



BUDGET
2011-12

INVESTING IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE SIMON CREAN MP
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA, REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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FOREWORD

Driving growth, liveability and sustainability across regional Australia is one of the highest priorities of the Gillard Government.

The 2011-12 Budget builds on the Government's record of investment in regional communities and provides the support, services and infrastructure they need to prosper.

The Australian Government understands that strong regional economies underpin a strong national economy.

That is why we are delivering forward-looking policies and investments that better reflect Australia's diversity and enable regional communities to maximise the opportunities that lie ahead.

The importance of Australia's regions to the national economy cannot be underestimated.

One in three people live outside our major capital cities and two-thirds of the nation's export earnings are generated in the regions.

It has already been a challenging year for many regional Australians.

Communities across the country have been affected by devastating floods, cyclones and bushfires.

The Australian Government is working with the States and Territories to support recovery efforts, but we are also acutely aware of the challenges presented by the nation's diverse patchwork economy.

Different regions are facing different pressures and opportunities.

Some regions are performing well as the result of the mining boom, others are not.

A high Australian dollar means that some communities that rely on export income are feeling more exposed than others.

Our goal as a Government is to ensure that each region – each part of the patchwork – can reach its full potential.

If communities are stronger and more connected at the local level, overall productivity rises at the national level – and that's good for our regions and good for our nation.

We want to enable regions to broaden their traditional economic base – through new partnerships, new skills and new technologies.

Investing in Regional Australia

In this way, communities will become more resilient, more viable and more sustainable in the longer term.

A top-down one-size-fits-all approach will not achieve these goals.

Empowering regional communities to take ownership of their future will.

The OECD recently noted that instead of simply reacting to existing problems, regional policies around the world have become more proactive and forward looking.

The Australian Government is committed to empowering regions to maximise those proactive opportunities for growth.

That is why last year we revitalised the nation's network of 55 Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees.

If we want to strengthen each part of our patchwork economy, we need to look at individual regions through their eyes – through the local lens.

The people who live and work in regional Australia know their patch best.

They are aware of their unique strengths, landscape, people and industry mix.

They are best placed to identify the drivers for change and the potential for partnerships and new markets.

Stronger local engagement will also ensure that local employment services are tailored to local job seekers, local skills meet the needs of local employers, and local communities can access the opportunities that better infrastructure, such as the National Broadband Network (NBN), will open up.

Through our new Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, the 55 RDA committees are already working closely with stakeholders region by region to identify creative initiatives that will connect their community and boost growth and development.

We asked RDA committees and local regions to build strong local and regional partnerships: to join the dots across their region.

They are looking at how they can get the best possible long-term results for their region by connecting infrastructure funding, health funding, education funding and the opportunities through the historic rollout of the NBN.

This has seen them engage across all three levels of Government, working with the private sector, health and hospital providers, universities, schools, local government, industry and community organisations.

The 2011-12 Budget continues our support for the important work of the RDAs with an additional \$20.3 million to increase their capacity to work across all three levels of Government as well as the private sector, local health and hospital providers, universities, schools, industry and community organisations.

This new commitment will also enable RDA committees to advance their work in support of strategic well-researched projects through our Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) in the order of \$1 billion, \$573 million of which is subject to the passage of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT).

The Australian Government launched the RDAF earlier this year to deliver positive, concrete, social and economic benefits for individual regions, based on their unique characteristics, opportunities and challenges.

Along with our strengthened commitment to the nation's RDA network, this fund of about \$1 billion will drive the development of new infrastructure projects and initiatives that contribute to the long-term economic growth of communities across the country.

This will not only enable our Government to better respond to the different issues facing different regions, it will also help us embed regionalism into the way we govern in a way that cannot be unpicked – in the same way our reforms to Medicare and Superannuation could not be unpicked.

The 2011-12 Budget is a clear demonstration of our strengthened commitment to the growth and development of Australia's regions.

We are continuing to provide the most significant government investment to strengthen the nation's health care system in history: with \$1.8 billion over six years to provide critical infrastructure upgrades to hospitals and health services for regional Australians.

We are strengthening regional education: with \$500 million to strengthen regional higher education and vocational education and training institutions, through the regional priorities round of the Education Investment Fund.

We are boosting workforce participation and skill development: with \$558.5 million to deliver skills for priority industries and critical occupations, including targeting regions with skill shortages.

Investing in Regional Australia

We are expanding regional infrastructure: with \$916 million for the first projects to be funded from the Regional Infrastructure Fund. Completion of these projects, and future commencement of other projects from the Fund, is subject to passage of the MRRT.

We are cementing our commitment to environmental sustainability: with \$84.2 million to expand the Environmental Stewardship Program to engage landholders to manage our nation's habitat.

The Australian Government is also encouraging sustainable population in our regions, both for regional centres experiencing significant growth and for regional cities with potential for growth.

For the first time, this Budget will provide an initial breakdown of Government expenditure by regional and non-regional Australia and the new MyRegion website to ultimately allow easier access to regional information, with the first phase of the website launched in July 2011.

Our Government has already committed more than \$10 billion in additional resources to regional Australia over the next 10 years, and this Budget demonstrates how regional funding has been allocated or will be allocated in the future.

The 2011-12 Budget invests in a comprehensive range of programs specifically targeted at regional Australia.

Combined with the NBN and the future RDAF projects, there is a great opportunity for regions to look beyond individual silos, connect the dots across their area and achieve strong, integrated outcomes for their communities.

The Government has always worked side by side with regional Australia.

Over the past three years, we have strengthened this legacy by delivering a comprehensive range of policies and programs designed to enable regional communities to deal with global and local challenges.

The 2011-12 Budget continues that work.

Australia's regions are central to our national economy and identity.

We are determined to ensure they remain wonderful places to live and are well positioned to meet the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.

Foreword

The Australian Government will continue to provide the carefully-tailored policies and support that regional communities need to reach their full potential and become more sustainable in the years ahead.

Through this Budget, we will strengthen our partnerships with regional Australians, provide the long-term investments they need to drive growth and development, and deliver the world-class services and infrastructure they deserve.

Simon Crean
Minister for Regional Australia,
Regional Development and Local Government

BUDGET INITIATIVES IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

The 2011-12 Budget demonstrates the Australian Government's commitment to delivering comprehensive policies and programs to build strong, liveable regional communities across Australia.

The Budget continues our record of support for Australia's regions, with critical infrastructure upgrades to regional health and hospitals; funding for training programs and local employment coordinators to boost workforce participation and skills; and a significant investment for the first projects under the Regional Infrastructure Fund.

Our commitment to creating stronger and more sustainable communities is also evident in new programs to help regional cities market themselves as excellent places to live and work; continuing drought assistance to help farming families prepare for future challenges; and additional funding for the nation's hard-working network of 55 Regional Development Australia committees.

The Australian Government is committed to building strong regional partnerships across the nation and the 2011-12 Budget strengthens the voices of regional Australians and delivers the policies, programs and infrastructure that will enable them to drive growth, development and prosperity now and in the future.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Managing Biosecurity Risk across the Continuum

Australia needs an effective biosecurity system to protect our primary production industries and environment from the severe and negative impacts of animal and plant pests and diseases. Biosecurity risks are growing for a number of reasons, such as increasing trade from higher risk destinations, population spread into new areas, increasingly intensive agriculture, increased globalisation and climate change.

In the 2011-12 Budget, the Australian Government is providing funding for continuing frontline biosecurity services at the border, initial funding for planning a new post-entry quarantine facility, and developing a business case for a new biosecurity Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) system. Finally, it provides for the continuation of eradication programs of pests and diseases of national significance in 2011-12.

Frontline biosecurity services will be maintained with funding of \$219.8 million over three years to address the growing volume of quarantine risk material arriving in cargo, passengers' bags and in mail items. Each year a large volume of quarantine risk material is detected at Australia's airports, seaports and mail centres, a proportion of

which poses a significant risk to Australia's primary production sectors and the environment. Maintaining these services will ensure that Australia's favourable pest and disease status continues to be protected.

We are also providing \$4.2 million to a business case to support modernisation of biosecurity ICT architecture in a way that utilises the capabilities of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service's platform, and supports the move to a risk based approach to managing biosecurity risks. This system will ultimately deliver advantages to Australia's importers and exporters and provide enhanced capabilities for risk-based management of Australia's biosecurity.

The Budget measures include investment in new post-entry quarantine arrangements, with funding provided to purchase land and undertake early scoping and design work. The Government is also providing \$19.1 million in 2011-12 for urgent repair and maintenance work and other expenses at existing post-entry quarantine sites.

A number of eradication programs for nationally significant agricultural and environmental animal and plant pests and diseases are being funded under the 2011-12 Budget. These programs include European House Borer, Chestnut blight and Siam weed. The regions most affected by these programs are the areas where outbreaks of these exotic pests and diseases are being managed in Perth and Albany in Western Australia, Ovens Valley in Victoria, Murray bridge in South Australia and in Mossman, Tully, and at Murray and Herbert Rivers in Queensland. Reducing harmful pest and disease incursions and helping to control outbreaks if and when they occur protects our agricultural industries, our valuable export markets, and our fauna and flora. It also has implications for tourism, as several of these plant pests pose risks to native woodlands, World Heritage rainforests and ecologically valuable species. Other pests, such as Red Imported Fire Ants, can severely affect the use and social amenity of land. This measure supports the collaborative approach by governments and industry to ensure pest and disease outbreaks are brought under control as quickly as possible.

Significant steps have already been taken in reforming Australia's biosecurity system since 2008. The Government has established the Biosecurity Advisory Council, an interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity, and successfully trialled and implemented a number of risk-based border processes. The announcements in the 2011-12 Budget continue this change to a more flexible and responsive system, which continues to protect and support Australia's rural and regional industries. It provides for improved management across the biosecurity continuum which will benefit regional Australia by reducing the risk of pest or disease incursions. The consequential benefit of this will be to maintain and improve market access for Australia's agriculture export industries – thus benefiting our regional communities in which many of these agricultural industries are located.

The Pilot of Drought Reform Measures in Western Australia

The Commonwealth, in partnership with the Western Australian Government, will extend the drought policy reform measures being piloted in Western Australia for 12 months until 30 June 2012 and expand the pilot area to include the south-west region of Western Australia.

This pilot is directly supporting Australia's agricultural sector and communities, with pilot measures designed to help farmers better manage risks and prepare for future challenges. It is also trialling more effective social support for farming families and communities. The range of measures in the pilot provides support through:

- planning and training activities;
- grants to farm businesses to implement eligible priority activities;
- access to a stronger social support network;
- income support for farmers facing financial hardship;
- grants to farmers who are leaving farming, including for retraining and relocation expenses; and
- bringing farmers and former farmers together to discuss opportunities outside of farming.

The new expanded pilot region will cover approximately 96 per cent of all Western Australian farms, which accounts for approximately 13,000 farm businesses. The Commonwealth has committed over \$44 million to the extension of the pilot. The Western Australian Government to commit an additional 20 per cent of the total costs to the pilot.

The pilot will inform the development of a new national drought policy. The national review of drought policy found that Exceptional Circumstances (EC) declarations and related drought assistance programs do not help farmers improve their self-reliance, preparedness and climate change management, and that the EC declaration process is inequitable and unnecessary.

Drought policy reform will help prepare Australia's agricultural sector and communities for drought, climate change and other hardships. It will aim to improve on-farm productivity, community wellbeing and the environment, which will ultimately benefit regional Australia.

The extension and expansion of the pilot will further support the Government's consideration of national drought reform and will continue support for farmers, their families and communities located in the pilot areas, including those farming businesses and communities in regional Western Australia. The review of the pilot, to

be completed by September 2011, will inform the Government's further consideration of national drought policy reform.

Adjustment Support

As farmers move towards recovery after the long-running drought across the eastern half of Australia, the Government will continue to make EC assistance available including the programs: EC Relief Payments, the EC Interest Rate Subsidy and EC Exit Grants.

The \$20,000 off-farm salary and wages exemption for EC Relief Payments for primary producers will be extended for a further 12 months to assist farmers to meet basic living expenses. The off-farm or non-business asset limit (at the Newstart Allowance rate of \$258,000) for EC Interest Rate Subsidy will also be extended to help farmers diversify their risk away from the farm.

Small rural businesses will also be supported in their recovery. Eligible small business operators in EC declared areas will be able to access EC Relief Payments, EC Interest Rate Subsidy and Interim Income Support until 30 June 2012.

An additional \$9.6 million will be provided in 2011-12 to support farmers through Re-establishment Assistance for primary producers. Eligible primary producers wishing to exit farming can apply for grants of up to \$150,000. Eligible primary producers may also receive up to \$10,000 for professional advice and retraining to help them plan for life after farming. They may also access up to \$10,000 to help with relocation expenses and to access job seeking services after they have sold the farm.

The Government is providing an additional \$12.8 million in 2011-12 to continue the Transitional Income Support program, which provides short-term income support to farming families in financial difficulty to assist in managing the impacts of climate change on their farm businesses. Transitional Income Support (at the Newstart Allowance rate) provides farming families with income support to meet day-to-day living expenses while they consider their options for the future, either on or off the farm. Transitional Income Support is available to eligible producers until 30 June 2012. Eligible primary producers may also continue to access professional advice and training grants of up to \$5,500 to assist them to better prepare for themselves for changing economic and climatic conditions.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

National Broadband Network Regional Legal Assistance Services

This Budget provides \$4 million for legal assistance services to use the National Broadband Network to increase service delivery to people in regional areas where legal assistance is limited, particularly to assist people to achieve early resolution of legal problems without costly litigation, where possible. It will also assist with the attraction and retention of professional staff through avenues such as remote training and supervision which otherwise may only be available in metropolitan centres.

This program builds on the Government's already substantial investment in legal assistance services which in 2011-12 will be approximately \$320 million.

BROADBAND, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

Indigenous Broadcasting Program and National Indigenous Television

The Government is providing \$15.2 million in 2011-12 to support the operations of National Indigenous Television (NITV) through the Indigenous Broadcasting Program. NITV provides a platform for Indigenous people to tell Indigenous stories and is a powerful tool for the wellbeing of Indigenous people and achieving the Closing the Gap objectives.

The funding will cover NITV's operations during the 2011-12 financial year, during which time the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy will negotiate with NITV a more sustainable structural model that achieves the sector's widely held goal of providing more original Indigenous content on free-to-air television.

New media has emerged as an important additional communications tool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which is why the Government is allocating \$1.5 million from the Indigenous Broadcasting Program to establish an Indigenous Content and Project Fund to encourage people to become involved with their local Indigenous broadcasting and media. This funding will be used by Indigenous broadcasters to support new media activities and develop new content.

From 1 July 2011, administration of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program will be transferred to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

Early Childhood Education and Care

Early Childhood Education and Care – Childcare Reform Agenda Workforce Package

The Childcare Reform Agenda Workforce Package consists of two initiatives which will build the early childhood education and care workforce. The Government will invest \$9.7 million over four years to support the early childhood workforce by improving the quality and uptake of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and ensuring that early childhood qualifications across Australia deliver competencies in early childhood mental health and wellbeing.

Building the capacity of the early childhood workforce will support the successful delivery of the existing early childhood reform agenda, including the introduction of the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care services and the delivery of universal access to early childhood education.

The first two initiatives are aimed at improving the quality and uptake of RPL. The first initiative will involve developing a specialist training tool for already qualified RPL assessors to make RPL delivery in Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Children's Services more efficient, effective and accessible. The second initiative will provide up to 2,000 grants annually to assist early childhood workers overcome the barriers to accessing RPL in rural and remote areas.

The third initiative will consider the extent to which nationally consistent mental health and wellbeing competencies are included in early childhood qualifications and develop options for incorporating these competencies in qualifications where they are not already included.

Both initiatives have a particular focus on the workforce in rural and remote areas of Australia.

Early Childhood Education and Care – Australian Early Development Index

The Government has committed to ongoing three yearly cycles of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) with additional funding of \$23.2 million over four years to supplement the existing AEDI funding of \$4.3 million per annum. This represents an investment of approximately \$28 million every three years.

The AEDI is a population-based measure of how children have developed by the time they start school across five areas of early childhood development: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge.

Investing in Regional Australia

The AEDI was implemented nationally for the first time in 2009, and was a key component of the Australian Government's early childhood reform agenda. The AEDI has also been endorsed by COAG as a national progress measure for early childhood development.

The Government's ongoing commitment will enable data to be collected nationally every three years (2012, 2015, 2018 etc) from approximately 270,000 children in their first year of full-time school.

The AEDI results will provide Government and communities with the information they need to inform policy and planning around early childhood development. Key information about children's mental health and wellbeing will be collected through data on their social, emotional, behavioural and physical development which will be linked to the communities in which they live.

The AEDI data will be publicly available for around 96 per cent of Australian local communities, including regional, remote and Indigenous communities. The results will be provided through a national report, online community maps and community profiles. Researchers will also be able to access the AEDI dataset and undertake data linkage activities with other datasets.

This initiative includes funding for AEDI State and Territory Coordinators and AEDI Local Champions. AEDI Coordinators will be engaged in each State and Territory to work directly with communities, schools, teachers and government agencies to support participation and engagement with the AEDI. AEDI Local Champions will work directly with local community groups and service providers to support early childhood initiatives within nominated communities.

Schools

Extension and Expansion of the National School Chaplaincy Program

This measure provides \$222 million to extend and expand the program for a further three years, thus delivering on the Government's election commitments. The National School Chaplaincy program aims to support school communities that wish to access the services of a school chaplain or secular pastoral care worker. This is a significant program for local schools, with 43 per cent of current funding being directed to regional and remote schools.

This measure extends funding to December 2014 for the approximately 2,700 schools currently funded under the Chaplaincy program, as well as providing funding for up to an additional 1,000 schools from 2012 to 2014. The additional schools will be selected by targeting disadvantaged, regional and remote communities. There will be a focus on disadvantaged regional and remote schools in the expansion of the program.

More Support for School Students with Disabilities

This initiative will provide a total of \$200 million to support students with disabilities. This will be distributed across government and non-government education authorities from July 2011 to December 2013. It will deliver immediate, intensified, targeted assistance to teachers and schools to support school students with disabilities. There are more than 164,000 students with disabilities in Australian schools who will benefit from this measure.

The initiative will fund a mix of tailored activities that will support teachers and schools to improve the learning experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities. Implementation plans will be negotiated with each education authority which will specify the number of teachers, schools and students that will be directly assisted.

Families of students with disabilities will benefit from the improved support offered by the students' schools. It will build the capacity of participating schools in regional and rural areas to deliver quality services to students with disabilities.

Cape York Welfare Reform Trial Extension

This \$16.1 million measure will extend the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial for 12 months in Coen, Hopevale, Arukun and Mossman Gorge, to ensure that it can run its full course, services can continue without disruption and the extensive evaluation can be conducted. This extension of the evaluation will add to the limited evidence base on methodologies for increasing social and economic participation in severely disadvantaged Indigenous communities.

Under the extension of the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, the Government will continue funding for two education measures:

- The Student Education Trusts, a program to help families save for their children's developmental and educational needs over the course of their lives.
- The ABSTUDY bypass which enables children in the four Cape York Welfare Reform Trial communities to by-pass local secondary schooling and apply for the ABSTUDY away from home entitlements to attend a secondary school outside their community.

The Australian Government will continue to support better education outcomes through a tailored literacy intervention including using direct instruction delivered through the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy. This will be progressively introduced in the Cape York Welfare Reform trial sites in place of the Making Up Lost Time In Literacy (MULTILIT) program.

Supporting Teachers

Teach Next

The Teach Next election commitment will establish a new employment-based pathway into teaching for up to 450 highly skilled and experienced professionals with specialist qualifications who are seeking a career change. This \$18.1 million program will address areas of teacher shortages in specialised subject areas such as mathematics and science, and in hard-to-staff schools, particularly in regional areas. It is expected that this initiative will either meet or exceed the Government's commitment that regional Australia receives 32 per cent of new and existing education initiatives.

