

Part 1: Overview

In the face of high but moderating inflation, higher interest rates and global economic uncertainty, the Australian economy has slowed in expected ways, but faces these challenges from a position of strength. While inflation is still too high, it is continuing to moderate and real wages are beginning to grow. Our unemployment rate is low, our participation rate is near record highs and employment growth has been strong, outperforming all major advanced economies.

The Government's responsible economic and fiscal management delivered Australia's first surplus in 15 years in 2022–23 and helped ease inflationary pressures at their peak. In the 2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), the fiscal position has further improved with lower deficits and gross debt now forecast across the forward estimates compared to the 2023–24 Budget. By restraining spending and returning most of the tax upgrades to the budget, the Government's Economic and Fiscal Strategy continues to ensure fiscal and monetary policy settings are aligned, and helps ease inflationary pressures.

The Government's comprehensive economic plan is focused on addressing cost-of-living pressures, repairing the budget and restoring fiscal buffers, whilst laying the foundations for future growth.

This MYEFO furthers that plan and makes responsible new investments in housing, energy, Medicare and other priority areas, taking into account the challenging economic and fiscal circumstances facing the nation. Through this MYEFO the Government is:

- taking pressure off Australians by continuing to roll out targeted cost-of-living relief and unlocking greater housing supply
- building our future here by investing in Australia's potential to become a renewable energy superpower and progressing the Employment White Paper Roadmap
- strengthening Medicare and securing essential services
- securing our home and region by building our economic resilience, sustaining our environment, strengthening the digital economy and improving trade.

The global economic outlook remains highly uncertain. Global growth is expected to slow over the next two years as persistent inflation and higher interest rates weigh on economic activity. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Hamas-Israel conflict, the ongoing adjustment in China's property sector and the lagged effects of sharp global monetary tightening all pose downside risks.

The Australian economy has shown resilience in the face of elevated inflation, higher interest rates and the volatile international environment, and is well positioned to grow more than all major advanced economies over the forecast period.

Economic growth was solid at 3.1 per cent in 2022–23. Wage growth has picked up to its fastest annual rate since 2009 and after two consecutive quarters of positive real wage growth, annual real wage growth is expected to return in early 2024.

The labour market remains strong, with the unemployment rate recording the longest consecutive run below 4 per cent since monthly records began. The participation rate remains at a record high, and employment has grown by over 600,000 people in the last 18 months – a faster pace than all major advanced economies.

The economy is slowing in expected ways, with growth forecast to moderate in 2023–24 as higher interest rates, high but moderating inflation and global pressures weigh on domestic activity in the near-term. Higher global oil prices have put upward pressure on inflation in recent quarters, but the broader outlook has not changed with the headline rate still projected to return to target within 2024–25 and forecast to be 2¾ per cent in the June quarter 2025. The Australian economy is now expected to expand by 1¾ per cent in 2023–24 before regaining momentum in 2024–25 as improving real incomes support a recovery in household consumption.

The fiscal position has strengthened. A deficit of \$1.1 billion is forecast in 2023–24 (0.0 per cent of GDP), an improvement of \$12.8 billion since the 2023–24 Budget. Over the four years to 2026–27, the underlying cash balance has improved by a cumulative \$39.5 billion. Gross debt as a share of GDP is now expected to peak 1.1 percentage points lower than forecast at the 2023–24 Budget at 35.4 per cent of GDP in 2027–28.

The significant budget improvement is the result of the Government’s fiscal restraint and continued focus on reprioritisations and savings. In this MYEFO, the Government has identified \$9.8 billion in savings and reprioritisations. The Government is returning 92 per cent of tax upgrades in this MYEFO to the budget, and the Government has returned 88 per cent of all tax upgrades since the start of its term. The Government’s fiscal restraint has been supported by the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and major rating agencies.

Taking pressure off Australians by continuing to roll out responsible and targeted cost-of-living relief remains the Government’s highest priority. In this MYEFO, new investments will help improve housing supply and affordability, with \$3.0 billion for the New Homes Bonus to encourage state and territory governments to meet the 1.2 million new homes target, and \$2.0 billion towards the Social Housing Accelerator.

The Government is modernising our economy, working to maximise our advantages and laying the foundations for growth. Building on the \$40 billion already committed towards the Government’s renewable energy superpower plan, this MYEFO provides around \$3 billion towards measures which unlock new investment in critical minerals projects and clean energy. This MYEFO also progresses the Employment White Paper Roadmap through removing barriers to work and making investments in skills and lifelong learning. An additional \$6.8 billion will support delivery of current infrastructure projects, helping to build future productivity and avoid capacity constraints that can drive inflation.

This MYEFO continues to strengthen Medicare and secure essential services and care for Australians. This includes additional investment in Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, improvements to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), new and amended Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings, expanded access to the Shingrix® vaccine, and continued COVID-19 support. It also invests in aged care, to ensure older Australians receive high-quality and safe care, and in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), to improve the operation of the Scheme so that every dollar goes to support those who need it most.

The Commonwealth is working closely with states through National Cabinet. On 6 December 2023, National Cabinet agreed reforms to strengthen the health system and to secure the future of the NDIS, improve Australia's firearms management systems, and provide states with funding certainty by extending the GST No Worse Off Guarantee for three years from 2027–28.

Our prosperity and security are linked to our neighbours in our region. The Government is securing our home and region by investing in our international partnerships, national security, environment and economic resilience. This MYEFO makes further investments in implementing the AUKUS agreement, and provides funding to strengthen economic engagement with our region and facilitate and simplify trade. It strengthens our resilience through investments in improving cyber security, expanding the Digital ID program, and pest and disease preparedness and response activities.

Updated economic and fiscal outlook

The outlook for the global economy remains uncertain and inflation is still a key challenge in many economies. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Hamas-Israel conflict, China's property sector downturn and the lagged effects of sharp monetary tightening all pose downside risks to the outlook for global growth. Global growth is expected to slow from 3.4 per cent in 2022 to 3 per cent in 2023 and 2024 as persistent inflation and higher interest rates weigh on economic activity. A modest pick-up to 3¼ per cent is expected in 2025.

