



# The Be Connected Network: First year report

by Good Things Foundation

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[beconnected.esafety.gov.au](http://beconnected.esafety.gov.au)



Australian Government

**Be Connected**  
Every Australian online.



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## About the Be Connected program

Be Connected is an Australian government initiative committed to increasing the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians. Be Connected aims to empower everyone to use the internet and everyday technology to thrive in our digital world.

Through [the Be Connected online resources](#), Australians will be able to learn the basics of using digital devices and engaging with the internet, including:

- being safer while online
- talking to or seeing family and friends who live far away
- finding new friends who share interests and hobbies
- connecting with old friends
- keeping up to date with what's happening in communities and around the world
- shopping and selling online, safely and securely.

Be Connected is not just a website; it is a national movement working across Australia, within communities, to help people with their digital skills. Our Network Partners are the local arm of Be Connected, and offer in-person help and support to older Australians who are disengaged with digital technology.

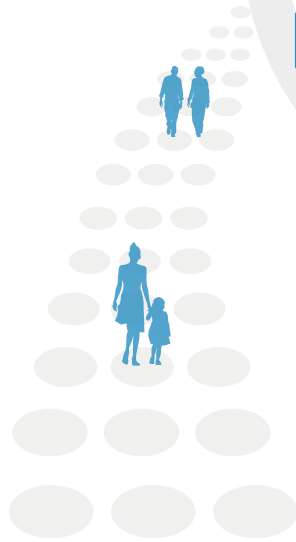
Australians with low internet skills can often feel isolated from their community and family at a time in their lives when feeling connected is increasingly important. Be Connected aims to change this through a family and community centred approach. These community organisations are committed to digital inclusion and supporting older Australians to help bridge the digital divide. Be Connected also supports families to mentor a relative or friend to help them be more connected online.

The Be Connected Network is managed by Good Things Foundation, and is part of the wider Be Connected campaign run by the Department of Social Services, in partnership with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner.

## About Good Things Foundation

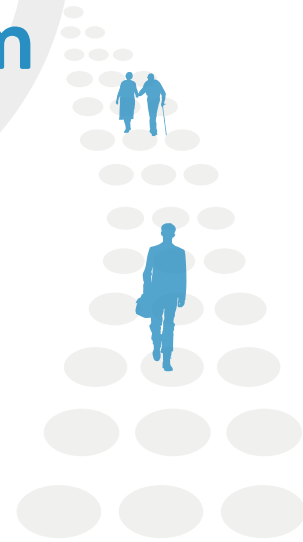


Our vision is  
a world where  
everyone  
benefits from  
digital



### Digital Inclusion

We're a **social change charity** aiming to help people improve their lives through digital, working in communities both nationally and internationally to deliver deep impact at scale



### Social Inclusion

Our goal is to support at least **3 million** socially excluded people globally to improve their lives through digital



## Growing the Network

Good Things Foundation coordinates the Be Connected Network and manages the \$20,000,000 Be Connected grants program. We join the dots between community organisations to ensure that no one gets left behind. Together, we create a large-scale platform for social change and help older Australians to Be Connected.

Good Things Foundation works in partnership with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner and Department of Social Services to deliver the Australian Government funded program.

### Over 2,000 Network Partners across the country

The Be Connected Network began in October 2017, just 3 months after Good Things Foundation won the contract to manage the Be Connected Network. Now 12 months in, it is time to learn more about the Network and what it has taken to get here.

2,000 organisations (Network Partners) have joined the Be Connected Network in the first year to support people in their communities

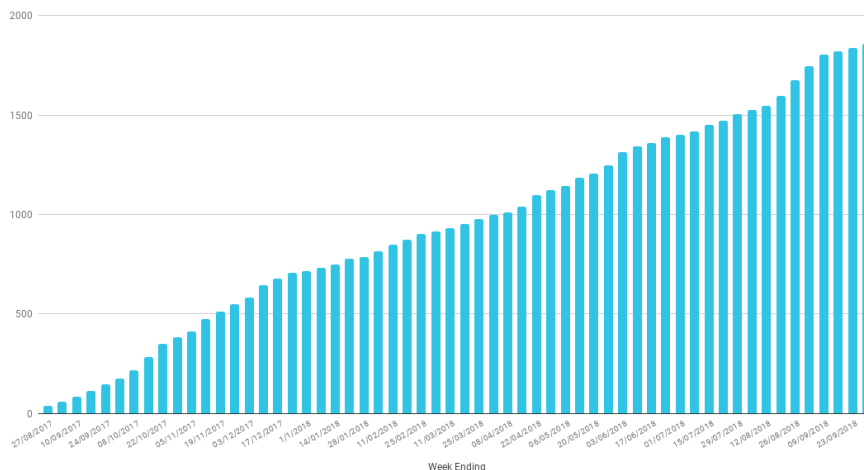
aged over 50 to learn digital skills. So far, a total of 7,067 learners have registered on the Be Connected website.