Reward Payments for Great Teachers

The Government will provide \$425 million over four years for the Reward Payments for Great Teachers election commitment. This funding will facilitate the development of a new nationally consistent, rigorous and objective performance management system for all teachers and recognise and reward Australia's top performing teachers. The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership will lead the development of this nationally consistent performance management system, known as the *Australian Teacher Performance Management Principles and Procedures*, and have them ready for implementation in all schools by the end of 2012.

Under the Commitment to Regional Australia, a significant proportion of the \$425 million reward payments will be awarded to schools in regional Australia that have shown the most improvement. These payments will drive improvements to the quality of teaching and leadership in regional schools and help raise student outcomes.

Higher Education

Regional Loading for Universities

In response to the Review of Regional Loading, announced in *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*, the Government will provide an additional \$109.9 million over four years for the regional loading, increasing funding to a total of \$249.4 million. This will strengthen regional higher education by helping to overcome the higher costs of regional campuses, compared to campuses in major cities. The Government will also improve the way the regional loading is provided to universities. Funding will be targeted to the campuses that most need support and it will be provided through a transparent process that responds to student demand.

Regional Priorities Round of the Education Investment Fund

The Government has already committed \$4.15 billion from the Education Investment Fund (EIF) for infrastructure to support higher education, research and vocational education and training.

In this Budget, the Government is providing a further \$500 million over the next five years to meet regional infrastructure needs with an EIF Regional Priorities Round, which will open mid-2011. This includes seed funding of \$20 million for the establishment of a multi-partner university campus on the mid-north coast of New South Wales.

The EIF Regional Priorities Round will help support education participation and attainment, contribute to regional economic growth and development and build sustainable institutions and communities.

Commitments from the EIF are expected to be made in line with the following schedule, with the majority of funding committed in 2011-12.

Education Investment Fund – Regional Priority Round

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total
Nominal proportion committed	75%	25%			100%
Nominal funding committed	\$375	\$125m			\$500m

NB: Indicative only, based on expected timetable for EIF priorities round. It is also subject to number of projects approved for funding, value of projects and complexity of negotiations around the funding agreements.

Skills

Improved Access to the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program

Funding of \$143.1 million over four years will be provided for approximately 30,000 additional commencements in Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programs over the forward estimates. These additional places will be targeted to support the skills package by providing a more targeted work-experience component and responding to sectoral demands for entry-level staff. The majority of additional commencements will be targeted in regional areas (up to 70 per cent) to address the lower employment and literacy outcomes in regional and remote Australians.

Sustaining Australian Apprenticeships Access Program enhancements

Additional funding for the Australian Apprenticeship Access Program will allow for continuation of program enhancements that provide vulnerable job seekers who experience barriers to entering skilled employment with nationally recognised pre-vocational training along with job search assistance and on-the-job support. Enhancements provide more tailored and higher levels of support for up to 9,500 disadvantaged participants per year who, without this type of support, are more likely to remain unemployed and less likely to find and keep skilled employment. This measure represents an investment of \$19.7 million over three years from 1 July 2012.

The Access Program is delivered nationally and responds flexibly to the changing needs of the Australian labour market including changes in the needs of particular regions or sectors.

Expansion of the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program

Funding of \$20 million over four years will be provided for approximately 13,000 additional training places in the Workplace English Language and Literacy program. The additional places will increase English language, literacy and numeracy training opportunities for those currently in the workforce with low language, literacy and numeracy skills. The additional places will be targeted to skill shortage areas and particularly priority areas identified in sector plans developed by the National Workforce Development Agency.

Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans

The Government will provide funding of \$19.1 million over three years for 34 Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators who will be deployed to regional communities across the country. These coordinators will work with community stakeholders, including Regional Development Australia Committees, to develop Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans strategies to improve participation and outcomes in education, training and employment in regional Australia. These Plans, built from local knowledge, meet local needs, and can then be drawn upon to inform the delivery of a range of Government policy and programs. The Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators will work closely with the Local Employment Coordinators outlined in the initiative: Extension of Priority Employment Areas, Local Employment Coordinators and Jobs and Skills Expos.

Additional Training Places for Single Parents

Funding of \$80 million over four years will be made available in for additional training places, to promote increased participation of single parents currently receiving PPS, with sufficient foundation skills to undertake further training, but insufficient work-related skills and experiences to find and maintain employment. The Government will work with states and territories to ensure that as this measure is implemented, vocationally oriented training places at the Certificate II level and above are available in locations of high demand for this target group including regional areas where appropriate.

National Workforce Development Fund

The National Workforce Development Fund, jointly funded by Government and industry, including an estimated \$66 million over four years to regional areas under the Critical Skills Investment Fund, will support training and workforce development in areas of current and future skills need. It will include an element that provides funding for enterprises in economically significant sectors with projected strong

employment demand, and also an element that enterprises in all sectors will be able to access to support training in occupations that are in demand. The Government will be providing \$558.3 million in funding over four years to support this initiative. This includes \$359.3 million in new funding and \$199.2 million in funding that is available to support critical industry sectors under the Critical Skills Investment Fund. An industry co-contribution is required.

This measure will assist to address the diverse skills needs of regional Australia. It will help to ensure a fair share of funding will be directed towards supporting regional employers, workers, trainees and job seekers, including by targeting areas of skills need identified through analysis undertaken in developing the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans. Consistent with the Government's Commitment to Regional Australia, it seeks to address the diverse skills needs of regional Australia through ensuring a fair share of funding is directed towards supporting regional employers, workers, trainees and job seekers through targeting areas of skills need. Skills needs across regional Australia can be identified through analysis undertaken in developing the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan.

National Workforce and Productivity Agency

A new independent National Workforce and Productivity Agency will be established from 1 July 2012. The Agency will be responsible for developing sectoral skills and workforce development plans, taking into account regional needs. In informing the allocation of training places under the National Workforce Development Fund, the Agency will need to bring together not only the needs of the industry sectors, but those identified by the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans.

Support for Competency Based Progression

The four-year, \$100 million Accelerated Australian Apprenticeships initiative will replace and expand on the 2010 Smarter Apprenticeships commitment which has not yet been implemented. It will support innovative, industry partnership projects that enable Australian apprenticeships to complete their training as soon as they have the required skills, rather than wait out the full duration of a traditional apprenticeship. This will enable apprentices to complete their apprenticeships as soon as they can demonstrate they have acquired the necessary skills. This will be supported by further work to develop principles for a model clause providing for competency-based wage progression to be embedded in modern awards.

Australian Apprenticeship Mentoring Package

The \$101.4 million Australian Apprenticeship Mentoring package will deliver services to assist potential apprentices to choose the right trade apprenticeship and provide targeted mentoring and assistance that will help apprentices successfully progress through their apprenticeships. Under the initiative, experienced individuals will assist potential apprentices, wherever they are, to better understand the type of work and

future opportunities available through an apprenticeship in the trades and inform employers considering taking on their first apprentice. This will ensure that there is a good 'fit' between apprentices and their trade and thereby support an increase in apprenticeships completions. Assistance will be targeted at Australian apprenticeship opportunities in traditional trades and industries experiencing skills shortage and focus on those disadvantaged Australian Apprentices who experience additional barriers to participation and completion.

Consistent with the national situation, currently about half of apprentices in regional Australia do not complete their apprenticeship. The *Apprenticeships for the 21st Century Expert Panel* recommended additional support for apprentices who face barriers to participation, including those in regional or remote locations. The Apprenticeship Mentoring initiative will fund targeted mentoring and assistance for at-risk Australian apprentices and support for their employers, particularly in the apprentice's first year, to help them successfully progress through their apprenticeships or traineeships. Mentors will support and advocate for the apprentice in a way that is focussed on maintaining the employment relationship. The Apprenticeship Mentoring package will include and expand on the existing Trade Apprentice Mentoring election commitment.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

Indigenous Ranger Cadetships

To assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to complete school, this \$4.1 million program will provide culturally relevant training in a school setting linked to natural resource management, heritage-related activities and cultural studies. Students in the Indigenous Ranger Cadetship pilot scheme will commence training in these areas through a nationally recognised vocational education and training qualification at the Certificate II level and, if successful, can continue into higher level qualifications including traineeships post school. A training program will be developed in partnership between the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational representatives and twelve pilot schools (program partners). Upon completion of the pilot, further schools will be invited to conduct the program.

Employment

Extension of Priority Employment Areas, Local Employment Coordinators and Jobs and Skills Expos

The Government will provide \$45.2 million over two years to extend the Priority Employment Area initiative, including Jobs and Skills Expos and Local Employment Coordinators until 30 June 2013. Priority employment areas provide targeted assistance and strategies for supporting jobs at a regional and local level. The Local Employment Coordinators in these areas will work closely with the Regional Development Australia Committees to build solutions to local employment issues. There will also be a flexible funding pool on which Local Employment Coordinators

can draw to help drive local responses. The Local Employment Coordinators will work closely with the Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators identified in the Regional Education, Skills and Job Plans initiative.

Future Employment Services Arrangements

To ensure tailored and effective services are delivered in remote locations, a comprehensive consultation process will be undertaken by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in 2011-12 on options to improve current employment and participation services. To support this, current employment service providers delivering assistance in remote areas will be offered a 12 month extension until 30 June 2013.

Building Australia's Future Workforce – Indigenous Youth Careers Pathway Program

The Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program will provide support to approximately 6,400 Indigenous students to stay in school and undertake School-Based Traineeships. Assistance will also be available for students to engage with mainstream employment service providers, find a job or move into further study.

While the measure will focus on the provision of School Based Traineeships and associated support to students in years 11 and 12 and, in some circumstances, year 10, it will also be available for aspiration building and mentoring for younger Indigenous high school students, to potentially move into a School-Based Traineeship, complete their schooling and then transition into vocational training, further education or a job. The assistance provided will follow a case management model, where providers work one-on-one with students in final years to provide intensive support, within the context of an individual 'pathway plan'.

The program will operate in schools with large Indigenous populations or those located in low socio-economic status areas with viable labour markets. This measure represents an investment of \$50.7 million over four years with the first intake of school-based traineeships commencing in the 2012 academic year.

This measure will be funded by a realignment of the objectives of the Indigenous Employment Program, commencing in 2011-12, which will ensure a more strategic approach to funding projects which focus on: employment outcomes; training for line-of-sight employment opportunities; better targeted and structured engagement, support and capacity building projects; supporting outcomes through Job Services Australia; and very targeted economic development projects. The savings of \$50.7 million from this measure will support the new Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program.

Job Services Australia and Indigenous Job Seekers

This three-year, \$6.1 million measure aims to lift the contribution of employment services to halving the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in regional and urban locations. The measure will pilot additional dedicated mentoring support for Indigenous job seekers in areas with significant Indigenous job seeker populations and high employer demand and will be delivered by Job Services Australia providers to achieve sustained employment outcomes.

Job Services Australia Very Long-Term Unemployed Pilots Place-Based Measure

This three-year, \$4.7 million measure will fund an anticipated 20 individual pilot projects to model potential enhancements to Stream 4 service delivery including alternative approaches to coordinating complementary non-vocational services for highly disadvantaged job seekers. This includes demonstrating how joint case management between multiple service providers can be used to enhance current Job Services Australia service delivery models and achieve improved employment and education outcomes for job seekers with multiple disadvantage.

Outcome Fee for Accumulated Employment in Remote Areas

This two-year, \$1 million measure recognises that remote labour markets are often characterised by short-term and intermittent job opportunities. It provides additional flexibilities for employment service providers to work with job seekers to secure a sustainable attachment to the labour market and meet employers' needs which will result in a positive impact on services to job seekers and employers. It will operate from 1 July 2011 until 30 June 2013 to help inform the development of future remote employment and participation service options.

Better Futures for Accumulated Employment

The Government will invest \$47.3 million over four years to trial a new approach to supporting teenage parents in 10 targeted communities across Australia. In this trial, teenage parents will be required to participate in 6 monthly interviews with Centrelink and develop participation plans which will link to access to more support and services. If they want to access childcare for study or training, the Government will pay for nearly 100 per cent of the costs (subject to eligibility of activities and services). These services will help teen parents develop their skills and improve their jobs prospects in the future. The trial is also designed to ensure that the children of teenage parents have the best chances in life. In 2012, this \$47.3 million proposal will support the long-term participation and productivity of parenting teens. These vulnerable young people will receive more intensive support from Centrelink and will engage in activities to improve education outcomes for themselves and for their children. The proposal will initially focus on locations with significant disadvantage which potentially compound

problems experienced by vulnerable young people. The intervention will operate in 20 Local Government Areas across Australia before being rolled out nationally.

Compulsory Participation Requirements for Jobless Families with Children Aged Under Six

There are two aims of this, \$71.1 million measure. First, it will seek to stem the transference of intergenerational disadvantage by creating opportunities for children from disadvantaged families to realise the benefits of early childhood health interventions, learning and education. Second, the proposal will empower parents who have been on income support for more than two years or who are under 23 years of age, by educating, informing and supporting them to access locally available services that will increase their capacity to overcome prevocational barriers to employment and engage in the community more broadly. This will help to increase employment outcomes across the regions of Australia, in particular the 10 Local Government Areas to be targeted. Parents and children in jobless families will also benefit from increased support under the Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA) program. JETCCFA provides substantial assistance with families' out-of-pocket child care costs, to support parents transitioning from income support to employment. Eligible parents who need to take up child care to support their entry into the workforce will be able to receive assistance with their child care fees for up to 52 weeks, 26 weeks longer than is currently available. An estimated 1,700 parents who reside in a specified location will benefit from this additional support over three years.

The identified locations are Logan (Queensland), Shepparton (Victoria), Kwinana (Western Australia), Playford (South Australia), Burnie (Tasmania), Shellharbour (New South Wales), Rockhampton (Queensland), Hume (Victoria), Bankstown (New South Wales) and Wyong (New South Wales).

Parents who are already participating through study or part-time work are not covered under this proposal.

FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Closing the Gap in Regional Australia

Cape York Welfare Reform Trial Extension

Funding of \$16.1 million over two years (from 2011-12 to 2012-13) is being made available to extend the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial. The Trial is being implemented in partnership with the Queensland Government, Cape York regional organisations and the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. It is an Indigenous led approach to improve social inclusion and economic outcomes for this severely disadvantaged region. The extension will allow trial partners to build on gains already seen in education and social responsibility.

Broadband for Seniors

The Australian Government will be providing \$10.4 million over the next four years to maintain 2,000 Broadband for Seniors kiosks across the nation. More than half of the kiosks are in regional areas.

Broadband for Seniors provides senior Australians with free access to the internet helping them gain confidence using computers and the internet, and stay connected with friends, family and their community.

Broadband for Seniors aligns with the Government's strategic priority to help strengthen the economy through delivery of the National Broadband Network.

Family Mental Health Support – Additional Services

The Australian Government is providing \$61 million over five years to double the number of Family Mental Health Support Services from 40 to 80, providing support for more than 32,000 children and young people.

This measure provides prevention and early intervention strategies for children and young people experiencing, or at risk of, mental illness and their families. It will provide a flexible range of interventions tailored to meet the need of children and young people who have been identified as being at risk of mental illness. These include family support and counselling; information and referral to clinical or other community services; home based support; and education and skills development.

Expanding Community Mental Health Services: Personal Helpers and Mentors and Respite Services

The Australian Government is expanding the Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMS) and respite services by providing \$208.3 million over five years to provide up to an additional 85 integrated PHaMS and respite services across Australia.

This measure will provide support for an additional 3,400 people with severe mental illness and 1,100 carers.

Personal helpers and mentors work one-on-one with people with persistent mental illness providing practical help to achieve their personal goals and manage everyday tasks; ranging from help with housekeeping, to catching public transport. They also work on improving relationships with family and friends and becoming more involved in community life. Personal helpers also make sure participants are connected with other relevant services including clinical health services, accommodation and substance use services as required.

The additional funding for mental health respite will give carers of people with a mental illness a short break, whether this means staying overnight in a respite service, a few hours enjoying recreational activities or linking in to support groups.

The expanded Family Mental Health Support and PHaMS measures are part of a broader package of commitments by the Australian Government to build a better mental health system.

Supporting Families with Teenagers

The Government is delivering on a key election commitment to increase family assistance by up to \$4,200 a year for teenagers in secondary study. This significant increase will help families meet the higher costs of older children and encourage more teenagers to stay in school.

From 1 January 2012, the maximum rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A will increase by up to \$160 a fortnight for teenagers aged 16 to 19 who are in secondary school or a vocational equivalent, or who are exempt from this requirement. This means teenagers will no longer experience a drop in assistance when they turn 16 and remain in full-time secondary study. Their families may also be eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part B, Rent Assistance, Large Family Supplement, Multiple Birth Allowance and Assistance for Isolated Children.

Continuation of Child Protection and Voluntary Income Management Trials in Western Australia

Income management is part of the Australian Government's commitment to reforming the welfare payments system, ensuring that income support and family payments are spent in the best interests of children. The Australian Government is investing \$17.9 million to continue trials of income management in Western Australia over 2011-12, including financial management services.

Child Protection of Income Management and Voluntary Income Management – will continue in the Kimberley region and metropolitan Perth. People on income management are also provided with referrals to a range of financial support services and given access to incentive payments to encourage improvements in saving and budgeting behaviours.

Continuation of Innovative Projects: Financial Literacy and Micro-Finance Programs

The Australian Government is providing funding of \$60.6 million over four years to continue a range of microfinance initiatives delivered in partnership with the community sector and the major banks, including no and low interest loans and matched savings schemes. This measure builds on the Government's commitment to build financial security and inclusion for disadvantaged and low income Australians. Funding will provide operational support for the delivery of these services in multiple locations across Australia, including regional and remote areas.

Services which will receive continued funding include 148 SaverPlus, Step-Up and No Interest Loans scheme in regional areas, as well as indigenous financial literacy projects in regional and remote areas.

Extension of Funding for Emergency Relief and Commonwealth Financial Counselling Services – Secure and Ongoing Funding

The Australian Government is providing \$128.1 million over four years in additional ongoing funding for emergency relief and Commonwealth financial counselling services across Australia. This is a 60 per cent increase on base funding levels for emergency relief, and continues funding for 77 full time equivalent financial counsellors funded in the global financial crisis.

Emergency relief services provide vulnerable individuals and families in disadvantaged areas across Australia with material aid, basic advocacy, financial counselling and referral in times of need, including people in regional and remote Australia. Without support, these people are at risk of prolonged social and economic exclusion and entrenchment in the welfare system.

This funding supports 705 organisations in more than 1,340 emergency relief service locations nationally. Funding will be maintained at 100 per cent of 2010-11 funding levels in Queensland and flood affected areas of Victoria and New South Wales until 31 December 2012, in recognition of the impact of natural disasters on these communities.

Commonwealth financial counsellors provide free financial counselling services to people who are experiencing personal financial difficulties including from causes such as unemployment, sickness, housing stress, family breakdown and natural disasters. The Australian Government will maintain 77 additional financial counselling positions established during the global financial crisis – with a total of 56 in regional areas. This brings the total financial counsellors across Australia to 140.

A Better Start for Children with Disability Initiative

Delivering on an election commitment, the Australian Government is providing \$146.5 million over four years to give children with disabilities that affect their development access to targeted early intervention services. Eligible conditions are sight and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and Fragile X syndrome. The new program starts on 1 July 2011 with two elements:

- Early intervention services for children up to the age of 7, including:
 - Up to \$12,000 funding to pay for early intervention services for eligible children. A maximum of \$6,000 will be available in any financial year, and around 9,000 children would benefit over four years.

- Access to a \$2,000 one-off payment for children living in outer regional and remote areas to assist with the costs of accessing early intervention services, such as travel and home visits. This will improve these families' access to early intervention services.
- New Medicare items for children up to the age of 15, provided a management and treatment plan is in place before the age of 13. Approximately 20,000 children will benefit over four years.

The program builds on the success of the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism initiative, which will receive a funding boost of \$28.7 million in the 2011-12 Budget to meet increased demand.