The Australian economy has slowed in expected ways in the face of global uncertainty, higher interest rates and high but moderating inflation. However, the economy faces these challenges from a position of strength. The labour market remains strong, with over 600,000 additional people employed over the past 18 months and participation is still at close to record high levels. The unemployment rate has recorded its longest consecutive run below 4 per cent since monthly records began and wages are growing at the fastest rate in over a decade.

Economic growth is expected to moderate in 2023–24 as inflationary pressures and higher interest rates weigh on household consumption and dwelling investment. Continued public and business investment momentum and the ongoing recovery in the international student and tourism sectors are helping to offset this weakness and support growth in 2023–24. These developments are flowing through to a modest upgrade to GDP growth this financial year relative to the 2023–24 Budget.

Economic growth is expected to pick up in 2024–25 as inflation subsides following its peak in 2022 and household disposable incomes improve. With inflation moderating, real annual wage growth is expected to return in early 2024. This will support household consumption and drive the pace of economic growth to a forecast 2¼ per cent in 2024–25.

The labour market remains resilient, with unemployment below 4 per cent and the participation rate near record highs, including for women. While leading indicators suggest some slowing is underway, consistent with the expected softening in growth, the labour market is forecast to perform well compared to pre-pandemic averages even as momentum eases. In line with forecasts from the past two budgets, the unemployment rate is expected to rise modestly to 4¼ per cent by June 2024.

Inflation is still elevated and above target, but it has fallen broadly in line with expectations since peaking in 2022. Inflation is still projected to return to the target band within 2024–25 and forecast to be 2¾ per cent in the June quarter 2025, though higher global oil prices were passed through to petrol prices and added ¼ per cent to annual inflation in the September quarter 2023. The Government’s cost-of-living measures are providing targeted relief to household budgets and ABS data shows they reduced headline inflation by half a percentage point through the year to the September quarter 2023. They are expected to directly reduce annual headline inflation by ¾ of a percentage point through the year to the June quarter 2024.

Table 1.1: Major economic parameters (a)

	Outcome		Forecasts		
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Real GDP	3.1	1 3/4	2 1/4	2 1/2	2 3/4
Employment	3.2	1 1/2	1	1 1/2	1 3/4
Unemployment rate	3.6	4 1/4	4 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/4
Consumer price index	6.0	3 3/4	2 3/4	2 1/2	2 1/2
Wage price index	3.6	4	3 1/4	3 1/2	3 1/2
Nominal GDP	9.8	4 1/4	2 1/4	4 1/2	5

a) Real GDP and nominal GDP are percentage change on preceding year. Employment, the consumer price index and the wage price index are through-the-year growth to the June quarter. The unemployment rate is the rate for the June quarter.

Source: ABS Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product; Labour Force Survey, Australia; Consumer Price Index, Australia; Wage Price Index, Australia; and Treasury.

The Government delivered the first surplus in 15 years in 2022–23, with fiscal policy working in concert with monetary policy to put downward pressure on inflation when it was at its highest. Australia returned to surplus ahead of all major advanced economies.

In this MYEFO, the Government continues the task of budget repair from the last two budgets, returning the majority of tax upgrades to the budget. 92 per cent of tax upgrades have been returned to the budget in this MYEFO, 88 per cent since coming to government. Real spending growth has been limited to an average of 0.8 per cent over the five years to 2026–27. The Government’s fiscal discipline is delivering smaller deficits and lower debt in every year of the forward estimates compared to the 2023–24 Budget, building on improvements delivered in the 2023–24 Budget and 2022–23 October Budget.

A small deficit is now forecast for 2023–24, a \$12.8 billion improvement from the 2023–24 Budget. Over four years to 2026–27, the underlying cash balance has improved by a cumulative \$39.5 billion. Tax receipts have been revised up by \$64.4 billion over four years to 2026–27, primarily reflecting near-term strength in commodity prices, higher non-mining corporate profits and recent strong employment growth.

MYEFO continues the work of the Government in rolling out responsible and targeted cost-of-living relief. The Government is working to strengthen Australia’s future productive capacity while addressing the inflation challenge. In this MYEFO, the Government has taken net policy decisions of \$5.3 billion over four years to 2026–27. This includes \$5.2 billion to resolve legacy issues from the former government and respond to unavoidable pressures including continuing support for the COVID-19 response.

The net impact of new policy decisions has been limited to \$650.2 million in 2023–24, when inflation remains elevated. Consistent with the Economic and Fiscal Strategy, the Government has identified \$9.8 billion of savings and spending reprioritisations in this MYEFO to improve the efficiency, quality and sustainability of spending. This brings the total budget improvements since coming to government to \$72.7 billion.

In 2033–34, at the end of the medium term, the budget is projected to be in a deficit of 0.3 per cent of GDP. Gross debt-to-GDP is now lower in every year of the projection period compared to the 2023–24 Budget. It is forecast to peak at 35.4 per cent of GDP in 2027–28, before falling to 32.1 per cent of GDP by 2033–34.

Interest payments are projected to be higher in the medium term, reflecting the effect of higher yields on borrowing costs. The Government’s responsible fiscal management has helped to reduce the impact of higher yields by improving the bottom line and reducing the stock of debt-to-GDP. Returning 88 per cent of tax receipt upgrades since coming to government is estimated to reduce gross debt by 10.5 percentage points of GDP in 2033–34 and avoid \$145 billion in interest costs over the 12 years to 2033–34. As demonstrated in the 2023 Intergenerational Report, the Government’s actions to repair the budget are providing an ongoing benefit through lower debt and interest payments, but challenges are intensifying.

Table 1.2: Budget aggregates

	Estimates							
	2023-24		2024-25		2025-26		2026-27	
	\$b	% GDP	\$b	% GDP	\$b	% GDP	\$b	% GDP
Underlying cash balance								
MYEFO	-1.1	0.0	-18.8	-0.7	-35.1	-1.2	-19.5	-0.6
<i>Budget</i>	-13.9	-0.5	-35.1	-1.3	-36.6	-1.3	-28.5	-1.0
Gross debt(a)								
MYEFO	909.0	34.0	934.0	34.2	1,007.0	35.2	1,058.0	35.3
<i>Budget</i>	923.0	35.8	958.0	36.3	1,015.0	36.5	1,067.0	36.5
Net debt(b)								
MYEFO	491.0	18.4	533.3	19.5	586.4	20.5	623.9	20.8
<i>Budget</i>	574.9	22.3	620.6	23.5	665.2	24.0	702.9	24.1

a) Gross debt measures the face value of Australian Government Securities (AGS) on issue.

b) Net debt is the sum of interest bearing liabilities (which includes AGS on issue measured at market value) less the sum of selected financial assets (cash and deposits, advances paid and investments, loans and placements).

