Program Protocol

Data matching between Services Australia and National Indigenous Australians Agency

Youpla Resolution Payment

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1. Description of the Program Protocol
   1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this program protocol is to:

* identify the matching agency and the source agency;
* detail the direct relationship of the program to the performance of the lawful functions or activities of the matching agency;
* set out the legal basis for any collection, use or disclosure of personal information involved in the program;
* outline the objectives of the program, the procedures to be employed, the nature and frequency of the matching covered by the program and the justifications for it;
* explain what methods, other than data matching, were available and why they were rejected;
* detail any cost/benefit analysis or other measures of effectiveness, which were taken into account in deciding to initiate the program;
* outline the technical controls proposed to ensure data quality, integrity and security in the conduct of the program;
* outline the nature of the action proposed to be taken in relation to the results of the program;
* indicate what form of notice is to be given, or is intended to be given to individuals whose privacy is affected by the program; and
* specify any time limits on the conduct of the program.
  1. **Requirement for a Program Protocol**

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner’s (**OAIC**) *Guidelines on* *Data matching in Australian Government Administration* (**Data Matching Guidelines**) specify that a program protocol be prepared by agencies conducting certain data matching programs. These guidelines are voluntary, but represent the OAIC’s view of best practice. Services Australia (**Services Australia**) complies with the Data Matching Guidelines.

Services Australia’s Privacy Policy outlines how a person may lodge a complaint about how Services Australia has handled their personal information, and also outlines how Services Australia will deal with such a complaint. Services Australia’s Privacy Policy is available at [servicesaustralia.gov.au/privacy](file:///C:\Users\n9b\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\ZFGLGDW4\servicesaustralia.gov.au\privacy)

1. Description of the Program
   1. **Summary of the Program**

The Youpla Group (formally, the Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund Pty Ltd, Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund No 2 Pty Ltd, ACBF Funeral Plans Pty Ltd and Community Funeral Plans Pty Ltd) operated funeral funds targeted at First Nations people. The Youpla Group was placed into liquidation in March 2022 following legislative changes (implemented in April 2020) which prevented the Youpla Group from selling new policies without an Australian Financial Services License (which they were unable to obtain).

The Commonwealth Government has agreed to provide resolution payments to former Youpla Group members. These payments would result in the return of premiums to ensure former Youpla Group customers can continue to conduct sorry business with dignity.

The Youpla Group Funeral Benefits Program is administered by the Department of the Treasury (**Treasury**). The Youpla Support Program has been established as the successor to the Youpla Group Funeral Benefits Program, and is administered by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (**NIAA**), supported by Services Australia.

From 1 July 2024, the Youpla Support Program will start accepting applications for resolution payments from eligible applicants. Resolution payments will be offered in the form of the option to reinvest in a funeral bond (default) or cash payments made directly to the customer (or nominated claimant). Customers will be able to choose between these options, noting that the funeral bond will be the default option (i.e. the first option offered to customers). Procurement of a single funeral bond provider will be conducted by the NIAA. Financial counselling will also be offered to all eligible customers. Procurement of the financial counselling provider will be conducted by the NIAA.

NIAA will be responsible for:

* policy for the Youpla Support Program
* determining customer eligibility and entitlement amount
* obtaining data from the Liquidator and providing it to Services Australia, and
* customer communications campaign to the public.

Resolution payments and customer engagement will be delivered by Services Australia. Service delivery is set to commence from 1 July 2024 and run for a period of approximately 2 years, with a potential of a 6-month extension period.

The project is to deliver on Service Australia’s service commitments, including:

* the system to data match and load data to customer’s record
* case management, linking with customers to capture their decision on payment method
* staff ability to complete the resolution payment, and
* escalation for eligibility review (systems, procedures, case management).
  1. **Objectives**

The key objectives of the data matching are to assist Services Australia to:

* + identify whether customers who are eligible for the Youpla Support Program have an existing Centrelink record and if not, create a new record
  + make payments to eligible customers, in the form of a funeral bond roll over or a payment into the customer’s bank account, and
  + ensure payments are only made to people who are eligible to receive them and they are paid the correct amount.

