



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

1 October 2020

### **National Get Online Week 19-25 October: Supporting vulnerable Australians through digital inclusion**

Now's the time to get online with Get Online Week 2020 taking place from 19-25 October. The annual campaign aims to support 2.5million Australians who are not online through 700 digital skills mentoring events across the country.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the risks associated with digital exclusion across the country. It has made digital skills essential for wellbeing, safety and participating in day to day activities such as accessing government and health services, paying bills, online shopping, social interaction, applying for jobs and many more.

Get Online Week is organised by Good Things Foundation Australia, which also manages a network of 3,000 Be Connected community partners across the country. Between March and August this year, the Be Connected network has received registrations from 178 new organisations; deployed \$1million in Australian Government-funded digital device grants to 215 organisations. In three years, 750,000 people have engaged with the Be Connected digital skills program.

These organisations are the unsung heroes of the pandemic – they have played a valuable role in supporting their local communities through a wide variety of digital mentoring in eSafety, social networking with friends and family, access to foreign language news and cultural programs, learning new hobbies and crafts through YouTube, and even online prayer vigils.

“This year's campaign will respond to the needs of our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. We'll support people to connect with friends and family, stay safe online, learn how to better use their devices, find reliable health information and apply for work online,” said Jess Wilson, National Director, Good Things Foundation.

“We're inspiring community organisations around Australia to hold online or COVID-safe face-to-face events for people with low digital skills, depending on the public gathering restrictions and health advice in their location.”

The over-65s are the least connected group in Australia and this has a severe impact on social inclusion and access to government and other services. According to the *COVID-19 impacts on Australian adults' online activities and attitudes* report which was produced by the

eSafety Commissioner, 89% of those surveyed agreed the internet was essential to them for at least one activity, with 27% of people surveyed sought extra help with technology.

People needing support to learn digital skills can find a local Get Online Week event by contacting Good Things Foundation on 1300 795 897 or going to [www.getonlineweek.com](http://www.getonlineweek.com)

## **Ends**

### **Available for interview:**

- Jess Wilson, National Director, Good Things Foundation
- Barbara Laurie, 73, Adelaide, South Australia
- Jean Shine, 74, Brunswick Junction, Western Australia
- Lyn Brown, 76, Batemans Bay, New South Wales

### **For interviews, images or further information please contact Momentum2:**

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### **About Good Things Foundation:**

Get Online Week is managed by Good Things Foundation - a social change charity with the vision of a world where everyone can benefit from digital. Find out more at

[www.goodthingsfoundation.org.au](http://www.goodthingsfoundation.org.au)

[www.getonlineweek.com.au](http://www.getonlineweek.com.au)