Communication strategy

Prepared by the Communication Services Branch and Community Cohesion Branch, Department of Social Services
October 2021

Purpose

In 2016, the Australian Government committed $47.2 million over four years from 2016-17 to 2019-20 ($30.3 million to Department of Social Services [DSS] and $16.9 million for the eSafety Commissioner [eSafety]) to ensure older Australians have the skills, confidence and knowledge to use new technology.

In the 2019-20 MYEFO, an additional $9.3 million ($5.4 million to DSS and $3.9 million to eSafety) was committed to extend current program arrangements in 2020-21 while an evaluation was being completed.

The 2020-21 Budget, invested a further $28.3 million ($16.4 million to DSS and $11.9 million to eSafety) to build on the success of Be Connected, and make sure older Australians can continue to access the program through to 30 June 2024.

Through Be Connected, older Australians can receive help to stay connected with family, friends and their communities.

This strategy outlines the overarching communication approach to raise awareness of the Be Connected program. It is a high-level document that should be read in conjunction with the following attachments:

- Attachment A – Program messaging
- Attachment B – Cross-agency communication and media protocol
- Attachment C – Brand Guide

Background

Current environment

The internet is an essential part of everyday life and has become the preferred form of communication for most Australians today.

Older Australians are less digitally connected and more vulnerable to online scams.

Seniors who are even less likely to use digital technology include those who are:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- from a lower socioeconomic status
- living in regional areas
- living with disability.[1]

This means, older people are less likely to access important services over the web, such as government and business services, or connect with family and friends online.

Bridging the digital divide for this audience is a major national challenge.

The Australian Government wants all Australians to be able to access and benefit from digital services and information, and is aiming to be one of the top three digital governments in the world by 2030.

Be Connected is contributing to the Government's online safety efforts as well as contributing to ageing priorities, addressing social and economic isolation of older Australians while improving the in-community experience for an increasingly ageing population.

Policy development

---

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

DSS has developed an overarching policy to improve the digital literacy and online safety of older Australians.

This policy was developed in consultation with eSafety. It outlines a learning roadmap to build the digital skills and safety of older Australians.

The policy will be reviewed in late 2021.

Existing materials

A number of resources have been developed to support the program.

- **Be Connected online portal**
  The Be Connected website, www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au, houses interactive learning materials, free information   , courses, videos and tip sheets in community languages to help empower, educate and improve the digital skills and confidences of older Australians. It also directs learners to find their local Network Partner with an interactive map and has a page dedicated to Network Partners.

- **Be Connected Network**
  The Be Connected Network Manager provides resources, small grants and support to community organisations (Network Partners) who offer one-on-one and small group training and support to   help older Australians improve their digital skills.

- **Be Connected helpline**
  The dedicated helpline, **1300 795 897**, is a platform for older Australians to ask questions or find their local Network Partner; its hours of operation are:
    o Monday – Friday   : 9am - 5   pm (AEST/AEDT)

Currently   3,500 Network Partners have joined the Be Connected network across the country. This includes libraries, neighbourhood centres, community clubs, retirement villages and services supporting older Australians.

To help Network Partners deliver information about the program, they are eligible to receive funding.

In addition, the following resources have been set up to support Network Partners:

- a website – www.beconnectednetwork.org.au
- a Network Partner helpline – **(02) 9051 9292** (Good Things Foundation).
- a Facebook group – www.facebook.com/groups/beconnectednetworkpartners

- a Twitter account – https://twitter.com/BeConnectedAU

Promotional products

Branded products have been developed to support Network Partners to promote the program. This material includes guides, factsheets, posters and flyers. Many of the products have also been translated into languages other than English. These languages include:

- Simplified Chinese
- Traditional Chinese
- Greek
- Arabic
- Spanish
- Serbian
- Turkish
- Croatian
- Korean
- Italian
- Macedonian
- Vietnamese

Governance

DSS has overarching responsibility for managing the implementation of the Be Connected program. The program is developed and delivered in partnership with eSafety, and the Good Things Foundation Australia (GTF), a not-for-profit organisation.

Key roles and responsibilities

	Responsibilities
DSS Community Cohesion Branch (CCB)	- Oversee the management of the Be Connected program in line with the policy direction. - Manage GTF's funding agreement which includes providing support to develop and deliver a national network of community organisations (Network Partners), and provide grant funding to Network Partners.

