



MEDIA RELEASE

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Be Connected Network secures \$1million of funding to provide digital devices for isolated older Australians

Good Things Foundation Australia has announced \$1million in digital devices grant funding for community organisations through its Be Connected program, run in partnership with the Department of Social Services and eSafety Commissioner.

The funding is available in \$2,500 and \$5,000 one-off payments to existing Be Connected Network Partners to assist those aged over 50. The grants will allow the purchase of loan digital devices and sim cards for older Australians and will improve access to the internet, which has become more important than ever with the Coronavirus pandemic. People receiving the device will be supported to access learning materials on the Be Connected website. When the pandemic is over the devices will be returned to community organisations for ongoing use in digital skills programs.

Good Things Foundation Australia is a social change organisation working to improve Australia's digital divide through the delivery of programs such as the Australian Government-funded Be Connected program. Through Be Connected, they work with over 3,000 Network Partners including community centres, libraries, Men's Sheds, Indigenous community groups, disability organisations, employment services providers, and non-English speaking community groups.

Prior to Coronavirus restrictions, community organisations ran Be Connected programs through face-to-face workshops. With programs now transitioning to online, one of the biggest challenges facing isolated older Australians in staying digitally connected during the Coronavirus pandemic is not just a lack of digital skills, but also a lack of digital devices and access to internet.

In a recent survey conducted by Good Things Foundation Australia, 75 per cent of Network Partners voiced concern that learners do not have access to the internet because they are lacking digital devices to use at home.

"With more than 2.5 million Australians not online, access to the internet is absolutely essential during these incredibly isolating times, particularly for older Australians," said Jess Wilson, National Director, Good Things Foundation Australia.

"We're very pleased to be able to support dedicated Be Connected Network Partners through the provision of \$1million in grants to purchase devices and internet coverage for those in need. Our partners across the country are working hard to stay connected to their learners through a creative range of online programs, and thanks to this funding they can continue to provide support to those in need."

People needing support to learn digital skills can access:

- Be Connected learning site: <https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/>
- Be Connected Helpline 1300 795 897

-Ends-

Available for interview: Jess Wilson: National Director, Good Things Foundation Australia.

For further information, interviews or images, please contact:

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Information for editors:

- The Be Connected Network & Grants program 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
- Be Connected is an Australian Government initiative designed to increase the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians.
- More information about the digital devices grant: www.beconnectednetwork.org.au/grant-program/digital-devices-grant