of financial abuse.
6. A comprehensive review of the COA process.
7. Pursuing legislative reform options.
8. Delivering a comprehensive update in conjunction with DSS within 12 months of the report.

The Agency accepted all 8 recommendations and is committed to addressing all the recommendations by the end of the 2025–26 financial year. Recommendations 4 and 7 can't be implemented solely by the Agency and are dependent on DSS and the ATO. The Agency has been working closely with DSS and the ATO in developing the response and is currently collaborating with them to progress the broader legislative and policy changes required.

# CHILD SUPPORT OMBUDSMAN

Since 2013, the Agency has had in place a specific FDV strategy. In December 2024, the Agency released its new FDV Strategic Commitment reaffirming the Agency's commitment to support both customers and staff who are affected by FDV, in line with the framework provided by the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- Nil

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Child support weaponised against single mums, report](#), Summer Liu, *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 June 2025.
- [‘Unfair and unreasonable’ – report finds \\$1.9 billion in unpaid child support in system rife with financial abuse](#), Kay Cook, msn.com, 3 June 2025.
- Report: \$1.9B Unpaid Child Support, Abuse Cited, Kay Cook and Adrienne Byrt, *Mirage News*, 3 June 2025.
- [Child support ‘weaponised’ against parents: report](#), Tess Ikonomou, *The Canberra Times*, 3 June 2025.
- [Parents able to ‘manipulate’ child support system free of consequences: ombudsman report](#), ABC News, 3 June 2025.
- Ombudsman confirms sector child support concerns, Institute of Community Directors Australia, 3 June 2025.
- [Child Support system weaponised: Ombudsman](#), Council of Single Mothers & Their Children (CSMC), 5 June 2025.
- [Abusers ‘weaponising’ child support](#), ABC News, 3 June 2025.
- [Ombudsman chastises Services Australia over management of Child Support program](#), Region Canberra, Region locally grown, 4 June 2025.
- Weaponising Child Support – when the system fails families – Commonwealth Ombudsman, Feminist Legal Clinic, 12 June 2025.

## CHILD SUPPORT OMBUDSMAN

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**Consultation:** Child Support & Tailored Services  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000228

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**>52WK LUMP SUM****GREATER THAN 52-WEEK LUMP SUM ASSESSMENT CHANGES****Subject/Issue**

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is working with Services Australia (the Agency) to rectify an administrative error in the assessment of some employment income lump sums received between 7 December 2020 and 7 September 2024.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The error was identified in June 2023, and a manual workaround was put in place.
- A system solution was deployed on 7 September 2024, and lump sums after this date were correct.
- Agency analysis identified that approximately 41,300 individuals that may have been impacted by this error prior to the system fix, with potential arrears and/or debts yet to be assessed.
- The Agency remediation strategy initially focused on a small subset of more straightforward customers cases. As at 31 August 2025, 100 individual customer records were selected for remediation, of which 53 have been assessed.
- Around 80 per cent of completed cases have resulted in arrears payments, with the average arrears value of less than \$10.
- As this was an administrative error, any resulting debts will be waived.

**Key Points**

- The period from issue identification in June 2023 to solution deployment on 7 September 2024 highlights the complexity of social security systems, which required thorough analysis of scope and legal implications. The manual workaround was maintained while the system fix was carefully planned, coordinated and thoroughly tested to ensure accuracy and compliance.
- DSS and the Agency have worked closely on developing the approach to remediation for impacted customers. The Commonwealth Ombudsman has been made aware of the issue.

**>52WK LUMP SUM**

- The remediation process commenced in early July 2025 and involves the Agency reassessing individual customer employment income lump sums that were incorrectly assessed to determine whether, because of that error, they were underpaid and/or overpaid their associated income support.
- The delay between the system fix in September 2024 and the commencement of remediation in July 2025 was due to the significant complexity of the remediation process that required:
  - Finalisation of policy positions on how arrears and debts would be treated under both social security law and the Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration (CDDA) Scheme.
  - Development of a trauma-informed communication strategy, including customer letters that were clear, accurate, and sensitive to the needs of vulnerable cohorts.
  - Resolution of operational issues such as staffing, system dependencies, and legal constraints on retrospective payments.
- For the majority of affected customers, the impact on their social security payments is expected to be minimal or nil, as many lump sums fell below the relevant income free area. However, reassessment is still required to account for individual circumstances.
- Where money is owed to a customer for historic shortfalls, arrears will either be paid under the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* or via the CDDA Scheme due to limitations in social security law regarding how far back arrears can be paid.
- Any arrears payment will be initiated by the Agency, and customers will not need to do anything.
- Customers may seek a formal review of a decision relating to arrears payable under social security legislation. If they do not agree with the outcome, they may apply to the Administrative Review Tribunal.
- Impacted customers will be informed of avenues to apply for additional compensation through a CDDA claim if they believe they have not been fully compensated.

## >52WK LUMP SUM

### Background

Prior to 7 December 2020, social security legislation required employment income lump sums paid for a period of more than one year to be assessed as income over a period of 52 weeks (the 52-week cap rule).

Following the introduction of *the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Simplifying Income Reporting and Other Measures) Act 2020* (the Amending Act), the 52-week cap rule was removed and employment income lump sums paid for a period of more than one year, were required to be assessed over a period of equivalent length.

The Amending Act resulted in significant changes needing to be made to the Guide to Social Security Law (the Guide). However, the Guide continued to reflect the 52-week cap rule, resulting in employment income lump sums paid for a period of more than 52 weeks continuing to be assessed with the 52-week cap rule applied.

This means, for example, a person who received an employment income lump sum relating to a 3 year work period, should have had it attributed in equal parts over 3 years from the date of receipt (creating a small amount of assessable income for three years). Instead, the lump sum was attributed in equal parts over 52 weeks (creating a higher amount of assessable income for one year, and no assessable income for the subsequent 2 years).

DSS advised the Agency of this issue in June 2023. While the Agency implemented manual workarounds, system changes were required to ensure the system aligned with legislation and the updated policy.

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- Nil

#### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil

#### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

#### Relevant Media Reporting

- Nil

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**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
**Cleared by (SES):** Stuart Turnbull  
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**Consultation:** ACOSS  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000230

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**TFES****TASMANIAN FREIGHT EQUALISATION SCHEME****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is committed to efficient processing of Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (the Scheme) claims.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- In the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency processed 17,162 claims for assistance, amounting to \$184 million. This compares to 16,833 claims and \$181.7 million in the 2023–24 financial year.
- This reflects an increase of approximately 1.96 per cent in the number of claims processed and a 1.27 per cent increase in the amount paid over the past two financial years.
- For the most recent quarter (April to June 2025), the Agency processed 4,277 claims, valued at almost \$50 million. During the same quarter, 91 per cent of claims were processed within 30 days, exceeding the target of 80 per cent.
- Each financial year, only a small number of claims lodged are rejected. In 2024–25, the percentage of rejected claims was 4.94 per cent. In 2023–24, the percentage was 5.18 per cent.
- If a claim, or part of a claim, is rejected then claimants can request a reassessment by the Agency. A further review can be requested and is conducted by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts.

**Key Points**

- The Scheme acknowledges Tasmania’s reliance on shipping across the Bass Strait. The Scheme supports Tasmanian shippers in transporting a variety of non-bulk goods by sea, including those used in manufacturing, mining, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and other significant local industries.
- In response to concerns raised by Tasmanian businesses about the Scheme’s complexity and delays in claim processing, a Senate Select Committee chaired by Senator Tammy Tyrell was formed in October 2024.
- The Agency accepted the recommendations in the Committee’s December report that the Agency develop clearer guidance, support services, and an online claims calculator. Work is underway to address these recommendations.

- On 1 July 2025, the Government announced that a comprehensive review of the Scheme is to be conducted.
- The review of the Scheme is being led by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts. The Agency will provide input to support the review, as necessary.

## Background

In October 2024, a Senate Select Committee on the Scheme was established, with Senator Tammy Tyrell as the Chair. This followed significant lobbying by Tasmanian businesses that the Scheme was out of date, difficult to understand and claimants were waiting up to 4 months for their claims to be paid.

The Committee released its report on 19 December 2024, with 2 recommendations for the Agency. The Committee recommended the Agency create clear guidance materials, support services, and an online claims calculator to help claimants understand their eligibility and estimate claim values under the Scheme. The Agency is currently working to improve its materials, however, the online calculator option has not been operationalised due to system restrictions.

On 1 July 2025, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, the Hon Catherine King MP, together with the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Julie Collins MP, announced a 25 per cent increase in the Scheme's rate of assistance. This was implemented by the Agency from 1 July 2025. The increase applies to shipments from 1 July 2025 until 30 June 2027. This increase followed an election commitment made by the Government on 2 April 2025.

The announcement stated the Commonwealth Government will commission a comprehensive review to keep the Scheme effective and address the Senate Select Committee's recommendations.

This review will be led by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts and conducted by independent reviewers.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- PQ25-000001 – Information on rejection of claims and eligibility. Senate 22 July 2025. Not yet tabled.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [Labor will deliver \\$95 million boost to the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme](#), ALP, 2 April 2025.
- [Joint media release: Increased support for Tasmanian freight begins | Ministers](#), the Hon Julie Collins MP, 1 July 2025.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- Nil

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**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000231

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**CLOSING THE GAP****SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in urban, regional, rural and remote communities, through the provision of payments, programs and services, strategic advice, cultural insights and data analytics.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Agency is a significant touch point for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and communities through social security, health and child support service delivery channels.
- As of 30 June 2025, there were:

<b>Indigenous Customers<sup>1</sup></b>	
Centrelink	410,744
Medicare	799,335
Child Support	77,608

- The Agency is funded for 72 ASL Indigenous Service Officer (ISO) positions, located in Service Zones. Of the 72 funded ISO positions, 68 are currently occupied.
- Our Indigenous staff represent 5.4 per cent (1,898) of the Agency's workforce, compared to the overall Australian Public Service (APS) rate of 3.4 per cent.

**Key Points****Indigenous Strategies****Closing the Gap**

- The Agency's Closing the Gap Action Plan (the action plan) was launched on 10 June 2025. It articulates a clear vision to transform our Agency through a set of long-term strategic objectives and key results. The action plan is designed to be ongoing and iterative to ensure its actions remain current and targeted over the remaining life of the current National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous status is self-identified by the customer

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

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**CLOSING THE GAP**

- The strategic objectives of our action plan are as follows:
  - Objective 1 - We have genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
  - Objective 2 - We are a culturally safe organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
  - Objective 3 - We co-design and deliver our services so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can access the services they need.
  - Objective 4 - We recognise and apply Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural strengths in everything we do.
  - Objective 5 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities have the data they need to make their decisions.
- The Agency is in the process of co-designing an implementation plan in response to the Commonwealth Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data.

**Indigenous Servicing Pathway Plan**

- The Indigenous Servicing Pathway Plan 2024–28 (ISPP) outlines our actions aligned to the socio-economic targets of the National Agreement.
- The ISPP affirms our commitment to improve outcomes with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, creating new opportunities and building on the expertise and strength of approaches to Indigenous servicing across the Agency.
- The ISPP covers 9 areas of action focussing on digital inclusion, maintenance action, fraud identity, Indigenous interpreters, debt prevention and increasing formal review processes.

**National Indigenous Coalition**

- The National Indigenous Coalition (NIC) is the Agency's peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice and supports the Agency's commitments to the National Agreement.
- As the Agency's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, the NIC membership comprises of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation. This puts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the centre of decisions that impact them and their communities.
- The NIC invites our Senior Executive to a Yarning Circle held bi-annually. Applying the principles of the Yarning Circle we focus on shared decision

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

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**CLOSING THE GAP**

making and transforming the way we design and implement service delivery payments, programs, and services.

- This two-way dialog allows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share knowledge through storytelling and seek agreement from SES.
- The NIC has completed six co-design sessions to help inform and develop specific programs and topics to improve Indigenous service and program design.

**Indigenous and Remote Servicing****Indigenous Service Officers**

- The Indigenous Service Officer (ISO) program is a customer and community focused role that establishes genuine partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and communities to increase understanding and access to Agency payments, services and programs.
- ISOs support the implementation of the ISPP working closely with customers and communities helping to address Indigenous disadvantage.
- ISOs support customers and communities in relation to the provision of medical evidence, debt prevention, non-maintenance action, awareness of scams and overall payments and services.

**Remote Servicing**

- The Remote Service Delivery Model commits to delivering equitable and accessible services to people living in remote areas.
- Remote service delivery is undertaken in remote and very remote communities through 37 service centres, 264 agents and access points, mobile service centres and 27 remote servicing teams.
- Remote servicing teams provide access to income support payments and services through face-to-face and virtual services to over 335 remote locations across Australia.
- Each community is serviced on average four times a year, except in the Central Australia region of the Northern Territory, where an enhanced service offer is in place.
- The enhanced service offer, supports the Central Australia region by:
  - increasing the frequency of remote servicing visits to 6-weekly, doubling our servicing effort to visit over 100 identified remote locations across the Central Australia region.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue****Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025****CLOSING THE GAP**

- expanding the existing town camp service offer to deliver weekly out-servicing to 17 town camps. This includes the addition of service officers to support end-to-end servicing for customers.
- increasing staffing numbers in the service centres located at Alice Springs, Hermannsburg, Santa Teresa, and Yuendumu in the Central Australia region, and Tennant Creek located in the Barkly Region.
- partnering with key non-government organisations in Alice Springs through the Community Partnerships Program. These partnerships have been in place since May 2023.

**Indigenous Services Phone Lines**

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can call the Centrelink Indigenous Call Centre at 1800 136 380 for help with payments and services, and the Medicare Indigenous Access Line at 1800 556 955 for Medicare support.
- Both lines are staffed by people with cultural training who can arrange free interpreters in various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

**Language Services**

- The Agency provides on-demand telephone interpreter support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers in 16 Indigenous languages.
- Interpreter support in Indigenous languages is delivered via our on-demand and booked telephone services, or through face-to-face appointments. Four service centres across Australia have an Indigenous language interpreter onsite to provide face-to-face support.
- Our website hosts audio and supporting written products in 11 languages for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers in the Central Desert, Top End regions in Northern Australia, and the Torres Strait Islands in Far North Queensland.
- Our Agency is closing the language barrier by using existing mediums to tailor products spoken in Indigenous languages enabling customers to listen to payment and service messages in their language.
- This important initiative breaks through language barriers by providing Indigenous language products for customers in remote communities, closes the gap through raising awareness, promoting education and improving participation and reducing debt and vulnerability for remote Indigenous customers.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue****Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025****CLOSING THE GAP**

- This initiative is a 2025 Spirit of Service Award finalist.

**Payments and Services - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers****ABSTUDY**

- ABSTUDY provides a range of assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and apprentices.
- As of 27 June 2025, there were 28,240 ABSTUDY recipients including tertiary, apprentice and secondary school students.
- We have worked to improve the Standard Hostels Agreement (hostels agreement) process to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are safe while living away from home to access education.
- The new process provides the Commonwealth assurance that hostels who are signatories to the hostels' agreement are compliant with state and territory child and building safety requirements with compliance reviewed annually.
- We continue to partner with educational advocates, DSS and NIAA to improve ABSTUDY program design and service delivery.