The Government's priorities

Taking the pressure off Australians

The Government's continued focus is on rolling out \$23 billion in cost-of-living relief, carefully targeted to reduce pressure on households. This MYEFO makes further investments to unlock more housing for Australians, to support the expansion of the Paid Parental Leave scheme and to allow eligible job seekers who enter employment to retain access to concession cards, child care subsidies and other supplementary benefits for longer.

Rolling out the Government's cost-of-living plan

Since the 2022–23 October Budget, the Government has continued to roll out billions of dollars in targeted, responsible and meaningful cost-of-living relief. To take pressure off increases in energy prices, the Government's energy bill relief is providing rebates of up to \$500 to around five million households and up to \$650 to around one million eligible small businesses. The second quarterly energy bill relief payments commenced rolling out to eligible households and businesses from October 2023. The ABS estimates that energy bill rebates reduced quarterly growth in electricity prices by 14.4 percentage points in the September quarter 2023.

In September 2023, the Government delivered additional support to low-income renters, with the largest increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance in more than 30 years. The ABS estimates that this reduced quarterly growth in rental inflation by 0.3 of a percentage point in the September quarter 2023. The Government has also boosted eligible working age and student payments, in addition to expanding access to additional financial support for single parents.

Early childhood education and care has been made more affordable for around 1.2 million eligible families, with child care costs decreasing by 13.2 per cent in the September quarter 2023. Without the changes to the Child Care Subsidy introduced in July 2023, it is estimated that child care prices in the Consumer Price Index would have increased by 6.7 per cent over the same period.

The Government is increasing the Paid Parental Leave scheme by two weeks each year starting from 1 July 2024, to reach a total of 26 weeks by 1 July 2026, providing further support to around 180,000 families each year. This MYEFO includes an additional \$79.5 million over four years to support this expansion and advance gender equality, including by reserving four weeks of Paid Parental Leave for each parent from 1 July 2026 and providing flexibility for parents to take up to four weeks at the same time from 1 July 2025.

From 1 September 2023, the Government delivered the increase to maximum dispensing quantities for the first tranche of medicines. This means many Australians are now able to receive 60 days' worth of the medicine they need, lowering out-of-pocket costs and reducing the number of visits to a pharmacy and general practitioner. The Government has also delivered cost-of-living relief by lowering the general patient co-payment for treatments under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) from \$42.50 to \$30 since 1 January 2023. The lower general patient co-payment has reduced the cost of prescription medicines by around \$20 million each month.

Ensuring Australians can access affordable health care when they need it, the Government has tripled the bulk billing incentive doctors receive to bulk bill pensioners, children under 16 and other Commonwealth concession card holders from 1 November 2023. This will support 11.6 million eligible patients to access bulk-billed appointments.

The Government has continued its focus on getting wages moving again, with wages now growing at around their fastest pace in a decade. Australia's future workforce will also benefit from the Government's investment in skills and training, including the commitment to provide 480,000 fee-free TAFE and vocational education places, particularly in critical areas of shortage. In the first nine months of this program, over 296,000 Australians enrolled in a fee-free course, far surpassing the target of 180,000 places for 2023.

To help smooth the transition between income support and work, in this MYEFO the Government is extending the employment income nil rate period from six to 12 fortnights and expanding eligibility to income support recipients who take up full-time work. An initiative identified in the Employment White Paper Roadmap, the nil rate period enables job seekers to remain connected to the social security system and retain access to concession cards, child care subsidies and other supplementary benefits for a period after entering employment.

Unlocking more housing supply

Access to safe, affordable and well-located housing, whether buying or renting is critical for the wellbeing of Australians and the productivity of the economy. The MYEFO invests around \$6.5 billion to improve housing supply and affordability, building on the \$10 billion already invested in the Housing Australia Future Fund.

Social Housing Accelerator

In June 2023, the Government invested \$2.0 billion through the Social Housing Accelerator (the Accelerator) to deliver a permanent increase in the nation’s social housing stock. The Accelerator was a one-off payment to the state and territory governments and is expected to deliver around 4,000 new and refurbished social homes across the country. States have agreed to commit all Accelerator funding by 30 June 2025, and complete all new homes by 2028.

Funding more social housing through the National Housing Infrastructure Facility

In 2023–24, the Government will provide an additional \$1.0 billion to the National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF), administered by Housing Australia. These funds will enable the NHIF to provide grants and concessional loans to support additional social housing dwellings.

New Homes Bonus

In August 2023, National Cabinet agreed to an ambitious national target to build 1.2 million new, well-located homes over five years from 1 July 2024. This is an additional 200,000 homes above the target originally agreed under the National Housing Accord in 2022.

To incentivise the states and territories to reach this new target, the Government has committed up to \$3.0 billion through the New Homes Bonus, a performance-based fund for the states and territories that exceed their share of the original one million new homes target.

Housing Support Program

The Government is providing around \$500 million over two years from 2023–24 to establish the Housing Support Program as a competitive grants program open to local, state and territory governments to support ancillary infrastructure to increase housing supply, including for essential services, community amenities and planning capability.

Building our future here

The Government is focused on steering the economy through the current challenges and building the foundations for future growth. This MYEFO is continuing to build upon the foundations for Australia to seize the opportunities of the net zero transformation and deliver a more sustainable pipeline of investment in nationally significant infrastructure projects. Following the release of the Employment White Paper, immediate steps are being made towards sustained and inclusive full employment through investments in skills, education, reforms to the migration system and better incentivising and supporting participation in the labour market.

Box 1.1: Australia’s plan to become a renewable energy superpower

The Government is capitalising on the opportunities of the net zero transition and strengthening domestic resilience through its plan to become a renewable energy superpower.

Achieving this goal will require strengthening supply chains, accelerating approval processes, attracting capital, and building a clean energy workforce.