HEALTH AND AGEING

Health and Hospitals Fund Regional Priority Round

The Commonwealth will provide funding to modernise key health infrastructure across Australia to improve health care. Funding will be provided for a range of health care facilities including enhanced and expanded hospitals to deliver increased elective surgery, sub-acute care and emergency department capacity; improved access to dental, cancer care and renal dialysis services; and new or refurbished mental health care facilities, primary care infrastructure and Indigenous health infrastructure. New and expanded patient accommodation facilities will also be provided for patients who need to travel to access treatment, and their families.

Substantial community-wide benefits in terms of health care and employment are expected for the immediate areas in which the projects are located and in the broader regions beyond.

In total, the Government is providing \$1.8 billion to improve regional health infrastructure through the Health and Hospital Fund. This includes funding of \$1.33 billion for 63 projects across regional Australia. The Government will also provide a further \$475 million to fund an additional Regional Priority Round from the Health and Hospital Fund.

Commitments from the HHHF are expected to be made in line with the following schedule, with the majority of funding committed in 2011-12.

Health and Hospital Fund – Regional Priority Rounds

		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total
2010-11 Regional Priority Round	Nominal proportion committed	70% to >90%	<10% to 30%	-	-	100%
	Nominal funding committed	\$930m to >\$1200m	<\$130m to \$400m	-	-	\$1330m
2011-12 Regional Priority Round	Nominal proportion committed	-	70% to >90%	<10% to 30%	-	100%
	Nominal funded committed	-	\$330m to >\$430m	<\$45m to \$140m	-	\$475m

This table is indicative only. The timing of commitment of funding for projects may be affected by negotiation with other parties, whether co-contributions are secured from other groups such as state/territory governments, or other factors outside Commonwealth control.

Reform of the Diagnostic Imaging Sector

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units operating in non-major cities which are currently not eligible for Medical Benefits Schedule coverage will become eligible for such MRI services from 1 November 2012. This is important as it will strengthen access to Medicare-eligible MRI services for patients living in regional Australia.

The measure also extends Medicare requesting rights to GPs for all patients under 16 to a small set of clinically appropriate indications for MRI from 1 November 2012, and requesting rights to GPs for all remaining patients to appropriate indications from 1 November 2013. As Medicare-eligible MRI can currently only be requested by specialists and consultant physicians, this measure will improve access to services for patients living in regional Australia where treating doctors are primarily GPs and there are fewer specialists.

Both aspects of the measure will result in less travel and time between scan and treatment for patients living in regional Australia.

The Government is committing \$104.4 million over four years to this measure.

Access to Allied Psychological Services

The Access to Allied Psychological Services Program provides access to short-term focused psychological services for people with a diagnosed mental illness, with referral through their General Practitioner. This program is particularly effective at targeting hard-to-reach groups and people who would otherwise miss out on mental health services.

Many specific populations, such as low income earners and those in rural and remote areas, have difficulty accessing Medicare-subsidised mental health services due to cost and workforce limitations. In 2010, approximately 36,000 people received services through the program, with 45 per cent of services provided in rural areas.

The 2011-12 Budget mental health package, has allocated this program \$144 million over four years, to provide additional services, with investment to grow to \$205.9 million over 5 years.

Headspace

One in four young Australians aged 16-24 years will experience a mental health disorder (including substance use disorder) in any year. Only 25 per cent of this group is accessing help.

The headspace model provides for holistic care in four key areas: mental health, physical health, alcohol and other drug use and social and vocational support. Between 2007, when funding for headspace commenced, and April 2011, approximately 42,000 clients received 396,000 occasions of service.

The headspace model has proven to be very successful and many communities are keen to have a headspace site established in their area.

This measure will provide an additional \$132.3 million over the forward estimates period, and \$197.3 million over the five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

This initiative will boost funding to achieve sustainability across the current 40 sites in 2011-12 and bring on an additional 50 fully sustainable sites in a phased way. A total of 90 headspace sites will be available across Australia by 2015-16.

The location of new sites will be determined by the Government and headspace using well established criteria and through consultation with States and Territories and other key stakeholders.

Establishment of a Single Mental Health Online Portal

Evidence shows that web-based programs delivering therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy (also known as talking therapies) are effective, particularly for people with common mental disorders such as anxiety and depression.

An online mental health portal will provide an additional avenue to traditional face-to-face psychological support. It will guide people to programs most suited to their needs, including self-directed programs and clinician assisted support through a 'virtual' clinic.

Investing in Regional Australia

General Practitioners (GPs) will be able to refer suitable patients to the portal. Consumers and carers will also be able to get more information and be guided to online treatment where appropriate.

This new measure makes better use of the existing investments and resources, includes links with primary care, and further increases the availability of online counselling provided by qualified clinicians. It will also ensure that people are able to be matched to those services that best meet their particular needs.

The portal will provide a clear gateway to current Australian Government investments in telephone and web-based mental health services and self help resources, totaling \$121.7 million to 2015-16, enabling ease of access by consumers and health professionals to these evidence based supports.

It will improve pathways to care for people with common mental disorders such as anxiety and depression. This measure will provide access to web-based therapies for up to 45,360 additional people over five years.

This measure will particularly improve access for harder to reach groups, including those in rural and remote areas and those who prefer anonymity.

Funding of \$11.1 million will be provided over the forward estimates period, and \$14.4 million over the five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16. This initiative will commence in the second half of 2011.

Regional Health and Aged Care – Dedicated Unit

The Government acknowledges that it is often difficult for regional Australians to access current, local information about regional health and aged care programs in their area. The dedicated unit for regional health and aged care offers regional Australians access to information about policies and service delivery in health and aged care through a freecall telephone number, a website that offers place-based information and an email contact function.

Additionally, regional Australians and peak rural health interest groups will benefit from a strong rural health advocate within the Government bureaucracy ensuring rural health remains a front and centre issue with key decision makers

Access to this new information will also assist health and aged care service planning at a local level, and provide support to regional Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks under national health reform plans.

The Regional Health Priorities Information Line will commence from 1 July 2011 and an initial regional health website will be launched on 1 September 2011 with information progressively added from this date.

Continued Expansion of the Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Initiative

In the 2011-12 Budget, the Government is maintaining additional funding of \$12 million for this initiative over four years. It provides increased access to specialist and other health professional services for Australians living in regional Australia, and addresses some of the financial disincentives incurred by specialists providing outreach services. Funds are available for costs associated with travel, meals and accommodation, facility fees, administrative support at the outreach location, lease and transport of equipment, telephone support and up-skilling sessions for resident health professionals. This funding covers approximately 25,000 patient contacts each year.

The Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance initiative is made up of a number of smaller components: the Indigenous chronic disease expansion (\$98.5 million over four years from 2011-12), the maternity services expansion (\$19.5 million over four years from 2011-12) and the ophthalmology expansion (\$5.6 million over four years from 2011-12). The core component has an annual funding of approximately \$19.5 million, with total four-year funding available from 2011-12 of \$204.7 million.

Continuation of the Specialist Obstetrician Locum Scheme in Rural Areas

The Specialist Obstetrician Locum Scheme maintains and improves access to quality medical care for rural communities by providing locum relief to the rural obstetric and anaesthetic workforce. In the 2011-12 Budget, the Australian Government has committed \$2 million to subsidise, for a further 12 months, at least 100 locum placements of up to 14 days, including travel costs, for Specialist and GP obstetricians and GP anaesthetists practising in inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote locations.

An independent review of the scheme is being finalised and is expected to propose ways of streamlining the scheme. The Government will consider ways to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme using the outcomes of the review in the 2012-13 Budget.

Continuation of the Bringing Them Home and Expanding Link Up Programs for the Stolen Generation

The transgenerational effects of the Stolen Generation continue to manifest themselves in grief, loss and trauma that adversely affect the social and emotional wellbeing of many Indigenous Australians. Under this initiative, existing services designed to address these issues will be maintained, and from July 2011, will be consolidated in more flexible models of service delivery under a cohesive Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program.

The Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program will provide culturally appropriate services across Australia, including existing counselling, family tracing and reunion support to the Stolen Generations through the network of Link Up Services and

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counselling services to Indigenous Australians through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. This initiative will improve geographical coverage of services, particularly in regional and remote areas.

The staff in these services will be clustered into teams to reduce professional isolation, which often results in staff burnout and turnover, a particular concern in rural and remote health services.

The Government will invest a total of \$39.1 million over four years from 2011-12.

Establishing Quality Health Standards

The Government is committing \$35 million over four years to assist Commonwealth Government-funded Indigenous health organisations attain best practice in management and quality care through meeting mainstream Australian accreditation standards. More than 80 per cent of these organisations are in inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote areas.

This measure provides funding for support mechanisms such as access to grants for minor capital works, purchase of equipment and staffing, to strengthen corporate and clinical governance in these organisations, and improves the quality of healthcare service delivery provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It increases Indigenous health organisations' ability to participate in, and achieve the objectives of, 'Closing the Gap' in Indigenous health disadvantage.

The measure funds continuation of an existing program from the 2007-08 Budget and will commence in July 2011. It will benefit approximately 400,000 clients of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, many of whom live in regional and remote areas.

Aged Care – Residential Aged Care Viability Supplement – Continuation and Expansion

The Government will provide \$16 million over 2011-12 to continue the 2009-10 residential aged care viability Budget measure, increasing the residential aged care viability supplement by 40 per cent for eligible rural and remote aged care providers, and to provide one year of funding to extend viability supplements to a new class of aged care providers facing extreme pressures, specialising in low care, and providing aged services for homeless and Indigenous Australians.

This initiative helps to ensure continued industry investment in order to meet the increasing demand for aged care in these areas, and that older Australians have continued access to sustainable high quality aged care services.

More than 258 eligible aged care providers operating about 6,300 residential care places in regional, rural and remote areas will benefit through this initiative, as will

approximately 67 providers servicing more than 2,000 residents who are homeless, Indigenous Australians or receiving low care in rural and remote areas.

HUMAN SERVICES

Service Delivery Reform

The Government has announced a number of key initiatives in the 2011-12 Budget to support Service Delivery Reform, which is a major program of work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery through the Human Services portfolio. These reforms will improve services for all Australians, with several reform initiatives directly targeted at improving services for people in regional Australia.

Online Services

The Government has allocated \$13.0 million in 2011-12 to support a portfolio access strategy, which will provide greater online and telephone access to services. This includes \$1.2 million for Home Based Medicare Claiming. Accessibility of services will be improved through the development of a single portfolio website and telephone number, making it easier to engage with government from regional locations. The number of services available online will also increase. For example, Home Based Medicare Claiming will make it easier for people in regional Australia to access government services in the same way as people in urban locations. Home based claiming will remove the inconvenience of having to travel to a Medicare office to claim a Medicare rebate which will increase ease of access and reduce the time spent dealing with government.

Co-location

The Government has allocated \$8.1 million in 2011-12 to progressively co-locate portfolio sites across Australia. The extension of services into portfolio shopfronts through co-location will increase the number of locations where people in regional Australia can access portfolio services face to face. The extension of services through co-location means that many people who have to travel very long distances to their nearest Medicare or Centrelink office will have access to an office in a much closer location.

Co-design

Service Delivery Reform will be supported by the co-design project, which will work in direct partnership with key stakeholders, including communities, individuals and others, in designing service delivery. People in regional areas will have the opportunity to participate in co-design through a range of methods including community and staff engagement forums, future online community forums and email.

The Government has allocated \$4.6 million in 2011-12 to support ongoing co-design activities.

Mobile and Outreach Services

Regional services are being improved through enhanced mobile and outreach services, such as the existing mobile office program that delivered essential services to people during the 2011 Queensland and Victorian floods. The Government has allocated \$2.7 million in 2011-12 for the continuation of the mobile office initiative.

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Focus on Regional Migration

Skilled migrants who settle in regional Australia are critical to supporting the viability of many regional enterprises. This in turn creates and sustains jobs for Australians in the regions and contributes to their social and cultural diversity. As part of its commitment to encouraging migrants to settle in regional areas, the Government will be introducing several measures in 2011-12 to enhance existing regional migration arrangements.

- Applicants for permanent regional migration visas will be afforded the highest level of processing priority, ensuring their applications are processed and finalised as quickly as possible.
- The Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme is expected to deliver 16,000 skilled migrants to regional areas in 2011-12, filling vacancies which employers cannot fill from the local labour force.
- The Government will review its employer-sponsored visa categories, including the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, to streamline the arrangements for skilled workers on temporary visas who are already living and working in regional Australia. This will make it easier for temporary visa holders who have already made a commitment to living in a regional area and are contributing to its productivity by filling a skilled position to transition to permanent residence. Their employers will find it simpler to retain their skills in the region.

- The Government will develop and implement an enhanced Regional Engagement Strategy to ensure that employers in regional areas know which migration programs can assist them to fill skilled vacancies, where the vacancy cannot be filled from the local labour force. Through its Regional Outreach Officer network, the Government will develop information specifically for regional areas, and will actively disseminate the information in a range of ways to assist regional employers.

Regional Migration Agreements

Regional areas will benefit from the introduction of Regional Migration Agreements, a new migration initiative that will bring together employers, local and state government and unions to cooperate on addressing local labour needs.

This measure recognises the unique circumstances of some localities and tailors migration solutions accordingly. In particular, RMAs would be a coordinated response to labour needs, helping local areas to implement workforce strategies that support growth while ensuring Australian workers remain the first choice for employers and industry. By utilising RMAs, local communities will be able to gain streamlined access to temporary and permanent overseas workers where there is a genuine need. A strong focus of the Agreements will be fostering training initiatives for Australians.

RMAs will be custom-designed, geographically based migration arrangements that set out the occupations and numbers of overseas workers needed in the area. Individual local employers could then directly sponsor workers under the terms of the RMA.

RMAs will be negotiated with a range of stakeholders in the area, including local employers and community representatives, and targeted at those regions with the greatest economic need, where there are high employment growth rates.

Renewing the focus on the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme program

The Government will allocate 16,000 places to the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) in 2011-12, to help fill regional vacancies that cannot be met domestically. This is an increase of more than 5,000 places over the expected number of RSMS visas to be granted in 2010-11 and is the first time that permanent visas have been specifically allocated to regional Australia.

This recognises the significant demand from regional employers for skilled people in their businesses and underscores the importance of a demand-driven migration program, particularly in ensuring that Australia gets the skills it needs right now.

In addition, applicants for RSMS and other permanent regional migration visas will be afforded the highest level of processing priority, ensuring their applications are

processed and finalised as quickly as possible. This will make migrating to Australia faster for applicants who have skills, qualifications and work experience that are in demand in regional Australia – ensuring they can make a timely contribution to regional areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

Regional Infrastructure Fund

The Budget includes funding for eight initial projects to be funded from the \$6 billion Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF).

The Government is establishing a Regional Infrastructure Fund from the proceeds of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT). It will invest \$6 billion over 11 years, with \$5.6 billion conditional on passage of MRRT legislation, in much-needed regional infrastructure to equip the economy for Mining Boom Mark II, tackle capacity constraints, and create jobs in regional economies.

Reinvesting the proceeds of mining tax reform into communities gives Australian communities a fair return on their natural mineral wealth, and benefits Australian businesses by providing them with rigorously planned economic infrastructure that supports sustainable growth well into the future.

The 2011-12 Budget commits funding for initial work the following projects:

- Blacksoil Interchange (Queensland);
- Townsville Ring Road (Queensland);
- Peak Downs Highway (Queensland);
- upgrade of the Intersection of the Bruce and Capricorn highways (Queensland);
- Gladstone Port Access Road (Queensland); and
- Gateway WA project (Western Australia).

Funding for the Mackay Ring Road Study (\$9.5 million) in Queensland and the Scone Level Crossing Study (\$1.8 million) in New South Wales has been brought forward to allow early commencement of these projects.

Funding from RIF will have regard to States' and Territories' share of total mining production over time. As a result, our most regional states Queensland and Western Australia can expect \$2 billion each, for additional investment in rail, roads, and ports to help tackle capacity constraints arising from mining production and growth.

Regional Aviation Access Program

The Budget announces \$28 million in funding over two years from 2011-12 to 2012-13 under the Regional Aviation Access Program for aerodrome upgrade works at remote and isolated airstrips across Australia. The airstrips support flights essential to remote communities such as those delivering fresh food, mail, transporting residents and emergency personnel, as well as the Royal Flying Doctor Service. This funding will also be used to undertake aviation safety upgrades at identified Indigenous community airstrips and to fund grants to aerodrome owners for aviation safety upgrades on a co-funding basis.

INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

National Science Engagement (Inspiring Australia)

Inspiring Australia is the first national strategy for coherent action in science engagement that will help realise the goals outlined in *Powering Ideas*, the Australian Government's Innovation Agenda for the 21st Century. It will include activities in the bush, the suburbs and regional and remote areas and will improve coordination of science engagement activity at community and school level.

Small Business Support Line – Continuation

The objective of the Small Business Support Line is to improve the sustainability of small businesses through enhanced access to advice on matters such as obtaining finance, cash flow management, retail leasing, business diagnostic services, independent contracting, marketing, and personal stress and hardship counselling. Continuation of the support line will ensure small businesses have ongoing access to a single point of contact for advisory services.

The support line provides an important service for small businesses located in regional and remote areas of Australia, with a review of the support line finding that one third of small businesses seeking services were in regional areas. The support line service will continue to help improve business sustainability through the delivery of tailored and timely advice to small business operators and intenders, including during crises and disasters – such as in the 2011 floods across many states and Cyclone Yasi in Queensland – as the support line provides free access to initial personal hardship and distress counselling. Support line operators are helping small businesses to recover and cope with the aftermath of these events. The support line is staffed by operators who have strong customer service skills and have all owned, operated or worked in a small business.

The continuation of the support line was recommended by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government in the November 2009 report *The Global Financial*

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Crisis and Regional Australia, on the basis that it is one of the few initiatives general enough in its coverage to support the needs of a range of small businesses located in regional Australia.

PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Australia Council

The Government is providing \$10 million over five years for the Australia Council to support young and emerging artists. This new program provides funding for the creation of new Australian work across all art forms and will assist artists to build more sustainable careers. It will also assist artists facing specific access barriers – including artists with a disability, artists from non-English speaking culturally diverse backgrounds, and artists in regional and remote areas.

This measure will implement the Government's election commitment to invest in a creative Australia. This commitment will support up to 150 additional artistic works, presentations and fellowships.

The initiative will deliver grants of:

- up to \$80,000 per annum for new artistic works, including visual arts, performing arts, literature, new media and music;
- up to \$50,000 per annum for additional presentations to Australian audiences, including to communities outside the major metropolitan areas; and
- \$60,000 or more for fellowships for Australia's young and emerging artists and mid-career artists.

Artists developing new content for use by the National Broadband Network or showcasing distinctive Australian work overseas may also be supported through this initiative.

Contemporary Music Touring Program

In 2011-12, the Government is committing \$0.4 million per annum, on an ongoing basis, to provide grants of up to \$15,000 to enable professional artists to perform original contemporary Australian music in regional and remote Australia where this would otherwise be commercially unviable. The Contemporary Music Touring Program is an established and successful program that provides opportunities for people in regional and remote Australia to share in Australia's cultural diversity as music makers, audiences and workshop participants, including people living in remote Indigenous communities. The program also generates significant economic

benefits for the regions through employment and skills development opportunities for artists and technical support specialists and allied industries.

Active After-school Communities Program

The Government has committed \$43.9 million to continue the Active After-school Communities Program for the 2012 school year (in addition to the Australian Sports Commission continuing to make an annual contribution of \$4 million). The program increases the physical activity levels of primary school aged children through the delivery of inclusive sport and structured physical activity programs during the after-school time slot (3:00pm – 5:30pm).

Of the 3270 sites participating in 2010, 1697 were regional sites. These regional sites were paid a total grant amount of \$10.5 million. Of these 1697 regional sites, 585 (34 per cent) were in communities with low socio-economic status, and 71 (4 per cent) were in Indigenous communities.

The Active After-school Communities Program contributes to the Commonwealth's Closing the Gap strategy in addressing Indigenous disadvantage. The program has shown a positive impact for Indigenous children increasing physical activity levels, introducing them to healthy food, providing safe participation settings and improving school attendance.