1. Agencies Involved
   1. **Source Agency**

NIAA is the source agency involved in this program.

The data provided to Services Australia will be obtained by the NIAA from the Liquidator, which will have sourced data from the Youpla Group and from Services Australia.

* 1. **Matching Agency**

Services Australia is the data matching agency.

* 1. **User Agency**

Services Australia is the primary user agency. Services Australia will receive the source data from the NIAA and will then match it to Services Australia’s own data.

While Services Australia is the primary user agency, the NIAA will also use results of the data matching program to administer the Youpla Support Program (for example, to make a further determination about eligibility and entitlement amount).

1. Opt out
   1. **Individuals’ ability to opt out of data matching**

Individuals who have been identified as eligible for the Youpla Support Program will have the ability to opt out of data matching by Services Australia.

A communication campaign was launched on 7 June 2024 to advise individuals that they can ring Centrelink and advise if they do not want their data to be matched by Services Australia (for example, see [Youpla Support Program - About us - Services Australia](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/youpla-support-program?context=22)). Individuals will be able to opt out of data matching before 5 July 2024. Data matching will commence after 8 July 2024 in respect to those individuals who have not opted out.

1. Data Issues
   1. Description of the data

The data will be provided by the NIAA to Services Australia in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, which will include:

* policy details
* identifying and contact details for the policy holder (customer), nominee, and next of kin or beneficiary
* the CRN of the policy holder (customer) (if they are also Centrelink customers), and
* amounts payable under the Youpla Support Program.

The file will include records for approximately 13,700 customers.

* 1. **Data Quality**

The data provided to Services Australia by the NIAA is sourced from the Liquidator (SV Partners), which in turn has sourced data from the Youpla Group and Services Australia.

The Liquidator will review the quality of the data before providing it to NIAA. NIAA will also review the quality of the data prior to sending it to Services Australia.

Services Australia, as the matching agency, will match the data so as to achieve the objectives stated in Part 2.2 of this protocol.

The Services Australia Data Quality unit will manually check every record to verify the accuracy of the data match.

Services Australia’s experience in matching similar data with the same matching criteria shows an extremely low number of instances of incorrect identity matching. Services Australia has a well-established process to address any instances of incorrect matching to reduce or eliminate potential privacy impacts.

For example, when there is any doubt about the correctness of a particular identity match, the data is forwarded to a specialist area within Services Australia where further checks are undertaken to:

* verify the identity match, and
* create a new record and only make payments once customer contact has been established, and the customer has been verified for identity (by Services Australia) applying Services Australia’s standard proof of customer identity processes.

Where a match is made (and verified), Services Australia will contact the customer.

Where a match cannot be made, Services Australia will contact the NIAA and/or the customer and verify their identity applying Services Australia’s proof of customer identity processes to identify the customer and:

1. update the customer’s (matched) record (if they have an existing Centrelink record), or
2. create a new Centrelink record for the customer.
   1. **Data Integrity**

Services Australia maintains a high level of data integrity. Measures are taken to maintain these integrity levels, including designing systems that will not accept records that are incomplete and identifying and correcting records that have data items that are inadequate or corrupt.

The program is likely to lead to greater data accuracy and integrity as Services Australia goes through the process of reconciling any mismatched records.

* 1. **Data Security**

Services Australia will exchange data with NIAA using dedicated secure government channels. This mechanism facilitates the transmission of secure and trusted communications across government.

All data received by Services Australia from the NIAA is held in secure storage databases, within Australian Government data centres. These are Services Australia systems that employ strict security controls. Only Services Australia staff with a business need to access data are able to view the data provided under this program.

Services Australia staff are subject to statutory secrecy and confidentiality provisions, including under the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999*, the *Public Service Act 1999* and the *Criminal Code Act 1995*. Services Australia is also subject to the *Privacy Act 1988*. Access to Services Australia’s computer centres is strictly controlled and limited to authorised staff.