Most importantly, more work is needed to secure sufficient renewable energy generation, transmission and storage, to decarbonise the economy and realise the clean industrial opportunities of the future.

The Government is committed to its longer-term ambitions to help develop the clean energy industries of the future as part of its plan to become a renewable energy superpower. Initial work has identified priority areas for focus, including green metals; green hydrogen and derivative products like ammonia; critical minerals; and storage and generation technologies such as batteries.

In addition to its previous commitment of over \$40 billion towards its ambition to become a renewable superpower, the Government has further committed around \$3 billion this MYEFO, including via:

- \$2.5 billion to support the *Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030*, including an additional \$2 billion in funding for the Critical Minerals Facility and \$500 million for critical minerals projects in Northern Australia through the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.
- \$5.4 million for a Battery Supply Chain and Research Working Group to enable collaboration with the United States Government on battery supply chains, battery manufacturing capabilities and battery technology research and development.
- \$359.0 million over four years to unlock the benefits of cleaner, cheaper and more reliable energy, as a critical enabler of future clean industries and broader decarbonisation. This includes an expansion of the Capacity Investment Scheme to boost renewable generation, firm our electricity supply and secure Australia’s energy transformation.

Energy transformation

\$359.0 million over four years is being invested to secure Australia’s energy transformation and maintain system reliability as our grid transitions. The Government is expanding the Capacity Investment Scheme from the current pilot stage to support 9 GW of clean dispatchable capacity and 23 GW of renewable generation capacity nationally. The Government will also negotiate bilateral Renewable Energy Transformation Agreements with jurisdictions to support the rollout of renewables and maintain reliability through objective benchmarks, an orderly transition, and potential strategic reserves.

Complementing these actions, the Government is providing funding to address supply chain barriers for clean energy technologies, secure a skilled energy workforce, plan for a future energy market design and support local governments with energy upgrades. To maintain energy system security, the Government is also supporting the Australian Energy Regulator to oversee our energy markets through the net zero transformation, and is providing funding to implement the Mandatory Gas Code of Conduct to ensure an affordable and reliable supply of gas.

Boost for critical minerals

Australia’s supply of critical minerals is crucial to global emissions reduction and presents opportunities for Australia. The Government is doubling the Critical Minerals Facility to \$4.0 billion to support growth in the critical minerals sector and advance Australia’s renewable superpower ambitions. This is in addition to the \$500 million for critical minerals projects in Northern Australia earmarked through the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.

This expansion aligns with the Government’s *Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–30* and will also support international partnerships, including the Australia-United States Climate, Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Transformation Compact.

Nationally significant infrastructure investment

Building a better future through considered infrastructure investment

The Government is committed to continued investment in infrastructure across Australia and will invest over \$120 billion in land transport infrastructure projects over the next ten years. Following a recent independent strategic review, the Government will continue to work with the states and territories to improve the sustainability of the Infrastructure Investment Program, providing an additional \$6.8 billion to support the delivery of current projects and reprioritising funding to ensure an ongoing pipeline of nationally significant infrastructure projects across all states and territories. This will help deliver the infrastructure Australia needs, create jobs and relieve capacity constraints that can drive inflation.

Following advice from the independent strategic review, the Government will provide a further \$4.2 billion for road safety infrastructure, including a graduated increase in funding for the Roads to Recovery Program to \$1.0 billion a year.

Unlocking the economic potential of Western Sydney

The Government is making significant investments in productivity-enhancing infrastructure to support the growth of Western Sydney. A further \$174.7 million will be provided to support operational preparations by border agencies for the new Western Sydney International Airport. In addition to supporting the delivery of projects such as the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport development, the Government will consider future investment priorities with the state government following the independent report of the Western Sydney Transport Infrastructure Panel.

Delivering important water infrastructure

The Government is continuing to invest in important water infrastructure projects by allocating a further \$180.3 million through the National Water Grid Fund. These investments will enhance water security for remote and regional communities such as \$13.2 million for Yulara in the Northern Territory and \$10.0 million for the Central Darling Shire in New South Wales. The Government is also providing an additional \$26.5 million towards the Mount Morgan Water Supply Pipeline project in Queensland to ensure full delivery of the project and to fix this town’s water crisis.

Investing in skills, tertiary education and lifelong learning*A landmark National Skills Agreement*

The Government has secured a new five-year National Skills Agreement (the Agreement) with the states and territories to commence from 1 January 2024. The Government is providing up to \$12.6 billion under the Agreement to lift productivity and deliver a national Vocational Education and Training (VET) system that is high quality, responsive and accessible. The Agreement includes a joint funding commitment from the states and territories, ensuring the collective investment in the VET system keeps growing. A new national stewardship model will coordinate strategic investment in skills across the economy and support the delivery of skills in areas of national priority. The Agreement also includes funding to implement major reforms, including establishing TAFE Centres of Excellence, improving foundation skills training and new Closing the Gap initiatives. The Agreement will also support women’s economic participation and ensure more opportunities for those historically locked out of the labour market, through reforms to boost VET completion rates.

TAFE Centres of Excellence and accelerating the uptake of apprenticeships

Building on the National Skills Agreement, the Government increased funding by \$41.2 million through the Employment White Paper to fast track up to six TAFE Centres of Excellence and accelerate the take up of higher and degree apprenticeships in the priority areas of net zero, care and digitalisation. TAFE Centres of Excellence will support partnerships between TAFEs, Jobs and Skills Councils, industry and universities to design and teach world-leading curriculum and provide students with cutting edge skills.

National Skills Passport

Following the release of the Employment White Paper, the Government is investing \$7.5 million to prepare a business case to define the scope, outcomes and benefits of a National Skills Passport. As part of the scoping and business case, the Government will consult widely with industry, unions, tertiary institutions and across government. A Skills Passport could combine a person's qualifications across VET and higher education to demonstrate their skills more effectively to employers, help them change jobs and upskill. A Skills Passport could also reduce barriers to lifelong learning and make it simpler for employers to find more skilled workers.

