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The Australian Government is continuing to guarantee vital supports and services for Australians by investing in the world-leading National Disability Insurance Scheme, the care and support workforce and myGov, as part of its plan to secure Australia's recovery.

In setting up Australia for the future, the 2021-22 Budget also makes significant investment in improving the way government services are accessed and delivered, particularly for Australians living remotely.

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Government Services, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC, said the Australian Government is providing an additional $13.2 billion up until 2023-24 for disability supports under the NDIS. This is in addition to the extra $3.9 billion included in the 2020-21 Budget.

"The success of the NDIS is remarkable – in fact it is a world first. Today, some 450,000 Australians are supported by the insurance scheme," Minister Reynolds said.

"The scale and cost per participant is now on a trajectory well ahead of what was anticipated by its original design.

"Labor's original NDIS framework makes it inflexible and administratively burdensome to make hundreds of individual decisions for hundreds of thousands of participants every year. The number of participants was also estimated well below the 530,000 Australians expected to access the scheme in coming years.

"The Commonwealth will continue to discuss with the states and territories how we can work together to guarantee the affordability of the NDIS to ensure it endures for many generations of Australians to come."

Minister Reynolds said investment in the care and support workforce will improve the quality and safety of the care and support services Australians rely on, and will promote market growth and jobs in the sector.

"Given the success of the NDIS, we'll need around 83,000 new workers by 2024 in addition to the further 57,000 workers required in aged care," Minister Reynolds said.

"This would take the total disability workforce to almost 353,000 people."

The Government's measures to guarantee essential services to some of Australia's most vulnerable people will be bolstered by $12.3 million to enhance the workforce that cares for and supports them. This includes Australians working in disability support under the NDIS, as well as in aged care and veterans' support.

Better regulatory alignment across the aged care, disability and veterans' care sectors will reduce red tape for providers and make it easier for care and support workers to work across disability, aged care and veterans' care.

A single code of conduct and improved information sharing will mean workers will need to meet the same standards of behaviour whether they are providing supports under the NDIS, aged care or veterans' care programs and can be held to account across the sector where these standards are not met.

"This measure is designed to ensure NDIS participants, older Australians and veterans are better protected and receive consistent, quality services, and forms part of the Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety," Minister Reynolds said.

The 2021-22 Budget also provides hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to further improve the way Australians interact with the government online, over the phone and in person.

The Australian Government has reaffirmed its commitment to guaranteeing essential services now and into the future by allocating $200.1 million to design and deliver an enhanced myGov over the next two years.

myGov is changing the way Australians can find and access government information and services online using the device of their choice. This investment will make myGov even more responsive to the need for delivering seamless and tailored services and payments as government policy demands, as part of our plan to secure Australia's recovery.

At the same time, around half a million Australians living in remote areas will benefit from continued investment in Services Australia's remote service offer. The Budget allocates $99.3 million over the next four years to ensure the continuation of phone-based support, dedicated remote servicing teams and locally based agents and access points.

"Millions of Australians rely on vital government services every day, particularly during and following a disaster," Minister Reynolds said.

"The remote services model can also deliver services on behalf of a range of government agencies, for example in response to local disasters to provide seamless and efficient access to payments and support when Australians need it most.

"This Budget underscores the Prime Minister's commitment to ensuring all Australians, no matter where they live, can quickly and easily access streamlined government services and support."

The Australian Government is committed to providing timely support for those in need, but criminal exploitation of that system of social supports remains a significant threat. To combat that threat, the Government has allocated $23.8 million over two years to extend the

successful Taskforce Integrity, a joint initiative between Services Australia and the Australian Federal Police.

Fraud and its enablers such as identity theft have become increasingly complex, with offenders exploiting technology to undertake criminal activity.

The taskforce will continue to be a significant and disruptive response to serious fraud and identity crime, signalling the Government's zero-tolerance for unscrupulous people seeking to abuse welfare, health and related programs.

The Australian Government is committed to guaranteeing essential services to Australians who need them most. Through investment in the 2021-22 Budget, the Government continues to support Australians with a disability and those across the sector.

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