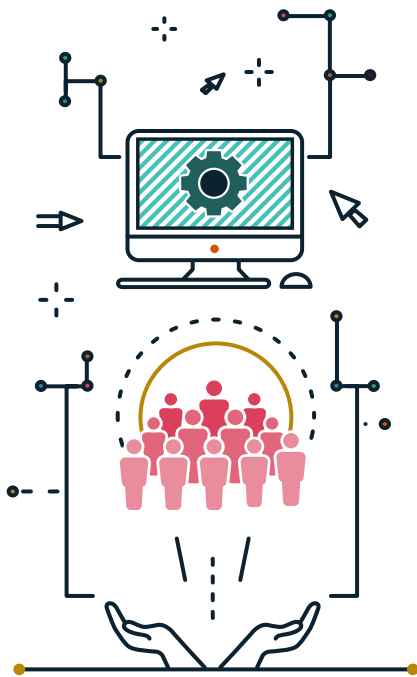
The 2,000 Network Partners are located in every state and territory of Australia. There is a close correlation between the percentage of Network Partners in each state and territory, and the overall population.



	Network Partners	General Pop State
Australian Capital Territory	1.36%	1.65%
New South Wales	33.84%	32.03%
Northern Territory	1.67%	1.01%
Queensland	17.08%	20%
South Australia	7.21%	7.1%
Tasmania	3.92%	2.16%
Victoria	24.33%	25%
Western Australia	10.60%	10.8%

### 2,000 Network Partners recruited: A week-by-week view





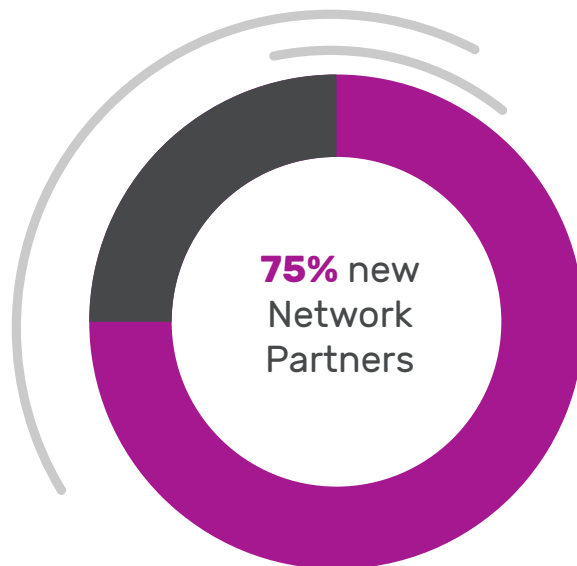
## 2000 Network Partners

We want to create a community where every older Australian can find a comfortable and friendly place nearby where they can learn

### Ways of engaging the Network

To engage the Network we adopted a number of approaches:

- Developed a contact list of over 4,000 organisations across the country
- Phoned, emailed, held face-to-face events, webinars and promoted the Network through stakeholder newsletters and social media
- Only **25%** of Network Partners were part of the previous Broadband for Seniors program