Australian Universities Accord priority actions

In response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report, the Government is implementing priority actions to start to address the fundamental challenges facing the Australian higher education system. These include investing \$66.9 million to create additional Regional University Study Hubs and establish new Suburban University Study Hubs to reduce barriers to participation for students who may have difficulty accessing a physical campus. The Government is also providing \$323.5 million over 11 years to extend demand driven funding to metropolitan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, guaranteeing all First Nations students in Australia a Commonwealth supported place when accepted into their chosen course of study. The Universities Accord will provide its final report to the Government by December 2023.

Reforming the migration system

In December 2023 the Government released its Migration Strategy which outlines an ambitious, phased policy roadmap to ensure the migration system delivers for the nation and migrants. The Strategy will help ensure migration is better targeted to build Australia's economic prosperity and security, and contribute to bringing net overseas migration back down faster, to pre-pandemic levels from next financial year.

Targeting skilled migration to address skills needs

The Government will provide \$30.1 million over four years from 2023–24 to improve the skilled visa system, including replacing the Temporary Skilled Shortage visa with a new Skills in Demand visa, developing a new skills shortage list and streamlining pathways from the Temporary Graduate visa to a skilled work visa for high-performing graduates. The new Skills in Demand visa will include:

- an efficient, simple pathway for specialised, highly-skilled workers earning at least \$135,000 to drive innovation in our economy and build the jobs of the future
- a mainstream temporary skilled pathway for migrants with core skills earning at or above \$70,000, using an improved approach to determining skills needs, informed by advice from Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA).

This flexible approach will enable Australia to attract the skills needed to drive future economic prosperity.

Getting the right skills in the right places

To ensure migration meets the local needs of communities across the country, the Government will develop a multi-year planning model for permanent migration, to improve collaboration with states on migration settings. The Government will establish a formal role for Jobs and Skills Australia in defining Australia's skills needs, and improve the quality and timeliness of migrant skills recognition and assessment. These measures will better coordinate Australia's migration settings to meet strategic and long-term challenges, ensure migration complements the domestic skills and training system, and facilitate greater workforce participation and stronger economic outcomes for all Australians.

Strengthening the integrity of the international education sector

The Government is taking important steps to improve integrity in the international education sector. The Government is increasing English language requirements for students and graduates, bolstering efforts to detect non-genuine students and strengthening requirements for international education providers. These integrity measures are in addition to a package of administrative changes applying targeted scrutiny to student visa applications. Together, these reforms will support the integrity and reputation of Australia's international education sector.

Addressing migrant worker exploitation

Migrant worker exploitation adversely impacts the individuals being exploited, affects Australian workers' confidence that their own wages and conditions are protected, and damages Australia's reputation as a migrant destination of choice. It also unfairly impacts employers who do the right thing.

The Government is delivering a suite of reforms to tackle migrant exploitation from all angles. This MYEFO, the Government will expand on reforms from the 2023–24 Budget to strengthen the regulation of the migration advice industry, and will deliver additional measures to address temporary migrant worker exploitation. These measures include enhancing protections against visa cancellation to reduce a visa holder's exposure to exploitation, and piloting a substantive temporary visa to extend a stay in Australia to pursue workplace justice. These changes will enable workplace justice outcomes to occur in a timely manner and address migrants' fears of reporting. Alongside broader reforms to address the exploitation of all workers in Australia, the Government is seeking to prevent the misuse of Australia's migration program to ensure it is not undermined for the purpose of exploitation.

Improving competition, corporate transparency and supporting small business

Competition Review

Greater competition is critical for lifting dynamism, productivity, wages growth, putting downward pressure on prices and delivering more choices for Australian consumers. To drive these outcomes, the Government is undertaking a Competition Review over two years supported by a dedicated taskforce to provide competition advice across Government. The Review will consider competition laws, policies and institutions to ensure they remain fit for purpose, with a focus on reforms that will increase productivity, put downward pressure on the cost of living and boost wages. As part of the Review, a consultation process has commenced on merger law settings. The Treasurer has also recently agreed with state and territory counterparts to revitalise national competition policy to collectively progress long-term pro-competitive reforms.

Climate-related financial disclosure

The Government is ensuring Australian investors have greater transparency of climate-related financial risks and opportunities to support informed investment decisions and encourage efficient capital market operation in Australia. New legislation will introduce standardised climate-related financial disclosure requirements for large businesses and financial institutions. The Government is providing funding of \$81.6 million to financial regulators, accounting, audit and assurance reporting standards setters and Treasury to support implementation of the new requirements.

Integrity reforms

The Government is improving the integrity of systems and structures that keep our tax and superannuation systems and capital markets strong. Tax and audit firms play a key role by providing important services to companies, investors, governments and the public. The Government is focused on addressing shortcomings in governance and regulation related to these services that were highlighted by the misconduct in the PricewaterhouseCoopers matter.

The Government has introduced legislation to strengthen the tax promoter penalty laws to deter and penalise tax advisers and firms who promote tax avoidance; remove limitations in the tax secrecy laws that are a barrier to regulators responding to a breach of confidence; extend protections to whistleblowers when they make disclosures to the Tax Practitioners Board (TPB); and enhance the TPB's investigation powers.

The Government is providing an additional \$22.2 million to the Treasury, the Department of Finance, the Attorney-General's Department and the Australian Taxation Office to strengthen the integrity of the tax system, increase the powers of regulators and strengthen regulatory arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose. This is in addition to the \$30 million increase in funding in the 2022–23 October Budget for the TPB to increase compliance, new laws to strengthen the powers of the TPB, and improvements to Commonwealth procurement practices.

Ensuring small businesses are paid on time

The Government will provide \$8.1 million to implement the Government's response to the recommendations from the Statutory Review of the *Payment Times Reporting Act 2020*. The response will deliver on the Government's election commitment to ensure small businesses are paid on time. Slow and late payments negatively impact cashflow, financing and productivity, all of which have a disproportionate effect on small businesses. To level the playing field and ensure small businesses are paid on time, the Government will overhaul the Payment Times Reporting Scheme. This will increase pressure on large businesses with poor small business payment practices and embed fair payment terms for small businesses in a range of other Government policies and processes.

Incentivising and supporting participation

Enhancing the Work Bonus

The Government is increasing the starting Work Bonus income balance to \$4,000, from the previous \$0 balance, for all new pension entrants over Age Pension age and eligible veterans, benefiting around 195,000 people each year. The Work Bonus supports pensioners over Age Pension age to work by allowing them to keep more of their pension when they have income from work. Both existing and new recipients will retain the current elevated maximum Work Bonus balance limit of \$11,800.

