

What does the federal budget include for children and families?

Measures relevant to the child and family services sector

The Federal Budget 2021-22 was handed down on Tuesday 11 May 2021.¹ The Centre has prepared this quick overview of the budget measures, both positive and otherwise, that are relevant to your work in the child and family services sector and to the children, young people and families that you support.

Family violence

- ◆ \$998.1 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$2.3 million in 2025-26) for initiatives to reduce, and support the victims of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) against women and children. Relevant funding measures include:
 - \$261.4 million over two years from 2021-22 to establish a new National Partnership with the states and territories to expand the funding of frontline FDSV support services
 - \$164.8 million over three years from 2021-22 for a two year trial program to provide financial support of up to \$5,000 to women fleeing a violent relationship
 - \$29.3 million over three years from 2021-22 to support refugee women and other migrant women's safety and social economic inclusion
 - \$26.0 million over four years to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children who have experienced or are experiencing family violence
 - \$25.9 million over four years for a range of further measures to support women affected by FDSV including expanding the Safe Places program, further supporting Temporary Visa holders experiencing FDSV and addressing technology-facilitated abuse of women and children
 - \$24.4 million over two years to extend the Stop it at the Start prevention campaign
 - \$23.2 million over two years to address online harm to Australians, and inform the community of support available as part of the Government's online safety reforms
 - \$10.7 million over four years for additional education resources for young Australians about respectful relationships
 - \$34.1 million over four years from 2021-22 for a range of further measures aimed at the prevention of FDSV, including programs aimed at working with those at risk of committing FDSV, preventing and responding to FDSV against women with a disability and supporting better FDSV responses for diverse communities
 - \$101.4 million over four years from 2021-22 (with \$29.5 million per year ongoing) to increase access to Children's Contact Services, which help separated parents who would otherwise be unable to safely manage contact arrangements for their children, including through the establishment of an additional 20 Children's Contact Services
 - \$85.0 million over three years from 2022-23 to continue and enhance funding towards existing Family Advisory Support Services and to extend services to new locations to provide support for people affected by FDSV who have a family law issue

- \$4.7 million over two years from 2021-22 to support national discussions with the states and territories on a joint program of work to strengthen the justice response to sexual assault, sexual harassment and coercive control
- \$31.6 million over five years from 2021-22 for a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survey on safety and violence
- \$30.0 million for Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety and the Australian Bureau of Statistics to continue collecting evidence and data on FDSV
- \$11.6 million over four years from 2021-22 for the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to expand its online services relating to FDSV
- \$7.4 million over four years from 2021-22 to enhance performance monitoring and establish an evaluation framework for the new National Plan.

Mental health

- ◆ \$2.0 billion over four years from 2021-22 for the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, including initiatives to be progressed with states and territories for a new national agreement on mental health and suicide prevention. Relevant funding measures include:
 - \$111.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand and enhance digital mental health services to provide Australians easier access to high quality digital mental health services
 - \$47.4 million over four years from 2021-22 to contribute to working with states and territories to achieve universal perinatal mental health screening across public antenatal and postnatal care settings, extend funding to the centre of perinatal excellence to continue to provide the digital infrastructure to support screening and to the Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia to meet higher demand for its helpline services
 - \$278.6 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand and enhance headspace youth mental health services, including in conjunction with the states and territories
 - \$54.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to work with the states and territories to establish child mental health and wellbeing hubs to provide multidisciplinary care and preventive services
 - \$46.6 million over four years from 2021-22 for parenting education and support to parents and carers with children aged under 12 years and to develop national guidelines to assist with early identification of emerging emotional difficulties
 - \$4.0 million in 2021-22 to continue to provide up to ten free trauma and distress counselling sessions for those impacted by the bushfires
 - \$79.0 million over four years from 2021-22 to implement initiatives under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Strategy providing crisis and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - \$16.9 million over four years from 2021-22 to provide mental health services and support to Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including for survivors of torture and trauma
 - \$11.1 million over two years from 2021-22 to improve outcomes for people with complex mental health needs including people with cognitive disabilities and autism spectrum disorder
 - \$117.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to establish a national database on service delivery, performance and outcomes across the mental health system and conduct

longitudinal surveys on the mental health of children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Child sexual abuse and redress