REGIONAL AUSTRALIA, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MyRegion Website

To support the Government's commitment to greater transparency and accountability, the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government will deliver the new, interactive myregion.gov.au website. Over four years, the Government will provide \$4.2 million to establish and maintain the website.

The MyRegion website will be released in stages, with the initial launch due in July 2011.

Promoting Regional Living

The Australian Government is keen to help regional cities promote themselves to the broader Australian community as vibrant places to live and work, with a range of economic opportunities and a great standard of living. People living in our major capitals are often unaware of the benefits of living, working and studying in regional cities and towns. The growth of our regional cities over the past decade has led to the growth in amenities and services as well as opportunities for a range of lifestyles and opportunities for economic growth.

Building on the success of the Evocities initiative, Promoting Regional Living provides \$11.5 million over four years to support non-capital cities to implement strategic and targeted marketing strategies to promote the benefits and opportunities of living and working in those cities. Cities that have strategies in place for future growth needs will be eligible for support.

The growth strategies must explicitly address national and regional priorities. Priorities that may have particular relevance to these cities includes access to critical transport infrastructure; current skills base and future skills needs; new opportunities for private sector participation and partnerships; opportunities to maximise the use of broadband for the purpose of expanding business enterprises and the delivery of services; opportunities to attract new and recent migrants; social inclusion; water and energy efficiency; affordable housing options; environmental amenity and management; and climate change adaptation and management.

Promoting Regional Living will create opportunities for regions to showcase their cities to their full advantage, while also enhancing community perceptions of regional cities as a desirable living and working alternative.

Extension of Supplementary Funding for South Australian Local Roads

The Australian Government's supplementary funding for South Australian local roads addresses anomalies in the distribution of the local road component of the Financial Assistance Grants. South Australian local governments receive only 5.5 per cent of the local road component of the Financial Assistance Grants, despite encompassing approximately 7.4 per cent of the national population and 11 per cent of the national road network. To address this issue, the Australian Government will continue to offer supplementary funding, with an additional \$51.1 million over the next three years, to be distributed across all local governments in South Australia. This funding allows local government to effectively maintain the road network and avoid costly future rehabilitation.

Maintaining the high standard of South Australia's local road network plays a vital role in the economy. It supports our growers and producers, boosts rural and regional productivity and sustainability, and improves connections to major cities and ports. It also has significant positive implications for regional communities, including through improving road safety and accessibility.

Additional Resourcing for the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government

The Government is strongly progressing several regional Australia commitments agreed on 7 September 2010 with the Independent Members of Parliament.

In accordance with that agreement, the Australian Government has committed \$6.6 million over the next four years to strengthen program implementation and risk management of key regional programs and ensure adequate program governance.

The Australian Government is also committed to improving policy making through an integrated, whole-of-Government response to the challenges and opportunities that face regional Australia. The recently formed Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government is the only Commonwealth agency whose sole focus is on regional issues and the impacts of government policy on regional communities. This Department has been allocated \$33.8 million to ensure it improves outcomes for regional Australians now and into the future.

An additional \$9.4 million has been allocated to the Department to implement a range of specific priorities relevant to regional Australia, including delivering effective whole-of-Government responses to the challenges and opportunities that face regional Australia. These priorities include the progression of a referendum on constitutional recognition of local government, a Regional Development Policy Centre, and a taskforce aimed at developing options for a Government response to the social and economic impacts of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Additional Resourcing for Regional Development Australia Committees

The Government is supporting local communities to develop local solutions, by providing an additional \$20.3 million over four years to strengthen Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees. This will ensure the RDAs have the resources they need to deliver for their communities.

Infrastructure

The Government has also committed additional funding to improve infrastructure in regional Australia, in particular the following:

- *Port Macquarie Stadium*: \$1.4 million will be provided in 2011-12 and \$1.4 million in 2012-13 for an upgrade of the Port Macquarie Stadium.
- *Karumba Seawall*: \$2 million will be provided in 2011-12 for the restoration of Karumba seawall.
- *Riverstone Football and Sporting Precinct*: \$8 million will be provided as a contribution towards a state of the art community sporting, education and wellness complex at Riverstone West in the city of Blacktown, New South Wales.

Centenary of Canberra Gift

To celebrate the national capital's centenary in 2013, the Australian Government is supporting two initiatives commencing in the 2011-12 financial year as a gift to the nation: the National Arboretum (\$20 million over four years) and a major redevelopment of Constitution Avenue (\$42 million over two years). These initiatives are intended to enhance all Australians' pride in, and ownership of, their national capital.

Centenary of Canberra Joint National Program

The Australian Government is contributing \$6 million over three years to the Centenary of Canberra Joint National Program to enhance its participation in the celebrations marking the Centenary of Canberra. The suite of activities being developed through the Joint National Program will complement the Territory specific focus of a broader centenary program being developed by the ACT Government. The Joint National Program will engage communities around Australia in the celebration of the Centenary of Canberra in its role as the national capital. The schedule of activities range from civics and citizenship, to national cultural assets and Australian sport. A project that is well advanced under this program is the *Canberra Diaspora*. This global project is collecting, online, the stories of Canberra and individual Canberra connections through forums, interviews and other interpretations to be shared throughout Australia, and internationally.

RESOURCES, ENERGY AND TOURISM

Renewable Energy

The Australian Government is delivering on its commitment to accelerate the commercialisation and deployment of new renewable and low-emission energy technologies.

The 2010-11 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook includes the Connecting Renewables initiative, which will invest \$1 billion over the next decade in our electricity networks to connect Australia's renewable resources to Australian homes. This initiative aims to accelerate investment in transmission infrastructure to support renewable generation and help position the electricity sector to respond to a future carbon price.

The Government is also investing \$20 million over four years for the Australian Biofuels Research Institute. Funding set aside for the Australian Biofuels Research Institute will progress the commercialisation of next generation biofuels in Australia.

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES

Sustainable Australia – sustainable regional development

The Government will provide \$29.2 million over four years to enable additional strategic assessments by the Commonwealth under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* of plans developed by state and local governments for priority high growth areas. The plans will provide a basis for more affordable housing, higher community amenity through protection of environmental values, and deliver landscape scale biodiversity conservation. This collaborative process will result in an endorsed planning and decision making framework that reduces red tape for business, delivers substantial economic benefits, and provides certainty for public and private investment in regional development and infrastructure provision. This program is part of a package of measures that will lay the foundation for the Sustainable Population Strategy.

Sustainable Australia – measuring sustainability

The Government will provide \$10.1 million over four years to improve the availability of information and data relating to sustainability. Funding will allow for the development of headline Sustainability Indicators covering economic, social and environmental issues that are relevant to communities. Funding will also help to establish a Directory of Sustainability Measurement, to support access to sustainability information at national and regional scale. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities will deliver this initiative in collaboration with key data agencies, including the Australia Bureau of Statistics. This program is part of a package of measures that will lay the foundation for the Sustainable Population Strategy.

National Wildlife Corridors Plan

The Australian Government has committed to developing a national framework for wildlife corridor planning to guide future investments in conservation management. The National Wildlife Corridors plan is based around working with the community to plan a system of national wildlife corridors; a critical element in preparing our native plants and animals, as well as our agricultural landscapes, for climate change. These corridors will link national parks and reserves with well-managed private land, and guide future government investments in projects to support the protection of our natural environment and conserve our biodiversity. The plan will guide regional and other non-government organisations, State and Territory Governments and private land managers in designing and building wildlife corridors to support landscape scale conservation.

From 2011–12 to 2013–14, the Australian Government will provide \$10 million to develop the plan. This process will involve extensive stakeholder consultation to

ensure that, under the plan, actions to create wildlife corridors are strategic, and recognise economic and social opportunities in regional Australia. The planning process will be linked with other regional activities to minimise the burden on volunteers and other community resources. On completion, the plan will be actioned under the existing Caring for our Country initiative. Implementing the program will result in a small employment benefit. The plan will also provide new land management and planning opportunities for many land managers in regional and peri-urban Australia.

Regional Marine Planning

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that interests in our marine environment are balanced and the sustainability of these environments is assured. The Government will undertake public consultation on draft plans for Australia's South-west, North-west, North and East marine regions during 2011 before finalising the plans.

Environmental Stewardship Program

The Government continues to support the Environmental Stewardship Program under the Caring for our Country initiative, with \$84.2 million provided over four years to maintain existing contracts and establish new contracts with follow up payments for up to 15 years. The Environmental Stewardship Program is providing Australian farmers with market-based opportunities to get involved in the long-term conservation on their land. Since 2008, the Stewardship program has engaged farmers in New South Wales and Queensland in the long term protection of more than 25,000 hectares of nationally endangered grassy woodland ecological communities on their properties. The program will continue to use and refine market based mechanisms to protect and conserve specific matters of national environmental significance. The Environmental Stewardship program provides long-term opportunities for farmers and Indigenous communities to be involved in conservation on their land and recognises the vital role they play in biodiversity conservation and stewardship of our natural environment. The program enables local communities to derive revenue from public good activities.

Yellow Crazy Ants Control on Christmas Island

The Government has allocated \$4 million from 2011-12 to 2014-15 to continue implementing a long term strategy to control invasive yellow crazy ants on Christmas Island. Crazy ants represent an extreme risk to the unique biodiversity and ecosystem integrity of Christmas Island. They dominate areas of forest and destroy native species such as Christmas Island red crabs, which play a key role in the region's rainforest structure and ecosystem. The Government is committed to controlling the ants and protecting Christmas Island's unique environment.

Australian Antarctic Program

The Australian Government has confirmed its commitment to Australia's engagement in the Antarctic with continued funding of \$28.3 million in 2011-12 to maintain critical functions that support research and expedition activities in the Australian Antarctic Territory. This will have a positive effect on the Tasmanian economy as a significant portion of expenditure is paid to Tasmanian staff and suppliers. It will also ensure that all four existing Australian Antarctic stations can be fully operational next year and Australia can continue to assert its presence in Antarctica by leading collaboration in projects with other nations active in the Australian Antarctic Territory. The funding will also enable the Australia-Antarctica Airlink to continue to provide an efficient means of transport from Hobart to Casey Station during the Antarctic summer season to transport scientists, expeditioners and other personnel participating in Australia's Antarctic Program.

CURRENT INITIATIVES IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

Outlined below are a variety of programs and initiatives in place supporting rural and regional communities.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

A significant proportion of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries are spread throughout regional Australia, and their employees and related businesses underpin many local economies. Consequently, a large proportion of the Government's activity in this portfolio directly benefits regional Australia.

Food Security

Australia's food industries contribute significantly to the strength and resilience of our economy on both a regional and national scale. Combined, the total value of farm and fisheries food production in 2009-10 was \$36.7 billion.

The economic benefit of these industries is significant to regional Australia. In 2009-10, agricultural production alone employed more than 324,000 people in cities, towns and regions across Australia, stimulating and sustaining local communities, along with nearly 227,000 employed in food and beverage processing.

The Government recognises the very important role these industries play in feeding not only our nation, but many millions of people across the world. It is essential that the Government meet the challenges of food security through research and development, helping to remove barriers to global trade and driving productivity along the food production chain.

National Food Plan

The Government has provided \$1.5 billion over four years to develop Australia's first national food plan covering food security, efficiency, health and nutrition, and the affordability of food. The plan will also identify the opportunities and risks to the long-term sustainability of food production to improve the international competitiveness of Australia's food industries and to contribute to food security.

The productivity and efficiency of our food chain is affected by a confluence of our broader economic policy, the regulatory environment, essential infrastructure, adoption of innovation, and the cost and availability of inputs such as land, water and labour. During the development of the plan, the Government will consider opportunities for regulatory reform consistent with its broader productivity agenda.

The benefits from a stable and growing food production sector will flow through to regional Australian agricultural and food processing industries, their employees and their local communities.

Regional Food Producers' Innovation and Productivity Program

The Regional Food Producers' Innovation and Productivity Program provides funding to projects that boost the productivity and competitiveness of Australia's regional food and seafood industries through innovation and technology improvements. The program will continue in 2011-12 with more than \$3 million committed to 11 ongoing projects, including those that:

- adopt new processing technology to improve yields and productivity while reducing wear and tear on machinery;
- develop new technology to reduce damage to produce and increase high quality yields; and
- develop cooking and packaging systems to increase product shelf-life and processing efficiency.

These projects will provide benefits across Australia, in particular to employers and industries in regional Australia.

Reform of Australia's Quarantine and Biosecurity Arrangements

The Government is committed to an effective and efficient biosecurity system that safeguards the nation's valuable farming, fishing and forestry industries. This helps to avoid the substantial costs incurred in dealing with an introduction of foreign pests or diseases, and protects the health of all Australians, our industries and natural environment, thereby ensuring the viability of regional communities.

Australia remains free of many of the world's pests and diseases, providing a competitive advantage to our rural exporters (rural exports were worth \$25.5 billion in 2009-10 in value terms). Reducing the risk of pest and disease incursions, and the effective control of outbreaks if and when they occur, protects our agricultural industries (valued at \$48.4 billion Gross Value of Production in 2009-10). The Government remains committed to the implementation of biosecurity reforms. In 2009-10, the Government committed \$20 million over four years to develop a risk-based approach to biosecurity operations, enhance data collection and develop new biosecurity legislation. The Biosecurity Advisory Council was established as the independent advisory body to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on biosecurity issues. The membership of the Council reflects a broad range of expertise in the fields of agriculture, environment, health sciences, risk assessment, business management and operational aspects of biosecurity. The Council will continue to provide valuable advice to the Minister on improvements to the current emergency

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response arrangements, enhanced community engagement activities and prioritising risk and investment.

The Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity, developed to support the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, has been negotiated (and is currently being considered for endorsement by the Council of Australian Government). This agreement will strengthen the working partnership between governments by identifying roles and responsibilities and outlining the priority areas for collaborative effort to improve the national biosecurity system.

The Government is driving enhanced offshore protection with our international stakeholders. These initiatives are reducing the likelihood of pests and diseases arriving in Australia, including those that are potentially highly detrimental to rural and regional Australia. For example, the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme was developed to ensure the effective offshore fumigations of goods destined for Australia. Reviews were jointly conducted by Australia, and by each of the participating countries (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Thailand). Audit results have demonstrated that treatment standards have improved.

The Government, in partnership with industry, has also significantly enhanced Australia's export certification system. These reforms are driving changes to export certification services, providing major regulatory and whole of supply chain reforms. This work provides assurances to exporters and overseas markets that our export produce meets overseas certification standards. Each of the six key export industries (dairy, fish, grain, horticulture, live animal and meat export) are represented by a dedicated ministerial taskforce, which consults with industry to advance the export certification reform agenda and monitor its implementation. All taskforces are making solid progress, having finalised, or being in the process of finalising, revised export certification arrangements for their industries.

Rural Financial Counselling Service

The Government is providing \$13.3 million in 2011-12 to fund the Rural Financial Counselling Service program. This program provides grants to 14 regional and State not-for-profit organisations to provide vital financial and business information and decision support to primary producers, fishers and small rural businesses as they deal with the impacts of difficult seasons and other pressures on their businesses. This service employs more than 190 individuals, including 119 rural financial counsellors across rural and regional Australia. Table 1 shows the distribution of office locations across Australia. In 2009-10, the service provided assistance to more than 10,280 people. During 2010-11, the service has provided critical support to clients who are dealing with the long-term outcomes of the past decade of drought and the more recent impact of floods, cyclones and other natural disasters.

Table 1: Distribution of Rural Financial Counselling Service office locations across regional Australia

Region	Office Locations
Queensland – Central Southern Region	Longreach, Biggenden, Goondiwindi, Emerald, Mundubbera, Miles, Chinchilla and St George
Queensland – South West Region	Roma, Charleville and Taroom
NSW – Northern Region	Casino, Armidale, Coonabarabran, Gloucester, Inverell, Macksville, Moree, Narrabri, Scone, Taree and Manilla
NSW – Central West	Dubbo, Buronga, Coonamble, Forbes, Gilgandra, Mudgee, Nyngan, Orange, Parkes, Tottenham and Walgett
NSW – Bourke	Bourke
NSW – Southern Region	Cooma, Coleambally, Cowra, Crookwell, Deniliquin, Ganmain, Griffith, Hay, Lake Cargelligo and West Wyalong
Victoria – North Central	Bendigo, Carisbrook, Kerang, Pyramid Hill and Seymour
Victoria – Wimmera South West	Hamilton, Ballarat, Colac, Horsham and Terang
Victoria – Murray Mallee	Mildura, Woomerlang and Swan Hill
Victoria – Gippsland	Leongatha, Bairnsdale, Ellinbank and Maffra
Victoria – Goulburn Murray Hume	Albury/Wodonga, Benalla, Kyabram and Numurkah
Tasmania	Hobart, Launceston and Wynyard
South Australia	Magill, Clare, Murray Bridge, Loxton, Struan, Cleve, Wudinna and Kadina
Western Australia	Geraldton, Dalwallinu, East Beverley, Kukerin, Woodanilling, Hacketts Gully, Northam, Merredin and Albany

FarmReady

The Government's climate change initiative for primary industries, Australia's Farming Future, provides funding over four years to help primary producers adapt and respond to climate change. FarmReady is a part of this initiative which aims to enable primary producers and industries to adapt and respond to the impacts of climate change and climate variability by improving the adoption of risk management and business management skills and increasing adoption of new technologies and best practice management. It is expected that around \$34.4 million will be spent over the program's four-year life to 30 June 2012. This program also supports environmental sustainability in regional communities.

The program consists of two elements. The first element is the FarmReady Reimbursement Grants, which to date have provided over 28,500 grants to individual primary producers and Indigenous land managers to attend approved training activities. The second element is the FarmReady Industry Grants. Over 60 projects worth up to \$8.86 million have been funded to help people to adapt to the impacts of climate change and climate variability.

Community Networks and Capacity Building

The Community Networks and Capacity Building program, which is part of the Australia's Farming Future initiative, focuses on increasing the leadership and representative capacity of women, young people, Indigenous Australians and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to strengthen primary industry productivity and build the resilience of rural, regional and remote communities in the face of a changing climate. The program helps people who have traditionally been underrepresented or whose contributions to primary industries have remained unrecognised. More than 200 projects have been funded under this program to date. It is expected that approximately \$12.7 million will be spent during the four-year program that runs until 30 June 2012.

Funding from this program for women and young people is delivered mainly through two separate, competitive grants processes: Recognising Women Farmers grants and Next Gen Farmers grants. The Recognising Women Farmers grants support activities that will build the leadership and representative capacity of women in primary industries, and in turn, strengthen primary industry productivity and build rural, regional and remote community resilience to a changing climate. The Next Gen Farmers grants support events that improve the leadership and representative capacity of young people entering or involved in primary industries, particularly those that address the challenges and opportunities in these industries as a result of a changing climate. Outside of these grants rounds, funding is also available for Indigenous Australians or people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to support projects, research and other activities that support social cohesion and capacity.

These programs strengthen rural communities through:

- the development of leadership and management skills among individuals and groups living in rural, regional and remote Australia to strengthen industry productivity and community resilience;
- improved engagement with groups that are underrepresented or unrecognised by increasing their participation in government and industry policy development, including industry boards and organisations; and
- improved networks among individuals and groups in rural, regional and remote Australia using a range of media.

Investment in Research, Development and Innovation

Investment in research, development and innovation is vital for ongoing growth and improvement in the productivity, profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food industries. By maintaining its strong support for rural research and development through the 15 Research and

Development Corporations (RDA) and other measures, the Government makes an important contribution to the overall economic diversity, social cohesion and environmental sustainability of the regional communities that rely upon these primary industries.

The Productivity Commission examined the effectiveness of the RDC model and the appropriateness of the current funding levels and arrangements for driving productivity improvements through research and development. In developing future rural research and development policy, the Government will respond to the Productivity Commission's final report on rural research and development. The Government will also consider the recommendations contained in the Rural Research and Development Council's National Strategic Rural Research and Development Investment Plan to ensure that Australia has the best possible rural research and development system, which benefits both primary producers and the Australian community.