DSS Communication Services Branch (CSB)	• Work with GTF and eSafety to ensure communications and marketing activities are consistent including: o ensuring the Be Connected brand is maintained in line with the Brand Guide (see Attachment C). • Manage media enquiries directed to DSS and ministerial requests related to the program
eSafety Commissioner (eSafety)	• Manage the Be Connected website and the online integrated learning system, including updating the tools and resources to support older Australians . • Manage the design, implementation and delivery of online digital and smart device training materials and tools, online safety resources and a digital portal. • Develop a range of learning tools and resources for use by seniors, community partners, families, friends and carers to support the learning needs of older Australians, including online training course content and interactive assessment tools. • Develop and manage instructional webinars for learners and the intergenerational mentoring program.
Good Things Foundation Australia (GTF)	• Continue managing and upskilling the National Network to ensure the successful engagement, retention and provision of appropriate support to community partners to enable them to meet the digital learning needs of older Australians. • Manage the Community Grants to assist Network Partners that deliver the Be Connected program to support the learning needs of older Australians. • Observe and monitor progress of the program to inform working group of progress. • Develop, maintain and distribute a range of promotional products for use by Network Partners from 2021-22 and deliver funded marketing activities.

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)	• Observe and monitor progress of the program to inform the interests of the Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications portfolio. • Implement any measures, i.e. legislative measures, to ensure eSafety can perform its functions.
Network Partners(managed by GTF)	• Promote the program on a local level. • Help older Australians access the program face-to-face or remotely. • Report learners supported through their grant-funded programs and highlight benefits of improving digital skills and Be Connected resources • Provide older Australians with free access to computers and the internet. • Offer tailored support and training to older Australians.

Aim and objectives

The overarching aim of this strategy is to contribute to an increased number of older Australians being online. The Be Connected program aims to deliver personalised, training and support.

The main communication objectives are to:

- **raise awareness of the Be Connected program** among older Australians (50 years and over) who do not engage with digital technology or have limited digital skills – importance of being digitally connected, how the program helps, how to access assistance

- **motivate influencers** (family and friends of older Australians) to start a conversation and help older Australians to be connected

- **drive the calls to action:** visit www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au; contact with Network Partners; call the hotline **1300 795 897**.

Target audiences

The target audiences for the Be Connected program are older Australians, aged 50 and over who do not engage with digital technology or have limited digital skills. Organisations and people that can influence this cohort are secondary audiences given the challenge in reaching this cohort through current communication channels.

Primary audiences

- Potential learners (people aged 50 years and over, who do not engage with digital technology or have limited digital skills)
- Be Connected Network Partners (to deliver engagement activities) and their digital mentors
-
- Indigenous Australians, people with disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds

Secondary audiences

- Influencers of older Australians, including family, friends, carers, peers and neighbours
- Older Australian advocacy and support groups
- Community organisations
- Technology-focused organisations that interact with older Australians
- State, territory and local governments and their services
- The Australian public

- Potential volunteer Digital Mentors.

Geographic audiences

Both national and community level strategies will be progressed to ensure the target audiences can access national online resources hosted by eSafety or learning opportunities offered by Be Connected Network Partners (see locations at the Be Connected website).

Stakeholders

Stakeholders for the Be Connected program include Network Partners such as community organisations and associations (for example, public libraries, Men's Sheds, community centres   ).

Stakeholders also include peak aged care industry and representative bodies, and peak Indigenous and ethnic organisations.

Stakeholder communications to   network partners are primarily the responsibility of GTF.

Both eSafety and GTF have the potential to   secure   additional support from other corporate, government and philanthropic partners, and seek assistance from DSS where necessary. eSafety and GTF will collaborate with each other where possible, to ensure consistency in promotion of the Be Connected program. All Be Connected program partners should agree before a corporate or philanthropic organisation is officially recognised as a Be Connected financial sponsor or partner.

Strategic communication approach

Communication activities will include both national and grassroots aspects in collaboration with all Be Connected program partners:

- DSS will focus and lead high-level national communication activities such as sponsorship for national events and editorial/media opportunities involving Ministers.
- GTF will focus on grassroots and national activities to promote the Be Connected Network.
- eSafety will promote the Be Connected website, online integrated learning system and webinars using a combined national and grassroots approach.

Program messages

A bank of approved program messages is at Attachment A and covers various aspects of the Be Connected program. This messaging ensures consistency across communication materials and will be continuously reviewed by the monthly Communication Working Group.

