

Relationships Australia welcomes government commitment to social and community services sector

Relationships Australia welcomes the government's commitment in the 2020-21 Federal Budget to secure ongoing funding for the vital work of the social and community services sector.

In response to the impending cessation of the Social and Community Services Pay Equity Special Account, the government has committed to allocate additional base funding for a workforce that provides much needed support to vulnerable Australians.

"After a summer of successive natural disasters, and the onset of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the pressure on Australian families and impact on mental health has been significant. With this much-needed commitment from government, Relationships Australia can continue to support our clients through this difficult time and beyond," said Mr Nick Tebbey, National Executive Officer of Relationships Australia.

Like many service providers across the country, Relationships Australia held grave concerns for the future sustainability of the workforce, and its capacity to meet the growing needs of the Australian community, if the loss of funding arising from cessation of the Special Account was not adequately mitigated against. "We welcome the support and willingness of government to work with the sector towards a solution to this issue.

"We know, and research demonstrates, that early-intervention, wrap-around specialist services, such as those delivered by Relationships Australia, have a considerable positive impact on supporting mental health, addressing suicidality, and preserving safe and healthy relationships. From this solid foundation, individuals and families are able to contribute to society.

"In response to the growing pressures on society caused by COVID-19, it was more crucial than ever that government commit to suitable, sustainable funding, and this commitment, as part of the 2020-21 Federal Budget, will avoid the financial cliff posed by the cessation of Special Account," said Mr Tebbey.

Relationships Australia has provided services to the Australian community for over 70 years. We offer a range of mental health, counselling and dispute resolution services to individuals and families across more than 100 sites nationally.

www.relationships.org.au.

Media contact: Kathleen Caller M: 0416106612 E: kcaller@relationships.org.au

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