The Government is strongly committed to strengthening our national research capability across the primary industry sectors to directly benefit the people that live and work in regional Australia. In 2011-12, the Government will continue to work with the State and Territory Governments, CSIRO, universities and private research providers on the development and implementation of the National Primary Industries Research and Development and Extension Framework. This framework will help provide the structure and institutional arrangements needed to promote the efficient delivery and uptake of innovation by primary producers and other participants.

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation's Dynamic Rural Communities Program provides research and development that builds capacity in people, industries and communities across Australia. This program benefits people in regional Australia by adding value to their information and communication infrastructure, improving their capacity to manage change, supporting Indigenous rural development, and addressing future agriculture industry skill needs. The Corporation also supports a Rural Women's Award, which celebrates rural women and their contributions to primary industries and rural communities, and sponsors the studies of undergraduates through the Investing in Youth Undergraduate Studentship Program.

The Government is also committed to addressing labour and skills issues in regional Australia. The Government is working with State and Territory Governments and Agrifood Skills Australia on the development of a Regional Agrifood Skills and Workforce Development Strategy. The Government is also working with the Primary Industries Education Foundation, the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education and the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture to promote careers in agriculture.

Research and Development Corporations Strategic Goals

The work of the 15 RDCs will significantly contribute to strengthening the economic diversity of regional Australia. Each RDC has developed five-year strategic plans and during 2011–12 each RDC will continue to advance these important goals. The strategic directions of the RDCs are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Strategic Directions of the Research and Development Corporations.

Research and Development Corporation	Year	Focus of the Strategic Plan
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	2010–15	Environment, including biosecurity, ecosystem protection and climate change; industry development, including productivity growth, resource allocation and market access; resilient and supportive communities; people development; and extension and adoption
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation	2007–12	Providing knowledge for diversification in Australian rural industries; increasing profitability, resilience and sustainability of established rural industries; and addressing national rural issues
Cotton Research and Development Corporation	2008–12	Promoting sustainable competitive advantage, paying particular attention to the issues of water, salinity and biodiversity, and integrating the management of cotton farms with increased effort to maintain the environmental health of catchments
Grains Research and Development Corporation	2007–12	Promoting a profitable and environmentally sustainable grains industry through planning, investing and overseeing research and development to support effective competition by Australian grain growers in global grains markets
Sugar Research and Development Corporation	2007–12	Regional futures, emerging technologies and people development
Australian Egg Corporation Limited	2007–11	Sustainable and profitable growth of the egg industry by targeting market awareness, market education, supply chain enhancement, on-farm innovation and efficiency and public affairs and stakeholder relations
Meat and Livestock Australia Limited	2010–15	Increasing market access, growing demand, increasing productivity across the supply chain, promoting industry integrity and sustainability and increasing industry and people capability
Australian Meat Processors Corporation Limited	2008–11	Promoting Australian meat in the domestic and international market, improving red meat quality and fostering the economic, environmental, health, safety and social wellbeing of the meat processing industry
Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited	2010–14	Ongoing improvement in animal welfare outcomes; improving industry efficiencies and capabilities through the supply chain; fostering support for the industry through increased knowledge and awareness; improving market access conditions and building demand for Australian livestock; increasing stakeholder confidence through strong governance, planning and evaluation
Australian Pork Limited	2010–15	Building consumer demand, viable productive farms, efficient value chains, leadership, preparedness, stewardship and industry cohesion and responsiveness
Australian Wool Innovation Limited	2010–12	Research and development, marketing and promotion that enhances the profitability, international competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian wool industry; and increasing demand and market access for Australian wool

Research and Development Corporation	Year	Focus of the Strategic Plan
Dairy Australia Limited	2010–14	Increase farm productivity, maintain and develop value-added, high-margin markets and products and promote and protect the unique benefits of dairy
Forest and Wood Products Australia Limited	2009–13	Promoting the benefits and usage of forests and wood products in accordance with changing community attitudes, environmental awareness and market trends; investing in and coordinating research and development to improve the industry's competitiveness, inform its climate change response, enhance investment, increase usage and ensure the sustainability of forests, wood products and services; growing the industry's capacity and capability in knowledge generation, adoption and promotion to facilitate expansion; and increase capacity and scope to provide services for the industry's benefit
Horticulture Australia Limited	2005-10	Maximising the long-term return on investment in industry programs; providing a powerful information, analysis and knowledge offer to stakeholders; establishing clearly defined and understood partnerships with industry; enhancing the reputation of Australian horticulture; and being a capable organisation (Horticulture Australia Limited is currently finalising a new strategic plan)
Grape and Wine Research Development Corporation	2007-12	Enhance the profitability, international competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian wine sector. This can be achieved through improved understanding of markets, development of new technologies and products and enhancement of wine quality. The Corporation helps growers to grow grapes that achieve desired wine characteristics, and support sustainable production

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) is a research organisation within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. It provides high quality scientific and economic research, analysis and advice on the economic, social and environmental issues affecting rural and regional Australia.

ABARES collects data from a range of primary and secondary sources in rural and regional Australia to support its analysis, and much of this data is published for use in analysis and planning by farmers and supporting industries in regional Australia. For example, ABARES collection officers visit more than 2000 producers each year to collect detailed information on the physical, financial and management performance of farms.

ABARES publicly communicates the results of its work through a range of means, including their regional Outlook conferences across Australia. Information is also made available through the annual national Outlook conference, on the website (www.abares.gov.au), through the use of the media and through a range of other activities aimed at ensuring that the information and analysis is beneficial to individuals and communities.

This information directly benefits rural and regional Australia by providing a wealth of information and analysis. For example, ABARES' quarterly commodity forecasts are widely disseminated and are of significant benefit to farms, agribusinesses and lenders in their individual decision-making. The work of ABARES also indirectly benefits rural and regional Australia through the research, analysis and advice it provides to government to inform policy decisions across a wide range of issues that directly affect the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities. For example, ABARES' analyses of water allocation and agricultural productivity are providing important inputs into government decisions in these areas. ABARES is also engaging directly with regional stakeholders through workshops to assess their capacity to monitor and detect biosecurity issues.

Northern Australian Beef Industry Strategy Indigenous Engagement Project

As part of the Northern Australian Beef Industry Strategy, the Government has committed \$500,000 to increase Indigenous engagement in the northern Australian pastoral industry. This strategy will provide an opportunity for the northern beef industry to diversify its production system and provide a valuable contribution to the region's future economic prosperity.

This strategy is part of the Northern Australian Sustainable Futures Program which is being led by the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government. This program responds to the identified priorities of the Land and Water Taskforce 2010 report into the Sustainable Development of Northern Australia.

Better Regulation of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals

The Better Regulation of Agricultural and Veterinary (agvet) Chemicals is a reform initiative that will directly benefit the community, manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, retailers and users of agvet chemicals. The Government has committed \$5.8 million in 2011-12 for this initiative, which aims to cut unnecessary red tape for farmers and business and encourage the development of modern, cleaner and safer chemicals, with a range of benefits for farmers and other users, the environment and the community.

The proposed reforms will improve:

- timeframes for chemical approval and registration, therefore decreasing the time to market and improving the availability of new, potentially more effective, safer and less environmentally harmful agvet chemicals;
- the review process for agvet chemicals by ensuring that existing chemicals meet appropriate standards, leading to better health and safety outcomes for communities and for the environment; and

- consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of the regulator, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

The Government will also develop an overarching risk framework for agvet chemicals and establish enhanced compliance measures to provide improved health and environmental protection.

In addition, the Council of Australian Government is progressing reforms of the control of chemical use. This process will work in harmony with the Government's Better Regulation partnership to improve consistency of agvet chemical regulation across Australia.

National Weeds and Productivity Research Program

The Government's \$15.3 million National Weeds and Productivity Research Program, over four years to June 2012, will reduce the impact of weeds on farm and forestry productivity and will help to secure Australia's biodiversity. Weeds are a threat to Australia's natural environment and the profitability of our farmers. While hard to measure, environmental impacts are considered to at least match the estimated economic impact of weeds at more than \$4 billion a year.

The Government is seeking innovative and effective solutions to Australia's weed problems. To this end, almost \$3.6 million from the first stage of the National Weeds and Productivity Research Program has been allocated to 39 weed research projects. This includes funding to research programs to manage such invasive weed species as Gamba grass, Chilean needle grass and Serrated Tussock. The Government will continue to manage and monitor these important programs.

Pacific Islands Forum

In 2009, the Government committed to leading the negotiation and implementation arrangements for securing the region's valuable fishing stocks. Ensuring the viability of fishing stocks not only protects key industries that underpin local regional economies, but fulfils Australia's obligations to protect marine biodiversity for future generations. The Government is delivering on its commitment with a three-year, \$2.4 million program aimed at settling legal arrangements that allow countries in the region to share data and more effectively cooperate in fisheries enforcement activities.

In 2010, a meeting between Pacific Islands Forum fisheries, law enforcement and justice Ministers was held in Canberra. At this meeting, Ministers agreed to the development of a multilateral Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement to provide a robust legal framework for more integrated, cost-effective and efficient maritime surveillance in the region. Negotiations are expected to conclude in December 2012.

During 2011-12, the Government will support the drafting of the agreement and implementing capacity building projects with Forum Fisheries Agency countries that will support the implementation of the agreement.

Recreational Fishing Industry Development

Recreational fishing in Australia is a multi-billion dollar-a-year industry, supporting tourism in many regional towns. It is an important leisure activity for over five million Australians. The Government is conscious of the need to balance the benefits that this industry offers to many local economies, with the responsibility that all Australians have to protect the biodiversity of our marine life for future generations. In 2008, the Government announced \$2 million over three years to review the 1994 National Recreational Fishing Policy and to develop and implement a new Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy. The Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee was established in February 2009 to progress these important recreational fishing industry initiatives.

The Committee completed its review of the 1994 National Recreational Fishing Policy and in 2010 the Government released a discussion paper. The committee will use the stakeholder feedback and work with the Government to inform the development and implementation of the strategy in 2011-12.

In 2010, the Government approved \$1.6 million worth of projects, including a national recreational fishing data collection project, to support the Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy.

Illegal Logging Policy

The Government will introduce legislation that will restrict illegally logged timber imports and require timber suppliers to undertake a process of due diligence by verifying the legal origins of timber products and disclosing species, country of harvest and any certification at the first point of entry of timber products onto the Australian market.

The Illegal Logging Prohibition Bill was referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural Affairs and Transport in March 2011 for a public inquiry, with the intent of introducing the Bill to Parliament later this year. This inquiry provides further opportunity for public consultation, and complements the previous discussions with stakeholders in the forest industry, manufacturers and retailers of wood products, and organisations with conservation interests in this matter. Throughout 2011-12, the Government will work to ensure a consistent global approach to eliminating illegal logging.

Tasmanian Contractors Assistance Package

Many of Tasmania's forest contracting businesses are facing difficult financial circumstances, with the sales of woodchip exports sourced from Tasmania's forests declining. Faced with reduced viability of many harvest and haulage businesses operating in Tasmania's forests, in 2010-11, the Government provided \$22.4 million to Tasmanian forest contractors. Of this, \$17 million was provided for exit assistance and \$5.4 million for financial support for viable businesses remaining in the industry. An additional \$216,000 was provided to the Tasmanian Government to administer the financial support program on behalf of the Commonwealth.

By reducing business overcapacity and supporting businesses remaining in the Tasmanian forest sector, the Government is seeking to help industry restructure so that it will be more viable into the future. In 2011-12, the forest harvesting and haulage sector will be stronger and the benefits from this package will be seen.

Forest Industries Database

In 2010, the Government delivered the Forest Industry Database portal. This project expanded upon data contained in Forest and Wood Products Industry Workforce and Industry Data Collection research project to meet the future skills and capacity information needs of both government and industry. The purpose of the database portal is to provide a centralised, publicly available platform for information associated with forestry in terms of employment numbers and employee characteristics, skills and training information and recruitment and retention data.

The database portal highlights important employment and skills trends within sectors and geographic regions. Users are able to design future industry structural scenarios by selecting processing facilities to suit their State or forestry region, based on the wood flow resource that is forecast to be available in the future. The model will then estimate the number of employees required to service the industry and any qualifications necessary.

Forest Industries Development Fund

In 2009, the Forest Industries Development Fund provided more than \$6.5 million to a range of projects, including those that improve employment in the sector, the value of timber products and the production and processing of timber. In 2011-12, these projects will continue to support regional industries and job seekers in regional areas and boost the competitiveness of the industry.

Climate Change Research Program

The Climate Change Research Program is supporting productivity, sustainable development and economic diversity in regional communities by helping primary producers research innovative ways in which to adapt to climate change, particularly in the areas of soil carbon, biochar, nitrous oxide and livestock emissions. The program

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also funds demonstrations of these research projects in order to engage and consult with farming communities.

The Government's \$46.2 million commitment between 2008-09 and 2010-11 has leveraged over \$100 million from partners – including State and Territory Governments, industry and research organisations – for joint projects. These large scale collaborative projects involve a range of organisations such as research providers, industry groups, universities and State governments. This commitment will continue to encourage the development of solutions for producers that will make a real difference in building their adaptability and resilience to climate change.

Carbon Farming Initiative

Carbon Farming is a major joint Australian Government initiative managed by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. It aims to help farmers, forest growers and landholders earn income from reducing agricultural emissions like nitrous oxide and methane through changes to land management practices. It will help establish a carbon crediting scheme and develop on-farm methodologies for emissions offset activities. The carbon crediting scheme will create a new income stream for interested land managers. The scheme will clearly outline the rules for recognition of carbon credits generated on-farm which can then be sold on domestic or international carbon markets.

Over the next two years, the Government is providing \$4 million for information and tools to help farmers and landholders benefit from carbon markets. The Regional Landcare Facilitators will play a primary role in providing information about the initiative to farmers, forest growers and other landholders.

Once the legislation is in place, the Regional Landcare Facilitators, with support from the Government, will provide information to landholders across the 56 natural resource management regions. Information will be provided through a series of workshops which are expected to be held during 2011-12.

The Government will also explore future opportunities to deliver information on the Carbon Farming Initiative by utilising the expertise of other natural resource management and farming groups.

Biochar Capacity Building Program

The Biochar Capacity Building Program is an important element of the Carbon Farming Initiative which will investigate options for utilising biochar to help mitigate Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, and provide opportunities for Australia's land managers to participate in carbon markets.

Further research on biochar is required to accurately identify the possible mitigation potential of different feedstocks in different production processes. No methodology for biochar is currently available to enable farmers to participate in a carbon market.

The Government will implement the Biochar Capacity Building Program through competitive grants, supporting research on biochar as a further option for land managers to reduce Australia's emissions and generate carbon offset credits.

Forest Industries Climate Change Research Fund

The Government is committed to addressing major knowledge gaps in the impact climate change will have on forestry and forest industries. Between 2008-09 and 2010-11, the Government provided \$5 million through the Forest Industries Climate Change Research Fund to fund a number of research projects that aim to identify and address these knowledge gaps. These projects focus on generating information on adaptation, mitigation, bioenergy, and inventory and data activities. In 2011-12 these projects will assist the industry to better understand the implications of climate change and build industry capacity to adapt to predicted scenarios and capitalise on emerging mitigation opportunities.

Landcare

The Government will continue to support Landcare in 2011-12. Landcare is a unique community-based volunteer approach that has played a major role in raising awareness, influencing farming and sustainable land management practices and improving environmental sustainability across Australian landscapes. It is made up of almost 6,000 groups, involving more than 120,000 people (including farmers) in rural and peri-urban areas across the 56 natural resource management regions of Australia, who volunteer their time, skills and resources to the program.

The Government will provide almost \$80 million in 2011-12 for Landcare programs. A component of this funding is provided to the Australian community through competitive grants programs. These provide funding to on-ground conservation projects that aim to improve on- and off-farm productivity, soil health, water quality and biodiversity. They also help farmers to increase their adoption of sustainable farming practices. Consequently, this program also contributes to an economically diverse regional Australia by supporting the Australian agriculture sector.

To provide guidance, advice and access to information and resources to rural and regional communities, volunteers and individuals, funding is being provided in 2011-12 for the Australian Landcare Council, the National Landcare Facilitator and the Regional Landcare Facilitators.

The Australian Landcare Council is the Australian Government's key advisory body on Landcare. The council, alongside the Landcare community, including farmers and Indigenous land managers, will assist the government in reinvigorating Landcare,

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providing insight into future opportunities to ensure the Landcare movement and Australian community can meet the challenges of food security and climate change, support volunteers and maintain the environment.

National Landcare facilitators support community Landcare through an advisory role. The facilitator focuses on sustainable production in the primary industry sector, together with the engagement and participation of community groups in natural resource management programs.

The Government is providing \$33.6 million over four years to 2012–13 to organisations to host regional Landcare facilitators in each of the 56 natural resource management regions. These facilitators will support Landcare and production groups by helping to plan projects, apply for funding and coordinate training. In 2011–12, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will work with the regional Landcare facilitators to provide local support to farmers and land managers to facilitate their participation in the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Landcare funding will also be provided for Landcare Australia Limited, a not-for-profit company established to promote and sponsor Landcare. This company helps Landcare groups with fundraising and awareness-raising activities, assists businesses to work with local communities on environmental and sustainable agriculture projects, helps to generate corporate sponsorship, runs campaigns such as National Landcare Week, Coastcare Week and the National Landcare Awards, coordinates special Landcare projects produces the Australian Landcare magazine and maintains a website.

Further Information

Further information about these and other agriculture, fisheries and forestry initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.daff.gov.au.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Australia's Human Rights Framework

From 2010-11, the Government is providing funding of \$2 million over four years to non-government organisations for the development and delivery of human rights education and engagement programs for the community. The Government is also providing an additional \$6.6 million over four years, from 2010-11 to 2013-2014, to the Australian Human Rights Commission to enable it to expand its community education role and to provide information and support for human rights education programs, including in regional Australia. The Government is working in partnership with community organisations and the Australian Human Rights Commission to make sure that education, information and engagement on Australia's new National Human

Rights Action Plan are available across all Australian communities, including regional communities.

Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment

The purpose of the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) is to provide immediate, one-off financial assistance to eligible Australians who have been adversely affected by disaster. The payment rate is \$1,000 per eligible adult and \$400 per eligible child.

AGDRP expenditure is driven by the frequency and extent of natural disaster events. The assistance does not distinguish between regional or metropolitan locations; rather they are specific to an event, which could affect either regional or metropolitan Australia, or both.

Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements

The Australian Government's Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) comprise a comprehensive national policy and financial framework for disaster relief and recovery. The NDRRA was established in recognition of the unpredictable and potentially significant costs to States and Territories arising from natural disasters. Through the NDRRA, the Australian Government provides financial assistance to State and Territory Governments to alleviate the financial burden of providing emergency assistance to disaster-affected communities, as well as the costs of community recovery, including for individuals, businesses, primary producers and for the restoration or replacement of public assets.

NDRRA expenditure is driven by the frequency and extent of natural disaster events and generally provides its support through partial reimbursement to States and Territories for costs incurred in certain natural disaster relief and recovery activities.

NDRRA assistance does not distinguish between State or Territory costs regional or metropolitan locations; rather they are specific to an event, which may affect either regional or metropolitan Australia, or both.

In response to the 2010-11 Queensland Floods and Tropical Cyclone Yasi, the Australian and Queensland governments signed a National Partnership Agreement for natural disaster reconstruction and recovery. As part of this agreement, the Commonwealth has agreed to provide \$2 billion dollars to the Queensland Government under the NDRRA to be paid in the 2010-11 financial year.

National Strategy for Disaster Resilience

In February 2011 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) adopted the new National Strategy for Disaster Resilience and agreed that jurisdictions would take immediate steps to implement its measures. The strategy includes steps to improve the

understanding of the risks of natural disasters, educating people of these risks and improving the methods of communicating urgent messages to communities so they can make informed decisions about their options when faced with natural disasters. The strategy also looks at how the Government can reduce the impact of natural disasters in the medium to long term by considering disaster prevention measures in current and future urban and regional planning. As the strategy is implemented by Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments it will progressively improve the resilience of regional Australia to potential natural disasters such as the widespread floods in the summer of 2010-11 and Cyclone Yasi in February 2011.