**Youpla**

- The Youpla Support Program provides a resolution payment to former members impacted by the collapse of the Youpla Group (formerly known as Aboriginal Communities Benefit Fund - ACBF).
- The Agency works in partnership with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) as the policy agency responsible for the Youpla Support Program.
- Services Australia is the service delivery agency providing case coordination for former members and delivery of resolution payment outcomes.
- Staff have an important role, providing trauma informed and culturally sensitive case coordination for impacted former Youpla members and/or their authorised nominees.
- Service delivery has exceeded the June 2026 target of 50% of former members with a resolution, already providing outcomes to 81% of eligible policies.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

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**CLOSING THE GAP**

- As at 30 June 2025, 9,923 former members have been paid a resolution payment, as a lump sum or funeral product, for 29,038 policies, and a total of \$46,561,470 paid.

**Centrepay**

- As a result of extensive customer and advocate engagement, Centrepay Reform (the reform) focussed on increasing customer protections and reducing the risk of financial harm for customers.
- The Agency included First Nations voices through consultations in regional and remote areas.
- Public consultations were held in May 2024 and April 2025:
  - Northern Territory - Alice Springs, Darwin, Hermannsburg, Milingimbi, Ngukurr, Nhulunbuy-Yirrkala, Santa Teresa.
  - South Australia – Amata and Enabella-Pukatja.
  - Western Australia – Broome and Derby – Winun ngari.
- Additionally, the Agency presented at the Financial Counsellors Australia (FCA) Conference, First Nations Forum in May 2024, the FCA Conference May 2025 and the Newman Forum in June 2025.
- The Agency worked closely with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) regarding food security in remote and very remote areas.
- The Agency continues to work with the NIAA, to ensure the National Strategy for Food Security in Remote First Nations Communities is closely considered in the reform approach.

**Remote Jobs Program**

- The Agency has been working closely with the NIAA, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), and other agencies to support the transition to the Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES) program.
- From 1 November 2025, the Community Development Program (CDP) will be replaced with the RAES. Through the design and development of the new program, the RAES will:
  - be more flexible
  - enhance provider engagement with the community to ensure community projects are co-designed to align with local priorities and aspirations

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

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**CLOSING THE GAP**

- link participants to suitable employment opportunities, including those created through the Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) program.

**Indigenous Employment Strategies****Australian Government Indigenous Apprenticeships Program (IAP)**

- The IAP is the largest entry-level recruitment process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the APS and plays a pivotal role in creating Indigenous employment opportunities across the APS, offering participants an APS2 or APS3 level full-time, entry-level position and a nationally recognised Certificate IV or Diploma qualification upon completion.
- The IAP is a 12-month employment and development program with a tailored approach to learning based on cultural requirements.
- The IAP is a highly successful whole-of-government program administered by the Agency, having employed more than 2,500 Indigenous staff across the APS since 2015.
- The 2025 intake had 28 partnering agencies with over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians employed across the APS.

**Recruitment and retention in remote Australia**

- The Agency is committed to removing barriers to the attraction and retention of staff in remote communities.
- We have tailored recruitment approaches to address ongoing vacancies in hard-to-fill regional and remote locations.
- To date the agency have commenced new staff across 29 locations through this approach, including communities in remote Northern Territory such as Borroloola, Santa Teresa and Yuendumu, and Kununurra in Western Australia.
- The agency also supports attraction and retention of staff in remote locations through the provision of safe and affordable staff housing.
- At 30 June 2025 the agency owned 44 residential properties across remote Australia, with the most recent additions to this portfolio being 15 properties in Alice Springs, bringing our total residential properties in remote Australia to 51 at 31 August 2025.

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**CLOSING THE GAP****Awakening Pilot Program**

- The Awakening Pilot Program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander APS4 employees to build capability to enhance career progression and pathways. The program does this by building participants' leadership and professional capacity and confidence, create networking opportunities, and encouraging individual development and reflection.
- The program consists of 6 modules run over 6 months, with the first commencing on 18 June 2025, with 22 participants.

**Indigenous Champions**

- Indigenous Champions are nominated senior executive leaders in the Agency who are accountable for advocating improved recruitment processes, retention, and developmental outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- The Agency has 3 Indigenous Champions, who are critical partners in helping to achieve the objectives of the Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026, Indigenous Employment Action Plan 2023–24, Closing the Gap Action Plan 2025 and Indigenous Servicing Pathway Plan 2024–28.
- Current priorities include the Agency's Indigenous Employee Network Framework, Anti-racism strategies, Retention and attrition, and Data Stewardship.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2025**

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2025 outlines the Agency's plan for Indigenous employee engagement, retention, recruitment, development, and inclusive workplace culture.
- The plan directly supports the Agency's Workplace Belonging Strategy launched on 29 September 2025.

**SES100**

- The Agency is an active participant in the APSC's SES100 initiative, which supports the Government's commitment to boost First Nations employment across the APS by increasing representation at the Senior Executive Service (SES) levels.
- Since the commencement of the SES100 program the Agency has promoted three individuals at the SES B1 level and recently announced the promotion of one of our leaders to the SES B2 level.
- Our Indigenous SES represent 4.9 per cent of the Agency's SES cohort.

# ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue

## Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

## CLOSING THE GAP

### Background

It is acknowledged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians can often face challenges in accessing services, especially if they live in remote areas.

We are committed to prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and embracing the new approach outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement). The National Agreement is a call to action for governments and their agencies to transform their approach to design and deliver programs and services in full and genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Our commitment to the new approach of the National Agreement guides our actions towards closing the gap. The Agency's strengths-based cultural principles of listen, share, value and learn and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of thinking, knowing, being and doing, reflect our commitment.

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

Nil

#### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

Nil

#### Recent Ministerial Comments

Nil

#### Relevant Media Reporting

- [ACBF funeral fund fined \\$3.5m for misrepresenting itself as an Aboriginal business, Australian Broadcasting Corporation article, 10 July 2025.](#)
- [Payments for thousands of First Nations people who lost money to the collapsed Youpla Group available July 1', 7 News article, 03 July 2025.](#)
- [Financial rights advocates 'seriously concerned' about how Youpla support scheme will be spent, Guardian Australia article, 03 May 2025.](#)
- [Government to pay out Youpla/ACBF customers after failed insurer made millions off Centrelink payments, Australian Broadcasting Corporation News article, 8 February 2024.](#)
- [Alice River Student Hostel closes and dozens more audited following ABSTUDY policy change - ABC News, ABC Website, 23 September 2024.](#)
- [ABSTUDY students allege mistreatment in government-run scheme - ABC News, ABC Website, 16 April 2023.](#)
- [Education advocates call for mandated national guidelines for student boarding providers - ABC News, ABC/Website, 27 May 2023](#)
- [Breakfast at 06:45 a.m. - Isentia, ABC Pilbara, Breakfast, 26 September 2025 with Justin Bott, Services Australia community information officer.](#)
- [Centrepay reforms to help remote First Nations welfare recipients, National Indigenous Times, 4 September 2025.](#)

# ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue

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## CLOSING THE GAP

- [Drive at 05:08 p.m. - Isentia](#), Radio ABC Darwin include interview from Hank Jongen.
- [State-owned monopoly under fire for overcharging vulnerable Centrelink customers](#) | [The West Australian](#), The West Australian, 14 July 2025.
- [Synergy to repay \\$2.29 million after overcharging Centrelink customers for electricity](#) - [ABC News](#), ABC News, 14 July 2025.
- [Synergy overcharges Centrelink customers using Centrepay system](#), Brisbane Times, 14 July 2025.
- [ERA media statement: Compliance enforcement notice issued for licence breach](#), Economic Regulation Authority Western Australia, 14 July 2025.
- [Breakfast at 07:23 a.m. - Isentia](#), ABC Riverland SA, 4 July 2025
- [Remote retailers warn businesses could 'collapse' when federal Centrepay crackdown takes effect](#) - ABC News, ABC News, 2 July 2025.
- [Centrepay under renewed ombud pressure to reform](#), The Mandarin, 19 May 2025.
- [Energy giant AGL disputes \\$25m fine for wrongly taking welfare money from hundreds as 'excessive'](#) | AGL | [The Guardian](#), The Guardian, 24 February 2025.
- [Vital service caught up in Centrepay crackdown](#), Northern Territory News, 20 January 2025.
- [Energy company AGL fined \\$25m over welfare rort](#) | [The Advertiser](#), Adelaide Advertiser and multiple other publications, 20 December 2024.
- [Vital service caught up in Centrepay crackdown](#) [Vital service caught up in Centrepay crackdown](#), Northern Territory News, 20 January 2025.
- [Energy company AGL fined \\$25m over welfare rort](#) | [The Advertiser](#), Adelaide Advertiser and multiple other publications, 20 December 2024.
- [AGL fined record \\$25m for wrongly taking welfare money](#), The Age and multiple other publications, 19 December 2024.
- [AGL kept taking money from welfare recipients via Centrepay years after promising to stop, court hears](#) | AGL | [The Guardian](#), The Guardian, 11 December 2024.
- [ASIC kicks second NT clothing shop off Centrepay as rules tightened for use](#) - ABC News, ABC News, 4 December 2024.
- [Shorten takes broom to Centrepay parasites](#), The Mandarin, 4 December 2024.
- [Centrelink changes for Centrepay bill-paying system: 'From 2025'](#), Yahoo Finance, 2 December 2024.
- [Centrepay improvements to protect and empower Australians](#) | [The National Tribune](#), The National Tribune, 2 December 2024.

Click or tap here to enter a date.

**Date sent to MO:**

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**PDR Number:** SB25-000346

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**TELEPHONY PERFORMANCE****TELEPHONY PERFORMANCE****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is continuing to build increased public trust and satisfaction through improved telephony performance.

**Key facts and figures**

- On average, the Agency hosts 8.9 million customer contacts every week. Of these, around 7.9 million (88 per cent) arrive via digital channels and 1 million (12 per cent) via service centres or over the phone.
- Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, the Agency handled 44.3 million phone calls, with service officers answering 19.2 million calls.
  - **Social Security** services received the greatest telephony demand, making up more than 30.5 million of the 44.3 million calls the Agency received.
  - **Health** services received the next largest proportion of telephony demand, making up more than 10.7 million calls the Agency received.
  - **Child Support** services made up more than 2.3 million calls the Agency received.
- Specific performance figures for the 2024–25 financial year, are at [Attachment A – Services Australia Telephony report](#).

**Key points**

- The Agency aims to answer as many calls as possible and continue the low application of congestion messages, enabling more customers to access our services.
- During the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency maintained minimal use of congestion messages while reducing customer wait times.
- When comparing June 2025 with June 2024, congestion messaging reduced by a further 66 per cent and call wait times have remained relatively the same.
- Continuing to improve the customer experience remains a key priority.
- Upfront information is provided to customers on the estimated wait times they may experience when using the telephony channel.
- The Agency now offers callbacks on some phone lines when demand is high, so customers do not have to stay on the phone while waiting to get to the front of the queue.

## TELEPHONY PERFORMANCE

- This Place in Queue (PiQ) capability is now available on all relevant Social Security, Health and Child Support lines. During the 2024–25 financial year more than 835,000 customers successfully received a callback:
  - 410,000 of these were to customers from Social Security lines
  - 266,000 of these were to customers from Health lines, and
  - 159,000 of these were to customers from Child Support lines.
- In July 2025, the Agency reached a milestone of 1 million PiQ call-backs accepted from over 1.7 million offers since 1 July 2024.
- The Agency continues to simplify telephony operations, reducing the number of virtual queues by 81 per cent (almost 1,500 since September 2022), making it easier for customers to get through to the right person the first time.
- By improving our Interactive Voice Messaging (IVR) questions and prompts, and adding new phrases, we are now connecting more of our customers to an appropriately skilled Service Officer in the first instance.
  - This has reduced the need for call transfers and resulted in a reduction of 468,000 call transfers in the 2024–25 financial year.
- A voiceprint is another way to use your unique features with the Agency to identify who you are, like a fingerprint. A voiceprint uses distinctive features in your voice, including its sound, rhythm and pattern to securely prove your identity.
- Using a voiceprint provides customers a more personalised IVR experience, including the ability to complete multiple transactions without needing to talk to a Service Officer.
- Nearly 9.6 million customers connected with the Agency using their voiceprint and 318,000 customers registered their voiceprint in the 2024–25 financial year.

## TELEPHONY PERFORMANCE

### Background

The Agency provides telephony services for whole of government responses to sensitive overseas incidents such as the Iran, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories conflict.

Additionally, the Agency delivers cross-government and critical surge capacity services on behalf of Government, including Australian Electoral Commission contact centre services for elections and the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the Census.

### Demand pressures

The Agency entered the 2023–24 financial year with a reduced budget following the cessation of pandemic-era funding. Furthermore, in 2023, policy changes that expanded eligibility for some payments and services resulted in a higher volume of claims overall.

Pressures on the Agency were masked during COVID-19 when staffing was significantly bolstered on a temporary basis. As the Agency returned to baseline funding, it became clear the supply of staff wasn't meeting demand. A backlog started to grow, causing an influx of calls for people checking the status of their claims.

With the increased staffing, more Service Officers are now available to process claims and answer the phones, improving processing and call wait times and reducing the Agency's need to use congestion messaging.

The Agency has seen significant improvements during the 2024–25 financial year. This data is available on [data.gov.au](https://data.gov.au).

The Government has invested \$1.8 billion into the Agency over 3 financial years to 2025–26 to: maintain a customer service workforce to deliver timely services and payments to Australians experiencing vulnerability amid a cost-of-living crisis; sustain emergency response capability; and support other aspects of the Agency's operations.

There was an additional 4,030 staff in 2024–25, which reduces to 3,530 staff in 2025–26. The additional staff better position the Agency to meet government and community expectations of service delivery performance.

### For the 2024–25 financial year

Social Security services received the greatest telephony demand, making up more than 30.5 million of the 44.3 million calls the Agency received. Of those 30.5 million Social Security calls:

- 10.9 million calls were answered by Service Officers
- approximately 12.3 million calls were self-managed by customers. This includes the use of self-service for completing routine tasks, from reporting income to checking balances
- 1.9 million were directed to congestion messaging during periods of high demand, where customers don't join the queue and are instead provided information about online alternatives, and
- 3.4 million were terminated by customers who either chose to try again later or followed the advice provided through proactive IVR messaging.

Health services received the next largest proportion of telephony demand, making up more than 10.7 million calls the Agency received. Of those 10.7 million Health calls:

- 6.6 million calls were answered by Service Officers
- approximately 2.8 million calls were self-managed by customers. This includes the use of self-service for completing routine tasks such as reporting income and checking balances

## TELEPHONY PERFORMANCE

- 303,000 were directed to congestion messaging (not applicable for Medicare Provider lines) during periods of high demand, where customers don't join the queue and are instead provided information about online alternatives, and
- 781,000 were terminated by customers who either chose to try again later or followed the advice provided through proactive IVR messaging.

Child Support services made up more than 2.3 million calls the Agency received. Of those 2.3 million Child Support calls:

- 1.2 million calls were answered by Service Officers, and
- 270,000 were terminated by customers who either chose to try again later or followed the advice provided through proactive IVR messaging.

The Agency does not use congestion messaging for Child Support.

### **Telephony definitions:**

Handled Calls are calls that have reached the Agency and include:

Pre-1 July 2024: Centrelink successful IVR calls; Health Customer – answered calls, calls handled in Health Customer IVR applications (Child Dental Benefits Scheme, Office Locator and Tax Statement); Health Provider – answered calls, calls handled in the Health Provider IVR application (Optometric and Concessional Entitlement Status Confirmation); Health Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) – answered calls; and Child Support – answered calls.