Cross-agency communication and media protocol

A communication and media protocol is at Attachment B to ensure a collaborative approach is taken to developing and handling communication and media activities.

Brand Guide

Guidelines to ensure brand consistency across communication materials are at Attachment C. These guidelines will govern the development of new promotional material.

Evaluation

Each party will undertake evaluation for their individual communications activities. A combination of these evaluations will form an overall evaluation that DSS will compile at the end of each financial year.

The following metrics may be used to evaluate communication activities:

	Measurables
Website statistics	○ monthly visitors – an increase in new vs. recurring ○ data including a breakdown of age, location and gender and if target markets were reached ○ behavioural insights including time spent on page, most popular pages, least popular pages and bounce rate ○ referral traffic – which websites refer the most traffic to the page
Media coverage	○ reach and prominence ○ sentiment ○ key themes
Social media metrics	○ reach and engagement with the target audience ○ sentiment of comments and the conversation
Events	○ attendance numbers ○ feedback from participants

	○ increase in registered users
Promotional products	○ number of requests ○ number of downloads ○ feedback on content ○ market research and testing
Stakeholder partnerships and engagement	○ level of support and impact of partnerships on reach and behavioural change ○ feedback from stakeholders

Supporting documents

- Attachment A – Program messages
- Attachment B – Cross-agency communication and media protocol
- Attachment C – Brand Guide

Appendix A – Communication Products

Product Name	Product Number	Detail
Marketing Guide (A4)	2183.10.17	A brochure to inform Network Partners about the program and marketing ideas.
Learning Guide (A5)	2180.10.17	A booklet containing information about the program as a resource for older Australians.
Appointment Card (A7)	2181.10.17	A card for Network Partners to use when booking appointments with older Australians.
Program Factsheet (A4)	2182.10.17	A double-sided factsheet provided to Network Partners to promote the program.
Play and Share Poster (A4)	2187.10.17	A double-sided poster promoting the Be Connected program as a way to play games online and share special moments around the world.
Learn and Cook Poster (A4)	2188.10.17	A double-sided poster promoting the Be Connected program as a way to learn online and share cooking recipes online.
Good Things Foundation Letter (A4)	2189.10.17	A welcome letter from the Good Things Foundation sent to new Network Partners.
Generic Poster (A3)	2186.10.17	A generic poster promoting the program to older Australians. This poster is available in English and the following languages: - Simplified Chinese (2249.06.18) - Traditional Chinese (2250.06.18) - Greek (2251.06.18) - Italian (2252.06.18) - Arabic (2253.06.18) - Vietnamese (2254.06.18) - Macedonian (2255.06.18) - Spanish (2256.06.18) - Serbian (2257.06.18) - Turkish (2258.06.18) - Croatian (2259.06.18) - Korean (2260.06.18)
Empty Belly Poster (A4)		A customisable poster for Network Partners to promote upcoming events, workshops and their physical location. This poster is available in English and the following languages: - Traditional Chinese (2262.06.18) - Greek (2263.06.18) - Arabic (2265.06.18) - Spanish (2268.06.18) - Serbian (2269.06.18) - Turkish (2270.06.18) - Croatian (2271.06.18) - Korean (2272.06.18)

		- Simplified Chinese (2273.06.18) - Italian (2276.06.18) - Macedonian (2277.06.18) - Vietnamese (2278.06.18)
DL Flyer 1	2184.10.17	A generic flyer promoting the program to older Australians. This flyer is available in English and the following languages: - Simplified Chinese (2285.06.18) - Traditional Chinese (2286.06.18) - Greek (2287.06.18) - Italian (2288.06.18) - Arabic (2289.06.18) - Vietnamese (2290.06.18) - Macedonian (2291.06.18) - Spanish (2292.06.18) - Serbian (2293.06.18) - Turkish (2294.06.18) - Croatian (2295.06.18) - Korean (2296.06.18)
DL Flyer 2	2185.10.17	A flyer promoting the role of local Network Partners to older Australians. This flyer is available in English and the following languages: - Simplified Chinese (2297.06.18) - Traditional Chinese (2298.06.18) - Greek (2299.06.18) - Italian (2300.06.18) - Arabic (2301.06.18) - Vietnamese (2302.06.18) - Macedonian (2303.06.18) - Spanish (2304.06.18) - Serbian (2305.06.18) - Turkish (2306.06.18) - Croatian (2307.06.18) - Korean (2308.06.18)