Crime Prevention Funding under the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002*

The Government is committed to ensuring that funds confiscated from criminals are given back to the community to help prevent and reduce the harmful effects of crime. Over the last year, over \$15 million in funding under the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* has been awarded to 130 projects focusing on crime prevention for seniors (including personal and financial security), victims of violent crime, youth crime, diversion and prevention programs, capital to fund security infrastructure (including CCTV and lighting) and early intervention projects. Many of these projects provide services in rural and remote locations across Australia.

The Government has committed to dedicate a significant proportion of funding from the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* to support crime prevention activities by police and communities.

Indigenous Justice Program

The Government has allocated \$11.2 million in 2011-12 to the Indigenous Justice Program for projects – many of which are in remote and regional areas – to support Indigenous Australians and reduce adverse contact with the criminal justice system. The program will focus on more strategic justice related projects that can demonstrate outcomes that reduce recidivism or incarceration by diverting offenders or rehabilitating those in prison or juvenile detention.

Sworn Community Engagement Police Officers

In 2011-12, \$1.72 million in funding will be provided to the Northern Territory Police through the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement to provide eight remote communities facing significant levels of crime and violence with sworn community engagement police officers. This project aims to improve the quality and quantity of contact between police and people in remote communities, and to build trust. This will allow police and communities to develop more effective crime prevention strategies, which in turn should decrease the likelihood of offending and re-offending. The initiative will encourage people to report violence and crime, and increase confidence in the police and the justice system more generally.

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory – Law and Order Measures

In 2011-12, \$29.6 million in funding will be distributed under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory law and order measures including community night patrol services, additional funding for legal assistance services, interpreter services and the Northern Territory Welfare Rights Outreach Project.

Improved Native Title Outcomes

The Government is committed to improving the native title system, and promoting leading practice and strong governance in native title agreements. Funding available to the native title system in 2011-12 will include an additional \$17.1 million provided as part of the \$50.1 million in new money agreed by the Government in the 2009-10 Budget. This brings the total amount of Australian Government funding for the native title system in 2011-12 to approximately \$130 million. Included in this funding is \$526,000 for the Native Title Anthropologist Grants Program in 2011-12 for projects to attract a new generation of junior anthropologists to native title work and encourage senior anthropologists to remain within the system.

Family Relationship Services Program

The Government will provide funding of \$149.5 million in 2011-12 for the delivery of post-separation services under the Family Relationship Services Program. Post separation services support families experiencing separation, and include family dispute resolution, parenting education, family counselling and other support services. These services are located across the country with a number of services specifically targeted to remote and regional areas.

Access to Justice Website

The Access to Justice website, www.accesstojustice.gov.au, provides an easy way for people who are experiencing difficulties or are in dispute to find helpful information about services that can assist them, wherever they live. The website enables people to identify services operating in their local area, which may particularly assist people in regional areas or identify state-wide services that provide outreach to regional areas.

Improving Access to Justice – Legal Assistance Priorities

The Government is committed to enhancing access to justice for all Australians, including Australians who live in rural and regional areas. The Government is providing an additional \$154 million funding over four years from 2010-11 to 2013-2014 to enhance access to justice for disadvantaged and vulnerable Australians through increased funding for legal aid commissions, community legal centres and Indigenous legal services. This funding will help to increase the availability of legal assistance generally, and will provide particular support for service providers in regional Australia.

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The investment takes total funding for legal assistance services from the Commonwealth to \$1.3 billion over four years from 2010-11, and is provided to the programs below.

Legal Aid

The funding brings total Commonwealth funding for legal aid to \$198.3 million in 2011-12 under a four-year National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services with the States and Territories. Legal aid commissions maintain locations in regional Australia and also provide a range of 'outreach' services for those unable to access main offices.

A key objective of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services is to promote a more integrated approach to service delivery. Jurisdictional forums set up under the Agreement within each State and Territory consider opportunities for improved coordination and targeting of legal assistance services which will include improving services in areas of need in regional Australia.

Community Legal Centres

The Commonwealth will provide \$33 million in 2011-12 to support 139 community legal centres across Australia. This includes enhanced services to more than 50 regional, rural and remote areas and the establishment of a new community legal centre on the New South Wales mid-north coast.

Indigenous Legal Aid and Policy Reform

Commonwealth funding for Indigenous legal aid will be \$65.5 million in 2011-12. The Legal Aid for Indigenous Australians Program provides culturally sensitive and accessible legal aid and related services across Australia. Currently, 88 per cent of service outlets are located in regional, rural or remote locations.

The Attorney-General has agreed to the renegotiation of funding arrangements with the eight existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services for the delivery of Indigenous legal assistance services for July 2011 to June 2014.

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services

The Government has committed \$19.8 million in 2011-12 to 14 Family Violence Prevention Legal Service providers covering 31 identified high-need rural, regional and remote areas. These organisations provide legal and other associated services to victims and survivors of family violence.

Further Information

Further information about these and other Attorney-General's initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.ag.gov.au.

BROADBAND, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

National Broadband Network

The Australian Government's goal for the National Broadband Network (NBN) is to re-shape the telecommunications sector and ensure every home and business in Australia, including those in rural, regional and remote areas, has access to affordable high-speed broadband. The Government has established NBN Co Limited (NBN Co) to design, build and operate the NBN, connecting 93 per cent of Australian homes, schools and businesses with fibre-to-the-premises technology providing broadband speeds of up to 100 megabits per second. All remaining premises will be serviced by a combination of next-generation fixed wireless and satellite technologies providing speeds of at least 12 megabits per second.

On 7 September 2010, the Government entered into the 'Commitment to Regional Australia' agreement with the Independent Members Mr Tony Windsor MP, the member for New England, and Mr Rob Oakeshott MP, the member for Lyne, which included a commitment to prioritise regional areas in the rollout of the NBN. NBN Co will bring forward interim satellite services early so that regional Australia can get better broadband access sooner. NBN Co has continued to plan an optimised rollout of the network, drawing on its experience with the early rollout of the NBN in Tasmania and the fibre deployments in first-release fibre sites on the mainland.

In August 2010, the first NBN services were officially launched in three Tasmanian Stage 1 communities. In April 2011, the first of the mainland First Release Sites commenced trial services with Retail Services Providers (RSPs). In a clear demonstration of the significance of the NBN to regional areas, by late March 2011 the percentage of households in the five mainland first release sites which had signed up for a fibre connection was:

- 91 per cent in Willunga;
- 88 per cent at Armidale;
- 78 per cent in Minnamurra / Kiama Downs;
- 62 per cent in Townsville; and
- 51 per cent in Brunswick.

Additionally, two-thirds of 6,000 km fibre optic cable rollout under the Government's \$250 million Regional Backbone Blackspots Program (RBBP) has been completed, providing more competitive broadband services for regional Australia. The Perth to Geraldton, Victor Harbor and South West Gippsland links are now complete and offering services.

Investing in Regional Australia

The Government has provided \$5 million for regional broadband coordinators to help regional communities maximise the benefits of the RBBP by encouraging broadband awareness, take-up and use.

Eight coordinators have been engaged to cover all backbone routes. Coordinators are working closely with community, business and government organisations to help rural and regional communities take full advantage of the opportunities of broadband offers to engage in the digital economy.

In November 2010, the Parliament passed the *Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (Competition and Consumer Safeguards) Act 2010*. The Act provides the framework for Telstra to progressively migrate its customers to the NBN. It also reforms the telecommunications access regime and strengthens consumer safeguards for the delivery of telecommunications services, which is particularly important for regional Australia.

In March 2011, the Parliament passed the *National Broadband Network Companies Act 2011* (the NBN Companies Act) and the *Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (National Broadband Network Measures – Access Arrangements) Act 2011* (the Access Act). The legislative framework will ensure the NBN operates transparently on a wholesale-only, open access and non-discriminatory basis, consistent with the Government's key objectives. Crucially for regional Australia, the Access Act enables NBN Co to operate in the manner needed to provide uniform national wholesale pricing, providing equitable outcomes for regional, rural and remote Australians. The NBN Companies Act also retains the company in government ownership until the network is built and fully operational and only allows its sale following a review by the Productivity Commission and full Parliamentary scrutiny.

On 20 December 2010, the NBN Co Corporate Plan 2011-13 was released publicly, together with the Government's Statement of Expectations for NBN Co, which reflect key government decisions on a range of issues including recommendations arising from the NBN Implementation Study and the number and locations of the points of interconnect to the network, providing greater access for RSPs to regional areas.

The corporate plan confirms that the NBN will provide all Australians with world-class broadband on a financially viable basis, at affordable prices. Taxpayers can expect to get their investment back with interest, as the NBN is expected to provide a rate of return higher than the government bond rate.

Construction will begin later this year on the Second Release Sites. Work is also underway on ensuring access to wireless and satellite services for those premises located outside of the fibre coverage footprint. On 6 May 2011, NBN Co announced the commencement of customer trials for an enhanced interim satellite service for regional and rural Australia, ahead of commercial services commencing later in 2011. NBN Co continues to progress the design and implementation of the fixed wireless network

with network construction due to commence in December 2011, with services scheduled to go live in mid 2012.

Telstra and NBN Co are close to finalising definitive agreements which will provide for the migration of customers from the old copper network to the new NBN, and for NBN Co's access to key telecommunications infrastructure.

In the 2011-12 Budget, the Government is providing \$35.6 million over four years to support the implementation of the NBN, including policy and regulatory support for the NBN rollout, restructuring the framework for the delivery of the Universal Service Obligation (USO) through the establishment of, and support for, the 'USO Co' entity; and to assist consumers and small business to manage the transition from the copper network to the NBN.

NBN Co will be funded with Government equity until NBN Co has sufficient cash flows to support private sector debt without explicit Government support. By 30 June 2011, equity injections from the Government into NBN Co will total \$1.7 billion. The Government will provide a further \$18.2 billion in equity funding to the NBN Co over the Budget and forward years, including for capital expenditure of \$9.9 billion on fibre-to-the-premises technology and \$2.2 billion on next-generation fixed wireless and satellite technologies providing speeds of at least 12 megabits per second.

Digital Regions Initiative

The four-year \$60 million Digital Regions Initiative co-funds digital enablement projects and pilots with State, Territory and local governments through a National Partnership Agreement. The initiative takes a collaborative approach to improve the delivery of education, health and emergency services in regional, rural and remote Australian communities.

Funding of up to \$4 million for telehealth trials in Armidale and Kiama in New South Wales was announced in late 2010 as part of the Digital Regions Initiative. These trials will be delivered in collaboration with NSW Health, local general practitioners and primary care providers, and will focus on high-quality telehealth services for older Australians with chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease. The trial will also focus on support for mental health and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Services will be delivered to the home via the NBN.

Digital Switchover

The Government will provide a further \$375.9 million over the Budget and forward years to continue programs to support the switchover to digital television, including in regional and remote Australia.

Investing in Regional Australia

Switchover has already occurred in the Mildura/Sunraysia, regional South Australia and Broken Hill switchover areas. Switchover occurred in regional Victoria on 5 May 2011, and is scheduled to occur in regional Queensland near the end of 2011. Switchover in all parts of Australia will be completed by the end of 2013. Every Australian who watches television will be affected.

The funding will support:

- a targeted communications campaign with a local focus to make sure people are informed about switchover in their area and the steps they need to take;
- continuation of the Household Assistance Scheme, which is successfully providing in-home practical assistance to eligible pensioners in the form of installation of a set top box and necessary cabling and aerial work, free of charge; and
- ongoing support for the Digital Switchover Taskforce.

In addition, funding will be provided over the Budget and forward years to support the digital conversion of transmitters, in regional and remote Australia, which currently provide analog SBS and ABC services on a self-help basis.

This funding complements that provided in the 2010-11 Budget to support the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service. With VAST, Australians in remote areas and those in signal blackspots can receive the same number of channels as Australians in metropolitan areas.

Funding was also provided in that Budget for the Satellite Subsidy Scheme, which provides subsidised installation of VAST reception equipment in areas currently served by analog self-help terrestrial towers, where those towers are not converted to digital.

Indigenous Communications Program

The Indigenous Communications Program provides and maintains community phones in remote Indigenous communities with baseline populations of less than 50 people. Community phones provide access to emergency and other medical and support services as well as family and friends. In 2011-12, around 500 phones in remote Indigenous communities will be monitored and maintained.

The program also provides funding to improve public internet access and provide computer and internet training in remote Indigenous communities with populations of more than 100 people. It is implemented in collaboration with State and Territory Governments through the Closing the Gap: National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access.

Indigenous Broadcasting Program

The Government allocated \$15.2 million to Indigenous broadcasting in 2011-12 to assist in the maintenance of Indigenous languages and the promotion of Indigenous culture and identity. Funding is aimed at assisting Indigenous community radio stations and support is provided in 22 regional areas and 86 remote communities. The Program funds a range of organisations and activities including Imparja Television, Indigenous Community Television, Remote Indigenous Media Organisations which support Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services, broadcasting training, content production and peak body operations.

A funding round for the program has been conducted each year since 1987. The number of Indigenous radio services the program supports has grown considerably over that time. Funding submissions for the program for 2011-12 were invited in November 2010 and applications closed in January 2011. Applications are currently being assessed against the published program guidelines and assessment criteria.

Satellite Phone Subsidy Scheme

The Satellite Phone Subsidy Scheme improves the affordability of mobile communications for people living and working in areas without terrestrial mobile coverage by providing subsidies for the purchase of satellite phone handsets.

The scheme provides up to \$1,000 for eligible applicants who live in areas without terrestrial mobile coverage, or up to \$700 for eligible applicants living in areas that have coverage but spend more than 180 days across a two-year period in non-coverage areas.

Those eligible to apply include individuals, small businesses, community groups, not-for-profit organisations, Indigenous corporations, emergency service organisations, health organisations and educational institutions.

Further Information

Further information about these and other broadband and communications and digital economy initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.dbcde.gov.au.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

National Solar Schools Program

The Government has allocated over \$199.7 million from 2008-09 to 2010-11 to assist schools in their response to climate change. The grants of up to \$50,000 (\$100,000 for multi-campus schools) have been awarded to over 3,800 eligible primary and

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secondary schools around Australia to install solar and other renewable power systems, rainwater tanks and to help implement a range of energy efficiency measures.

To date, over 600 schools located in remote or very remote areas (according to the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia) have received a grant under the Program.

A further \$49.8 million has been allocated over the 2011-12 and 2012-13 financial years. Schools located in remote or very remote areas with low socio-economic status, will have an advantage over other schools applying for funding under the Program. This will allow remaining funding to be directed to the schools most in need.

Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme – Solar Hot Water Rebate

The Government has allocated over \$144.2 million from 2010-11 to 2012-13 to assist Australian households reduce their energy use, help the environment and save on energy bills. Installing a climate-friendly hot water system can save a family hundreds of dollars off their energy bills each year. As part of this Budget, the Government has extended the submission timeframe for Solar Hot Water Rebate applications from two months to four months. This is a practical measure which will assist small business to comply with the Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme – Solar Hot Water Rebate guidelines, and will especially benefit regional areas where the limited number of qualified tradespeople has caused delays in the processing, completion and lodging of applications.

Solar Cities

The Australian Government's \$94 million Solar Cities program is a partnership between all levels of government, industry, business and local communities to trial sustainable energy solutions. Three of the seven Solar Cities (Central Victoria, Townsville and Alice Springs) are in regional Australia. Townsville Solar City is a \$32 million project to which the Government contributes \$15 million. Central Victoria Solar City is a \$42 million project to which the Government contributes \$14.9 million, and Alice Springs Solar City is a \$37 million project to which the Government contributes \$21 million, with funding of \$4 million to come from the Solar Cities Program, with the remaining \$17 million from the Renewable Remote Power Generation Program. The Solar Cities initiatives are changing the way Australians view and use energy. Information collected will demonstrate how different approaches can influence energy use, and inform future energy policies.

Carbon Farming Initiative

The Government has allocated \$45.6 million between 2010-11 and 2013-14 to implement the Carbon Farming Initiative, a carbon offsets scheme providing new economic opportunities for farmers, forest growers and landholders, and supporting a sustainable environment by reducing carbon pollution. The Carbon Farming Initiative

includes legislation to establish a carbon crediting mechanism, fast-tracked development of methodologies for offset projects, and information and tools to help farmers and landholders benefit from carbon markets. The funding includes \$4 million for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to support Regional Landcare Facilitators and other groups working with farmers, Indigenous groups and other landholders to identify how they can participate in and benefit from the scheme. The funding also includes a further \$2 million for the Biochar Capacity Building Program, helping farmers and landholders to better understand the role biochar can play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Further Information

Further information about these and other climate change and energy efficiency initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.climatechange.gov.au.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

Early Childhood Education and Care

Budget Base Funded Child Care Services – Improved Standards

The Australian Government has provided \$59.4 million over four years from 2010-11 to improve the existing infrastructure of Budget base funded long day care centres and increase the qualifications of staff in all such child care services. Ongoing funding for maintenance of qualifications and infrastructure will also be provided. Budget base funded child care services operate largely in rural, remote and Indigenous communities, where the childcare market is unable to provide sufficient places. They are reliant on Australian Government funding for their operations. This investment will improve infrastructure and staff qualifications in the services that support some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and assist them in meeting key aspects of the new National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and care.

Early Childhood Education and Care – National Quality Framework Implementation

In the 2010-11 Budget, the Government allocated \$273.7 million over four years to deliver the National Quality Framework. This included additional Australian Government funding to support jurisdictions' transitional and ongoing costs and funding for the establishment of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. This Authority will help to make important changes to early childhood education and care that will ensure that Australian children across all regions get the best possible start.

National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE), the Australian Government is providing \$955 million to States and Territories over five years, to achieve universal access to early childhood education – so by 2013 every child, wherever they live, will have access to affordable, quality early childhood education in the year prior to formal schooling.

Bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and each State and Territory under the NP ECE articulate the agreed strategies and timeframes around achievement of universal access for all children by 2013. As part of these bilateral agreements, the States and Territories are implementing a range of strategies to achieve universal access in regional and remote locations, including mobile and outreach services, as well as additional funding loadings to assist with the extra costs of providing an early childhood education in these areas.

National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development

Through the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, the Australian Government has provided \$292.6 million for the establishment of 38 Children and Family Centres across Australia by June 2014. The Children and Family Centres will deliver integrated services, including early learning, child care and family support programs.

Children and Family Centres are targeted at addressing the needs of Indigenous families and their young children and will also provide services to all families in the community. The centres will be established in a mix of remote, regional and urban locations concentrated in areas where there is a demonstrated need for these services. State and Territory Governments are taking the lead on establishing the centres, including undertaking community consultations.

Schools

Drought Assistance – Assistance for Isolated Children – Extension

The Government has provided \$9.7 million over two years to extend the Distance Education Allowance Supplement of \$1,084 per annum per student until 30 June 2011, and the Additional Boarding Allowance of \$1,000 per annum per student and the consequential ABSTUDY Boarders' rate for School Fees Allowance until 31 December 2011.

These measures were part of a broader Drought Assistance package that ceased on 30 June 2010. The Government made the decision to extend these allowances in light of the ongoing pressures faced by families as they recover from the prolonged drought. These allowances assist with the educational costs associated with geographical isolation, and directly assist students and families across regional Australia.

Empowering Local Schools

The Government has committed \$69.1 million over four years from 2010-11 to empower local communities to assist in improving student performance and outcomes at local schools, a third of which are located in regional areas. The funding allows principals, parents and school communities greater input into the management of their local schools, including managing school budgets, deciding the mix of staff and setting local priorities. Up to 1,000 government, Catholic and independent schools are expected to participate in the initial phase in 2012 and 2013, with the national rollout of this initiative commencing in 2015.