Local Jobs Program reform

Reforms to the Local Jobs Program, which helps bring a local focus to employment services, will better support employment outcomes for people seeking work and strengthen the efficacy and effectiveness of the program. Initial changes include broadening eligibility for projects funded through the Local Recovery Fund to support more people to connect to work, including those not on income support, strengthening governance structures to enhance community representation, improving public sector servicing capability with staff from the Australian Public Service deployed in three micro regions in Western Australia, and enhancing local and regional data and information.

Backing social enterprises

To boost labour force participation and economic development in some of the nation's most disadvantaged communities, the Government will work with social enterprises to identify ways to provide more employment and training opportunities for Australians who face disadvantage. This work forms part of the Government's efforts to back local communities and builds on the *Targeting Entrenched Community Disadvantage* measure announced in the 2023–24 Budget.

Strengthening Medicare and securing essential services

In the 2023–24 Budget, the Government made a historic investment of \$3.5 billion to triple the bulk billing incentive for children under 16 years, pensioners and other Commonwealth concession card holders. The Government is continuing to take action to make health care more accessible and affordable, alongside further investments in our aged care and disability sectors.

New preventive health measures will support the wellbeing of the Australian community, together with targeted measures to improve the lives and economic opportunities of First Nations Australians, build on commitments to end violence against women and children and improve support for our veterans.

Box 1.2 – National Cabinet

On 6 December 2023, National Cabinet met and agreed key reforms that will strengthen the health system, secure the future of the NDIS, improve Australia’s firearms management systems, and provide states with certainty over the GST No Worse Off Guarantee. These reforms demonstrate that the Federation is working collaboratively to address growing pressures on the health system and the NDIS and ensure that these systems can continue to be delivered sustainably into the future.

- National Cabinet endorsed the Commonwealth increasing its **National Health Reform Agreement** contribution to 45 per cent over ten years, from 1 July 2025. A 42.5 per cent Commonwealth contribution will be achieved before 2030, as well as a more generous approach to the funding cap.
- To take further pressure off hospitals, the Commonwealth will deliver a further package of **Strengthening Medicare** measures. This includes implementing the health-related recommendations from the Independent Review of Health Practitioner Regulatory Settings. These reforms will help move the health system to a more integrated, equitable, efficient and sustainable system.
- National Cabinet acknowledged the need for reforms to **secure the future of the NDIS**, ensuring it can continue to provide life-changing support to future generations of Australians with disability.
- As an initial response to the independent NDIS Review, National Cabinet committed to work together to implement legislative and other changes to the NDIS to improve the experience of participants and restore the original intent of the Scheme to support people with permanent and significant disability, within a broader ecosystem of supports. National Cabinet also agreed to jointly design additional Foundational Supports, with additional costs split 50–50.
- National Cabinet agreed to work together to adjust state NDIS contribution escalation rates, increasing from 4 per cent to be in line with actual Scheme growth, capped at 8 per cent.
- A **National Firearms Register** will be established, which will deliver the most significant improvement in Australia’s firearms management systems since the reforms immediately following the Port Arthur massacre in 1996. The Register will address significant gaps and inconsistencies in firearms management across all jurisdictions. The Commonwealth will assist states and territories with funding the reforms to ensure the Register is operational within four years.
- National Cabinet agreed to extend the **GST No Worse Off Guarantee**, which was due to expire in 2026–27, for three years from 2027–28 to 2029–30. This extension will provide funding certainty for states in their coming budgets.

Investing in health and wellbeing

Medicare Benefits Schedule and Urgent Care Clinics

The 2023–24 Budget responded to the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce report. The Government is further supporting access to Medicare services through improvements to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). This includes support to access MBS items for vestibular assessment, to detect residual disease in patients with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, and abdominal MRI scans for patients with rare genetic conditions.

The Government is investing a further \$39.5 million in Medicare Urgent Care Clinics and Services to support the delivery of bulk billed urgent care. This builds on the \$358.5 million provided in the 2023–24 Budget and the \$235.0 million provided in the 2022–23 October Budget.

Improving access to medicines and medical services

The Government will provide \$3.5 billion for new and amended Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings, including treatments for chronic heart failure, breast cancer and diabetic kidney disease.

The Government will provide an additional \$380.3 million to expand the eligibility for Shingrix® under the National Immunisation Program to people aged 65 years and over, First Nations people aged 50 years and over and immunocompromised people aged 18 years and over. This builds on the \$446.5 million provided for Shingrix® in the 2023–24 Budget and together will provide almost five million Australians who are at risk of severe disease from shingles with a free Shingrix® vaccine.

The Government is investing \$148.2 million to provide additional assistance to community pharmacies in regional, rural and remote communities as they transition business arrangements for 60-day prescriptions. This is part of the Government's commitment to reinvest \$1.2 billion back into community pharmacies as they transition business arrangements for 60-day prescriptions.

Improving cancer outcomes

The Government will provide \$184.9 million to extend funding for existing cancer initiatives and establish new cancer programs including a Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program. The new program will ensure all people with cancer have access to high quality and culturally safe care.

Improving access to mental health services

The Government is committed to ensuring Australians can obtain the mental health support they need. Funding of \$483.7 million is being provided to strengthen Australia's mental health and suicide prevention system, including through the extension of funding for national crisis and support services Lifeline, Beyond Blue, Kids Helpline and 13YARN.

Protecting against harm from vaping

To protect Australians from the harms caused by vaping, the Government is providing \$82.0 million to support vaping product regulation, enforcement activities and increase awareness. The Government will also continue to work with states and territories to end the sale of vapes in retail settings.

Continuing COVID-19 support

The Government is delivering \$392.5 million to continue the response to COVID-19 and provide Australians with COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. The Government is providing \$6.5 million to extend the *National COVID-19 Vaccine Program*. Additional funding of \$317.4 million is being provided to continue assisting aged care providers in managing the effects of COVID-19.

Play Our Way program

\$200.0 million will be invested in the Play Our Way program, which will provide targeted grants for infrastructure and sporting facilities to support women and girls to participate in sports and physical activity.

