

Services Australia

- I would like to begin by saying how shocked and saddened I was by last week's serious incident at Services Australia's Airport West Service Centre in Melbourne.
 - This is a sad time for Services Australia and for frontline officers across Australia. My thoughts are with the staff member who was injured, their family, and the staff and customers who witnessed the incident.
- These staff come to work every day to support Australians and we need to support them.
- Frontline workers and first responders should be able return home safely from work every day, but increasingly this isn't the case. It's time to draw a line in the sand.
- That is why the Government has announced a Security Risk Management Review for Services Australia, to be led by former Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, Graham Ashton.
 - The Review's terms of reference will take into account the agency's already strong security but examine what can be done better to deter future incidents.
- It's a sad reality that we can't reduce risk to zero, but we can do everything in our power to combat it.

Disaster support

- More broadly, Services Australia, as the agency responsible for delivering government services and support, plays a critical role in the lives of Australians, often when they are at their most vulnerable.
- In recognition of the Agency's critical role in supporting Australians, the Government's latest Budget includes significant investments to sustain and strengthen the Agency's ability to deliver government services to those who need them most, including during emergencies and natural disasters.

- Services Australia plays an integral role in delivering Government payments and support to Australians affected by disasters and emergencies.
- The flood events, bushfires, pandemic and other natural disasters across Australia in recent years have shown the Agency's responsiveness in providing essential support to stricken communities.
- This includes not just ever-faster emergency payments – which can now be processed within minutes of claims being received – but also on-the-ground support from frontline officers to help those affected by disasters obtain the assistance they need.
- In the past 12 months the Agency has processed over 160,000 claims for emergency assistance and paid over \$105 million to support more than 105,000 Australians affected by floods and cyclones.
- I would like to take this opportunity to thank and commend officers in the Agency for working closely with affected communities to ensure people get access to the right payments as quickly and simply as possible.
- In recognition of this effort, the Government has allocated \$231.8 million under its Administration of Emergency Response Payments Budget measure.
- Through this funding, the Government is providing certainty for Australians, with an additional 850 dedicated and trained Services Australia staff ready to be mobilised during disasters to support communities, including through on-the-ground emergency assistance.

myGov

- Events such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic have shown the importance of quick, easy and secure online services that allow customers to connect effortlessly with the government services they need.
- The myGov platform plays a critical role in enabling access to these online services.
 - This was confirmed by the myGov audit which was overseen by an independent panel of experts chaired by the eminent Mr. David Thodey AM.

- Recognising myGov as critical national infrastructure, the Government will invest \$134.5 million, including \$120.1 million in 2023-24, to ensure that this essential government service remains secure and easy to use.
 - This investment will also support the new myGov app, including the addition of digital credentials.
- This funding will provide confidence that myGov remains secure and stable in line with community expectations as the Government formalises next steps from the audit in the coming months.
- myGov will keep evolving as we build a world-class platform that genuinely unifies government digital services to make life easier for Australians.

Concluding remarks

- Services Australia delivers government services on behalf of a wide range of Commonwealth departments and agencies. As a result it plays a significant role in supporting other agencies through the Budget process.
 - I would like to thank all those staff at Services Australia who over recent months have worked to help other departments and agencies develop a number of Budget submissions.
- Looking to the future, Services Australia will continue to strengthen its ability to put people at the centre of service delivery and provide Australians with the support they need, including
 - expanding and improving online service delivery, ensuring that digital services are not only quick and easy to access, but also secure and transparent, and
 - improving the customer experience across non-digital channels, including its telephone and face-to-face services, to make sure no Australians are left behind.
- Australians can be assured that when they need support – be it ongoing help or emergency assistance, through digital channels or in person – Services Australia will deliver government services that are simple, helpful, respectful and transparent.