Extension and Expansion of the National School Chaplaincy Program

The Government has provided \$50.6 million over three years from 2009-10 to extend the National School Chaplaincy program for all participating schools until December 2011. This is a significant program for local schools with 43 per cent of current funding being directed to regional and remote schools.

The National School Chaplaincy program aims to support schools and their communities to establish school chaplaincy and pastoral care services or to enhance existing services. It is a voluntary program that assists schools and their communities to support the wellbeing of their students. This might include support and guidance about ethics, values, relationships and religious issues; the provision of pastoral care; and enhancing engagement with the broader community. As outlined in the Budget Initiatives chapter, this measure is to be extended and expanded in the 2011-12 Budget.

Rewards for School Improvement

The Government has appropriated \$164.8 million over four years from 2010-11 to implement the Reward for School Improvement initiative. The initiative will provide reward payments to government and non-government schools that have shown the most improvement. In early 2013, 275 primary schools will receive a reward payment of \$75,000 each and 225 secondary schools from 2014 for four years. In total, \$388 million in reward payments to schools will be provided over five years from early 2013, with a minimum of \$125 million in reward payments over five years to be made to regional schools. This measure delivers on the Government's commitment to regional Australia.

School Enrolment and Attendance Trial – Continuation

The School Enrolment and Attendance trial was announced in the 2008-2009 Budget as a part of the Government's Welfare Payment Reform Agenda. The 2010-11 Budget provided \$6.4 million for a two-year extension of the trial (until 30 June 2012) and included locations across the Northern Territory and Queensland. The trial aims to increase school enrolment and attendance by encouraging parents to take positive steps to lift their children's school attendance and better support their education.

Under the trial, parents receiving Australian Government income support payments are required to demonstrate to Centrelink that their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at school, and that they are taking reasonable steps to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Parents who fail to provide enrolment details for their children or take reasonable steps to get their children to school may have their income support payment be suspended until the problem is resolved. Other benefits, such as Family Tax Benefit, remain available to parents during any period of suspension of income support payments.

This measure will extend the trial for families in the Logan suburbs of Woodridge, Kingston, Logan Central and Eagleby, the communities of Doomadgee and Mornington Island in Queensland, and the Northern Territory communities of Hermannsburg, Katherine, Katherine town camps, Wadeye, Wallace Rockhole and on the Tiwi Islands will continue to take part in this measure linking school enrolment and attendance with welfare payments.

Indigenous Education

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan

The Government has provided \$15.4 million over four years from 2010-11 to support the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014. The Action Plan sets out an agreed national approach to meeting the Closing the Gap targets through initiatives that aim to strengthen the education outcomes of Indigenous students across all regions of Australia. The cost of the measure was met from existing resources within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Increased Funding for Indigenous Boarding Students

The Government has committed \$22.4 million over four years from 2010-11 to support Indigenous students from remote Indigenous communities attending non-government, non-remote boarding schools. These funds will provide a higher rate of Indigenous Supplementary Assistance for these students, with more than 50 Indigenous students from remote Indigenous communities attending these schools. This initiative will assist boarding schools to better serve the needs of Indigenous students from remote communities.

Higher Education

Demand-driven funding for Undergraduate Student Places

The Government announced it would implement a demand-driven funding system for undergraduate places at public universities from 1 January 2012. During the transitional years of 2010 and 2011, regional universities have responded strongly to the opportunity to enrol more undergraduate students. In 2011, more than

67,000 undergraduate places are being funded at regional universities – an increase of 10 per cent since 2009. This level of growth is comparable to that being experienced nationally.

Commonwealth Scholarship Program

Approximately \$9 million has been allocated to the higher education sector in 2011-12 to fund 2,205 new, and 523 continuing, Indigenous scholarships.

The aim of the Commonwealth Scholarship Program is to assist with the costs associated with higher education so as to improve access to and participation in higher education for Indigenous students from backgrounds of low socio-economic status and from regional and remote areas.

There are five types of Indigenous scholarships.

- *Indigenous Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship (ICECS)*: These scholarships provide funding (\$2,290 in 2011 and indexed annually) to assist with general education costs for up to eight semesters to assist Indigenous students enrolled in undergraduate courses (not limited to areas of National Priority), or a graduate diploma or equivalent postgraduate course of study required for initial registration to practice in a chosen National Priority area.
- *Indigenous Enabling Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship (IECECS)*: These scholarships provide funding (\$2,290 in 2011 and indexed annually) to assist with general education costs for up to two semesters for Indigenous students undertaking an eligible enabling course.
- *Indigenous Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship (ICAS)*: These scholarships provide funding (\$4,508 in 2011 and indexed annually) for up to eight semesters, to assist Indigenous students from regional and remote areas with accommodation costs if they need to move away from home to undertake an undergraduate course (not limited to areas of National Priority), or a graduate diploma or equivalent postgraduate course of study required for initial registration to practice in a chosen National Priority area.
- *Indigenous Enabling Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship (IECAS)*: These scholarships provide funding (\$4,508 in 2011 indexed annually) for up to two semesters, to assist Indigenous students from regional and remote areas with accommodation costs if they need to move away from home to undertake an eligible enabling course.
- *Indigenous Access Scholarship (IAS)*: These scholarships provide eligible commencing students with a one-off payment of \$4,321 in 2011 and indexed annually. These scholarships assist Indigenous students to undertake an eligible enabling course, undergraduate course or graduate diploma (or equivalent post graduate course of

study) in an area of National Priority required for initial registration to practice in a chosen National Priority area.

Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program

The Government will provide \$708.4 million, over four years from 2011-12 to 2014-15, to eligible universities to increase the access and participation in higher education of people from a background of low socio-economic status. While not specifically targeted to regional Australians, the program may assist those from regional and remote areas of low socio-economic status.

The program has two components.

- The Participation component funds universities to expand the enrolment of students from a background of low socio-economic status and to provide the intensive support needed to improve these students' completion and retention rates.
- The Partnership component is designed to link universities with schools, vocational education and training providers, State and Territory Governments, community organisations and other groups. Its aim is to promote leading practice, increase the aspirations of students and contribute to higher rates of education attainment of students from backgrounds of low socio-economic status across all regions of Australia.

Indigenous Support Program

Funding of \$155.6 million over 2011-12 to 2014-15 for the Indigenous Support Program will assist eligible higher education providers to meet the special needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to advance the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy. Funding for the program is formula-based and is calculated on the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in each university.

Student Income Support

Significant reforms to student income support commenced from 1 April 2010 aimed at increasing access to, and better targeting, income support to students from low socio-economic status backgrounds who need it most, including students from rural and remote regions and Indigenous students.

Since 1 April 2010, to help with the costs of study, Student Start-Up Scholarships have been paid to higher education students receiving Youth Allowance, Austudy or ABSTUDY. These scholarships are worth \$2,194 (two payments of \$1,097) in 2011 and are indexed annually. Relocation Scholarships, worth \$4,124 for the first year that students are required to live away from home to attend university and \$1,031 in

subsequent years, are being paid to eligible university students receiving Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY Living Allowance. Eligible students are those who as dependent recipients have to move away from home for study or as independent recipients are disadvantaged by their personal circumstances and are unable to live in the family home. The Relocation Scholarship is indexed annually and particularly benefits rural and regional students.

The Parental Income Test threshold for maximum payment of Youth Allowance was increased in July 2010 (and indexed to \$45,114 on 1 January 2011) with payment withdrawal rates relaxed for incomes above the threshold.

The workforce participation criterion was tightened from 1 July 2010, so that young people are required to work full-time for an average of 30 hours a week for at least 18 months in a two-year period to demonstrate independence for Youth Allowance. Since 1 January 2011, the second and third elements of the previous workforce participation criterion for independence have also applied for young people who are required to relocate to study, whose family home is in an outer regional, remote or very remote area (according to the Australian Standard Geographical Classification) and whose parents' income is less than \$150,000 a year.

On 1 January 2012, the staged reduction from 25 years in the age at which independence status is achieved for Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY will be complete, with independence at age 22 years. Extension of student payments to Masters by Coursework students is also planned for implementation on 1 January 2012.

The Government has appointed Professor Kwong Lee Dow to review the impact of the new student income support arrangements on equity, with a particular focus on the impact on rural and regional students and their capacity to access higher education. The review will report to the Government by 1 July 2011, making any necessary recommendations for changes to achieve the reform objectives. Following the review, the Government will implement any new eligibility arrangements eliminating regional eligibility distinctions for student payments by 1 January 2012.

Rural Tertiary Hardship Fund

The Government has provided \$20 million in the 2010-11 Budget for the establishment of a Rural Tertiary Hardship Fund. The Fund, to operate from 1 January 2011 to 30 June 2013, will provide assistance to students aged under 25 years whose main place of residence is located in a rural or regional area and who face financial hardship in undertaking a course of higher education. This additional assistance will help reduce the financial barriers regional students face in accessing higher education.

Eligibility criteria for individual \$3,000 grants under the Fund were recommended by the Rural and Regional Taskforce established by the Government in 2010 to provide advice on how the Fund could be delivered.

Skills

Critical Skills Investment Fund – Regional Funding

The Government has committed that for new and existing education initiatives, regional Australia will receive a minimum funding entitlement based on population shares (around 32 per cent of available funding).

Regional businesses and workers will benefit from a dedicated \$66 million from the Critical Skills Investment Fund (CSIF). The CSIF provides Australian Government co-funding for industry partnerships to plan for and meet Australia's emerging skills needs in sectors undergoing significant expansion (resources, construction, renewable energy and infrastructure). These all have a strong presence in regional Australia.

Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package – Disaster Recovery Start-up Bonus

The Government has provided \$3.4 million over two years to support the commencement of up to 1,000 Australian Apprentices under the Disaster Recovery Start-up Bonus. This will provide an additional payment of \$3,350 made to small and medium-sized employers (less than 200 employees) and registered group training organisations in rural and regional flood and cyclone affected areas in Queensland who take on a new apprentice aged 19 years or under in a skill shortage trade between 7 March 2011 and 7 September 2011 (inclusive) or until 1,000 apprentices have received a Start-up Bonus payment.

Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package – Relocation Payment Initiative

The Government has provided \$0.3 million over two years to support the relocation of up to 100 apprentices to rural or regional, flood or cyclone affected areas in Queensland. The initiative will provide a one-off payment of \$3,000 to eligible, registered, out-of-trade apprentices who relocate to a flood or cyclone affected area to recommence their apprenticeship. The payments will be paid directly to the apprentice three months after recommencement. This payment will be available for recommencements between 7 March 2011 and 7 September 2011 (inclusive) or until 100 apprentices have received a relocation payment.

Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package – Tools and Work Equipment Payment

The Government has provided \$0.4 million over one year to provide support for up to 500 apprentices to replace tools and work equipment that has been damaged or lost in a flood or cyclone related event in Queensland. This will be a one-off payment of \$800 made to an eligible apprentice whose tools or work equipment have been lost or damaged. The payment will be made directly into the apprentice's nominated bank account.

Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package – Apprentice Work Teams

The Government has made up to \$5 million of funding available as a contribution to the 2011 Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package Apprentice Work Teams initiative. This will allow Queensland group training organisations to employ teams of out-of-trade apprentices (Apprentice Work Teams) in trade projects that benefit both their industry and the wider community. Apprentice Work Teams will support communities in their recovery efforts by providing 750 job opportunities in flood and cyclone affected areas of Queensland.

Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package – Apprentice Support Program

The Government is contributing \$0.3 million for the Apprentice Support Program. The program delivers prevocational training to equip candidates for engagement in a trade apprenticeship and helps bolster the skilled workforce. A skilled workforce will help Queensland to recover quickly from the recent floods.

Skills for Sustainable Growth – Foundation Skills Package – Workplace English Language, Literacy and Numeracy – Expansion

The Government has provided \$28.7 million over four years to fund up to 9,500 additional places under the Workplace English Language and Literacy program. The program provides vocational training integrated with language, literacy and numeracy training in the workplace. The training is flexible, tailored to the needs of the workplace and based on industry specific need.

The Teaching and Learning Capital Fund for Vocational Education and Training

The Teaching and Learning Capital Fund for Vocational Education and Training program facilitated the provision of \$500 million in grants during the 2009-10 financial year – expended in the 2009-10 and 2010-11 financial years – which focused on modernising and improving the quality of teaching and learning across numerous disciplines. The program will benefit all regions of Australia through the rollout of more than 470 different projects with a national spread of training providers.

Trade Apprentice Income Bonus

The Government has provided \$281 million over four years from 2010-11 for the Trades Apprentice Income Bonus. This Bonus will be paid on top of the existing Tools For Your Trade payments. Trade apprentices will receive a \$5,500 tax exempt bonus over the course of their training that they can use to purchase tools, service their ute, pay for registration and insurance, and meet various other expenses.

Employment

Job Services Australia

Representing an investment of over \$5.5 million over four years, Job Services Australia provides individualised assistance and tailored employment services to help job seekers secure sustainable employment.

The Australian Government launched Job Services Australia on 1 July 2009.

Job Services Australia provides job seekers with opportunities for training, skills development, work experience and tailored assistance. Job Services Australia gives job seekers access to support and services that are relevant to their individual circumstances, to help them find employment from over 2000 sites across Australia. Approximately one-third of job seekers being assisted under Job Services Australia live outside the capital cities.

Disability Employment Services

Representing an investment of over \$2.3 million over the next four years, Disability Employment Services commenced on 1 March 2010 and provide immediate access to tailored services for job seekers with disability across Australia. Services are flexible and responsive to both individual job seeker needs and those of employers. Disability Employment Services comprise two elements:

- Disability Management Service for job seekers with a disability, injury or health condition who require the assistance of a disability employment service but are not expected to need long-term support in the workplace; and
- Employment Support Service for job seekers with permanent disability and with an assessed need for more long-term, regular support in the workplace.

Queensland Flood Assistance Package

The Government has provided \$14.6 million over two years to expand the Job Seeker Relocation Assistance Package to assist those unemployed people to move where there is work, particularly in response to the Queensland Floods.

FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Closing the Gap in Regional Australia

National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy for Indigenous Australians

About three quarters of Indigenous Australians live in urban and regional areas and many are significantly disadvantaged compared with the non-Indigenous population. In 2009, COAG agreed the National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy for Indigenous Australians as an important part of efforts to Close the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

The strategy commits governments to coordinate and target the substantial funding provided under mainstream and Indigenous specific programs to address Indigenous disadvantage in urban and regional locations. This includes activities under existing National Partnerships in housing, homelessness, education, employment, health and early childhood.

The strategy is focused on improving the way governments work together in urban and regional locations to provide more effective, accessible and culturally appropriate services for Indigenous Australians.

Improved Service Delivery for Indigenous People Living in Remote Communities

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery is providing \$291.2 million over five years from 2009-10 to improve the delivery of services in 29 priority locations across the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia.

Local Implementation Plans have been developed for each community to set priorities and actions to respond to local needs.

In addition, to harness investment under COAG National Partnership agreements, the 2010-11 Budget established a Remote Service Delivery Flexible Funding Pool of \$46 million to support the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement. Its flexibility and scope allows for the funding of a broad range of projects that cut across traditional portfolio responsibilities.

To date, these projects have included a parents' room at a local school, an Innovative Learning Centre and Young Mothers Learning Centre and improvements to road and aerodrome infrastructure.

Indigenous Engagement Officers

The Australian Government is committed to a reformed relationship with Indigenous Australians, based on the principles of mutual respect, cooperation and responsibility. Indigenous Engagement Officers are a key part of this. Under the Remote Service Delivery and Closing the Gap National Partnerships, Indigenous Engagement Officers are employed in 44 communities across Australia. They are local community members and provide a critical coordination and communication role between community and Government, including in the development of Local Implementation Plans.

Indigenous Housing

The Australian Government is providing \$5.5 billion over 10 years from 2008-09 to deliver major reforms to Indigenous housing.

The funding is provided under the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) agreed with all States and the Northern Territory.

Governments are working together to reduce overcrowding and improve the supply of functional housing in remote Indigenous communities by delivering up to 4,200 new houses and up to 4,800 refurbishments over 10 years, by ensuring that land tenure issues are resolved, and developing better ways of managing new construction and by improving property and tenancy management services for residents.

NPARIH sets targets for Indigenous employment of 20 per cent of the workforce. Local people are being provided with training and real job opportunities, learning trades through construction work and working on property management such as ongoing repairs to and maintenance of the houses.

NPARIH ensures land tenure arrangements are in place where new houses are being built and upgraded as this is a critical first step for housing reform. Secure land tenure over social housing allows reformed property and tenancy management arrangements to be implemented to ensure that rental houses are well maintained and managed in remote Indigenous communities.

In regional areas, Indigenous people are benefiting from the significant new investment in social housing under the mainstream Social Housing Initiative which is constructing over 19,300 new social housing dwellings and has delivered repairs and maintenance to around 80,000 existing dwellings. Around 8 per cent of social public housing residents nationally are Indigenous.

Improved housing investment for Indigenous citizens is a central plank in achieving the targets for Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory

The Australian Government is continuing to target additional effort to improving the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians living in the Northern Territory through the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement with the Northern Territory Government. To fulfil our commitment to close the gap in the Northern Territory, \$807.4 million was appropriated in the 2009-10 Budget and will continue through to 2012-13.

Through the National Partnership, regional and remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory are supported by measures that focus on strengthening community safety, law and justice, supporting families, enhancing education, improving child and family health, reforming welfare and ensuring effective engagement between the Government and Indigenous peoples.

Alice Springs Transformation Plan

The Alice Springs Transformation Plan is a \$150 million initiative, delivered in partnership between the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government, to transform the town camps of Alice Springs into normal suburbs, reduce homelessness through short-term accommodation options, housing and infrastructure upgrades and provision of suitable support services.

Construction of 85 new houses in the town camps is well under way. The Australian Government is also funding rebuilding and refurbishing of the 200 existing houses on the town camps.

Infrastructure works include new and upgraded roads, power supply, water supply, sewerage, drainage and street lighting.

Tenancy reforms are also being implemented so that residents are required to pay reasonable rent and have support to help them maintain successful public housing tenancies. These arrangements also ensure regular and consistent maintenance will be carried out on houses.

Through the Transformation Plan more accommodation for visitors is being provided, to help reduce overcrowding in the town camps and homelessness in Alice Springs. This includes:

- the Ampere Mwerre Visitor Park, providing short-term accommodation for up to 150 visitors to Alice Springs;
- an extra eight beds for emergency accommodation for homeless people through Salvation Army services;
- 35 rooms of additional accommodation for people visiting Alice Springs for medical treatment; and

Investing in Regional Australia

- 28 units of transitional accommodation for people on the waiting list for public housing in Alice Springs.

These initiatives to ease accommodation shortages, together with the 85 new houses being built, will provide more than 500 additional beds in Alice Springs.

Social support services are being increased with \$25 million of projects in response to the priority areas of alcohol rehabilitation, family support, family violence, safety and security, early childhood services, tenancy management, life skills and intensive case management.

Breaking the cycle of alcohol and substance abuse in Indigenous communities

The Australian Government is providing \$20 million over three years (2011-12 to 2013-14) to support new community-led solutions for fighting alcohol and substance abuse in Indigenous communities by:

- assisting Indigenous communities to work with government and non-profit organisations to develop and implement alcohol and substance abuse management plans; and
- providing prevention programs to tackle youth substance abuse.

Combating Petrol Sniffing

The Australian Government is committed to achieving sustained reductions in petrol sniffing rates in Indigenous communities through its Petrol Sniffing Strategy. Petrol sniffing causes brain injury and long-term disability, and is linked to community violence and property damage. The Petrol Sniffing Strategy is the Australian Government's comprehensive regional approach to petrol sniffing in remote Indigenous communities.

Under the Petrol Sniffing Strategy, the Departments of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Attorney General and Education, Employment and Workplace Relations are responsible for youth programs, while the Department of Health and Ageing is responsible for a number of programs including the roll-out of low aromatic Opal fuel. Opal fuel is replacing regular fuel across areas at risk of petrol sniffing, such as the Central Desert, Eastern Kimberley, Kakadu and the Gulf Region of Queensland.

