



Attachment A – Program messages

The following messaging will be used to ensure consistency in communicating information about the Be Connected program. These messages have been developed in conjunction with the eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) and Good Things Foundation Australia (GTF).

This document forms part of the *Be Connected Overarching Communication Strategy (June 2021)* and will be updated on a regular basis.

Overarching

- Our day-day-to lives increasingly rely on digital and online services. For some older Australians this digital world can be daunting and isolating.
- Be Connected is a free Australian Government initiative to help older Australians get the most out of going online.
- The program helps people aged 50 years and over engage with digital technology.
- It aims to empower everyone to use the internet and everyday technology to thrive in the digital world.
- It can help people stay connected to loved ones, and make it easier to access online services such as banking, grocery shopping and government services.
- Be Connected helps older Australians be safe, confident and comfortable online and helps reduce social isolation.
- It helps ensure older Australians gain the confidence and skills they need to use digital technology.
- The program provides older Australians with a range of resources such as online tutorials, training videos, and webinars.
- Online resources are available to families, friends, peers, and local community organisations so people can help show older Australians the benefits of being online.
- Be Connected offers free one-on-one and small group support through a network of 3,500 community organisations across Australia.

Program background

- Launched in October 2017 at cost of \$56.5 million, Be Connected is helping older Australians to thrive in a digital world.
- A rigorous evaluation completed in 2020 showed the program has had a significant impact on the foundational digital skills, knowledge, confidence, social connectedness and online safety of older Australians.

- In response, the Australian Government invested a further \$28.3 million in the 2020 Budget to deliver essential, free digital skills training to older Australians across the country.
- Be Connected is a resounding success, and we know it works:
 - The evaluation shows it has returned an estimated four dollars in social value for every dollar invested.
 - In its first two years, Be Connected substantially exceeded its targets for both learners and Network Partners.
- Be Connected is an Australian Government initiative implemented in partnership by the Department of Social Services, the eSafety Commissioner and Good Things Foundation Australia.

Call to action

- There's never been a better time to get online.
- To learn more about the program:
 - Go to www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au
 - Call 1300 795 897

Network Partners

About Network Partners

- The Be Connected program offers free, face-to-face personalised training and support through the Be Connected Network.
- Network Partners are an essential part of the Be Connected program.
- Older Australians can find support to learn digital skills in a friendly, comfortable setting with a Be Connected Network Partner in their community.
- Currently there are 3,500 Network Partners in every state and territory across the country and over 15,000 digital mentors.
- The Network is a diverse group of community organisations located across Australia, including libraries, neighbourhood centres, community clubs, retirement villages, men's sheds and services supporting older Australians.
- The Network Partners tailor the program to meet the needs of their communities. This may include hosting a weekly digital class, one-on-one drop-in sessions, or integrating Be Connected resources into their existing community activities, such as cooking classes.
- The national network of community partners is managed by Good Things Foundation Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that supports people to improve their lives through digital .
- Good Things Foundation Australia provides Network Partners with a range of support and resources, including in-person and online digital mentor training, access to small

grants as well as communications and marketing materials to raise awareness of the program.

Be Connected grants program

- All Be Connected Network Partners have access to a range of grants to support older people in their communities to embrace digital technology.
- Grants range from \$1,000 to \$50,000.
- The funding helps Network Partners host a digital skills event, train Be Connected mentors, purchase new devices or upgrade software.

Call to action:

- Become part of the Be Connected Network today and help us support older Australians to gain the skills and confidence to get online.
- To find out more information or to become a Be Connected Network Partner:
 - Call 02 9051 9292
 - Go to www.beconnectednetwork.org.au
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Supporting evidence

Older Australians

- People aged 65 and over are Australia's least digitally included age group, in terms of access, affordability and ability.¹
- Research has found there is a gender gap, with older Australian women having lower levels of overall digital inclusion compared to older Australian men.
- Other demographic groups that recorded lower digital inclusion than the national average include those who:
 - are unemployed
 - have less than secondary education
 - are people with disability, and
 - have an Indigenous background.

Family support

- Research from the eSafety Commissioner shows younger Australians are keen to help older relatives acquire new digital skills.²
- The 2019 report revealed:

¹ Good Things Foundation, August 2021, *Digital Nation Australia 2021*. Available at: file:///U:/Downloads/DigiNation_Report_Final_Aug9-accessible-1.pdf

² Office of the eSafety Commissioner 2019, Encouraging the digital participation of older Australians through mentoring, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/BeConnected%20intergeneration%20research%20report.pdf>

- young people are more likely to show an older family member how to use technology (59 per cent), rather than doing the online task for them when asked (40 per cent)
- only four per cent of young people felt frustrated or annoyed to help an older family member use technology
- young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are even more likely to show an older family member how to use technology
- younger generations believe it is important for people over 70 to have better digital skills.

Program management

- The Department of Social Services is the lead agency managing the implementation of the Australian Government's Be Connected program.
- eSafety develops and maintains the Be Connected website and interactive learning content. It also hosts online and face to face webinars in addition to other online safety and educational activities.
- Good Things Foundation Australia is a not-for-profit organisation which manages and provides ongoing support to the Be Connected Network. It also manages and administers the associated grants program.