Post-1 July 2024: Social Security & Welfare, Payments & Integrity, Health Customer, Health Provider, Health PBS, Child Support – Successful IVR calls; answered calls are calls answered by a Service Officer; terminated by customer calls have progressed through the IVR, entered a queue waiting to be answered and the call is ended (hung up) before it is answered by a Service Officer. They were formerly known as 'Abandoned calls'; Average Speed of Answer is the average time it takes for a call waiting in the queue to be answered. The speed of answer is measured from when a call leaves the IVR menu (i.e. joins the queue to be answered) to when it is answered by a Service Officer; Busy signals ceased being used as a method to manage demand from 1 July 2020.

Congestion Messaging is only activated in periods of high demand and provides detail of the digital services available to customers. The message encourages callers to conduct their business through self-service options rather than repeatedly calling.

### **Supporting information**

#### **Questions on Notice**

- SQ24-000967 – Main Business Lines. Supplementary Budget Estimates Spillover – 12 December 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.
- SQ24-000765 – SSW Calls Served within 15 Minutes. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000781 – SSW Congestion Messaging. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000795 – Total Customer Demand by Type. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000803 – Total Customer Demand – first quarter data. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.
- SQ24-000877 – Customer Demand per Week by Financial Year. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.

## TELEPHONY PERFORMANCE

- SQ24-000882 – Daily telephony performance – 2023–24 financial year. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000886 – Telephony – ASA longer than 3-5 hours. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.
- SQ24-000893 – Longest wait time – 2023–24. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000898 – Aged Care Telephony – 2023–24 financial year. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.
- SQ24-000900 – Aged Care Telephony – FYTD. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.
- SQ24-000914 – Congestion Messaging Statistics. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000915 – High volume frequent customer calls 2023–24. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000916 – High volume frequent customer calls FYTD. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000937 – Voice Print – Opt-outs. Supplementary Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- NIL

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [Landmark investment in Services Australia delivers major improvements for all Australians](#) – The Hon Bill Shorten MP, 4 November 2024.
- [Shorten says Centrelink's notorious waiting times now finally falling](#), 31 July 2024.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Key targets missed as Centrelink wait times for callers blow out: report](#), Lachlan Leeming, *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 January 2025.
- [Welfare call times drop, claims processing faster](#), Tess Ikonomou, *The Canberra Times*, 4 November 2024.
- [Centrelink, Medicare call waiting times balloon and over 11 million calls not answered](#), Nicole Hegarty, ABC, 24 July 2024

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap to enter a date.  
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**Consultation:** Strategy and Performance/Data and Analytics Division  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000234



Services Australia – Telephony Performance 2024-25 Financial Year

	Answered					
	Handled Calls	Self-Managed	By Service Officer	Terminated by customer	ASA (mm:ss)	Congestion messages
Agency	44,269,308	15,821,577	19,244,310	4,512,094	15:22	2,173,375
Centrelink (Social Security - SS)	30,493,161	12,341,737	10,912,604	3,379,469	21:48	1,870,335
Disabilities, Sickness and Carers	2,117,276	673,062	796,487	310,926	33:25	212,455
Employment Services	3,750,409	1,200,941	1,389,911	484,354	30:07	527,565
Families and Parenting	3,878,486	782,413	1,790,616	562,804	30:54	896,635
Older Australians	1,863,785	612,178	673,642	272,595	33:05	97,972
Youth and Students	927,033	280,224	414,863	148,948	32:35	88,705
Other	17,956,172	8,792,919	5,847,085	1,599,842	13:23	47,003
Payments and Integrity (separated from SS)	794,124	141,973	499,931	81,495	06:53	-
Health Customer	3,453,836	480,053	1,997,837	526,453	13:12	303,040
Medicare	2,463,619	434,726	1,585,316	379,627	12:19	6,397
Australian Immunisation Register	180,343	20,894	60,100	15,136	08:08	-
Centrelink Aged Care	665,142	-	238,593	116,601	25:23	296,643
Other	144,732	24,433	113,828	15,089	02:31	-
Health Provider	3,750,458	2,348,088	1,289,727	162,086	04:19	-
Medicare Provider	1,363,194	760,975	427,021	52,806	05:51	-
PBS General	3,467	163	163,116	11,336	01:50	-
PBS Improved Monitoring Entitlements	214,667	20,041	27,768	2,810	01:17	-
Other	2,169,130	1,566,909	671,822	95,134	04:04	-
Health PBS Authorities	3,490,611	-	3,305,289	92,281	01:00	-
Child Support	2,287,118	509,726	1,238,922	270,310	15:24	-
Compliance	15,019	4,486	99,962	6,031	02:14	-
Info Service	86,875	192,052	-	-	-	-
Mainstream	2,098,760	312,593	956,655	233,089	18:04	-
Multicultural and Tailored Services	76,651	595	73,122	6,583	01:43	-
New Customers	-	-	88,005	21,936	14:43	-
Specialised Assessments	9,813	-	21,178	2,671	07:07	-

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**CLAIMS PROCESSING****CLAIMS AND NON-CLAIMS PROCESSING****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is continuing to build increased public trust and satisfaction through accurate, high-quality and timely access to payments and services.

**Key facts and figures**

- In the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency processed 15.6 million Social Security claims and non-claims, 15 million Health claims and non-claims, and 3.8 million Child Support activities, supporting families to help with the costs of raising children.
- 87 per cent of Social Security claims were processed within standard.
- 91 per cent of Health activities were processed within standard.
- 67 per cent of Child Support work was processed within standard.
- The Agency has also processed more than 863,000 Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payments, paying \$575.7 million to people impacted by an emergency.

**Key points**

- The Agency processes millions of claims a year and works hard to finalise these as quickly as possible. Processing timeframes vary depending on the payment type and complexity of the claim.
- Throughout the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency has maintained reduced work on hand volumes while targeting older more complex work.
- Maintaining adequate resourcing on processing has helped to reduce the need for customers to contact the Agency about the progress of their claim.
- The Agency is driving accelerated customer outcomes by streaming claims as early as possible and supporting customers if further information is needed to complete an assessment.

**When comparing June 2024 to June 2025, the Agency has:**

- Reduced Social Security claims by 22,200 and over standard claims by 47 per cent.
- Reduced Social Security non-claims by 230,000 (noting there is no standard for this work).

## CLAIMS PROCESSING

- Seen an increase in Health claims by 12,600. However, over standard claims decreased by 12 per cent.
- Reduced Health non-claims by 38,500 and over standard work by 51 per cent.
- Reduced Child Support intrays by 18,000 and over standard work by 12 per cent.

### **Investing in staff and improving the customer experience**

- The Agency is investing in its staff to advance into more complex work, building their skills and confidence and progressing towards becoming a customer service expert.
- This sets a strong foundation and assures workforce capability and quality as well as providing end to end services for customers when possible.
- Continuing to improve the customer experience and providing greater transparency on processing times is a key Agency priority.
- Information is provided to Social Security and Health customers on the estimated claim completion date ranges.
- By advancing technology and building the capability of our workforce, the Agency is improving its ability to serve customers in a more holistic way.

### **When comparing the 2023–24 financial year to the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency has reduced the following Social Security average processing times**

- ABSTUDY claims by 3 days.
- Age Pension claims by 39 days.
- Disability Support Pension claims by 41 days.
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card claims by 23 days.
- Low Income Card claims by 33 days.
- Parenting (Partnered and Single) claims by 14 days.
- JobSeeker (including Youth Allowance JobSeeker) claims by 14 days.
- Carer Allowance claims by 30 days.
- Paid Parental Leave claims by 22 days.
- Child Care Subsidy claims by 15 days.

### **Complex Assessments**

- Many customers have complicated financial affairs (e.g. companies, family or business trusts, investments, superannuation, real estate assets, foreign

## CLAIMS PROCESSING

pensions and inheritances) requiring assessment by a Complex Assessment Officer (CAO).

- As CAOs require the highest level of income and asset assessment experience, the learning pathway is lengthy, with 16 weeks of specialised training to manage these assessments.
- The Agency continues to invest in and train more CAOs. In July 2025, an additional 60 staff began their CAO training. As a result, it is expected to see the average processing time of claims requiring a complex assessment to fall, as the proficiency of these newer CAOs grows.

**When comparing the 2023–24 financial year to the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency has reduced the following Health average processing times:**

- Aged Care claims by 7 days.
- Patient claims by 5 days.
- Medicare Eligibility & Enrolment claims by 39 days.
- Provider Registration Applications by 9 days.
- Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme (PBS) claims by 3 days.
- PBS patient refunds by 95 days.
- PBS safety net claims by 86 days.
- Medicare Entitlement Statements claims by 55 days.

### Health work on hand

- The Agency is continuing to focus on reducing Adjustments work outside of timeliness standards.
- Significant improvements in work on hand has occurred with Patient Claim, Bulk Bill and Easy Claim adjustments during 2025 with Bulk Bill returning within KPI standards.
- Simplified Billing and Safety Net Adjustments remain a pressure with a backlog of work outside of tolerance and remains a key priority for the Agency.

**Across Child Support, when comparing the 2023–24 financial year to the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency has reduced:**

- Intrays on hand by 12 per cent and over standard intrays by 12 per cent.
- Change of Assessment applications on hand have decreased by 33 per cent.
- General Objections finalised has increased by 37 per cent.

**Child Support work on hand**

- The Agency continues to focus on reducing the overall Child Support work on hand outside of timeliness standard.
- While the overall volume of work on hand and timeliness has improved, backlogs of priority work outside timeliness standards exist in General Objections and Change of Assessment work types.
- General Objections work on hand has reduced in recent months. However, there is a significant backlog of tasks that are outside timeliness, which remain a key priority.
- Whilst the overall volume of Change of Assessments applications has reduced from the 2023–24 financial year to the 2024–25 financial year, there has been an increase in recent months. The overall volume of applications on hand and the percentage finalised outside of standard are significant pressure points.
- Total Child Support Debt continues to grow and is approximately \$1.9 billion. Reducing Total Child Support Debt remains a key priority and the Agency has committed to increase Intensive Collection resourcing by 100 staff over the next 12 months.
- There is currently a high volume of Care activities on hand with approximately 70 per cent of these activities outside timeliness standards. Improving the volume and age of overall Care activities, as well as Disputed Care and Disagreed Care work types, remains a key focus.

## CLAIMS PROCESSING

### Background

#### Demand pressures

The Agency's goal is to deliver timely access to Australians needing our payments and services. The Agency supports almost every Australian at some point in their lives, including through key life events such as having a baby, accessing childcare, retiring from the workforce or entering aged care.

The Agency entered the 2023–24 financial year with a reduced budget following the cessation of pandemic-era funding. Furthermore, in 2023, policy changes that expanded eligibility for some payments and services resulted in a higher volume of claims overall.

The Agency works hard to ensure critical work and reviews are completed as soon as possible.

Pressures on the Agency were masked during COVID-19 when staffing was significantly bolstered on a temporary basis. As the Agency returned to baseline funding, it became clear that the supply of staff wasn't meeting demand. A backlog started to grow, causing an influx of calls for people checking the status of their claims.

With the increased staffing, more Service Officers are now available to process claims and answer the phones, improving processing and call wait times and reducing the Agency's need to use congestion messaging.

The Agency has seen significant improvements throughout the 2024–25 financial year. This data is available on [data.gov.au](https://data.gov.au).

The Government has invested \$1.8 billion into the Agency over three financial years to the 2025–26 financial year to maintain a customer service workforce to deliver timely services and payments to Australians experiencing vulnerability amid a cost-of-living crisis, sustain emergency response capability, and support other aspects of the Agency's operations.

There were an additional 4,030 staff in the 2024–25 financial year, which will reduce to 3,530 staff in the 2025–26 financial year. The additional staff will better position the Agency to meet government and community expectations of service delivery performance.

#### Social Security and Welfare

Peaks in demand occur all year round that impact processing times and levels of work on hand.

The families peak starts in July, with balancing of Family Tax Benefit in line with tax lodgement, it continues into August with balancing of Child Care Subsidy, and again in October with the deadline for lodging tax returns. There is also a smaller peak in January with the commencement of the school year and new childcare placements.

The student peak occurs from January to March due to the commencement of the school year, with a smaller peak in July with the start of the second semester, and another peak in September to November with study updates and other reviews to determine ongoing entitlement.

While most customers choose to lodge claims through digital channels, staff are focused on providing one-on-one support over the phone or in-person, where required, to increase confidence in using online services.

Wherever possible, the Agency encourages people to claim early. Customers may lodge an early claim for an eligible Social Security payment up to 13 weeks before their first day of qualification for payment.

## CLAIMS PROCESSING

The Agency triages claims for some payments the day they are submitted. This allows any additional information to be requested from the customer as early as practicable reducing delays.

The time it takes for customers and/or third parties, including employers and nominees, to provide the information to support claim assessment is included in the overall processing time.

The Agency makes every effort to contact customers via the phone where additional information may be required to finalise a claim. This includes 'digital coaching' to upload documents using online systems where customers can do so.

Claims may be rejected if a customer is not eligible for payment because they do not meet basic qualification, or obligation provisions. If the customer subsequently reviews the decision and supplies the required information or additional information to support the claim, claims are reopened and may be assessed from the original lodgement date.

Claims may be placed on hold due to additional information required from the customer. Many customers have complicated financial affairs (e.g. family or business trusts, investments, superannuation, real estate assets, foreign pensions and inheritances) requiring assessment against the income and assets test.

These assessments can take an extended period to conduct and complete the corresponding report/s. Delays can often occur if customers fail to provide all the required documentation in a timely manner.

### Health

There are several Health peaks throughout the year that impact processing timeliness and levels of work on hand.

Safety Net peak begins around May and continues to December. This peak traditionally commences around October each year however eligibility threshold changes have resulted in higher demand.

Provider Registration peak occurs from November through to March.

Entitlement Statements have a peak period in line with tax lodgements between July and October.

Australian Immunisation Register peak in line with flu season from April to August.

### Child Support

Child Support peaks occur throughout the year, which impact on processing timeliness and levels of work on hand, including:

Mainstream seasonal peak, which is driven by the lodgement of tax returns, commences in July and continues through to September.

New Customers peak occurs between January and February, which is typically associated with an increase in separations and changes in financial circumstances.

Employer Services experience a peak in workload from December through to January because of employers closing for Christmas and condensed processing timeframes to reconcile payments.

There is a range of assessments impacting work that also increases across most business areas because of the Mainstream seasonal peak. Specialist areas are diverted to assist with the increased Mainstream telephony demand resulting in increased work on hand.

## CLAIMS PROCESSING

**Supporting information****Questions on Notice**

- PQ25-000004. Government Services Improvements and Aged Pension Claim Wait Times. Due to be tabled Friday 26 September 2025.
- SQ24-000973. Processing Work Types. Supplementary Budget Estimates. Tabled 12 December 2024.
- SQ24-000711. Medicare – Refund Payment Time. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000795. Total Customer Demand by Type. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000803. Total Customer Demand – First Quarter Data. Supplementary Budget Estimates 18 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000856. Crisis Payment – Unprocessed Claims. Supplementary Budget Estimates 18 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000865. Crisis Payment – Subcategories. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000874. Data Request – Average Processing Time. Supplementary Budget Estimates. 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000877. Customer demand per week – by financial year. Supplementary Budget Estimates. 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000896. Claim Data – 2023-24 Financial Year by Local Government Area. Supplementary Budget Estimates. 15 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000897. Claim Data – Financial Year by Local Government Area. Supplementary Budget Estimates. 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000929. Medicare Claims Processing. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000933. Regenerated Claims. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000935. Crisis Payment Type and Reason. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000940. Pre-release Claims. Supplementary Budget Estimates 15 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000941. Crisis Payment – Claims by Category of Prison or Psychiatric Confinement. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.

**Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests**

- Nil.

**Recent Ministerial Comments**

- [Labor delivering faster support for Australian families](#), Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Media Release, 4 September 2025.
- [Albanese Government continues improvements across social security and Medicare claim times](#), Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Media Release, 13 June 2025.
- [Landmark investment in Services Australia delivers major improvements for all Australians | Department of Social Services Ministers](#), The Hon Bill Shorten MP, Media Release, 4 November 2024.

## CLAIMS PROCESSING

- [Services Australia delivers 900,000 claims, reduces call wait times | Department of Social Services Ministers](#), The Hon Bill Shorten MP, Media Release, 30 July 2024.

## Relevant Media Reporting

- [Senator's welfare wait time blowout claim uses outdated data.](#), Mather Elmas, AAP FactCheck, 23 April 2025.
- [Basics of government: Call wait times drop at Centrelink, claims processed faster | The Nightly](#), Karina Curtis, The Nightly, 4 November 2024.
- [Shorten claims victory over huge Medicare and Centrelink backlog | PS News](#), Chris Johnson, psnews, 6 August 2024.
- [Services Australia says outstanding claims reduced by 66 per cent - Government News](#), Judy Skatssoon, Government News, 1 August 2024.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap to enter a date.  
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**PDR Number:** SB24-000362

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW****SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW****Subject/Issue**

The safety of all staff is paramount, and Services Australia (the Agency) is committed to ensuring that all staff can serve the Australian public without fear of violence.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Government committed \$361 million in response to the Security Risk Management Review (the Review).
  - \$46.9 million through the 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), and
  - \$314.1 million over the 2024–25 and 2025–26 financial years through the 2024–25 Budget.
  - This funding, as well as internally committed Agency resources, is being used to implement the Recommendations of the Review in full by July 2026.
- The Review made 44 recommendations to improve staff safety and reduce customer aggression in Agency service centres.
  - 23 recommendations have been completed and closed.
- The Agency has 318 service centres across Australia.

Financial year	2022–2023	2023–2024	2024–2025
Service centre engagements	>10 million	>10 million	>10 million
Customer aggression incidents in service centres	8,993	12,056	11,357
Number of staff in Face-to-Face Services Division	6,470 <sup>1</sup>	6,410 <sup>2</sup>	6,393 <sup>3</sup>
Number of social workers in service centres	417 in 188 service centres <sup>1</sup>	371 in 182 service centres <sup>2</sup>	424 in 199 service centres <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As at 30 June 2023.

<sup>2</sup> As at 30 June 2024.

<sup>3</sup> As at 30 June 2025.

# SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

## Key Points

- Agency staff play a critical role in providing services and payments to Australians, and most customer interactions occur without incident. However, when servicing customers, Agency staff can be subjected to customer aggression and violence.
- The Review outlined the extensive range of measures the Agency already has in place to protect staff and provided recommendations to improve these measures.
- Of the 44 Review recommendations, 23 have been implemented in full, 3 are progressing to closure and the remaining 18 are in progress. Details of actions taken to improve staff safety are at Attachment A.

## Stakeholder engagement

- The Review recommendations were informed by comprehensive staff engagement.
- The Agency is working in close partnership with the Department of Home Affairs on the Commonwealth Workplace Protection Orders Bill 2025.
- Implementation of the Review includes consultation with staff and their representatives, including the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU).

## Heightened customer aggression in service centres

- Mr Graham Ashton AM APM recommended the Agency build an improved safety culture and tools to better understand and track customer aggression. The renewed focus on a positive reporting culture could be contributing to more informed customer aggression data.
- Societal conditions are contributing to a heightened risk environment in service centres. Mr Ashton, in transmitting the Review, indicated that the environmental conditions that produce risks are escalating rather than abating.
- The Agency has made progress in implementing the recommendations of the Review; however, it will take time to implement the more complex and involved security requirements to further strengthen Agency controls to deter or prevent staff exposure to customer aggression.

## SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

### **Airport West incident specifically**

- On 22 May 2025, Comcare filed a single charge commencing criminal proceedings against the Commonwealth (through Services Australia) under the Work Health Safety Act. The charge alleges the Agency failed to take several measures to eliminate or minimise the risk that workers at the Airport West Service Centre would be subjected to violence by customers or members of the public.
- As the circumstances of the incident are the subject of criminal proceedings, it would not be appropriate to provide comment on the specific incident itself.

## SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

### Background

The Review, undertaken by the former Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, Mr Graham Ashton AM APM, was initiated by the former Minister for Government Services, the Hon Bill Shorten MP on 24 May 2023, following an incident on 23 May 2023, at the Airport West Service Centre in Melbourne, where a staff member was seriously injured by a customer.

### Timeline of recent or significant events

Date	Action
<b>1 September 2025</b>	The Commonwealth Workplace Protection Orders Bill 2025 was reintroduced into Parliament, passed the House of Representatives on 28 August 2025, and was introduced in the Senate on 1 September 2025.
<b>22 May 2025</b>	Comcare filed a single charge commencing criminal proceedings against the Commonwealth (through Services Australia) under the <i>Work Health Safety Act 2011 (Cth)</i> .
<b>27 November 2024</b>	The Commonwealth Workplace Protection Orders Bill 2024 was introduced into Parliament and passed the House of Representatives on 6 February 2025 but lapsed when Parliament was prorogued in March 2025.
<b>9 July 2024</b>	Criminal Code Amendment (Protecting Commonwealth Frontline Workers) Bill 2024 enacted.
<b>3 May 2024</b>	Former Minister Shorten announced the Government, through the 2024-25 Budget, will commit \$314 million over 2 years to significantly strengthen safety and security in Agency service centres.
<b>13 October 2023</b>	Former Minister Shorten announced the Government, through MYEFO, committed \$46.9 million in 2023-24 to immediately respond to the recommendations, and the key findings and recommendations of the Review were published on the Agency's website.
<b>31 July 2023</b>	Mr Ashton completed the Security Risk Management Review and briefed former Minister Shorten and the Agency.
<b>24 May 2023</b>	Former Minister Shorten announced the Services Australia Security Risk Management Review be undertaken by former Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, Mr Graham Ashton AM APM.
<b>23 May 2023</b>	Staff member injured at Services Australia, Airport West Service Centre.

### Relevant Media coverage

- There was significant broadcast and print media about the Airport West Service Centre incident when it occurred on **23 May 2023**, as well as on **13 October 2023** and **3 May 2024** related to Budget announcements.

## SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

- Recent media reporting related to the Airport West incident charge, includes:

Date	Source	Item
<b>26 May 2025</b>	<i>Comcare Media Release</i>	<a href="#">Government agency charged after work assault</a> Outlines details of the single charge made against Services Australia in response to the incident at Airport West Service Centre on 23 May 2023.
<b>26 May 2025</b>	<i>The Canberra Times</i>	<a href="#">Services Australia charged with WHS breach over 2023 workplace stabbing</a>
<b>26 May 2025</b>	<i>The Mandarin</i>	<a href="#">Melbourne Centrelink stabbing leads to charges for workplace duty breach</a>
<b>26 May 2025</b>	<i>Region Group</i>	<a href="#">Services Australia charged over Centrelink stabbing</a>
<b>28 May 2025</b>	<i>Herald Sun</i>	<a href="#">Federal prosecutors charge Centrelink over worker's near-fatal stabbing at Airport West office</a>

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- #268, PQ23-000118. Security Risk Management Review.

#### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- LEX 75583. Security Risk Management Review. Response provided on 20 November 2023.
- LEX 82324. Security Risk Management Review. Response provided on 3 February 2025.

#### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [Albanese Government introduces new protections for Commonwealth frontline workers | Our ministers – Attorney-General's portfolio](#), the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP and the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Joint media release, 27 November 2024.
- [Albanese Government strengthens protections for Commonwealth frontline workers | Our ministers – Attorney-General's portfolio](#), the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP and the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Joint media release, 4 July 2024.
- [Safety of Australians visiting Services Australia boosted in Budget | Former Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries](#), the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Media release, 3 May 2024.
- [Albanese Government protecting Commonwealth frontline workers | Department of Social Services Ministers](#), the Hon Bill Shorten MP and the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, Joint media release, 28 March 2024.
- [Minister Shorten's address at the Rebuilding trust and integrity in the Australia Public Service conference. | Former Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries](#), the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Speech, 22 February 2024.
- [Minister Shorten address at Parliament House | Department of Social Services Ministers](#), the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Speech, 19 October 2023.

## SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

- [Hansard - House of Representatives 19/10/2023 Parliament of Australia](#), the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Speech, 19 October 2024.
- [Stronger protections for frontline staff | Department of Social Services Ministers](#), the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Media release, 13 October 2023.
- [TRANSCRIPT - MINISTER SHORTEN - PRESS CONFERENCE - MELBOURNE - 13 OCTOBER 2023](#), the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Press Conference, 13 October 2023.
- [Minister Shorten Statement to the House | Former Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries](#), the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Public announcement, 24 May 2023.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Minister for Government Services, Bill Shorten, has announced a major security funding](#), ABC Radio National, 3 May 2024.
- [Interview with Minister for Government Services Bill Shorten](#), Sky News Live, 3 May 2024.
- [Services Australia receives \\$314 million security boost | The Canberra Times | Canberra, ACT](#), Rachel Ward, *The Canberra Times*, 3 May 2024.
- [Joeanne Cassar was stabbed while at work at Centrelink, and hopes new security will protect others](#), Caroline Schelle, *The Age*, 3 May 2024.
- [Services Australia: Hundreds of security guards announced for Centrelink, Medicare centres after violent attack on staff member | Sky News Australia](#), Bryant Hevesi, Sky News, 3 May 2024.
- [CPSU applauds Government's \\$314m investment in safety for Services Australia](#), Tori McGregor, Community and Public Sector Union – Media Release, 3 May 2024.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
**Cleared by (SES):** Bo Robertson Acting Deputy CEO  
**Telephone No:** [s47F\(1\)](#)  
**Group/Division:** Customer Service Delivery Group / Child Support and Tailored Services Division  
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**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000180

## SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW - Attachment A

### Implementation progress to date

- Actions taken to improve the security and safety of staff include:
  - The *Criminal Code Amendment (Protecting Commonwealth Frontline Workers) Act 2024* enacted on 9 July 2024 to strengthen offences for acts of violence and aggression against Commonwealth frontline workers.
  - The Government reintroduced a Commonwealth Workplace Protection Orders Bill 2025 on 31 July 2025, which sets out a Commonwealth Workplace Protection Orders scheme to provide legal protections for Commonwealth workplaces and workers and deter acts of violence and other harmful behaviours by members of the public.
  - Increased deployment of security guards, including two guards at 258 service centres, inclusive of the 110 service centres at risk of high levels of customer aggression as at 31 August 2025.
  - Upgrades to the Airport West Service Centre were completed in December 2023. As at 31 August 2025, a total of 188 service centres have been refurbished or remediated, inclusive of 62 service centres at risk of high levels of customer aggression.
  - The customer online appointment booking system was rolled out nationally on 24 June 2024. Customers can now go online and book their own 15 minute phone appointment or a 30 minute face-to-face appointment. This has streamlined interactions, reducing customer wait times and frustration. As at 31 August 2025, 619,115 appointments had been booked by customers online since national implementation.
  - As at 31 August 2025, as part of the Face to Face Customer Management System, Customer Self Check-in Kiosks are operational in 94 service centres, which streamlines customer check-in and minimises frustrations caused by stand-up queuing.
  - As at 31 August 2025, 3,596 frontline staff have received Advanced Customer Aggression training, skilling them with the practice and confidence to respond and de-escalate customer aggression. The roll out of this training is continuing to all face-to-face frontline service delivery staff uplifting the capability of the Agency to prevent and effectively respond to customer aggression.

## SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW - Attachment A

- Systems changes now allow staff to see an extended record of a customer's aggressive behaviour history, improving access to risk information.
- On 7 February 2025, a system enhancement was released to store and share customer images and risk-related information between service centres in real time as a proactive intervention measure. Work also continues to streamline incident management reporting and tracking to provide an Agency wide view of customer aggression.
- Operational planning and configuration for the Protective Security Operations Centre is underway to support real time response to customer aggression incidents, inclusive of alarm monitoring and response.
- Proactive engagement and liaison with law enforcement agencies has commenced to establish relationships and investigate opportunities to improve Agency intelligence about safety and security risks to staff and customers. Liaison is ongoing including discussions to formalise information sharing arrangements.
- The build of the Electronic Benefit Transfer digital solution and enhanced card is well progressed, which will enable the Agency to make certain payments to a customer without a bank account and provision these without a customer needing to attend an office.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue****Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025****AUTOMATION AND AI****AUTOMATION AND AI****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) uses a range of capabilities, including automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), to improve the customer and staff experience where it is safe, ethical, responsible and consistent with whole-of-government standards and frameworks.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Agency continues to work closely with subject-matter experts, including staff advocates such as the Community and Public Sector Union (CSPU) and customer advocates such as the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG), to ensure the use of automation and AI technologies is human-centric, safe, responsible, transparent, fair, ethical, legal, and consistent with whole-of-government legislation and frameworks.
- The Agency does not use AI to determine outcomes for customers or to process claims.
- AI does not replace the important work of Agency staff. AI can assist and empower people by speeding up tasks, simplifying processes and freeing up staff time to help more Australians.
- The Agency is building staff awareness and overall capability in AI, which includes staff engagement sessions and specific training, such as guides and information sessions for staff in the opt-in trial of Microsoft Copilot.
- The Agency does not permit the use of publicly available Generative AI tools within Agency systems or sensitive data.

**Key Points**

- Automation and AI are key enablers for the Agency to improve customer and staff experience, reduce costs, increase service integrity, and enhance the Agency's reputation in the community and government.
- The Agency's [Automation and AI Transparency Statement](#) outlines the areas in which the Agency is using automation and AI in, and the way in which the Agency ensures these technologies are developed, implemented and assured.
- The Agency's [Automation and AI Strategy 2025-27](#) was published on the Agency's website in May 2025, following extensive consultation with

## AUTOMATION AND AI

stakeholders, including the Minister for Government Services Independent Advisory Board, CSAG and the CPSU. The Strategy sets out 6 priority areas for the Agency to address the barriers it will face in adopting automation and AI technologies.

### Automation

- The Agency has used computer systems for many years that rely on business rules to automatically determine customers' entitlements, make payments and send letters.
- More recently the Agency has used automation to help reduce highly repetitive manual tasks to enable staff to spend more time assisting customers with complex needs. For example, automation has been used for:
  - workload management that contributes to improved customer outcomes
  - streamlining of the approach to processing customer requests and improving the staff experience, and
  - fraud mitigation on inactive myGov accounts and compromised devices linked to accounts.
- The use of rules-based automation to provide improvements such as productivity efficiencies for staff and reduction of wait times for customers remains an important capability for the Agency.
- All new rules-based automations are subject to the Agency's Automation and AI Governance and Assurance Processes.