Services Australia’s security system provides protection and control of dataset access, system entry and program integrity. Security features include logon identification codes, passwords and security groupings to ensure that access to information is on a need-to-know basis only. In accordance with existing security arrangements, Services Australia automatically logs user access to data files.

NIAA is responsible for its own security with respect to its staff and access to the data provided to Services Australia. Like Services Australia, NIAA is subject to obligations relevant to the protection of data and personal information under *Privacy Act 1988*, *Public Service Act 1999* and *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

Additional security will be in place for the data received by Services Australia as part of this data matching process, with data to be quarantined in a separate Services Australia database, up until data matching occurs with access strictly limited to officers required to facilitate the delivery of this program.

1. The Matching Process

NIAA will provide Services Australia with a data file containing a list of individuals who are eligible for a resolution payment under the Youpla Support Program. This data file may contain personal information of individuals who are not claimants or customers of social security payments.

Upon receipt of the data file, Services Australia performs an identity match of all NIAA records with Centrelink customer records, by comparing the following fields:

* Payer Family Name
* Payer Given Name
* Payer Middle Name
* Payer Date of Birth
* CRN (if the customer is also a Centrelink customer).

The resulting matches are those where the NIAA’s data files have the same identity details as Services Australia’s customers.

Where an unconfirmed match results, these will be resolved manually. Unconfirmed matches include:

* Multi-matches – this is where the identity could relate to multiple Services Australia records
* Possible matches – this is where the identity match is not certain.

If required, to increase the confidence of a match, the following information will be compared manually by Services Australia staff:

* Payer Address
* Payer Mobile Number
* Payer Email Address

Where a match cannot be made, Services Australia will contact the NIAA and/or the customer and verify their identity applying Services Australia’s proof of customer identity processes to identify the customer and:

1. update the customer’s (matched) record (if they have an existing Centrelink record), or
2. create a new Centrelink record for the customer.

Once a data match has been confirmed to a high level of confidence, Services Australia will then look at the additional information that has been provided by NIAA, including the members covered under the policies paid by the customer.

Services Australia will then use the information that has been provided by the NIAA (and information in the customer’s Centrelink record, if available), for the purpose of processing the customer’s claim and arranging a resolution payment.

A technical standards report can be found at Appendix A.

1. Action Resulting from the Program

All customers will require contact prior to any payment being made. Customers may be contacted by either pre-call SMS and outbound phone call, or letter if the call is unsuccessful. An example of the SMS and letter text is set out at Appendix B.

Contacting customers by pre-call SMS and letter are standard agency processes for all customer contact. The pre-call SMS alerts the customer to expect a call from Services Australia. It does not otherwise include any personal information.

The customer’s personal information will be used during the outbound phone call with the customer. There may be customer contact through both Service Centres, or other areas (e.g. Agent and Access Points). Staff at Service Centres or Agent and Access Points will give general advice and customer can supply them their documents to scan and upload. However, customers will be referred to their case manager if they wish to discuss the details of their claim.

Services Australia will confirm with the customer the policy in respect of which they will be receiving payment and ask for their decision on how they would like to receive their resolution payment. The customer will be offered a lump sum to be paid into their bank account or a roll over to a funeral bond provider. Financial counselling is also available to customers to assist them to make the choice between these options.

If a customer disagrees with any of the information Services Australia has received from NIAA, the customer is able to advise Services Australia staff at any time. The customer will be able to provide supporting evidence so the correct information can be provided to NIAA for further assessment. NIAA will make the final eligibility determination.

Where required, Services Australia may undertake administrative action to recover overpaid payments.

If the customer is not contactable by outbound call, Services Australia may contact a customer via a letter, requesting the customer to contact Services Australia. The letter advises the customer that Services Australia has attempted to contact them and they are asked to make contact. As is the case with the pre-call SMS, the letter does not otherwise contain the customer’s personal information.