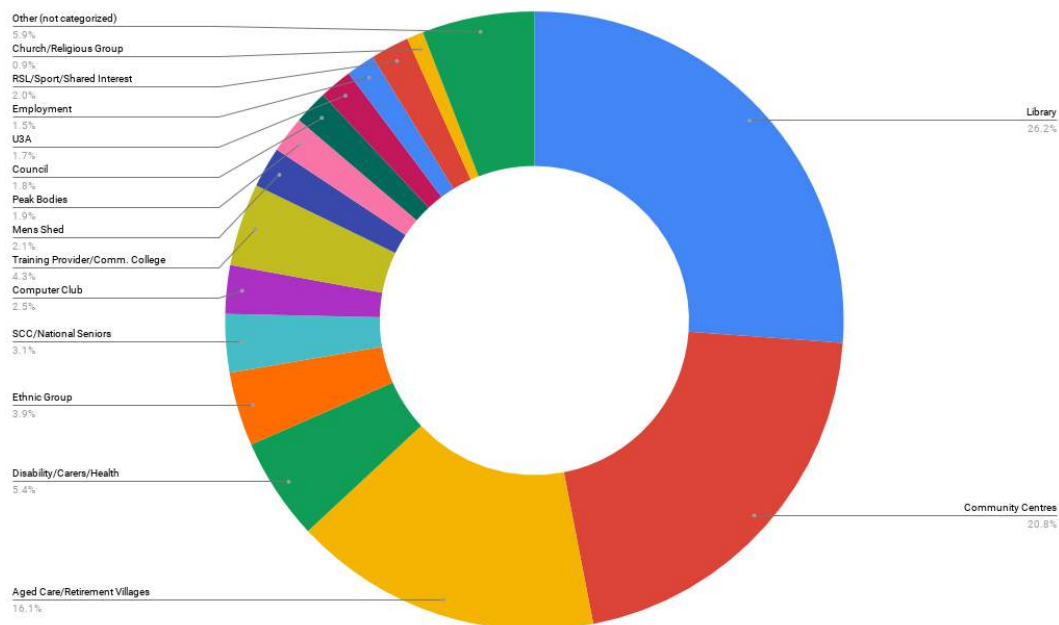


## The Network's diversity is its strength

The Network of community organisations is diverse, including aged care providers, CWA branches, Men's Sheds, computer clubs, and even a Meals on Wheels service.

The top 5 types of community organisations by percentage of the Network are:

1. Libraries (26.2%)
2. Community Centres (26.2%)
3. Aged Care & Retirement Villages (16.1%)
4. Disability/Carers/Health (5.4%)
5. Ethnic & Cultural Groups (3.9%)



It is this diversity that gives the Network its strength, meaning that more older Australians can find support in a community setting that works for them. Network Partners know their community best and can use this knowledge to tailor digital literacy supports. Good Things Foundation provides organisations with flexibility in how they deliver the program to suit their structure and ensure it is relevant for their over 50's learners.





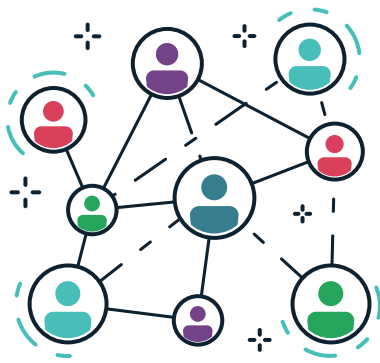
## | Campbelltown Library

“ Campbelltown Library provides a range of basic digital literacy, small group and one-on-one learning opportunities to Library patrons and the greater Campbelltown community. Their Digital Literacy program covers everything from basic computer skills to creating websites and upskilling in Microsoft Excel. Campbelltown Digital Mentor Alison adds, “Not only do the Be Connected online resources augment our existing learning materials, we have also created a series of four-week units which work through the Be Connected online resources more thoroughly with a Library trainer.”



## The Network Partner Journey

As this is a brand new network, we wanted to understand the journey organisations take to get up and running with their digital literacy program.



### On average, it takes:

**41 days** from first calling an organisation to them registering as a Network Partner

**13 days** later, the organisation is inducted to the Be Connected Network by Good Things Foundation

**36 days** after registration, they apply for Be Connected grant funding

**100 days** later, Network Partners register their first learner

These averages indicate that the journey Network Partners go on to start up their program can take time. Good Things Foundation is here to support organisations through this process.

They also indicate that the impact of the Network is just starting to be felt by some communities, with a number of organisations still in the process of getting up and running with their programs.

## Support provided to Network Partners

The Good Things Foundation network team provides support to Network Partners across the country to build their capacity to teach learners in their community.

We enable organisations to deliver the program in a way that works for their organisation's structure and is relevant for their over 50 learners.