### AI initiatives

- The Agency uses automation and AI systems in a safe and responsible way to support the delivery of services where it's helpful for our customers and staff.
- The Agency currently has limited use of AI technologies. These include some use of machine learning technologies to assist with data analysis, and Interactive Voice Response to assist with customers calling the Agency and in document processing. The Agency is also trialling Microsoft Copilot to support staff who have opted-in to assist them with administrative tasks.
- Trials are also underway to explore how AI technology might improve processes and experience for staff and customers including:
  - discovering patterns and presenting outcomes for staff to review and triage suspected fraud

## AUTOMATION AND AI

- reviewing and classifying content uploaded to improve efficiency and protect staff from inappropriate images
- improving knowledge management by resolving duplication or enhancing content to better support staff, and
- assisting with technology development and documentation.
- The Agency is considering areas where AI could provide the most benefit for staff and customers through development of an AI Roadmap. All AI use cases within the agreed AI Roadmap will be subject to the Agency's assurance and governance processes, aligned to whole-of-government standards and frameworks.

## AUTOMATION AND AI

### Background

#### AI Training and Awareness

The Agency recognises the importance of providing staff with the skills and knowledge to prepare them to responsibly use any new AI tools in the Agency.

The Agency has developed a range of training packages targeted at different knowledge levels that will soon be made available to staff.

The Agency has invested in uplifting AI knowledge across the Agency through:

- over 400 executive staff completing Australian National University (ANU) AI short courses
- 11 staff sponsored to complete the 12-month full time ANU Master of Applied Cybernetics course, and
- approximately 400 staff attending in-Agency AI Staff Engagement Roadshows to date.

#### AI Assurance (and ethics)

The Agency has established comprehensive assurance frameworks for all automation and AI initiatives, which are aligned to whole-of-government frameworks. This includes assessment of each automation and AI initiative from an ethical perspective based on the Department of Industry, Science and Resource's AI Ethics Principles. Decisions about automation and AI are also anchored on the Agency's Customer Experience Standard (including Experience Design Principles).

#### Publicly Available GenAI tools

The Agency does not permit access to publicly available Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, on Agency systems.

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- SQ25-000069 – ChatGPT. 2024-25 Additional Estimates - 27 February 2025. Tabled 24 March 2025.
- SQ25-000018 – Artificial Intelligence Trials. 2024-25 Additional Estimates - 27 February 2025. Tabled 24 March 2025.

#### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- LEX 84196. Disclosure Log Documents

#### Recent Ministerial Comments

- 31 July 2025, Minister Gallagher announced the launch of GovAI:
  - The Australian Government has launched GovAI to help public servants build AI skills through tools, training, and a secure testing environment
  - New AI Technical Standards have been released, and an industry showcase is promoting partnerships with small and medium enterprises

## AUTOMATION AND AI

- These initiatives build on existing ethics policies to ensure AI adoption in government is safe, responsible, and maintains public trust.
- [GovAI launch marks major milestone for AI in APS | Media Release | Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Finance | Finance Ministers](#)
- 19 August 2025, Minister Gallagher appeared on ABC Afternoon Briefing and was asked about the Government's view on AI, responding that:
  - The government acknowledges diverse view on AI regulation, ranging from strict controls to light-touch or existing frameworks
  - The government plans to use the Economic Reform Roundtable to explore protections, opportunities, and challenges for managing AI within government and across the economy.
  - [TV interview - ABC Afternoon Briefing | Transcript | Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Finance | Finance Ministers](#)

## Relevant Media Reporting

- [AI job recruitment tools could 'enable discrimination' against marginalised groups, research finds - ABC News](#), ABC, 8 May 2025
- [Services Australia lays two-year AI ethics footing](#), 26 May 2025, Innovation Aus
- [Services Australia releases AI and automation strategy](#), 27 May 2025, Information Age
- [Services Australia re-humanises its AI and automation rollout](#), 3 June 2025, *The Mandarin*
- [McKinsey enlisted to help Services Aus with AI 'building blocks'](#), 30 June 2025, Innovation Aus
- [AI in government: Public sector warns against risks of 'clever, creepy' technology](#), *The Australian Financial Review*, 29 July 2025
- ['Better outcomes': Katy Gallagher launches new AI platform for the APS](#), 31 July 2025, Canberra Times.
- ['Failure on top of failure': Welfare systems on the brink](#), 17 August 2025, Innovation Aus
- [Public service union calls for AI regulation and job protection](#), 18 August 2025, *The Canberra Times*
- [Robodebt's ghosts looming large as the use of AI increases](#), 26 August 2025, *The Canberra Times*

**Date sent to MO:**

Click or tap to enter a date.

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**Telephone No:****s47F(1)****Group/Division:**

Service Delivery Excellence Group

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**Telephone No:****s47F(1)****PDR Number:**

SB24-000181

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – HOT ISSUE**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT****EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT****Subject/Issue**

The Government is committed to supporting people impacted by natural disasters. Services Australia (the Agency) plays a key role in the delivery of payments, support and services for people affected.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- In the case of an emergency event, the Minister for Emergency Management, the Hon Kristy McBain MP, has the delegation to activate:
  - Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP)
  - Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA)
  - New Zealand Disaster Recovery Payment (NZ DRP), and
  - New Zealand Disaster Recovery Allowance (NZ DRA).
- During the 2024–25 financial year, emergency payments were activated for the following events:
  - New South Wales East Coast Severe Weather and Flooding, May 2025
  - Western Queensland Heavy Rain and Flooding, March 2025
  - New South Wales Ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred, March 2025
  - Queensland Ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred, March 2025
  - North Queensland Floods, January to February 2025
  - Bushfires in Western Victoria, December 2024, and
  - Far West New South Wales Storms and Power Outages, October 2024.
- As at midnight 31 August 2025, 576,000 disaster recovery claims have been granted and \$818.8 million paid for disaster events activated in the 2024–25 financial year:
  - 528,000 claims for AGDRP and NZ DRP have been granted and \$604.6 million paid
  - 47,500 claims for DRA and NZ DRA claims have been granted, with \$214.2 million paid
  - 197,000 calls were answered on the Australian Government Emergency Information Line (180 22 66), and

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – HOT ISSUE****Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025****EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

- 96.2 per cent of claims received by the Agency are completed online via myGov.

**Key Points**

- The Agency is working closely with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to prepare for the 2025–26 disaster season.
- As there are many challenges facing the community when a disaster occurs, the Agency provides different channels for people to claim disaster support:
  - The fastest way to claim is online. People with internet access can claim online via myGov.
  - The Agency has staff on the ground, who can assist people face-to-face.
  - People can call to claim on 180 22 66, between 8am and 5pm local time Monday to Friday.
- The Agency can tailor a response that is targeted and provides accessible services for customers in remote or isolated communities. For example, the Agency can establish temporary offices, provide on the ground support to assist customers with how to claim, provide access to mobile devices for customers to lodge their claims and link people with interpreters for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers.
- The Agency's ability to deliver these payments is supported through the *Social Security Amendment (Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment) Act 2023*. This provides greater certainty in supporting automation and ensures the timely payment of AGDRP claims.
- AGDRP claims will not be refused through automation. Refusal decisions will be a result of manual processing by the Agency. Automated processes in place to support AGDRP only relate to the granting of claims and does not apply to debt recovery.
- Partial Claim Automation (PCA) was introduced in 2025 to complement end-to-end automation of the AGDRP claiming process. PCA has streamlined and improved the claim process by automating key components, allowing staff to focus on completing identified manual actions within the claim. This approach enhances and improves the overall claim processing experience, facilitating quicker outcomes for both staff and customers.
- As at 31 August 2025, PCA supported 43,600 AGDRP claims received saving time for customers and staff.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – HOT ISSUE****Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025****EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT****Background****Disaster Payments**

Once an emergency response has been activated, the Agency can provide the following disaster payments to eligible persons in declared areas as directed by NEMA: the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) provides \$1,000 per eligible adult and \$400 per eligible child directly into bank accounts; the Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA) provides assistance for claimants who have lost income for a period of up to 13 weeks, starting from the first day their income was impacted, which can be from the event start date, as written in the signed Instrument; New Zealand Disaster Recovery Payment (NZ DRP) provides one-off financial assistance to eligible New Zealand citizens residing in Australia who hold a non-protected Special Category Visa (subclass 444); and New Zealand Disaster Recovery Allowance (NZ DRA) provides short-term income support to eligible New Zealand citizens residing in Australia who hold a non-protected Special Category Visa (subclass 444).

**New South Wales East Coast Severe Weather and Flooding, May 2025**

On 26 May 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were activated for eligible people affected in 4 Local Government Area's (LGAs). On 28 May 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were extended to an additional 15 LGAs. On 28 May 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were activated for eligible people affected in 9 LGAs. On 30 May 2025, AGDRP and DRP were extended to an additional 2 LGAs. On 4 June 2025, AGDRP and DRP were extended to one additional LGA.

As at 31 August 2025, 310,000 claims have been received, 185,000 claims have been granted, and \$225.2 million in total paid, and 50,100 calls have been answered.

**Western Queensland Heavy Rain and Flooding, March 2025**

On 1 April 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were activated for eligible people affected in 6 LGAs. On 16 April 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were extended to an additional 2 LGAs. On 8 April 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were activated for eligible people affected in 15 LGAs. On 16 April 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were extended to an additional 9 LGAs.

As at 31 August 2025, 4,800 claims have been received, 2,000 claims have been granted, and \$2.7 million in total paid, and 1,300 calls have been answered.

**New South Wales Ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred, March 2025**

On 11 March 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were activated for eligible people affected by Ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred in 17 LGAs and one area known as Lord Howe Island. On 13 March 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were activated for eligible people affected in 4 LGAs and 2 Suburbs or Localities (SoLs). On 17 March 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were extended to an additional 4 LGAs.

As at 31 August 2025, 89,300 claims have been received, 43,900 claims have been granted, and \$67.0 million in total paid, and 118,000 calls have been answered.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – HOT ISSUE****Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025****EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT****Queensland Ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred, March 2025**

On 11 March 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were activated for eligible people affected by Ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred in 14 LGAs. On 12 March 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were activated for eligible people affected in 3 LGAs and 12 SoLs. On 14 March 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were extended to an additional 10 SoLs. On 17 March 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were extended to an additional 4 LGAs and 27 SoLs.

As at 31 August 2025, 589,000 claims have been received, 290,000 claims have been granted, and \$451.7 million in total paid, and 118,000 calls have been answered.

**North Queensland Floods, January – February 2025**

On 5 February 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were activated for eligible people affected by floods in 5 LGAs. On 10 February 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were extended to an additional 6 LGAs.

On 13 February 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were extended to an additional 6 LGAs.

On 21 February 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were extended to an additional 13 LGAs.

On 6 February 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were activated for eligible people affected in one LGA and 2 SoLs. On 10 February 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were extended to an additional 6 SoLs. On 21 February 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were extended to an additional 24 SoLs.

On 25 February 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were extended to an additional 4 SoLs.

On 19 March 2025, AGDRP and NZ DRP were extended to an additional 2 LGAs.

As at 31 August 2025, 111,000 claims have been received, 55,500 claims have been granted, and \$71.0 million in total paid, and 38,400 calls have been answered.

**Bushfires in Western Victoria, December 2024**

On 30 December 2024, DRA and NZ DRA were activated for eligible people impacted by the Bushfires in 4 LGAs. On 7 February 2025, DRA and NZ DRA were extended to an additional 3 LGAs.

As at 31 August 2025, 400 claims have been received, 200 claims have been granted, and \$704,000 in total paid, and 300 calls have been answered. The claiming period for this event closed on 24 June 2025.

**Far West New South Wales Storms and Power Outages, October 2024**

On 31 October 2024, DRA and NZ DRA were activated for eligible people impacted by the Far West NSW Storms and Power Outages in 3 LGAs.

As at 31 August 2025, 700 claims have been received, 100 claims have been granted, \$437,000 in total paid, and 500 calls have been answered. The claiming period for this event closed on 29 April 2025.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – HOT ISSUE**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT****Supporting Information****Questions on Notice**

- Nil

**Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests**

- Nil

**Recent Ministerial Comments**

- Nil

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- Nil

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
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**PDR Number:** SB25-000182

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**IAB****INDEPENDENT ADVISORY BOARD****Subject/Issue**

The Independent Advisory Board (the Board) provides independent advice to the Minister for Government Services on the design, delivery and implementation of government services.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Board was established in response to recommendation 7 of the myGov User Audit, which sought to overcome government silos and drive inclusion and performance by introducing citizen-centred governance and operational arrangements.
- In the 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the Government agreed to establish an Interim Independent Advisory Board until June 2024.
- The Interim Board was established in December 2023 and contracts for Interim Board members were in place until 31 December 2024.
- In the 2024–25 Budget, the Government provided investment of \$7.5 million over four years, until June 2028, for the enduring Independent Advisory Board.
  - \$4.5 million for remuneration of the enduring Independent Advisory Board members.
  - \$3 million for administrative costs including travel and accommodation and Services Australia’s secretariat functions.

**Key Points**

- The Board provides expert independent advice to the Minister for Government Services on projects, policies and initiatives ensuring they are ethical, uphold human rights and are beneficial to people and the Australian economy.
- The Board is comprised of a diverse group of non-government members with expertise across industry, academia and peak bodies. Members are nominated by the Minister for Government Services.
- Establishment of the enduring Board was approved by the former Minister for Government Services on 16 December 2024.

- The Agency sought a remuneration determination from the Remuneration Tribunal at the beginning of December 2024.
- On 13 December 2024, the Tribunal informed the Agency of its determination to remunerate members of the enduring Independent Advisory Board.
- Remuneration Tribunal Amendment Determination (No. 8) 2024, which established remuneration and allowances for members of the Board, took effect on 1 January 2025.
- The Remuneration Tribunal determined remuneration as follows:
  - Chair – Annual fee \$58,280
  - Deputy Chair – Annual fee \$40,480
  - Member – Annual fee \$40,480
- The inaugural meeting of the newly established enduring Board occurred on 19 February 2025, and the Board has met a further 6 times.

## Background

Members were identified based on their expertise and credentials covering six areas: governance and funding, ethics of service delivery, technology in the delivery of digital services, economic benefits and issues, citizen advocacy, and staff advocacy.

The Interim Independent Advisory Board was established in November 2023, with the first meeting held in December 2023. The Interim Board met on 12 occasions with the last meeting held on 11 December 2024.

Contracts for Interim Board members were in place until 31 December 2024 to allow for the Board's interim arrangements to continue while the Government appointments and remuneration process was undertaken, consistent with the Cabinet Handbook.

Remuneration Tribunal Amendment Determination (No. 8) 2024, which established remuneration and allowances for members of the Board as Holders of Part-time Public Office, was registered on 25 December 2024 and took effect on 1 January 2025.

Establishment of the Independent Advisory Board – 2025 Ministerial Priorities and Board Framework was noted and signed by the Minister on 16 December 2024. The appointment of the 12<sup>th</sup> and final member of the enduring board was confirmed in April 2025.