- ◆ The Government will provide a contribution to the resolution of litigation brought forward by former child migrants against the Commonwealth relating to institutional child sexual abuse
- ◆ \$146.0 million over four years from 2021-22 for initiatives to prevent child sexual abuse. These initiatives will contribute to the First Commonwealth Action Plan (2021-2025) under the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2031 (the Strategy). Relevant funding measures include:
 - delivering online safety education programs to prevent online harm and promote safe online practices for children and young people
 - enhanced support to victims of child sexual abuse including expanding the national specialist trauma informed legal service, establishing a specialist national legal online chat service dedicated to young people experiencing, or at-risk of experiencing, harm and sexual abuse, coordinating access to support services, resources and information, and developing trauma-informed and culturally appropriate approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - bolstering Commonwealth law enforcement efforts to prevent, disrupt, investigate and combat child sexual abuse, including establishing new, and enhancing existing, intelligence, enforcement and criminal research efforts dedicated to preventing, detecting and disrupting child sexual abuse and prosecuting perpetrators
 - \$2.3 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand the evidence base around the perpetration of child sexual abuse, including studies to identify methods to reduce opportunities for offending and increase detection of child sexual abuse
- ◆ The Government will provide funding to further support delivery of the National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse, including for initial and immediate actions in response to the recommendations of the Second Anniversary Review of the National Redress Scheme.

Financial wellbeing and women's economic security

- ◆ \$1.8 billion over five years from 2020-21 to improve women's workforce participation and economic security. Relevant funding measures include:
 - \$1.7 billion over five years from 2020-21 (and \$671.2 million per year ongoing) to assist families by reducing out of pocket costs and supporting parental choice through increasing the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rate by 30 percentage points for the second child and subsequent children aged five years and under in care, up to a maximum CCS rate of 95 per cent for these children, commencing on 11 July 2022; and removing the CCS annual cap of \$10,560 per child per year commencing on 1 July 2022
 - \$13.9 million over four years from 2021-22 to establish an Early Stage Social Enterprise Foundation focused on providing capacity building and financial support for early stage social enterprises that improve the safety and economic security of Indigenous women
 - \$10.7 million over two years from 2021-22 to extend the family law small claims property pilot and Legal Aid Commission family law property mediation trial for settlement of property of less than \$500,000 following a relationship breakdown

- expanding the Mid-Career Checkpoint Program to Victoria, beyond existing pilots in Queensland and New South Wales, and expanding eligibility to include people who have been absent from work due to caring responsibilities for six months or more and existing workers at risk of unemployment, primarily targeting female dominated, COVID-19 affected industries. Training grants of up to \$3,000 will also be available to support skills and training needs to increase employability and support career advancement. Funding for this will be met from within the existing resources of the Department of Education, Skills, and Employment
- ◆ \$8.5 million in 2021-22 for the Rural Financial Counselling Service to improve delivery of financial counselling services to primary producers experiencing financial hardship, and extend support for a further six months for rural and regional small businesses affected by drought, COVID-19 or the 2019-20 bushfires.

Low- and middle-income households

- ◆ The Government will retain the low- and middle-income tax offset (LMITO) for the 2021-22 income year, providing further targeted tax relief for low- and middle-income earners. The LMITO provides a reduction in tax of up to \$1,080.

Family law

- ◆ The Government will provide \$123.8 million over four years to support the reform of the family law system and improve access and safety for children and families. Relevant funding measures include:
 - \$60.8 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$1.7 million per year ongoing) to reform family law case management processes to improve outcomes and better meet the needs of families by delivering a safe, child centred, accessible and efficient system
 - \$29.0 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$8.5 million per year ongoing) to improve information sharing between the family law and the family violence and child protection systems, to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families interacting with the family law system, including managing risk to family safety
 - \$6.3 million in 2021-22 to the Family Violence and Cross Examination of Parties Scheme to continue to protect victims of family violence in family law proceedings.

Early childhood education and care

- ◆ \$1.6 billion over four years from 2021-22 (and \$589.0 million per year ongoing) to make an ongoing Commonwealth funding contribution to preschool. The new agreement will support continued universal access to at least 15 hours of preschool each week (600 hours per year) for children in the year before they start school. From 2024 payments to states and territories will be tied to attendance targets. A preschool outcomes measure will be developed and trialled for introduction in 2025
- ◆ \$17.9 million over four years from 2021-22 to establish a new Early Childhood Program that will deliver a range of disability-specific information, workshops and supported playgroups for young children aged 0 to 8 years with disability or developmental needs.

Education

- ◆ \$77.5 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$5.5 million per year ongoing) for further initiatives to support teachers, students and young Australians. Relevant funding measures include:

- \$20.0 million over four years from 2021-22 to continue and improve the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on school students with disability, to ensure the quality and integrity of data that underpins ongoing funding for students with disability
- \$8.1 million over four years from 2021-22 for Together for Humanity to deliver a program to students, teachers and parents so they are equipped for diversity, and to foster greater inter-cultural understanding and a sense of belonging
- \$3.0 million over two years from 2021-22 for High Resolves to deliver a learning experience to young Australians to help build social cohesion, strengthen cultural understanding and promote positive participation in their local community
- \$1.0 million in 2021-22 for youth engagement activities, including improving Year 9 and Year 10 students' learning about civics and citizenship through the annual National Schools Constitutional Convention, delivering activities for Ministerial engagement with youth, and providing greater information to young Australians on programs and services that support them.

