

## **EXTENSION OF DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM WELCOMED**

**Wednesday 22 May 2024**

National Seniors Australia (NSA) has welcomed the Federal Government's \$42 million investment to extend the Digital Literacy for Older Australians program – *Be Connected* until June 2028.

NSA Chief Executive Officer Mr Chris Grice said the investment and timing were critical to provide the training to help give older Australians the skills and confidence to safely use online services, helping to bridge the gap between digital inclusion and exclusion.

"We live in a world where most services, communications and transactions are online. For those who are not online, including older Australians and other vulnerable groups, they risk being left behind," Mr Grice said.

"For many of these people, being online and navigating the internet is still new and fraught with fear, and rightly so.

"Figures released by the ACCC today reveal older Australians are increasingly targeted by scammers. Within the last quarter alone, Australians 65+ have lost \$14.3 million in investment scams, \$2.8 million in dating and romance scams and \$1.1 million in phishing scams. These are not just numbers – these are people's retirement funds, life savings and legacy's to family and charities.

"Fear of banking online and potential scams are valid reasons why some older Australians prefer to use cash and why, as part of NSA's *Keep Cash* campaign, we have been calling for greater digital literacy education for seniors, such as the *Be Connected* program.

"We are pleased to see our call has been heard and the delivery of this essential program has been assured for another four years.

"NSA has been a long supporter of the *Be Connected* program. We will continue to support and promote the program to help ensure our 240,000+ community members and supporters, and others, can confidently and safely be connected online."

Good Things Foundation will deliver the grants program and continue to support more than 3800 community organisations that deliver *Be Connected* Training, both in person and online.

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