Appointed Members of the Enduring Board are:

- The Hon Victor Dominello (Chair)
- Ms Caroline Edwards (Deputy Chair)
- Mr Amit Singh
- Professor Angie Abdilla
- Dr Simon Longstaff
- Professor Ed Santow
- Professor Johanna Weaver
- Professor Jan Breckenridge (appointment announced 20 May 2025)
- Ms Karen Batt
- Ms Leanne Ho
- Mr Malcolm Crompton (NB – was not a member of the Interim IAB)
- Dr Scott Winch (NB – was not a member of the Interim IAB)

The inaugural meeting of the newly established Independent Advisory Board occurred on 19 February 2025. The meeting communiqus are publicly available on the Minister for Finance's Advisory Boards page [Advisory boards | Finance Ministers](#).

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- SQ25-000110. New Entities. Additional Estimates. 27 February 2025. Tabled 24 March 2025.
- SQ25-000051. Remuneration Tribunal. Additional Estimates. 27 February 2025. Tabled 24 March 2025
- SQ24-000570. Board Forward work plan. Budget Estimates. 3 June 2024. Tabled 27 July 2024
- SQ24-000578. Board recommendations regarding funding model. Budget Estimates. 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000104. myGov Advisory Board. Budget Estimates. 22 February 2024. Tabled 4 April 2024.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- LEX 84196. Minister for Government Services Independent Advisory Board Record of Meeting and Agenda requested for Automation and Artificial Intelligence item. Response provided on 8 May 2025.
- LEX 79379. Ministerial Correspondence concerning fund models for the myGov platform. The Agency has requested all content be redacted as the funding model is being considered by Cabinet. Additionally, two documents have already been released previously under other FOIs.

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [Gender-based violence expert appointed to Government Services Independent Advisory Board](#). Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher media release. 20 May 2025.
- [New experts to help improve government services](#). Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher media release. 18 February 2025.
- [Advisory boards | Former Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries](#). The Hon Bill Shorten MP Communique. 1 February – 16 December 2024.
- [Meeting of the Interim Services Australian Independent Advisory Board](#). The Hon Bill Shorten MP media release. 18 December 2023.
- [Minister Shorten Press Conference for the launch of the myGov Advisory Board](#). The Hon Bill Shorten MP transcripts. 9 November 2023.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Hello from Areyonga](#), Victor Dominello, LinkedIn, 31 July 2025.
- [I've been thinking about what it means to turn up](#), Ed Santow, LinkedIn, 31 July 2025.
- [February Independent Advisory Board](#), Victor Dominello, LinkedIn, 19 February 2025.
- [Katy Gallagher expands government services mandarin squad](#), Dan Holmes, The Mandarin, 19 February 2025.
- Nine ways the Board is supporting improvements to Services Australia, Leanne Ho, LinkedIn, 6 September 2024.
- [Gig Guide – Service Aus Board extended](#), Brandon How, InnovationAus, 2 August 2024.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.

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**Group/Division:** Service Delivery Excellence /

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**Telephone No:** **s47F(1)**

**Consultation:** Nil

**PDR Number:** SB25-000183

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue****Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025****MYGOV****MYGOV****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) manages and operates myGov, which provides a safe, secure and easy way for Australians to access digital services.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- myGov makes it easy for Australians to use one door to access 18 digital services across the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, including the Australian Taxation Office, Centrelink, and Medicare.
- As at 30 June 2025, myGov had 26.4 million active user accounts linked to at least one member service.
- As at 30 June 2025, 7.9 million people use the myGov app.
- For the 2024–25 financial year, myGov received an average of 979,000 sign ins each day.
- The top 3 member services linked to customer accounts are Medicare (19.4 million), the Australian Taxation Office (18.7 million), and Centrelink (16.3 million).
- As at 30 June 2025, over 171,000 Commonwealth statutory declarations have been completed in myGov.
- As at 30 June 2025, over 1.5 million Medicare cards, 183,000 Organ donor cards, 426,000 Health Care Cards and 34,000 DVA cards have been added to the digital wallet.

**Key Points**

- In the 2024–25 Budget, the Agency received \$630.3 million over 4 years from the 2024–25 financial year, (and \$144.8 million per year ongoing) to sustain and enhance the myGov platform, and ensure the continued development of its capability. This includes continuing an Independent Advisory Board to provide guidance and advice to Government on potential myGov enhancements and other service delivery improvements until the 2027–28 financial year.

- Following on from the myGov User Audit, the Agency continues to deliver significant improvements for customers, such as:
  - The myGov app makes it easier to access services and messages from mobile devices, including 6 government issued cards now available in the digital wallet. As of 30 June 2025, more than 7.9 million people are now using the myGov app.
  - A new security feature ‘Passkeys’ is helping people enhance the security of their myGov accounts, providing extra protection against scams. As of 30 June 2025, 1.4 million users have now set up a passkey.
  - Commonwealth Statutory Declarations can now be completed in myGov with Digital ID, saving people time by not having to find an in-person witness.
- The Agency is making further improvements in myGov to make it easier to use and to help our customers stay safe, including:
  - Allowing people to do more and access services in myGov, without needing to use other apps, starting with Medicare.
  - Improving the emails customers receive from myGov, making them easier to read and understand.
- In February 2025, the Agency completed phase one of the Trust Exchange initiative proof of concept (PoC), and outcomes were delivered to the Department of Finance. An Independent Review Panel assessed the outcomes, and the proof of concept was found to be successful.
- The Department of Finance provided the Independent Review Panel's recommendations to Government. Based on these recommendations, the Government agreed to release funding for Phase 2.
- Phase 2 will focus on:
  1. Further testing the user experience of Verifiable Credentials, including the experience of using biometrics with digital wallets.
  2. Testing the full lifecycle of a Verifiable Credential, including when credentials need to be reissued or revoked, building on the medical practice use cases tested in Phase one.
  3. Exploring if Verifiable Credentials can give people the choice to share more personal attributes beyond what is printed on a physical card.

- Services Australia and the Australian Tax Office (ATO) will both contribute to Phase 2. Questions relating to biometrics and myID should be referred to the ATO.

## Background

### Keeping myGov Secure

The Agency continues to make progress on the recommendations of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's report.

The Agency provided a response on 11 August 2025 advising completion of 3 of the 4 recommendations and 2 suggestions and significant progress on the final recommendation.

In addition to actions to address the findings of the report, the Agency is progressing further reform activities to address long-standing challenges in the foundational design of myGov.

The Agency takes the security of myGov seriously, supported by advanced cyber and fraud capabilities, which are continuously evolving to monitor and respond to threats against myGov, combating scams and supporting customers.

In response to the report and recommendations, the Agency has implemented additional security measures to support customers, including, disrupting fraudulent payment redirection by adding additional controls on updating payment details for Medicare and Centrelink; introducing the myGov Security Dashboard to help customers switch to stronger sign in methods such as Digital ID and Passkeys; obscuring bank details in online accounts across Centrelink, Medicare, Child Support and myGov; and Introducing multifactor authentication steps when updating account settings in myGov.

In response to the recommendations and suggestions, the Agency has also undertaken a myGov ecosystem-wide review of the Proof of Record Ownership (PORO) settings, with all myGov member services and progressed changes to strengthen PORO processes when linking Services Australia's own member services, Medicare, Centrelink, and Child Support, to myGov. The first wave of changes, which include adding multi-factor authentication as part of the account linking process, are scheduled for delivery in September and October 2025.

## Supporting information

### Questions on Notice

- SQ24-000733 - myGov investment pipeline projects. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2025.
- SQ24-000730 - myGov investment pipeline. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024 - Tabled 19 December 2025.
- SQ24-000728 - Ombudsman report – progress on managing shared risks across member services. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2025.
- SQ24-000726 - Ombudsman report and legal advice on information sharing across member services. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2025.

- SQ24-000704 - List of legislation to be updated for joined up government service delivery. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2025.
- SQ24-000703 - Deloitte report recommendations on legislating myGov. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2025.
- SQ24-000702 - Deloitte report re: benefits of legislating myGov. Supplementary Budget Estimates 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2025.
- SQ24-000580 - myGov Initiatives. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000584 - Digital Identity and Enhanced myGov – Post Implementation Review. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000575 - ICT – Resolution of Outages – myGov. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000573 - ICT mGov Performance. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000569 - ICT Outage time and significant incidents – myGov. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000568 - ICT Outage time and major incidents – myGov. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000565 - myGov Daily Logins. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000553 - myGov Inbox. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000551 - myGov App – Device Biometrics. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000547 - Enhanced myGov – myGov app. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000502. myGov – NSW Driver's Licence Program. Budget Estimates 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [Register to save lives this DonateLife week](#), Minister Gallagher / Assistant Minister Rebecca White joint media statement, 1 August 2025
- [More flood affected communities in north Queensland to access Australian government support](#), Minister Gallagher media statement 21 February 2025.
- [Update of simpler digital statutory declarations on the rise](#), Minister Gallagher / the Hon Bill Shorten / Attorney General Dreyfus joint media statement, 27 November 2024.
- [Add your organ donor card to the myGov app wallet](#), Assistant Minister Kearney media statement. 29 October 2024.

- [New digital features making Medicare easier](#), Minister Shorten media statement, 26 September 2024
- [myGov app popularity growing](#), Minister Shorten media statement, 14 August 2024.
- [Simpler sign ins to myGov with passkeys](#), Minister Shorten media statement, 4 July 2024
- [Digital Veteran Cards rolled out in the myGov app](#), Minister Shorten and Minister Keogh joint media statement, 27 June 2024.
- [Digital statutory declarations now available in myGov](#), Minister Shorten , Minister Gallagher and Attorney General Dreyfus joint media statement, 12 February 2024.

### Agency Media Releases

- [Security prompts helping keep myGov accounts secure](#), Services Australia media release, 13 August 2025.
- [Simplifying Medicare online services in the myGov app](#), Services Australia media release, 7 August 2025.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Your new digital bodyguard: myGov's security revolution](#), *Your Life Choices*, Don Turrobia, 25 August 2025
- [Medicare has about \\$247 in unpaid benefits: How to see if you're affected and claim](#) *The Herald Sun*, Kirrily Schwarz, 17 February 2025.
- ['Tell us once' lurches back to life after a decade](#), InnovationAus, Justin Hendry, 22 August 2025
- [Major overhaul for key Medicare service](#), yahoo! News, Emma Kirk, 7 August 2025. Similar reporting in [News.com.au](#) (7 August 2025).
- [ABS Census Test story, including mention of new subscription through myGov](#), Sky News, 29 July 2025. Similar reporting in the [Weekly Times](#) (23 July 2025), and [ABC Radio Brisbane Drive](#) (17 July 2025).
- [myGov Census partnership to get first stress test](#), *The Mandarin*, Dan Holmes, 14 July 2025
- [Easy ways to obtain a medical certificate for sick or carer's leave](#), ABC online, Daniel Jonson, 8 July 2025
- [Gallagher seizes control of Services Australia, Centrelink in massive welfare shakeup](#), *The Mandarin*, Julian Bajkowski, 5 July 2025
- [Hackers targeting myGov and ATO accounts](#), MSN Australia, 19 May 2025
- [Government Services Summit, Australian Financial Review](#), 15 May 2025.
- [The suite of services awaiting you on the myGov portal](#), *The West Australian*, Nick Bruining, 5 May 2025
- [How to call in sick and when you need a medical certificate](#), ABC Online, Kellie Scott, 15 April 2025. Similar reporting in [MSN Australia](#).
- Discussion on the future of 2FA and how passkeys are a more secure option to protect your myGov account, [ABC Radio Adelaide Drive](#), Nicolai Beiharz, 27 March 2025

- [Over 200,000 myGov users disable passwords in passkey shift](#), Eleanor Dickinson, iTNews, 14 March 2025. Similar reporting in [Web Cyber Daily](#).
- [Australian Digital government at a crossroads](#), *The Mandarin*, 10 March 2025
- [Scammers target Aussies with myGov ABN emails, how to tell – Pickr](#)
- Leigh Stark, 13 February 2025.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
**Cleared by (SES):** Jonathon Thorpe  
**Telephone No:** [s47F\(1\)](#)  
**Group/Division:** Service Delivery Excellence / Customer and Staff Digital Programs  
**Contact Officer:** Jordan Hatch  
**Telephone No:** [s47F\(1\)](#)  
**Consultation:** Strategy and Performance Group  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000184

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**Joined Up Government Services****JOINED UP GOVERNMENT SERVICES****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) has been working with relevant policy agencies to pursue legislative reform opportunities that will enable the modernisation of government service delivery and deliver benefits to customers.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Government has a vision to deliver simple, secure and connected public services for all people.
- Work undertaken by the Agency in response to the myGov Audit identified barriers to delivering more connected government services, including legislative barriers.
- The recent Economic Reform Roundtable identified modernising government services as one of the top 10 reform directions. The Treasurer noted that the Regulatory Reform Omnibus Bill, through which the Agency are progressing some initial legislative reforms, was accelerating work on the “tell us once” principle for government services.

**Key Points**

- The Agency is working with relevant policy agencies and the Department of Finance (Finance), which leads whole-of-government service delivery policy, to explore opportunities to reform legislation to deliver more joined up and digitally enabled services.
- Examples of some legislative issues impacting service delivery include:
  - Customer experience, such as the ability for customers to “tell us once”, is hindered by information sharing restrictions. This exists both within Services Australia and for the whole of government products like myGov that the Agency supports.
  - It is difficult to enable automation, even in low-risk scenarios where there is a clear customer benefit, due to the inconsistent legislative framework for the use of automation and the complexity of underlying legislation (including the degree of discretion).
    - The Agency is working with the Attorney-General’s Department as it seeks reforms with respect to automated-decision making. Any

## Joined Up Government Services

questions about these reforms should be referred to the Attorney-General's Department.

- The Agency administers services across a range of legislation. Lack of consistency in service delivery-related powers can create operational inefficiencies and inconsistent customer experience.

# Joined Up Government Services

## Background

As part of the Government's response to the myGov Audit, the Agency received funding of \$2.406 million over two years in the 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) to progress research, evaluation and recommendations to improve the existing legislative landscape for myGov and identify barriers and opportunities to deliver an intuitive service experience for people.

Finance's Whole-of-Government Regulatory Reform Bill (Omnibus Bill) is the first stage of the Government's regulatory reform strategy and contains a range of simple, non-controversial regulatory proposals that:

- make it easier for vulnerable Australians to “tell us once” and access government services, and/or
- improve government efficiency and increase productivity.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- The Agency received several Questions on Notice following questions relating to progress on the myGov User Audit Report, including outcomes of legislative discovery, by Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds at the Community Affairs Senate Estimates hearing on 6 November 2024.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 26 June 2024, following a Freedom of Information application from [s47F\(1\)](#), the Interim Independent Advisory Board meeting papers for 17 June 2024 were released. This included a redacted copy of an independent report prepared by Deloitte on the use of legislation to connect information and services in government.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- The Agency has responded to a media enquiry about the discovery work for connected services legislation from InnovationsAUS, Senior Reporter, Mr Joseph Brookes. On 2 October 2024, an article titled ‘Government eyes law reform to finally deliver connected digital services’ was published on [InnovationAus.com](#)

<b>Date sent to MO:</b>	Click or tap here to enter a date.
<b>Cleared by (SES):</b>	Jonathon Thorpe
<b>Telephone No:</b>	<a href="#">s47F(1)</a>
<b>Group/Division:</b>	Service Delivery Excellence / Telecommunications Modernisation, Automation and Architecture Click or tap here to enter text.
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<b>Consultation:</b>	Program Design Group
<b>PDR Number:</b>	SB25-000312

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS****PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT (MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS)****Subject/Issue**

The terms *major programs* and *major projects* are used to describe internal projects Services Australia (the Agency) is working on.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- As at 30 June 2025, the Agency had 2 major programs and 63 major projects with Federal Budget funding.
- The 2 major programs as at 30 June 2025 were:
  - The Health Delivery Modernisation Program, which was reporting Green
  - The Security Risk Management Review Program, which was reporting Amber.
- The current list of the major programs and related status from January 2025 back to June 2025 is at [Attachment A](#).
- One program was closed in the 2024–25 financial year:
  - Gov ERP Program.
- There were 63 major projects as at 30 June 2025:
  - 53 projects were tracking Green
  - 5 projects were tracking Amber
  - 5 projects were tracking Red:
    - Farm Household Allowance realignment<sup>1</sup>
    - Overseas Health Practitioner Digital Registration<sup>1</sup>
    - Removal of Time Limits for Temporary Incapacity Exemptions<sup>1</sup>
    - Youpla Resolution Payment<sup>1</sup>
    - Improved myGov Inbox and Notifications
- The current list of the major projects and related status from January 2025 back to June 2025 is at [Attachment B](#).