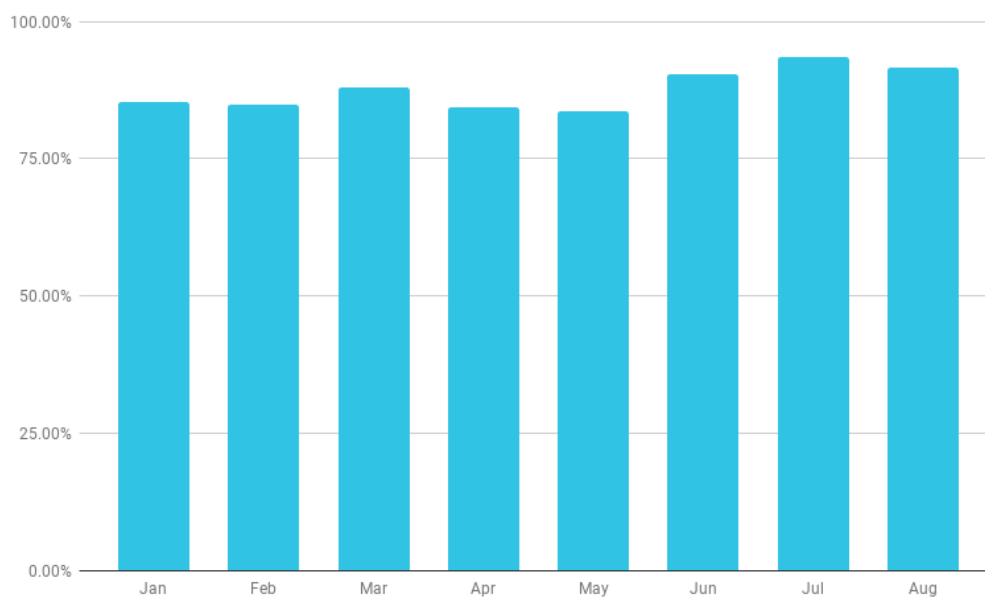


### In the first year, there were:

- 1,804** Helpline calls answered
- 1,189** participants in webinars (including Leep webinars)
- 30** face-to-face events held across Australia
- 24,423** support resources downloaded from the Network Partner website
- 261** members in Network Partner Facebook Group
- 40.44%** average open rate of Network Partner newsletter

On average, we received a **87.89%** satisfaction score from Network Partners.

The most recent monthly satisfaction score was **91%**.



Satisfaction scores by month.

## Feedback from the Network

“ Feedback from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. Our classes have enabled digital skills access to a generation who have so far managed their lives very successfully without technology and who would not travel to another venue to receive support.”  
- **Janice, Digital Mentor at Derrinallum Library**

“ Digital platform works well and is easy to work, the Be Connected guide for getting online proved to be a valuable tool in the learning process of the older people.”  
- **Glen Innes & District Community Centre Inc**

“ The Be Connected courses and the PBNC tutors make this new way of communicating simple to understand...absolutely perfect!”  
- **Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre**



## The Be Connected Grants Program

In the first year, **1,536** grants were allocated to **923** community organisations totalling:

# \$3,878,500

The **1,536** grants is made up of:

### **966 Activation grants\***

- \$2,000 grant to register 30 older Australians over 10 months

### **33 Building Digital Skills grants**

- Organisations eligible to apply after they have registered 24 learners
- \$2,500 - \$15,000 available to register up to 300 learners over 12 months

### **25 Capacity Building grants**

- Innovative community organisations with strong existing networks
- Recruit organisations into the Be Connected Network
- Up to \$50,000 available to register 500 learners over 12 months

### **512 Get Online Week Event grants**

- Be Connected Network Partners are eligible to apply for a special Get Online Week grant of \$1,500 to support their event

For Activation, Building Digital Skills and Capacity Building grants, organisations in Outer Regional, Remote or Very Remote areas are able to apply for specialised contracts with halved learner numbers, recognising their demographic differences to Inner Regional and Metro areas of Australia.

\*Increased from \$1,500 in first year based on feedback from Network.



## Capacity Builders - An innovative community approach

We're supporting organisations across the country to build the Be Connected Network and develop new approaches to support older Australians to get online. 25 organisations were funded in the first year to participate in this program as Capacity Builders.

Capacity Builders are ambassadors of the Be Connected Network and are delivering innovative outreach projects to build the Network and engage Australians over 50 to learn digital skills. Each Capacity Builder has a unique approach to engage their community with the support of Good Things Foundation.

Capacity Builders have been a critical friend to Good Things Foundation in the first year of the Network, helping us to support and grow the Network. To date, Capacity Builders have supported over **140** Network Partners.

While they are a diverse group of organisations, ranging from State Libraries to local Men's Sheds and National Service Providers, they are all connected by their commitment and passion for digital inclusion.