Social security

- ◆ The Government will provide funding to support the continuation of the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) on an ongoing basis. Relevant funding measures include:
 - a Jobs Fund to create employment opportunities in existing CDC sites, including drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation facilities in these regions
 - information technology to support the continued roll-out of CDC
 - long-term data collection and an evaluation to measure the impact of CDC
 - extension of place-based income management in all 13 current locations across Australia until 31 December 2023
- ◆ \$3.8 million over five years from 2020-21 to cease the third party relationship verification (TPV) process for single parents claiming Parenting Payment and JobSeeker Payment. TPV requirements have not been enforced since November 2019 due to the 2019-20 bushfires and ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆ \$9.5 billion over five years from 2020-21 to increase support for people eligible for working age payments. This includes a number of previously announced and already implemented changes such as the \$50 per fortnight increase to payments. Other relevant measures include:
 - \$2.5 million to establish an employer reporting line to refer job seekers who are not genuine in their job search and increase auditing of job applications to ensure job seekers are making genuine applications
 - \$197.0 million to enable job seekers to participate in an intensive activity after six months of unemployment, including participating in approved intensive short courses, with some job seekers required to participate in Work for the Dole
- ◆ The Government will achieve savings of \$671.1 million over five years by applying a consistent four-year Newly Arrived Resident's Waiting Period across most welfare payments from 1 January 2022.

Employment

- ◆ \$258.6 million over four years from 2020-21 to increase participation in the labour market and modify existing unemployment services to further increase support for job seekers. Relevant measures in this package include:

- \$213.5 million over four years from 2021-22 to expand the Local Jobs Program to 51 employment regions and to extend the program for three years from 30 June 2022 to 30 June 2025. The Local Jobs Program supports tailored approaches to accelerate reskilling, upskilling, and employment pathways in selected regions, supporting Australia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$15.6 million in 2021-22 to increase all wage subsidies to \$10,000 for eligible participants in jobactive, Transition to Work, and ParentsNext to incentivise employers to hire eligible disadvantaged job seekers. This will align with wage subsidies commencing under the New Employment Services Model measure from 1 July 2022
- extending flexibility available within mutual obligation requirements enabling job seekers to satisfy these requirements through undertaking study, for an additional six months from 31 December 2021 to 30 June 2022, to align with the commencement of the New Employment Services Model measure from 1 July 2022
- ◆ The Government will introduce a new approach to employment services that is digitally driven, tailored and flexible. The New Employment Services Model (NESM) will introduce two pathways of support for job seekers – Digital Services and Enhanced Services. Digitally capable job seekers will be able to self manage finding employment through Digital Services while those in Enhanced Services will receive tailored and intensive case management support. Funding for this package includes \$699.4 million over five years from 2020-21 to expand and strengthen specialist services to support job seekers. Relevant measures include:
 - \$481.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to ensure more young people have the best opportunity to secure employment by strengthening and continuing the Transition to Work program to provide specialist youth employment services (for young people aged 15 to 24)
 - \$7.6 million over two years from 2021-22 to better enable young people to make informed decisions about their education, employment, and training pathways through extending the 1800 CAREER Information Service until 30 June 2023
- ◆ \$12.6 million over two years from 1 July 2021 to further support a number of projects from the Try, Test and Learn Fund that have been successful in supporting vulnerable groups into employment.

Health

- ◆ \$204.6 million for the extension of temporary telehealth MBS services from 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021, with revised billing arrangements from 1 July 2021
- ◆ \$7.3 million over four years from 2021-22 to allow children under the age of two to access the Child Dental Benefit Schedule
- ◆ \$80.9 million over five years from 2020-21 for initiatives to support the delivery of primary care and the health workforce in rural and remote Australia
- ◆ \$40.8 million over two years from 2021-22 for the Sporting Schools program, to assist Australian children of all abilities to be more physically active and to establish lifelong healthy behaviours
- ◆ \$12.7 million to support initiatives to improve health services for people with an intellectual disability
- ◆ \$16.8 million over two years from 2021-22 to continue financial support to AOD services currently funded under the Social and Community Services Wage Supplementation, which ceases on 30 June 2021.

Community sector funding

- ◆ \$12.3 million over two years from 2021-22 to improve alignment of regulation across the care and support sector. This includes facilitating greater information sharing between regulators, alignment of auditing arrangements and compliance and enforcement powers, review of the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Framework and consultation with the sector around options for further reform to align regulation and safeguards
- ◆ \$124.7 million over two years from 2021-22 to meet wage requirements under the 2011 Fair Work Australia decision on social and community services wages for workers in the housing and homelessness sector.

ⁱ Content in this quick guide is largely included verbatim from budget paper 2.

Commonwealth of Australia 2021, [Budget measures – Budget paper no. 2 2021-22](#), Australian Government, Canberra.