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<sup>1</sup> denotes projects that have reported Red for a number of consecutive months during the period June 2025 back to January 2025.

## MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

- For comparison, there were 57 major projects as at 31 December 2024:
  - 48 projects were tracking Green
  - 5 projects were tracking Amber
  - 4 projects were tracking Red.

### Key Points

- The Agency's portfolio of major programs and projects is identified based on outcomes of the Federal Budget process year on year. These could be single or multi-year programs.
- Once identified, major programs and projects have a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) assigned and are registered.
- The SRO is a lead SES officer (Band 1, 2 or 3) who is accountable for all aspects of program/project performance, including governance, budget and delivery.
- As part of the Agency's portfolio assurance practices, the Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO) works with SROs to track and monitor the health of a program/project and reports program and project status information.
- The status of a program or project is reported against a traffic light system of Red, Amber and Green.
- The status colour is established taking into account key milestones, budget, and risk. The resulting colour assists in determining whether remedial activities are required.

### If asked

- *Program/project status questions can be directed to the relevant Deputy CEOs.*
- *Financial questions relating to the budget of a program/project can be referred to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO).*
- *Monthly status updates are provided to the Executive, they are not provided to the Minister or their office.*

## MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

### Background

From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, the Agency has responded to 15 related Senate Estimates or Parliamentary Questions on Notice as listed below.

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- SQ24-000907. Major Programs – Rebaselined. Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000905. Major Programs – Activities. Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000904. Major Program – Status. Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- SQ24-000903. Major Project – Status. Budget Estimates – 6 November 2024. Tabled 19 December 2024.
- #713, PQ24-000071. Major Projects – Multiple questions. Parliamentary QiW – 9 September 2024. Tabled 5 November 2024.
- #659, PQ24-000045. Major Projects on hand. Parliamentary QiW – 4 July 2024. Tabled 30 August 2024.
- #636, PQ24-000040. Status of Major Projects. Parliamentary QiW – 24 June 2024. Tabled 20 August 2024.
- SQ24-000645. Internal Investments – Expenditure. Budget Estimates – 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000643. Major Project and Major Program. Budget Estimates – 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000452. Major Program and Major Project - Status. Budget Estimates – 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000428. Major Programs - Status. Budget Estimates – 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000425. Major Programs – Rebaselined. Budget Estimates – 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000421. Major Programs – Activities. Budget Estimates – 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000416. Major Programs – Closed. Budget Estimates – 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.
- SQ24-000414. Major Project - Status. Budget Estimates – 3 June 2024. Tabled 25 July 2024.

## MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs asked

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil

### Relevant Media Reporting

- Nil

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
**Cleared by (SES):** Jason Lucchese, A/g Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
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**Group/Division:** Strategy and Performance / Enterprise Portfolio Management Office  
**Contact Officer:** Kylie Whiu  
**Telephone No:** **s47F(1)**  
**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000190

Attachment A

Major Programs	Status June 2025 – January 2025						Responsible Deputy / Group
	June 2025	May 2025	April 2025	March 2025	February 2025	January 2025	
Health Delivery Modernisation Program	●	●	●	●	●	●	Stuart Turnbull Program Design
Security Risk Management Review Program	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	Bo Robertson Customer Service Delivery

Red



Amber



Green



\* The status of a program is reported against a traffic light system of Red, Amber and Green. The status colour is established taking into account key milestones, budget and risk. The resulting colour assists in determining whether remedial activities are required.

Attachment B

Major Projects	Status June 2025 – January 2025						Responsible Deputy / Group
	June 2025	May 2025	April 2025	March 2025	February 2025	January 2025	
Farmhouse Allowance (FHA) Realignment	◆	◆	◆	▲	◆	◆	Stuart Turnbull Program Design
Overseas Health Practitioner Digital Registration	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Removal of Time Limits for Temporary Incapacity Exemptions	◆	◆	●	●	●	●	
Youpla Resolution Payment	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program	▲	▲	●	-	-	-	
Equitable and Improved RAD/RAC Information	▲	●	●	●	●	●	
ICT to enable: New Aged Care Act	▲	▲	▲	▲	●	●	
Paid Parental Leave Superannuation	▲	●	▲	●	▲	●	
Reforming Means Testing and Exempt Redress	▲	●	●	●	▲	▲	
2024-25 MBS Enhancements	●	●	●	●	●	●	
8CPA bulk adjustment upload portal	●	●	●	●	●	●	
A Higher Rate of JobSeeker Payment for Recipients with a Partial Capacity to Work	●	●	●	●	●	●	
AIR enhancements for COVID-19 vaccines	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Allowable Discount Flag	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Better Recognising Individuals' Circumstances for Mutual Obligations	●	●	●	●	●	●	

Attachment B

Major Projects	Status June 2025 – January 2025							Responsible Deputy / Group
	June 2025	May 2025	April 2025	March 2025	February 2025	January 2025		
Bulk Bill 12 Month Claim Limit	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Stuart Turnbull Program Design
Cashless Welfare Reform - Abolish Cashless Debit Card and Reform Income Management	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
CCS and ParentsNext Replacement Service	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Changes to Wholesale Mark-Up Tiers and Calculations	●	●	●	●	-	-	-	
Child Care Subsidy – Activity Test Changes	●	●	▲	▲	●	-	-	
Chronic Wound Consumables Scheme	●	▲	●	●	●	●	●	
ECEC Worker Retention Payments	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Enhanced Paid Parental Leave	●	●	▲	●	▲	▲	▲	
Expanding MBS GP Bulk Bill Incentive Eligibility	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	
First Nations Prison to Employment	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
General Practice in Aged Care Incentive	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Healthcare Identifiers Service	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Identification and Assessment Tools for Job Seeker	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Improved Flexibility of CP work limit	●	●	◆	●	●	●	●	
Lowering the indexation of HELP debts	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	

Attachment B

Major Projects	Status June 2025 – January 2025							Responsible Deputy / Group
	June 2025	May 2025	April 2025	March 2025	February 2025	January 2025		
Mandate ePrescribing plus new Med Chart	●	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	-	
Marginal repayment rate for HELP and other ICL's	●	●	●	●	●	-		
MBS changes to support Nurse Surgical Assistants and Contraceptive Choice	●	●	●	●	●	-		
Medicare Integrity Enhancements for Spinal Surgery and Neurosurgery	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Military Invalidity Pension Changes	●	●	●	●	●	●		
MyMedicare	●	●	●	●	●	●		
MyMedicare my health App	●	●	●	●	●	●		
MyMedicare Software Vendor Integration	●	●	●	◆	◆	●		
National Authentication Service	●	-	-	-	-	-	Stuart Turnbull Program Design	
New Disability Employment Services Reform	●	●	●	●	●	●		
New Pre-Employment Service for Parents	●	●	●	●	●	●		
New Remote Employment Service	●	▲	◆	◆	▲	-		
One-off 20 percent reduction on outstanding HELP or ICL debt	●	●	●	●	●	-		
PBS Eighth Community Pharmacy Agreement - Additional Community Supply Support Fee Payments and transition to Payment Utility platform	●	●	▲	●	●	▲		
Places to People: Embedding Choice in Residential Aged Care	●	●	●	●	●	●		

Attachment B

Major Projects	Status June 2025 – January 2025							Responsible Deputy / Group
	June 2025	May 2025	April 2025	March 2025	February 2025	January 2025		
Privately Practising Midwives	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Redesigning the Better Access Initiative	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Reforming pathology application charging	●	◆	◆	●	●	●	●	
Removing MRI Eligibility Requirements	●	◆	◆	●	●	●	●	
Social Security Agreement with Uruguay	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Support at Home and Single Assessment Workforce	●	●	●	▲	●	●	●	Stuart Turnbull Program Design
Tasmania Freight Equalisation Scheme Rate Change	●	●	-	-	-	-	-	
Digital Identity Interim Oversight Authority	●	●	◆	◆	●	●	●	Charles McHardie
National Care and Support Worker screening check for NDIS	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Technology and Digital Programs
Administrative Review Reforms	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Chris Birrer Payments and Integrity
Improved myGov Inbox and Notifications	◆	▲	●	●	●	●	●	
Digital ID Exchange	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Expand myGov Support Tool	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Jonathon Thorpe
myGov Fraud Prevention (MIRS)	●	●	●	▲	▲	▲		Service Delivery Excellence
myGov Security Dashboard - Supporting People to Better Secure their myGov Account	●	●	●	●	●	●		

Attachment B

Major Projects	Status June 2025 – January 2025							Responsible Deputy / Group
	June 2025	May 2025	April 2025	March 2025	February 2025	January 2025		
myGov Strategic and Investment Pipeline	●	●	⚠	⚠	⚠	●		
Supporting the Census through myGov	●	●	●	●	●	⚠		
Trust Exchange – Digital ID and Verifiable Credentials Proof of Concept	●	●	●	●	●	●		

Red



Amber



Green



Did not report

-

\* The status of a project is reported against a traffic light system of Red, Amber and Green. The status colour is established taking into account key milestones, budget and risk. The resulting colour assists in determining whether remedial activities are required.

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**CYBER SAFETY AND SECURITY****CYBER SAFETY AND SECURITY****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) is engaged across government and the private sector to ensure that our cybersecurity posture is effective in protecting customer data and highly complex payment systems.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Agency maintains security to protect the large volumes of data it holds, including customer information, payment details and other personal identifiable information.
- The Agency's Cyber Security Operations Centre operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing monitoring, response and vulnerability management capabilities.
- As of 30 June 2025, the Agency's Cyber Security Division has 305 personnel, comprised as follows:
  - 215 APS
  - 52 Contractors
  - 38 Service Providers.

**Key Points**

- The Agency holds personal identifiable information for most Australians. The Agency's highest priority is ensuring our ICT systems are robust, secure and reliable, to meet the needs and expectations of the Australian community with protecting their personal identifiable information.
- The Agency's has observed an increase in the extent and complexity of the cyberthreat landscape that poses potential security risks to Australia and the Agency. The Agency continually reviews threats, risks, and identifies and applies protective measures commensurate with the threat and/or risk.

**Cyber Capability**

- The Agency delivers cybersecurity capability to protect its systems and data, and for its Shared Services Partners, including the Department of Social Services, Department of Veterans' Affairs, National Disability Insurance Agency and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
- This is provided through cybersecurity monitoring, security threat intelligence, detection, and security incident response capabilities.

## CYBER SAFETY AND SECURITY

- The Agency prioritises the threats and advisories provided by the Australian Signals Directorate, Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) and National Office of Cyber Security (NOCS) to mitigate cyberthreats faced by the Agency.
- The potential consequence of a cybersecurity incident on Agency systems is significant, potentially impacting continuity of government service delivery.
- The Agency is made aware of instances where third party compromise events have unintentionally or inappropriately led to the disclosure of customer credentials. The Agency works closely with the NOCS and the impacted third party to mitigate and manage risk.
- The Agency does not publicly comment on the operational specifics of investigations or its cyber posture.

### Evolving Cyber Security Threat Landscape

- Cyberthreats are becoming more complex and sophisticated, partly due to the use of artificial intelligence, making it easier for threat actors to launch attacks.
- The Agency's significant personal identifiable information holdings is likely to be of interest to organised crime, malicious cyberthreat actors and advanced state-based threat actors seeking to leverage it for financial gain or to undermine the Australian Government.
- Increased geopolitical tensions and foreign intelligence campaigns targeting Australia's diverse supply chain, present additional risks and complexity for the Agency in combating cyberthreats.
- To combat this, the Agency focuses on cyber vulnerability and risk management, implementing effective whole-of-government security controls, and improving operational resilience through effective cyberthreat intelligence gathering, threat detection, enhanced monitoring and robust response capabilities.

### Cyber Uplift Program

- The Agency has a Cyber Uplift Program focused on uplifting the Agency's cybersecurity Maturity Level and reducing cybersecurity risks to Agency systems.
- This program contributes to achieving the Agency's obligations set out in the *Commonwealth Cyber Security Uplift Plan* and the ACSC's *Essential Eight*.

## CYBER SAFETY AND SECURITY

### Background

The Agency's ICT systems and associated cybersecurity arrangements are highly complex and highly interconnected. Sharing specific details of these arrangements publicly must be carefully considered to ensure the Agency's systems are not exposed.

The Agency takes a broad approach to managing the security of its systems, focusing on managing cyberthreats and risks, implementing effective protective security controls, and improving operational resilience through effective threat detection and robust response capabilities.

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- SQ24-000954. Services Australia's security systems in place of how staff access the internet. Supplementary Budget Estimates 12 December 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.
- SQ24-000954. ICT Security Breaches from people working at home. Supplementary Budget Estimates 12 December 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.
- SQ23-000964. Services Australia Identity Exchange – Cyber security and risks. Supplementary Budget Estimates 15 December 2023. Tabled 20 December 2023.
- SQ23-000406. Cyber Hubs Program. Budget Estimates 31 May 2023. Tabled 9 August 2023.
- SQ23-000262. Cyber operational issues. Supplementary Budget Estimates 15 February 2023. Tabled on 5 May 2023.
- PQ23-000034. Invitation to TikTok Australia's Transparency and Accountability Centre. Parliamentary Question on Notice. Tabled 21 April 2023.
- PQoN #1327. PQ23-000001. TikTok on Work Issue Devices. Tabled 9 February 2023.

#### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil.

#### Recent Ministerial Comments

- [Government passes Australia's first Cyber Security Act](#), the Hon Tony Burke MP, Media release, 25 November 2024.
- [PJCIS recommends urgent passage of cyber security laws – Parliament of Australia](#), the Department of the House of Representatives, Media release, 18 November 2024.
- [Government releases Ransomware Playbook](#), The Hon Tony Burke MP and Dr Andrew Charlton MP, Media release, 11 October 2024.
- [Australian Government among the best in the world for digital investment](#), Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister of Government Services, 7 August 2025
- [GovAI launch marks major milestone for AI in APS](#), Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister of Government Services, 31 July 2025

#### Relevant Media Reporting

- Nil.

## CYBER SAFETY AND SECURITY

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap to enter a date.  
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**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000217

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**ICT PERFORMANCE****ICT SYSTEMS PERFORMANCE****Subject/Issue**

The reliability, accessibility and security of Services Australia's ICT infrastructure systems is imperative to the delivery of services and payments to the Australian public.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- From 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025:
  - 4,544 ICT changes were implemented.
  - Three Significant Incidents occurred in this quarter (a customer self service capability system or application was unavailable or severely degraded).
  - Two Major Incidents occurred in this quarter (a system was unavailable leaving no available options for customers to access Services Australia's services).