If contact is not made by 30 June 2026, the moneys will be returned to the Department of Finance.

1. Time Limits Applying to the Program

The matching of data will commence on or after 8 July 2024 (after the expiration of the opt out period discussed in part 4 of this protocol).

As per the Services Australia Records Management Policy:

* The CSV file provided by NIAA to Services Australia will be retained by Services Australia until 1 December 2026, and then will be sent to Records Management for destruction in accordance with the *Archives Act 1983* (Cth) (**Archives Act**).
* The data matching tables (that is, the tables received from NIAA which Services Australia will use to match against) are archived in Process Direct after 7 years and otherwise handled in accordance with the Archives Act.

1. Public Notice of the Program

Services Australia will notify the public of the program protocol by:

* publishing a notice in the Federal Register of Legislation – Gazettes in the week commencing 8 July 2024
* publishing this protocol on Services Australia’s website.

1. Reasons for Conducting the Program
   1. **Relationship with Services Australia’s Lawful Functions**

The program is related to the NIAA’s performance of the Youpla Support Program (being a program specified in Schedule 1AB to the FF(SP) Regulations). In accordance with section 32D of the FF(SP) Act, the Chief Executive Officer of the NIAA has made all relevant delegations required to enable officers of the NIAA and Services Australia to administer the Program.

All information handling by Services Australia in relation to the data matching program will be in accordance with law, including the *Privacy Act 1988* and, to the extent the program involves protected information, the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999*.

1. Legal Authority
   1. **General**

Section 32B of the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Act 1997* (Cth) (FF(SP) Act) authorises the Commonwealth to make, vary or administer arrangements and grants for the purposes of programs specified in the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* (Cth) (FF(SP) Regulations). The power to make, vary or administer arrangements and grants may be exercised on behalf of the Commonwealth by Ministers and the accountable authorities of non-corporate Commonwealth entities, as defined by section 12 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth). Section 32D of the FF(SP) Act confers powers of delegation on Ministers and the accountable authorities of non-corporate Commonwealth entities, including in respect of powers under section 32B of the FF(SP) Act. In exercising powers under a delegation, the delegate must comply with any directions of the Minister or accountable authority of a non-corporate Commonwealth entity (as the case may be).

The Youpla Support Program is specified as a program in Schedule 1AB to the FF(SP) Regulations. Under section 32B of the FF(SP) Act, the Chief Executive Officer of the NIAA, as the accountable authority of the NIAA, has the power to make, vary and administer arrangements and grants for the purposes of the Youpla Support Program. The Chief Executive Officer of the NIAA has made all relevant delegations required to enable officers of the NIAA and Services Australia to administer the Program, in accordance with section 32D of the FF(SP) Act.

* 1. **Services Australia**

Services Australia complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* and Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), and the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999*,in relation to the handling of information about customers and other individuals.

Services Australia will collect personal information (and protected information) from the NIAA and use it to perform the data match for the purposes of administering the Youpla Support Program (collection for primary purpose authorised by APP 6.1).

To the extent the data match will involve the use of protected information held in the Services Australia Centrelink database, that use of protected information is authorised as follows:

1. for Centrepay customers, use for the purposes of the social security law (*Social Security (Administration) Act* section 202(2)(d)), and
2. for all other customers, use with their implied consent (*Social Security (Administration) Act* section 202(2)(f)).

Once the data match has occurred, Services Australia will use personal information (and protected information) to contact customers for the purposes of administering the Youpla Support Program (use for primary purpose authorised by APP 6.1). To the extent that contact involves the use of protected information, that use of protected information is authorised under section 202(2)(d) and section 202(2)(f) of the *Social Security (Administration) Act* as set out above.

Once Services Australia has made contact with a customer, all further action taken by Services Australia in respect of the personal information of customers will be with the customers express consent (*Social Security (Administration) Act* section 202(2)(f) and APP 6.1(a)) and for the primary purpose of administering the Youpla Support Program.

