



**THE HON JOSH FRYDENBERG MP**  
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Minister for Families and Social Services

## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **TAKING ACTION ON THE BANKING, SUPERANNUATION & FINANCIAL SERVICES ROYAL COMMISSION**

#### **GOING FURTHER WITH A FINANCIAL COUNSELLING REVIEW**

The Coalition Government has agreed to take action on all 76 recommendations contained in the Royal Commission's Final Report and, in a number of important areas, is going further, including conducting an immediate review of financial counselling services.

In his Final Report, Commissioner Hayne observed, "The desirability of predictable and stable funding for the legal assistance sector and financial counselling services is clear and how this may best be delivered is worthy of careful consideration."

While Commissioner Hayne made no recommendation in regard to a review of financial counselling, the Government recognises that it is a vital service used by thousands of Australians every year.

For this reason, we are commencing an immediate review that will focus on the coordination and funding of financial counselling services. It will consider gaps and overlaps in current services and the adequacy of appropriate delivery models for future funding.

The Department of Social Services provides funding for financial counselling services around the country, with a commitment that totals \$64.2 million over 4.5 years. These services, however, face a number of challenges including inconsistent and short term grant based funding streams, fragmented delivery across jurisdictions and high demand.

This review is a chance to increase predictability and stability in funding for financial counselling, as well as consider whether funding sources can be broadened. States and territories, private and not-for-profit funders, the financial services sector and those involved in service delivery will be consulted.

Financial Counselling Australia CEO Fiona Guthrie said: "FCA and financial counsellors are delighted that the Government recognises the immediate need for predictable and stable funding of financial counselling.

"We welcome the review into the capacity of existing services to meet growing demand, as well as the adequacy and source of future funding.

"We look forward to working with the Government on this review."

The review is also set to benefit drought-affected communities, with senior representatives from the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) having recently attended a Drought Finance Taskforce meeting and shared observations about client experiences as well as the RFCS' relationships with banks.

The review will be led by the Department of Families and Social Services in consultation with Treasury and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

**Ends**

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