Investing in aged care and disability support

Continued investment in aged care

The Government is continuing to deliver on its commitments to ensure that older Australians receive high quality and safe care. Building on the support provided in the 2023–24 Budget, the Government is investing \$202.4 million to deliver the ICT changes required for the implementation of the new Aged Care Act.

The Government is also providing new funding to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to support better regulatory oversight of the Government's aged care reforms and ensure the aged care sector has a fit for purpose regulator. Funding of \$11.8 million is being provided to continue monitoring compliance of aged care providers with meeting the Government's 24/7 registered nursing commitment and care minutes standards, and \$85.6 million to better support facilities in meeting the 24/7 registered nursing requirement.

To continue progressing the Government's commitment to reform in-home aged care, funding of \$12.2 million is being provided to support the design and delivery of the new *Support at Home Program* to commence on 1 July 2025.

Improving NDIS sustainability and support for participants

In the 2023–24 Budget, the Government announced measures to support NDIS participant outcomes and the effective and sustainable operation of the Scheme. Reforms are needed to secure the future of the NDIS, ensuring it can continue to provide life-changing support to

future generations of Australians with a disability. National Cabinet has agreed to work together to develop and implement reforms to the Scheme (see Box 1.2).

The Government is also investing in reforms to prohibit providers from advertising or charging unreasonably higher prices for NDIS participants. Funding of \$6.7 million is being provided to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to support these reforms and to prioritise NDIS related matters for potential investigation and enforcement action, as appropriate, under existing laws. A further \$492.2 million in additional funding will be provided to the National Disability Insurance Agency in 2024–25 to ensure continued support for NDIS participants.

Establishing a Commonwealth Disability Royal Commission Taskforce

The final report for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was first published on 29 September 2023, with 222 recommendations. To immediately begin work on a response, the Government is providing \$4.3 million to establish a Commonwealth Disability Royal Commission Taskforce, engaging closely with the disability community and states and territories.

Strengthening the care and support economy

The Government will provide \$13.6 million to support initiatives to promote a sustainable and productive care sector that delivers quality care and decent jobs. Funding includes:

- \$7.6 million to progress activities to provide a more streamlined and efficient whole of government ICT experience for businesses providing care and support services across aged care, disability support and veterans' care.
- \$3.6 million to progress national worker screening arrangements for the care and support sector, including working with jurisdictions to standardise arrangements nationally.
- \$2.4 million to fund activities to simplify and harmonise regulatory requirements on workers and care providers.

Strengthening support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, women, children and veterans

Closing the Gap initiatives

The Government is committed to working in partnership with First Nations Australians on Closing the Gap and sharing decision making on policies and programs which impact on their lives.

Scoping work has commenced with the Coalition of Peaks and other First Nations stakeholders on a First Nations Economic Partnership. The Partnership will focus on the strengths of First Nations Australians and community-controlled organisations, opportunities for jobs creation and translating First Nations' knowledge, assets, interests and rights into sustainable social and economic benefits for communities.

The Government will also provide funding of \$25.0 million to extend the Tailored Assistance Employment Grant Program (TAEG) to 31 December 2024, ensuring existing TAEG providers can continue to deliver First Nations employment services across Australia.

Ending violence against women and children

The Government is committed to ending violence against women and children in Australia in one generation. This MYEFO will provide \$18.6 million over five years from 2023–24 to support temporary visa holders leaving violent relationships and people who are at-risk of, or have experienced, forced marriage. This includes:

- \$12.1 million over five years from 2023–24 to establish the Forced Marriage Specialist Support Program to provide caseworker support, counselling, temporary accommodation and financial support.
- \$4.4 million over two years from 2023–24 to increase financial support available under the Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot to \$5,000 (previously \$3,000) to align with the Escaping Violence Payment.
- \$2.2 million over four years from 2024–25 to extend Speak Now, Australia’s national forced marriage community education service delivered by Anti-Slavery Australia.

This builds on a total investment of \$2.3 billion announced in the 2022–23 October Budget and 2023–24 Budget to support women’s safety and help deliver the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–32*.

Looking after our veterans

In response to the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, the Government is addressing longstanding complexities in the veteran support system by providing:

- \$40.1 million over three years (and an additional \$1.2 million from 2027–28 to 2028–29) to implement reforms to the veterans’ compensation, rehabilitation, and entitlements legislation framework.
- \$18.0 million over four years (and an additional \$0.1 million in 2027–28) to replace and modernise at-risk legacy ICT systems.

To support veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, the Government will provide \$3.6 million over three years from 2024–25 (and an additional \$2.4 million from 2027–28 to 2028–29) to deliver specialist support services as part of the Government’s \$30 million election commitment in *Labor’s Plan to Address the Veterans Crisis*.

Securing our home and region

Protecting our sovereignty and being a leader in driving stability in our region is at the core of the Government's agenda. In an environment of global economic and strategic uncertainty, the Government is continuing to invest in our key relationships, sustaining our environment, supporting trade, national defence and strengthening our digital capabilities to ensure we can meet both current and future challenges.

A sustainable future

Reducing transport emissions

Reducing transport emissions will be critical to the net zero transition, with the transport sector projected to be Australia's largest source of emissions by 2030. To provide a clear, long-term strategy, the Government is developing a Transport and Infrastructure Net Zero Roadmap and Action Plan, which will outline pathways to net zero by 2050 for all transport modes and supporting infrastructure. The *National Electric Vehicle Strategy* released earlier this year will support Australians to access electric vehicles, including with the introduction of a Fuel Efficiency Standard. The Government also committed \$500 million to the Driving the Nation Fund, and legislated the Electric Car Discount to support Australia's shift to electric vehicles.

Building on these actions, the Government is modernising the Luxury Car Tax by tightening the definition of a fuel-efficient vehicle. This change will encourage greater take-up of fuel-efficient vehicles, such as electric vehicles.

Climate finance – meeting our global and regional ambitions

At the United Nations COP28 summit, the Government announced it would contribute \$50.0 million to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) Green Climate Fund (GCF) to support developing countries to establish low emission and climate resilient development pathways. The Government also announced it would contribute \$100.0 million to the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) which will support climate and disaster resilience and enable Pacific Island Countries to invest in the resilience and sustainability of their communities across the region.