* 1. **NIAA**

NIAA will disclose personal information (and, in some cases, protected information) to Services Australia for the purposes of administering the Youpla Support Program, being the purpose for which the data is initially obtained by NIAA from the Liquidator (and therefore in accordance with APP 6.1, *Social Security (Administration) Act* section 208(1)(a) and *Social Security (Public Interest Certificate Guidelines) (DSS) Determination 2015* clause 17A).

1. Alternative Methods

NIAA is responsible for determining individuals’ eligibility and entitlement amounts under the Youpla Support Program. As such, the only mechanism for Services Australia to obtain information about customers who are eligible, and the amounts eligible, is through NIAA. In the circumstances, there are no other alternative measures to data matching that could achieve the same results as the data matching program.

1. Prior Data Match Programs

No previous data matching activity has been undertaken for this purpose.

1. Costs and Benefits

As [announced](https://ministers.pmc.gov.au/burney/2024/enduring-resolution-victims-youpla-group) by the Australian Government on 8 February 2024, this initiative meets the Government’s commitment to provide an enduring resolution for people impacted by the collapse of the insurance provider Youpla Group.

The Youpla Support Program will begin on 1 July 2024, and is expected to help more than 13,000 people recover from financial loss and provide certainty to families.

Under the program, eligible recipients will be offered the choice of a resolution payment – assessed at 60 per cent of the premiums paid up to the value of the insurance. Eligible recipients will receive a low risk prudentially-regulated funeral bond or opt out for a cash payment.

To assist eligible recipients, financial counselling will be offered to help them better understand the options available under the Youpla Support Program.

The $97 million program will run for two years, receiving applications until 30 June 2026.

The NIAA has delegated administration of the Youpla Support Program to Services Australia in circumstances where many (if not the majority) of affected customers will be customers of Services Australia who made a payment to the (former) Youpla Group via Centrepay (being a program under section 61A of the *Social Security (Administration) Act*). Services Australia has contact information and payment details for those individuals. Services Australia is best placed to contact those individuals and facilitate the payment of benefits to them using Services Australia’s existing secure payment infrastructure.

In respect of affected customers who are not otherwise customers of Services Australia, Services Australia is one of the largest Commonwealth service delivery agencies with an existing secure payment platform. It is more efficient for Services Australia to facilitate payment to affected customers rather than require the NIAA to invest in a payment platform to facilitate payments to individuals for the program.

Appendix A – Technical Standards report

**Description of Data**

**Data from NIAA to Services Australia**

A data file will be provided by the NIAA to Services Australia, which contains the data elements listed below.

| **NIAA field** | **Used for data matching** |
| --- | --- |
| Youpla Entity | No |
| Fund | No |
| Customer Number | No |
| Funeral Product Number | No |
| Commencement Date | No |
| End Date | No |
| Mem. Date of Death | No |
| Total Paid | No |
| Benefit Amount | No |
| Youpla entitlement amount | No |
| Status | No |
| Unique Identifier Number | No |
| Mem. Date of Birth | No |
| Member First Name | No |
| Member Middle Name | No |
| Member Last Name | No |
| Member Address | No |
| Member Phone | No |
| Member Mobile | No |
| Member Email | No |
| Is (Member the) Payer for Plan | No |
| Payer First Name | Yes |
| Payer Middle Name | Yes |
| Payer Last Name | Yes |
| Payer DOB | Yes |
| Payer Address | Yes |
| Payer Phone | Yes |
| Payer Mobile | Yes |
| Payer Email | Yes |
| CRN | Yes |
| Funeral Claim Paid | No |
| Cancelled Reason | No |
| Database Comments | No |
| AFCA Determination Paid (Y/N) | No |
| AFCA Complaint Paid (Y/N) | No |
| Additional Contact Person First Name | No |
| Additional Contact Person Middle Name | No |
| Additional Contact Person Last Name | No |
| Additional Contact Person Phone | No |
| Additional Contact Person Address | No |
| Additional Contact Person Mobile | No |
| Additional Contact Person Email | No |

**Matching Techniques**

**Identity Matching**

Identity matching involves using key data fields provided in external data and comparing these against customer data held by Services Australia. The result of this is establishment of a high-confidence link between external data and customer records held by Services Australia.