**Key Points**

- The target for Strategic Performance Measure 6 (SPM6) – Availability of Digital Channels, is ≥99 per cent.
  - In Q4 of the 2024–25 financial year, the Agency achieved a result of 99.9 per cent against this target.
- This performance measure supports the strategic themes of customer-centric service delivery and modernisation.

## Background

A 'Major Incident' is applicable if:

- there is no alternative service (customer or staff facing) available, impacting the Agency and/or an organisation's ability to provide key services to meet service level commitments, and
- there is a major impact to a critical function. For example, both customer payments and staff facing systems are not processed on time or unavailable.

A 'Significant Incident' is applicable if:

- a customer self-service capability system or application is unavailable or severely degraded, and
- there is a significant impact to a critical function. For example, Express Plus Centrelink being unavailable. Customers could still use myGov, call or visit a Service Centre.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- SQ24-000987. Outage Data – 2023–24 Cumulative Outage Time. Supplementary Budget Estimates 20 December 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.
- SQ24-000988. Outage Data – 2024–25 Cumulative Outage Time. Supplementary Budget Estimates 20 December 2024. Tabled 17 January 2025.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- No FOIs asked.

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- Nil.

<b>Date sent to MO:</b>	Click or tap here to enter a date.
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<b>Consultation:</b>	Nil
<b>PDR Number:</b>	SB25-000218

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**SERVICES AUSTRALIA ERP****SERVICES AUSTRALIA ERP****Subject/Issue**

The Government's Enterprise Resource Planning (GovERP) solution is being repurposed for use by Services Australia (the Agency).

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The GovERP Programme was intended to deliver a whole-of-government SAP-based technology solution and operating model that was required for the essential corporate capabilities of finance, HR, procurement and reporting services to enable the Australian Public Service Shared Services Transformation Initiative (APS SSTI).
- The Agency was funded in the 2021–22 Budget to build and deliver the GovERP Programme.
- From 2021–22 to 2023–24 financial years, the Agency recorded \$203.5 million of expenditure against the GovERP Programme.

**Key Points**

- On 28 November 2023, the Minister for Finance, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, announced significant changes to the Shared Services Transformation Program and the previously approved GovERP Programme, which resulted in a fundamental change to the delivery of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution.
- One of the changes was that agencies were no longer mandated to utilise GovERP, leaving agencies free to explore appropriate solutions to best meet their needs and budget, with GovERP to be repurposed for use by the Agency and any other interested agencies.
- As part of the 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) process, the Digital Transformation Agency undertook an Independent Reuse Assessment of the GovERP solution.
- Findings in the Reuse Assessment Report will be considered as the Agency implements the Services Australia ERP, with the option for other entities to utilise the solution.

**SERVICES AUSTRALIA ERP****If Asked - What work is the Agency undertaking to repurpose GovERP?**

- The Agency is repurposing GovERP into phases and in October 2024 approved funding for further progression of 4 of these Phases:
  - Continuation of Phase one, which was implemented into production during August 2025, a Learning Management module along with Recruitment and Onboarding capability. Pilots of these modules are underway within the Agency.
  - Phase 2 commenced development of a Performance and Goals module (in July 2025) and commenced procurement of a Travel and Expense Management Solution (TEMS) (in July 2025), noting the GovERP TEMS contract has lapsed.
  - Phase 3 Core HR, including Payroll, is commencing development in October 2025.
  - Phase 4, Finance and Procurement and support for full transition and decommission of legacy ERP systems, commenced the discovery phase in July 2025.

## SERVICES AUSTRALIA ERP

### Background

The Agency was funded in the 2021–22 Budget to build and deliver the GovERP Programme, with the Department of Finance (Finance) retaining the policy function for Shared Services.

In July 2021, delivery of the GovERP Programme was transferred from Finance to the Agency.

The full GovERP solution was originally scoped to service the Government's six shared services hubs, but only funded for the first hub. Finance's service delivery hub was to be the first entity to be on-boarded to GovERP, with funding provided in the 2021-22 Budget to achieve this.

Prior to the 2022 Federal Election, significant work had been undertaken jointly with the former Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) to prepare for onboarding as the first agency to the GovERP platform by June 2023.

Following Machinery of Government changes, the former DESE became the Department of Education and a new entity was created, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. This change resulted in an adjustment to the GovERP onboarding schedule and timeframes.

On 16 August 2022, it was agreed to amend the onboarding schedule that would see the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) as the first agency to onboard to the GovERP Programme rather than the former DESE.

While the original scope included the onboarding of the Service Delivery Office (SDO) and the SDO's 14 client agencies, it was agreed to pause the onboarding of the SDO and its client agencies to allow the GovERP Programme to invest all effort toward the AGD onboarding readiness for a 2024 go-live.

On 28 November 2023, the Government announced significant changes to the Shared Services Transformation Program and the previously approved Government Enterprise Resource Planning (GovERP) Programme, which resulted in a fundamental change to the delivery of the ERP solution.

It was announced that agencies were no longer mandated to utilise GovERP and were free to explore appropriate solutions to best meet their needs and budget, with GovERP to be repurposed for use by the Agency and any other interested agencies.

On 5 January 2024, AGD advised it would not proceed to onboard the GovERP solution and would assess alternative options.

As part of the 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) process, it was agreed the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) would undertake an independent reuse assessment of the GovERP. The Independent Reuse Assessment was completed on 30 June 2024.

The GovERP Programme was funded to 30 June 2024.

The Independent Reuse Assessment findings are being taken into consideration as the Agency continues to explore the establishment of the Services Australia ERP solution, as well as being leveraged by entities that the Agency supports with ICT shared services, and any other entities who choose to use it.

## SERVICES AUSTRALIA ERP

**Supporting Information****Questions on Notice**

- SQ24-000153 – GovERP – red status. Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee – Additional Estimates. 14 February 2024
- SQ23-000469 – Re-profiled funding. Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee – Budget Estimates. 31 May 2023
- SQ23-000189 – DTA – joint projects. Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee – Supplementary Budget Estimates. 15 February 2023
- PQ23-000110 – GovERP delays and planning.

**Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests**

- Nil

**Recent Ministerial Comments**

- Nil

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- GovERP shared services project a \$340m federal government IT disaster, Tim Burton, *Australian Financial Review*, 22 August 2024
- Eye-wateringly expensive failure': \$341m GovERP coffin nailed shut, Joseph Brookes, *InnovationAus.com*, 20 August 2024.
- GovERP axed as reuse review finds demand only for artifacts, patterns - Software - iTnews, Ry Crozier, *ITNews*, 20 August 2024.
- What next for shared services after GovERP decision, Ed Chung, *InnovationAus.com*, 15 December 2023
- GovERP debacle: A predictable but valuable lesson, Dr Joseph Sweeney, *InnovationAus.com*, 6 December 2023
- GovERP to be scaled back, Ry Crozier, *ITNews*, 28 November 2023
- Push for procurement rethink after 'criminal' GovERP outlay, Justin Hendry, *Public Policy and Business Innovation*/*InnovationAus.com*, 31 July 2023
- GovERP faces summer slowdown as SAP build enters new phase, Justin Hendry, *Public Policy and Business Innovation*/*InnovationAus.com*, 9 December 2022

## SERVICES AUSTRALIA ERP

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
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**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000220

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**TDP WORKFORCE****TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL PROGRAMS WORKFORCE****Subject/Issue**

The Technology and Digital Programs (TDP) Group represents the largest in-house technology workforce across government.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- As at 30 June 2025, the TDP Group APS workforce headcount was 4,414 comprising of:
  - APS employees:
    - 2,632 ongoing employees
    - 34 non-ongoing employees
  - Non-APS employees:
    - 1,748 labour hire workers/contractors/secondees, of which:
      - 1,559 supplement our APS workforce, with 1,270 engaged full time
      - the remaining 189 are engaged to deliver milestone-based deliverables or are vendor resources (employees) support contract deliverables

**Key Point**

- The TDP Group remains committed in aligning with APS reform and the objectives outlined under the Strategic Commissioning Framework (SCF). The TDP Group is focussed on increasing the capability of its APS workforce, through a targeted APS recruitment pipeline including investment in Entry Level Pathway (ELP) talent, and continued delivery of various learning and development offerings.
- The APS recruitment pipeline includes targeted recruitment of key roles integral to delivering the Group's workplan. This ensures immediate workforce demands are met, and Services Australia (the Agency) can build a consistent talent pipeline to support long-term success and organisational growth.
- With the Government's commitment to continue to invest in myGov, the Agency identified opportunities to further improve the customer and staff experience.

**TDP WORKFORCE**

- The Agency remains committed to assessing and prioritising new internal investment initiatives that enhance and support the delivery of simple, helpful, respectful, and transparent services to citizens.
- TDP maintains a blended workforce of contractors, labour hire and APS staff. Our workforce strategy is designed to ensure we can respond flexibly to the needs of government and deliver against current work plans.
- The 2025–26 recruitment plan will adopt a more focused and strategic approach, prioritising critical roles where existing merit pools have been exhausted or are unavailable, and ensuring we remain responsive to operational needs while aligning with broader workforce planning objectives.
- In July 2025, the Telecommunications Services Projects (TSP) Branch moved from Service Delivery Excellence Group into TDP Group, to support delivery of the Network and Data Carriage Project. A total of 68 staff (18 APS and 50 contractors) transitioned to TDP Group.
- Since 1 July 2024, the TDP Group has progressed 66 APS recruitment exercises across APS4 to EL2 levels, resulting in approximately 350 positions filled (as at 30 June 2025) and merit pools available for future vacancies.
- Since 1 July 2024, TDP has welcomed 112 ELP participants through the Digital Traineeship and Cadetship, National Graduate Program, Aurora Neuroinclusion, VetPaths, and Indigenous Apprenticeship Programs as measures to increase the Group's APS balance.
- Between 1 December 2020 and 30 June 2025, 330 non-APS employees, including labour hire, contractor, and SDP staff, have transitioned to APS employment in TDP.
- As part of regular workload and workforce planning activities, TDP also reviewed its contractor workforce to ensure it represents the skills and capabilities required to deliver against our 2025–26 work plan. This saw approximately 150 contractors cease with the Group in June 2025, and approximately 130 in September 2025.
- The TDP Group has seen an increase in staff learning engagement over the past 6 months, including a 60 per cent increase in learning hours, 43 per cent rise in courses accessed, and 25 per cent growth in unique facilitated courses requested and procured.
- The TDP Group will continue evaluating its workload to ensure resources align with established priorities. Any new projects necessitating internal investment will undergo assessment at the enterprise level.

**TDP WORKFORCE**

- The TDP Group remains committed to prioritising the sustainment, maintenance, and stability of critical systems. The focus will be on projects with dedicated government funding and system stability, engaging in cyber activities, and responding to routine demands of Agency operations.

## Background

### APS Workforce

The TDP Group continues to support the outcomes of the SCF by continuing to review workforce compositions against core work. The TDP Group has made significant progress to date and will continue to implement strategies to increase its APS headcount and embed highly specialised and desirable skill sets.

The TDP Group continues to invest in the reskilling, uplift, and development of APS capability through various learning offerings. These initiatives include structured technical training, flexible on-demand online learning platforms, and targeted on-the-job training. This approach aims to enhance the capability uplift of our workforce for the future. Prioritising educational opportunities is essential for the TDP Group and industry partnerships will continue to be leveraged to deliver up-to-date, relevant, and contemporary content.

The TDP Group continues to invest in Group-wide succession planning, with a focus on developing potential successors to fill critical roles as required. Succession plans are reviewed 6 monthly to identify and address critical skill shortages ahead of time.

The TDP Group is progressing APS recruitment activities to fill multiple critical roles at various levels over the next 24 months, with a focus on supporting Group-wide succession and strengthening workforce capability. By committing to these recruitment efforts, the Group aims to build a robust, skilled, and capable workforce for the future, thereby reducing reliance on external workforce engagements over time.

## Supporting Information

### Questions on Notice

- Nil.

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Nil.

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil.

### Relevant Media Reporting

- Nil.

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.

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**Consultation:** Danielle Regeling, General Manager Workforce Capability

**PDR Number:** SB25-000221

**ESTIMATES BRIEF – Hot Issue**

Supplementary Budget Estimates – October 2025

**ICT ARCHITECTURE REVIEW****SERVICES AUSTRALIA ICT ARCHITECTURE REVIEW****Subject/Issue**

Services Australia (the Agency) has developed a 10-year ICT Architecture Strategic roadmap and investment plan to enhance the Agency's current end-to-end ICT landscape.

**Key Facts and Figures**

- The Architecture Review 10-year ICT roadmap includes over 90 initiatives.
- The Agency established the Architecture Review Taskforce (the Taskforce) and related oversight committees to work with stakeholders across and beyond the Agency in the process of developing a target state technology architecture that will meet the needs of government and the Australian community.
- The Taskforce engaged internal and external stakeholders to identify capability gaps and define strategic solutions for inclusion in the roadmap.
- The initial 2 years of the roadmap is focused on reducing risks and technical debt for key legacy platforms responsible for the majority of the 1.2 billion digital transactions each year.

**Key Points**

- In 2024–25, the Taskforce reviewed the Agency's current ICT landscape and developed a draft 10-year ICT Architecture Strategy (in line with the requirements of the Digital Investment Oversight Framework). This is now leading to a near-completed set of implementation plans with supporting options.
- The Taskforce has continued to engage with industry and partner agencies to define priorities and approaches that will deliver short- and long-term benefits.

## ICT ARCHITECTURE REVIEW

### Background

#### Budget and Efficiency Review

The Department of Finance commissioned independent consultants, KordaMentha, to conduct a Budget and Efficiency Review in the second half of 2023.

The scope of the review was broad and considered service delivery operations, resourcing, workforce, expenditure, and the Agency's performance metrics to determine how the Agency could meet Government priorities and overcome barriers to achieve its functions and intended outcomes.

#### Review outcomes

The Taskforce has near-completed the compilation of a 10-year ICT roadmap and a complementary cyber security uplift plan. As a result of the work undertaken, the review has achieved:

- Shared current state and future plans to enhance ICT stabilisation and remediation over the next 2 years.
- Shared lessons learned around previous major system changes or transformation initiatives, and playbacks on the roadmap with commercial partners and Central agencies to create a shared vision.
- Engagements resulting in a detailed overview of current and emerging key operational risks, planned initiatives, and a required improvement program mapped to strategic business capabilities, starting from the 2025–26 financial year.
- Business-critical legacy application footprints and implementation plans based on costing options.

### Supporting Information

#### Questions on Notice

- Nil.

#### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- Services Australia FOI request LEX84551. Ministerial Submission For Noting. Release provided 9 April 2025.
- Services Australia FOI request LEX82769. Ministerial Submission For Noting. Documents released to **s47F(1)**
- Services Australia FOI request LEX82769. Copy of Budget and Efficiency Review and information shared with the Advisory Group.

#### Recent Ministerial Comments

- Nil.

#### Relevant Media Reporting

- [Services Australia draws up 10-year IT architecture strategy - iTnews](#), Eleanor Dickinson, iTnews, 29 January 2025.

## ICT ARCHITECTURE REVIEW

**Date sent to MO:** Click or tap here to enter a date.  
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**Consultation:** Nil  
**PDR Number:** SB25-000229