Supporting emission reductions in the farming and forestry sectors

This MYEFO is providing \$4.9 million to develop an Agriculture and Land Sector Plan that will help farmers play their part in achieving net zero emissions by 2050. This will help governments, industry and communities plan for the future and mitigate emissions from the land sector. This will be supported by a further \$9.7 million over four years for the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences to improve forestry data and analysis.

Supporting continuity of research in Antarctica

The Government is ensuring that Australia has a safe and effective presence in the Antarctic to support crucial research activities. This MYEFO provides \$8.7 million to address critical safety risks at the Macquarie Island Research Station. The Antarctic program is central to Australia’s commitment to protect 30 per cent of our oceans by 2030, to save threatened species and to protect more of what is precious.

Strengthening economic resilience and improving trade

Eradicating red imported fire ants

The Government is providing \$268.2 million towards the eradication of red imported fire ants. Fire ants are an aggressive invasive exotic species that swarm and inflict painful bites on people, pets, wildlife and livestock. They also damage electrical utilities including air conditioners, streetlights and telecommunications networks. Left unchecked, this pest has the potential to spread across the nation and cost over \$1.25 billion annually.

This is an unprecedented investment which will pay for 350 new workers, a new depot, new vehicles, new aerial eradication contracts and an additional 1,400 tonnes of bait each year.

Facilitating agricultural exports

The Government is providing \$95.5 million to support Australian farmers to continue exporting food and fibre to the world. A further \$8.8 million will support the ongoing resumption of live cattle trade with Indonesia and Malaysia and mitigate the risk of further trade suspensions.

Southeast Asia Economic Strategy

In September 2023, the Government launched *Invested: Australia’s Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040* (the Strategy). The Strategy sets out a pathway to strengthen Australia’s economic engagement with the region by mapping emerging trade and investment opportunities in Southeast Asia and matching those with Australian capabilities.

In response to recommendations in the Strategy, the Government has announced \$95.4 million in new initiatives for new investment deal teams based in the region, working with Australian businesses to increase investment in the region, a Southeast Asia Business Exchange program to boost Australia’s trade in the region, and an internship pilot for young professionals to help build enduring links between Australian and Southeast Asian business people.

Simplifying trade

The Government is providing \$53.5 million to simplify cross-border trade. This includes digitalising trade procedures and supporting paperless trade, reducing regulatory burden, trialling new cargo inspection technologies and procedures, and streamlining interactions between businesses and Commonwealth agencies. This will reduce the time and cost for businesses to import and export as well as improving and strengthening Australia's border and biosecurity to increase our global trade competitiveness.

Investing in our national defence

We continue to make significant progress through the AUKUS partnership. The Government will provide \$575.5 million over 11 years to support the nuclear-powered submarine program. This includes \$558.0 million to establish and support the Australian Naval Nuclear Power Safety Regulator to regulate nuclear safety and radiological protection and \$11.7 million to pilot a nuclear science graduate program at the Australian Submarine Agency.

The Government will provide \$285.0 million to acquire 78 additional Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicles to replace the vehicles gifted by Australia to Ukraine. This includes \$160.0 million to produce new Bushmasters in Bendigo, Victoria.

The Government will provide \$186.6 million over two years from 2023–24 to deliver additional support for Ukraine and expand Australian Defence Force deployments under *Operation Kudu*. This support includes \$131.9 million for the provision of additional military vehicles and ammunition. The Government is also providing \$10.0 million to the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund to help meet needs for shelter, health services, clean water and sanitation.

Enabling a strong and secure digital economy

Cyber security

The Government's investment of \$300.1 million over five years from 2023–24 (and \$21.2 million per year ongoing) in the 2023–2030 *Australian Cyber Security Strategy* will improve our cyber security, manage cyber risks and better support individuals and Australian businesses to manage the cyber environment. We are building public awareness to better protect our communities from identity theft and crime, including boosting the Australian Federal Police's capability to disrupt and investigate cybercrime. The Government is also investing in embedding secure by design in digital goods and services, and growing and professionalising our cyber workforce. These investments build on other initiatives like the National Anti-Scam Centre, and support the Strategy's intention to work with industry to break the ransomware business model.

Investments in better threat-blocking and threat-sharing capabilities will uplift industry and business cyber resilience, including through a threat-sharing platform for the health sector. A new national Executive Cyber Council has been created to bring together government and industry leaders to share insights and address emerging challenges.

Government will uplift its own cyber maturity as an owner and operator of critical infrastructure and provider of essential services. We are also strengthening collective cyber resilience with neighbours in the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Cyber security resilience for small business

Small businesses have rapidly digitalised in the last few years, increasing their exposure to cyber security threats. As part of the *2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy*, the Government will invest \$20.8 million to empower small businesses to bolster their cyber security. This includes a Small Business Cyber Resilience Service, providing one-on-one assistance to help small businesses navigate their cyber challenges and recover from a cyber attack. The Government will also establish a voluntary cyber health-check program, supporting businesses to undertake a free, tailored self-assessment of their cyber security. Building the sector’s cyber security resilience by helping businesses to recover swiftly in the event of an attack will protect Australians and the jobs this vital sector provides.

Digital ID

The Government is providing \$145.5 million to continue to expand the Digital ID system and establish the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission as the Digital ID regulator. This will support the development of a national, economy-wide system that provides Australians with a voluntary, secure, convenient and inclusive way of proving who they are online.

Strengthening our social fabric

Supporting Australian communities

The Government is committed to supporting the safety and wellbeing of all Australians during the Hamas-Israel conflict. The Government will provide \$77.7 million for a range of initiatives to support Australian communities, including \$25.0 million for the Australian Jewish community, and \$25.0 million for Australian Palestinian, Muslim and other communities. The remainder of the funding will support the broader Australian community through targeted mental health and wellbeing support services and protection against terrorist and violent extremist online content.

Humanitarian Program

The Government has reaffirmed Australia’s commitment to those in need, increasing the annual Humanitarian Program intake to 20,000 per year. The Government will also provide \$163.5 million to address backlogs in Australia’s refugee protection system. This will restore system integrity and ensure those owed Australia’s protection will have access to a quicker assessment of their claims allowing them to rebuild their lives with certainty and stability.