Services Australia will undertake identity matching of its customer database against the NIAA data using the following data fields:

* Payer Surname - Mandatory
* Payer Date of Birth - Mandatory
* Payer First Name
* Payer Middle Name
* CRN (if available).

Distinct combinations of the above identity fields will be matched against customer data and where a successful match occurs, an identity match score will be applied. Where the total of all identity match scores exceed a pre-determined level, an overall successful identity match is achieved. All data matches will be confirmed manually.

If required, to increase the confidence of a match, the following information will be compared manually by Services Australia staff:

* Payer Address
* Payer Email Address, and
* Payer Mobile Number.

The pre-determined total identity match score will reflect what Services Australia determines to be a high-confidence match on identity fields in both sets of customer data.

The identity matching process will also uncover instances of NIAA data matching to multiple Centrelink customer records, or to no record. Where no Centrelink customer record exists, one will be created and the customer will be asked to verify their identity (if contactable).

All records deemed to have been successfully identity matched will proceed to the customer contact and case management process.

**Risks**

**Incorrect identity matches**

Services Australia uses sophisticated identity matching techniques to ensure that it identifies the correct customer from data provided by the NIAA. This technique uses multiple details to obtain an identity match. For example, where a name and date of birth are available, all of these items will be used in the identity matching process.

Only high-confidence matches by Services Australia will result in further risk assessment rules being applied to the data.

Services Australia’s data matching rules and techniques are constantly evolving and being refined to ensure risks are being minimised. This is achieved by utilising the learnings of past and present data matching exercises.

**Data quality controls and audit**

When action is proposed, additional checks will take place to ensure the correct Centrelink customer has been identified.

**Security and confidentiality**

All Services Australia systems are strictly controlled with features including:

* system access controls and security groupings;
* login identification codes and password protection; and
* full audit trails of data files and system accesses.

Appendix B – Example of SMS

*Services Australia Service Officer will call you today from a private number. Please answer this call. Do not reply by SMS.*

Appendix C – Gazettal Notice

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Commonwealth**  **of Australia** | **Gazette** |
| Published by the Commonwealth of Australia | **GOVERNMENT NOTICES** |

**NOTICE OF A DATA MATCHING PROGRAM - Youpla Resolution Payment**

**SERVICES AUSTRALIA**

This notice refers to the data matching program between Services Australia (Services Australia) and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) in relation to the Youpla Support Program.

This data matching program involves the matching of:

* data provided by the NIAA to Services Australia about individuals who are eligible for the Youpla Support Program; and
* Centrelink customer data held by Services Australia,

for the purpose of identifying whether persons who are eligible for the Youpla Support Program are existing Centrelink customers of Services Australia.

If individuals are existing Centrelink customers, Services Australia will use customer data held in their Centrelink records for the purpose of administering the Youpla Support Program, including to make contact with the individual, verify their identity and arrange resolution payments. If individuals are not existing Centrelink customers, Services Australia will create a new customer record for the individual and make contact with them in order to verify their identity and arrange resolution payments.

The data provided by the NIAA to Services Australia will contain records relating to approximately 13,700 individuals.

A protocol document describing this program has been developed in consultation with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). Copies of the document are available from:

[https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/about-us/publications-andresources/centrelink-data-matching-activities](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/about-us/publications-and-resources/centrelink-data-matching-activities)

Services Australia adheres to the OAIC Guidelines on Data Matching in Australian Government Administration which includes standards for data matching to protect the privacy of individuals. Services Australia’s privacy policy is available from:

[https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/about-us/publications-andresources/privacy-policy](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/about-us/publications-and-resources/privacy-policy)