Our **25** Capacity Builders are:

- Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association
- Bloomhill Cancer Care
- Bowls Australia
- Bundaberg Regional Libraries
- Carers Victoria
- Chorus Australia
- COTA Tasmania
- Esperance Public Library
- Ethnic Communities Council of NSW
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
- Homecare Heroes
- Langwarrin Men's Shed
- Leep
- Leopold Community Centre
- Linkwest
- Lively
- Macquarie Community College
- National Seniors Australia
- NSW SLASA
- Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre
- State Library of QLD
- Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre
- The Smith Family
- Workways Townsville
- YourLink

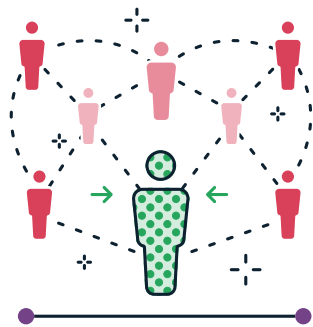
## Supporting Be Connected Learners

Network Partners have reported in the Network Partner survey that they have provided **59,894** people with other digital literacy support.



From Good Things Foundation's learner progression survey, we found that:

**86%** of learners were satisfied or very satisfied with the support from Network Partners



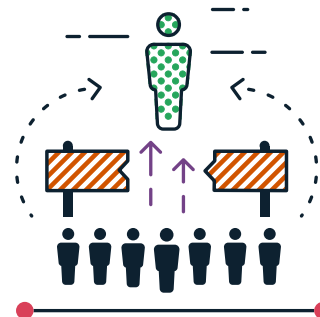
**39%** agree that the Be Connected website has **increased social connection with their friends, family or**



**49%** agree that the Be Connected website has **improved their confidence with using digital**



**46%** agree that the Be Connected website has **improved their digital skills**



**57%** agree that the Be Connected website has **improved their confidence with staying safe online**

## Our learners

Be Connected Network Partners use the online Learning Portal, managed by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, and resources provided by Good Things Foundation to deliver programs to their learners. The Learning Portal (<https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au>) has free courses on everything from how to access the internet, to using your device and keeping in touch with others online.



"I email family and friends, surf Pinterest, shop on craft websites and download and print craft patterns. I'm about to start online grocery shopping as I've lost the sight in one eye and am a bit wobbly on my feet." - **Jean, a learner at Elermore Glen Retirement Village**

"I'm not one to post photos or go on social media, but plants are my life and I love that I can type in the name of a plant and find out all this information. I love gardening and researching things about it, so I'm happy the internet has helped me do this more."  
- **Azalea, a learner at Lockyer Community Centre**







## | Hampton Park Turkish Seniors Club, VIC

“ Kim, along with the women at the club, have families overseas in Turkey. Most of the members have completely lost contact with of their family. As long distance calling can get quite expensive, they were all open to a new way to keep in touch with family and friends.

Since the introduction of Be Connected digital skills classes at her club, Kim says everyone is thrilled with their new ways of communicating online.

“Since getting online, we’re able to send and receive photos from our families who we haven’t seen in years,” says Kim.



## Get Online Week

Get Online Week began in 2007 in the UK as an initiative to bring digital inclusion to national attention. Since then the campaign has grown into a week-long annual celebration, with thousands of events taking place each year, bringing digital skills and know-how to everyone. This year's Get Online Week took place for the first time in Australia from the 15-21 October 2018.



Over **750** events were held across Australia, helping people with limited digital skills make the most of the internet. Good Things Foundation worked together with commercial partners, stakeholders and community organisations to reach out and encourage people to get involved and #try1thing new online.

## #try1thing

**1,155** learners registered on the Be Connected Learning Portal during the one week campaign. **4,515** resources were downloaded from the Get Online Week website, supporting event holders to get involved.

Network Partners used the Network Partner Facebook group to share stories of their events and were able to access special events and resources such as Tip Sheets and marketing materials.



Map of events around Australia.

## The Future of the Be Connected Network

### In 2019 we will:

- Manage a growing and diverse Network of over 2,000 community organisations that value supporting people to improve their digital skills as a core part of service delivery
- Distribute grants to Network Partners to support them to deliver programs in their community.

### Network Partners are at different stages of development and need different support. We will:

- Continue to develop packages of support & learning pathways tailored to the needs of Network Partners and Digital Mentors that supports quality service delivery
- Continue to build a community of practice with Capacity Builders and share learnings
- Develop networks within the Network
  - Piloting skill share webinars with Men's Sheds, Libraries and Aged Care service providers
  - Explore different needs of sub-groups within the Network
  - Development of tailored resources
- Organise a conference for Network Partners to share skills across the Network
- Better understand the evolving needs of the Network through continued regular face-to-face visits



**For more information about the Be Connected Network, contact Good Things Foundation on:**

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**w:** [www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au/network-partners](http://www.beconnected.esafety.gov.au/network-partners)

The Be Connected Network is coordinated by

