

# Auditing fast tracked stimulus programmes

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17 September 2020

Services Australia acknowledges the  
Traditional Custodians of the lands we live on.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past and  
present, of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander nations.



- responsible for the **Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support** programs
- more than **300** walk-in service centres around Australia, supported by a network of Agents and Access Points, as well as two Mobile Service Centres
- **largest call operation** in the Southern Hemisphere
- **99%** of Medicare transactions now occur digitally
- myGov now has the **largest capacity** of any authenticated online platform in Australia.



## In the 2019-20 financial year we:

- Provided payments totalling **\$203.6 billion**
- Processed **4.9 million** social security and welfare claims
- Handled **395 million** customer interactions, including phone calls, Service Centre visits and self-serve interactions
- Facilitated Child Support payments for **1.2 million** children
- Paid **\$25 billion** in benefits across the **25.9 million** people enrolled in Medicare.

# Our COVID-19 response

## Over a nine-week period in 2020, we:

- Received **1.8 million** social security and welfare claims.
- Finalised **1.9 million** claims, including **1.2 million** JobSeeker applications
- Delivered **\$5.1 billion** in \$750 economic support payments into the bank accounts of **6.8 million** eligible Australians
- Expanded myGov to become the largest authenticated online platform in Australia, supporting an average of **1 million** extra users per day
- Answered **3.8 million** calls and helped **1.95 million** customers in service centres
- Paid **\$512 million** for COVID-19 related Medicare Benefits Schedule items.

# COVID-19 economic support measures

## Temporary supplement payment

- Paid to existing JobSeeker payment recipients
- \$550 per fortnight
- 6-month duration
- Not income-tested

## Economic Support Payment

- Two 'once-off' payments
- Made to eligible, existing income support payment recipients and concession card holders
- March and July 2020

## Other measures

- New Medicare claim items including pathology items to support COVID-19 testing
- Free child care services
- Expanded eligibility for the Crisis Payment as a result of having to quarantine or care for a person
- Change to mutual obligations

# Speedy policy implementation and effective governance – getting the right balance

- From 10,000 claims per week to 210,000
- Logistical challenges
- *Right payment, Right person, Right time*
- Social distancing in the workplace and smart centres
- ICT infrastructure – supporting 1 million extra users per day

# Key governance arrangements

- Looking outwards – our external stakeholders
  - Policy delivery partners
  - Ministers
- Looking inwards – our internal governance frameworks
  - Enterprise risk management framework and policy
  - Senior executive governance committees
  - Operational committees and MDTs



# Key enterprise risks

- Disruptions to payments and services to customers
- Business continuity
- Business integrity
- Safe environment for staff and customers
- ICT service availability and business continuity
  - Externally-facing services
  - Internal systems and infrastructure (working-from-home)
- Large-scale staff redeployment

# Applying agile assurance

- Use of AGILE project delivery methodology
  - MDTs
  - Benefits of AGILE methodology
  - Assurance

# Identifying risks – lessons learned from previous stimulus programmes

- Governance arrangements
  - Strategic and operational committees
  - Clear roles, responsibilities and lines of reporting
- Managing competing risks
- Flexible approach to workforce redeployment
- Customer experience – easy and safe

# The role of internal audit and governance committees in the process

- Internal audit
  - A unique position at the centre of the agency
  - Providing 'real-time' assurance in a crisis
- Governance Committees
  - Engaging effectively with risk
  - Strategic versus operational risk
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Timely, accurate and transparent reporting
  - Documenting legislative and policy authority