Youth Programs are an essential part of the strategy as they provide diversionary activities for Indigenous youths who are at risk of engaging in petrol sniffing, and also for habitual petrol sniffers.

The Government is continuing to work with local and regional stakeholders to develop sustainable solutions to incidence and harm caused by petrol sniffing.

Remote Policing and Substance Abuse

The Government is providing \$47.8 million in 2011-12 to maintain the increased police presence in the Northern Territory. Through the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement, the Australian Government has provided funding to the Northern Territory Government for five new permanent police stations. The first permanent police station at Yarralin opened on 14 April 2011, with the remaining stations at Arlparra, Gapuwiyak, Imanpa and Ramingining to be built by June 2012. Four of these will be constructed this year, including police accommodation, custodial facilities and multi-purpose justice facilities. Funding is also being provided to the Northern Territory Government for 60 new Northern Territory Police that have been recruited and trained over the previous two years.

Caring for our Country

The Caring for our Country initiative aims to achieve an environment that is healthier, better protected, well managed, resilient, and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate. The initiative funds a range of activities contributing to this aim that involve Indigenous Australians, including the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) program, Indigenous Land Management Facilitators (ILMFs), the Indigenous Emissions Trading Scheme, Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships, as well as part of the Indigenous Rangers election commitment.

There have been 16 new IPA projects approved for funding and three newly declared IPA added to the National Reserve System. This brings the total number of declared IPA across Australia to 42, covering more than 23.9 million hectares of Indigenous-owned land. In addition to the declared IPA, 48 other Indigenous groups are receiving support for consultation and planning towards an IPA declaration or co-management arrangements with other state agencies.

There are 12 ILMFs across Australia who have assisted the capacity of Indigenous groups to develop projects and to access and manage grant funding. The ILMFs have also helped identify opportunities to support Closing the Gap initiatives where they align with Caring for our Country.

The Indigenous Fire Management in Northern Australia project continues to work with four regions across northern Australia (the Kimberley, central Arnhem Land, the Gulf and Cape York) to undertake early season burns.

Caring for our Country – Working on Country

The Working on Country program, which is partially funded through the Caring for our Country initiative, delivers successful environmental outcomes and employs over

600 Indigenous rangers, drawing on Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices. These ranger positions provide direct employment, benefiting the individuals, their families, their communities and local economies.

Reef Rescue Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program

In December 2008, the Australian Government committed \$10 million over five years towards the Reef Rescue Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program. The program is designed to: expand the Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreement (TUMRA) program; develop sea country management plans; and strengthen communications between local communities, managers, reef stakeholders and Traditional Owners about managing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The TUMRA program continues to assist Traditional Owners in significant environmental management of their sea country. One of the ways this is achieved is by providing support for enhancing and improving organisational capacity. Funding support is provided for community leaders to come together to discuss traditional hunting, traditional fishing and collection activities within the Great Barrier Reef, providing local management initiatives. While significant progress continues across all aspects of the program, a major conservation outcome has been achieved in addressing illegal netting of dugong in the waters adjacent to the Yarrabah Community. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the incidents of dugong take by illegally set nets, and strong Traditional Owner and community support for development of TUMRAs.

The program also provides Sea Country Partnerships Grants to encourage Traditional Owner groups to undertake projects on land and sea country that result in better management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Traditional Owners can also apply for sponsorship up to \$5,000 to engage in sea country management activities or initiatives. The Sponsorship Program continues to be well received, with 18 successful applicants to date.

Family Support Program

The Family Support Program (FSP) provides integrated services for families, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged families, to improve child wellbeing and development, safety and family functioning. The Government is committed to providing broadly accessible family support services across the whole of Australia. There are currently services in more than 2,700 locations, a significant proportion are outside major capital cities, in country towns and in some of the most remote parts of the country.

Many FSP services operate place-based service delivery models and their locations have been selected on the basis of need determined by a range of information including proportion of children in the community, consultations with State and Territory Governments and indicators of disadvantage. In particular, the Communities for Children (CfC) service model uses a hub and spoke approach whereby a facilitating

partner works with community partners to deliver prevention and early intervention programs to families with children up to 12 years, who are at risk of disadvantage and who remain disconnected from childhood services. CfC sites span urban, regional and remote areas of Australia and include locations such as Dubbo, Lismore, Taree, East Arnhem, Gladstone, Mt Isa, Townsville, Bendigo, East Kimberley and Murray Bridge.

Community Investment Program

The Community Investment Program aims to strengthen communities and promote social inclusion and participation of vulnerable people in community life. The program provides grants and funding to non-profit organisations to run local programs, such as mentoring, learning and leadership activities for young people, support for migrants and victims of trauma, community kitchens, and activities to promote community volunteering.

The Australian Government has committed to provide three year funding to 60 Community Projects under the Community Investment Program over the next three years, 2011-2014. Funded activities are delivered in metropolitan, regional and remote settings, and 63 per cent of Community Projects being extended have a regional delivery footprint.

Volunteer Grants

The Volunteer Grants Program recognises the valuable work of Australia's volunteers and is part of the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to supporting volunteers and encouraging volunteering in local communities. In 2010, more than 3,787 organisations in rural and regional Australia shared in a total of \$12.8 million in volunteer grants.

Funding is available to not-for-profit organisations to purchase small equipment to help existing volunteers and to encourage more people to become volunteers. Organisations are also able to request funding to contribute towards the reimbursement of fuel costs of their volunteers who use their cars to transport others to activities, deliver food and assist people in need, as well as for costs of training courses and background checks.

For the first time, in 2010 volunteer grants also allowed organisations to apply for funding for training for volunteers such as first aid or leadership development training.

Australian Disability Enterprises

Australian Disability Enterprises are commercial businesses that provide employment opportunities for people with disability. Across Australia, there are 324 outlets that collectively employ about 20,000 people with disability each year.

Investing in Regional Australia

There are 175 outlets (54 per cent of total) located in regional and remote parts of Australia, which employ around 6,000 people with a disability. These outlets contribute significantly to the local economy and are an active part of the community.

Further information

Further information about these and other family, housing, community services and Indigenous affairs initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.fahcsia.gov.au.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

Export Market Development Grants Scheme

The Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) scheme is a government financial assistance program for current and aspiring exporters. The scheme, administered by Austrade, aims to encourage small and medium-sized Australian businesses to develop export markets by reimbursing up to 50 per cent of eligible export promotion expenses above a threshold of \$20,000. Eligible Australian businesses can claim up to a total of seven grants of a maximum of \$150,000 each.

EMDG is a non-discretionary grants scheme in that all applicants who meet the specified criteria receive a grant. As a result, the scheme is not specifically targeted at regional and rural businesses and the number of grants from different demographic groups is influenced by the business conditions faced by those groups each year. However, the results from year to year have been reasonably consistent.

Of the total number of EDMG grants paid in 2009-10 (relating to eligible expenditure incurred in 2008-09), 23.7 per cent were awarded to recipients from rural and regional Australia. These grants supported 1,082 rural and regional grant recipients with grants valued at \$34 million. These recipients reported exports of \$1,062 million in 2008-09 and employed 21,456 people.

Of particular relevance to regional Australia is the grant support of \$1 million for 22 rural and regional industry bodies, regional not-for-profit economic development bodies and tourism bodies to promote Australian exports internationally.

TradeStart

TradeStart is an Australian Government initiative that delivers Austrade services through local public sector and industry organisations throughout Australia. The prime objective of the TradeStart program is to assist small and medium-sized enterprises in their international business endeavours.

The TradeStart program, which was scheduled to conclude on 30 June 2010, was extended in the 2010 Budget, with \$14.4 million provided over four years for the program. Of the 31 TradeStart locations, 21 are in regional locations.

TradeStart Advisers are currently working with over 3,000 companies throughout Australia and support for these companies is also available through Austrade's international network.

HEALTH AND AGEING

Expansion of the Zero Real Interest Loans Initiative

The Government is encouraging construction and investment in the aged care sector through the Zero Real Interest Loans program. The program aims, through the provision of low-cost finance, to encourage aged care providers to build new facilities, expand existing facilities, or bring provisionally allocated places on line quicker in identified areas of need, typically in rural and regional areas.

Access to \$300 million in zero real interest loans and 2,500 residential aged care places was first made available in the 2008-09 Budget as part of the *New Directions for Older Australians: Improving the transition between hospital and aged care* package. This measure was extended by a further two years from 2010-11.

The allocation of zero real interest loans will be done in two stages, with \$150 million and 1,250 places made available in each of two loan rounds that will be run in conjunction with the 2011 and 2012 Aged Care Approvals Rounds.

Rural and Regional Building Fund

The Government provides ongoing funding for Rural and Regional Building Fund capital grants which assist approved aged care providers in rural, regional and remote areas with the cost of capital works. This can include acquiring land to build new premises; erecting, altering or extending premises; and acquiring furniture, fittings or equipment for those premises. Projects built with the assistance of these grants can assist services to meet certification standards and can also significantly enhance the long-term viability of rural and regional aged care services.

Capital assistance of \$33 million (indexed annually) is available annually through the Rural and Regional Building Fund. Eligibility for the grants is limited to residential aged care services in all areas of Australia other than major cities as defined by the Australian Standard Geographical Classification 2006 Remoteness Structure.

Improving the Viability of Community Care Providers

The Government provided \$10.1 million over four years from 2010-11 to increase the level of funding provided through the viability supplement for eligible aged care providers operating community care places in regional, rural and remote areas. The viability supplement compensates aged care providers in these areas for the additional costs associated with delivering services in those locations.

This initiative helps to ensure continued investment by the industry to meet the increasing demand for aged care in these areas and ensures that older people living in regional, rural and remote areas have continued access to sustainable high quality aged care services.

More than 400 eligible aged care providers, operating more than 6,300 community care places in regional, rural and remote areas, have received a 41 per cent increase in viability supplements as a result of this initiative.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Initiative

This ongoing initiative provides flexible, culturally appropriate care to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people close to their home and community, particularly in rural and remote areas. It provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are aged over 50 with access to a range of aged care services while remaining in their community. Total funding for 2011-12 is approximately \$25 million.

A Quality Framework for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care initiative is being developed to provide culturally appropriate standards for health and personal care, safety and physical environment and effective management and governance. These standards will form the basis of quality assurance monitoring for the program and assist providers to improve service delivery.

Remote and Indigenous Service Support Initiative

The Government is providing \$46.2 million over four years from 2008 in capital funding to improve the infrastructure of aged care services providing care in remote communities and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This initiative aims to improve the long-term quality of aged care and build capacity in remote and very remote communities.

Providers of aged care services for difficult-to-service populations face particular challenges in service provision. These challenges can include issues around operating small services which may be remote from professional assistance and support, higher infrastructure and supply costs and difficulties in attracting and retaining staff. The Remote and Indigenous Service Support (RISS) initiative assists aged care services operating in remote areas, and those providing care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, by making available a range of professional and capital support.

The initiative includes a panel of organisations chosen to provide capacity building, professional assistance and guidance (including emergency assistance). Panel expertise covers care delivery, including quality of care, governance and management, financial management and locum relief. The initiative also provides capital works support for residential and community based aged care providers in remote areas, and to those providing care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people anywhere in Australia. The RISS Capital Infrastructure and Support program assists services to maintain and build infrastructure, including staff accommodation, to facilitate the provision of quality aged care.

COAG Improving Access to Primary Care in Rural and Remote Areas Initiative

The Government is committed to ensuring increased access to primary health care services for rural and remote communities experiencing workforce shortages. The *COAG Improving Access to Primary Care in Rural and Remote Areas* initiative recognises that where there is a lack of private practices, many rural and remote hospitals fulfil a role in meeting the primary care needs of their communities.

The initiative allows Medicare benefits to be claimed for some state-remunerated professional services (including eligible nursing, allied health and dental services) provided in emergency departments, outpatient and community clinics at an increased number of small hospitals located in rural and remote communities of less than 7,000 people.

Under this initiative, in 2009-10 more than 42,600 services were billed to the Medicare Benefits Schedule at 11 sites in Queensland alone, providing over \$2 million in additional Commonwealth funding for primary health care services. The initiative was expanded in 2010-11 to 30 approved sites, with Queensland, the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and New South Wales currently participating.

Closing the Gap – Indigenous Dental Services in Rural and Regional Areas

In the 2009-10 Budget, the Government announced a commitment of \$11 million over four years to implement and evaluate pilot projects for mobile dental service delivery for rural and regional Indigenous communities.

This initiative provides funding for mobile dental infrastructure to service Indigenous communities where oral health services are scarce, and will provide an insight into what models are effective for servicing Indigenous communities in rural and regional Australia.

Funding was provided for three pilot projects under the Program in 2009-10, in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, and Orange and Narooma in New South Wales. An

additional 13 pilot projects have been recommended for funding in rural and regional locations across Australia.

Expansion of Subacute Care in Multi-Purpose Services Initiative

The Commonwealth is providing \$120 million in capital funding to rural and remote Australia over three years to expand subacute care capacity in Multi-Purpose Services through the establishment of 286 additional subacute care beds and/or bed equivalents in Multi-Purpose Services. As at 30 June 2010, there were 129 Multi Purpose Services operating in the States and the Northern Territory.

This initiative will contribute to the health and wellbeing of regional Australians by expanding access to subacute care services, such as rehabilitation and palliative care, in more appropriate settings closer to home. Better access to subacute care will support improved functional status and enhanced quality of life for many patients living in rural and remote areas.

Australian General Practice Training Initiative

General Practice Education and Training Limited, the Commonwealth company responsible for the management of the Australian General Practice Training initiative, is required to ensure at least 50 per cent of registrars are training in rural and regional areas. Significant additional investment was announced in 2010 to deliver around 1,375 new general practitioners (GPs) or GPs-in-training by 2013, or 5,500 new GPs or GPs-in-training over the next decade.

GP registrars currently provide 3.5 per cent of all services across Australia and 8.3 per cent of services in rural and remote Australia. The increase in training places under the Australian General Practice Training initiative will improve access to general practice services in rural and regional Australia (as registrars provide services while they train).

An additional \$344.9 million over four years was invested in this initiative in March 2010 to increase GP training places.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Remote Vocational Training Scheme

The Remote Vocational Training Scheme supports GPs practising in some of Australia's remotest locations. The scheme delivers structured distance education and supervision to doctors while they continue to provide general practice medical services to remote and/or isolated communities. The training includes weekly tutorials through video and teleconferences, twice-yearly education workshops, remote supervision and individualised training advice.

The scheme funds locum relief to allow doctors to attend face-to-face training. This ensures that solo doctor towns or small communities are not affected by doctors leaving for training requirements.

Currently, 60 communities have Remote Vocational Training Scheme registrars. Over the past decade, a total of 97 communities have benefited from the scheme. The four-year scheme meets the requirements for fellowship of both the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

Funding of \$10.4 million has been provided for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2013.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Prevocational General Practice Placement Initiative

This initiative provides junior doctors with the opportunity to undertake a short-term placement (usually 12 weeks) in general practice under the supervision of an experienced GP. The vast majority, more than 85 per cent, are allocated to regional and remote Australia, and evidence shows that exposure to general practice in regional and remote Australia increases the likelihood of a person returning to the bush to practise later in their career.

From 2011 onwards, the vast majority of placements will be allocated to facilities located in regional and remote areas, with a maximum of 15 per cent of placements allocated to major cities.

In March 2010, the Government invested an additional \$149.6 million over four years to increase prevocational general practice training. This additional funding more than doubled the number of placements from 380 in 2010, to 910 in 2011, and to 975 placements in 2012 onwards. This investment was in addition to the increased funding of \$41.2 million over four years announced in the 2009-10 Budget.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

More Doctors and Nurses for Emergency Departments

This initiative supports the establishment of more emergency medicine specialist training posts in rural and regional areas by making available a \$20,000 rural loading for up to 50 per cent of the newly funded posts. It will deliver up to 270 additional fully trained emergency medicine specialist doctors over the next decade.

It will also provide increased capacity to build and expand the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine Certificate and Diploma Courses in Emergency Medicine

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nationally. These courses are designed to provide additional training to GPs and other doctors who wish to improve their skills in emergency medicine and have particular relevance and focus on doctors working in rural and regional Australia.

This initiative also provides greater capacity to train and up-skill overseas trained doctors working in Australian emergency departments to fellowship level. This has particular relevance for rural and regional Australia where many of the local doctors are overseas-trained.

The initiative commenced on 1 January 2011. Funding of \$95.9 million over four years has been provided from January 2011.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Specialist Training Initiative

This initiative increases the capacity of the health care sector to provide high quality, appropriate training opportunities for trainee medical specialists. It will more than double the number of Commonwealth-funded specialist training places in private, public, community and rural settings from 360 to 900 by 2014.

It actively supports the establishment of more training in rural and regional settings by providing these posts with \$20,000 in supplementary funding. Currently, 518 posts are being funded out of which 40 per cent of training sites are in regional and rural areas and 8 per cent in remote regions.

This initiative consolidates various existing Commonwealth-funded specialist training activities. The Australian Government is providing \$356.8 million in funding to support the initiative over four years from 1 January 2011.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

New England Centre for Excellence in Health Education

This project will enhance the current education and training opportunities for health professional students and staff in the New England region.

An inter-professional health education and training precinct will be developed on a new site adjacent to Tamworth Hospital. It will improve student accommodation, and also allow the existing University Departments of Rural Health/Rural Clinical School to continue to provide direct learning support for students on placement at the hospital.

In Armidale, the project will see the development of additional teaching facilities to increase the capacity of the University of New England to provide professional health education in the region.

The University of New England and the University of Newcastle have both experienced large increases in student numbers and clinical placement hours in recent years (in 2011 a combined 4,943 students will be enrolled at the two universities). These numbers are set to grow further as new health professional programs come online. The development of additional teaching facilities will help accommodate the predicted increases in the number of undergraduate medical, nursing and allied health students enrolled at the University of New England and the University of Newcastle.

The Government has provided \$15 million dollars over two years for the Tamworth Project, and \$5 million over two and a half years for the Armidale Project. Both projects will commence in June 2011.

Rural Locum Scheme for Nurses

This measure provides around 3,000 possible nursing locums over the four year funding period to enable rural-based nurses to take leave to undertake professional development opportunities, and enable organisations to back-fill their positions to support ongoing service delivery. The measure encourages nurses to remain working in rural areas. It is also designed to encourage interested nurses to remain in the workforce and experience rural-based practice through a locum placement.

Funding of \$28.8 million over four years from 2010-11 has been provided.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Rural Locum Scheme for Allied Health Professionals

This measure provides around 100 locum placements annually to enable rural-based allied health professionals to take leave to undertake professional development opportunities, and enables organisations to back-fill their positions to support ongoing service delivery. It will also encourage interested allied health professionals to remain in the workforce and experience rural-based practice through a locum placement.

The scheme commenced during 2010-11, with funding of \$5.3 million provided over four years from 2010-11.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship

Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarships assist selected students with a rural background to study medicine at university. The scheme is aimed at attracting more doctors to rural and remote Australia.

Because students from rural areas can face financial barriers to studying medicine, particularly the costs of moving and living away from their home and family support structures, scholarship holders receive \$10,000 per annum to assist in meeting travel, accommodation and living costs incurred while studying medicine.

The Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship scheme provides 573 ongoing scholarships valued at \$10,000 per annum for medical students during their completion of a standard medical degree.

The National Rural Health Alliance manages the scheme on behalf of the Australian Government under a \$21.4 million funding agreement, due to run until 2013.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Expanded Clinical Placement Scholarships for Allied Health Students

This measure provides 100 additional scholarships for allied health students to undertake a rural or remote clinical placement during their degree. It aims to improve the future recruitment of allied health professionals in these areas by introducing increased numbers of students to rural clinical practice during their university training.

This is an ongoing measure that builds on the success of the Government's Allied Health Clinical Placement Scholarship Program, established in 2008-09. The scholarships have commenced, with an additional 100 scholarships offered in July 2010 through the Nursing and Allied Scholarship and Support Scheme.

Funding of \$6.5 million has been provided over four years from 2010-11.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

GP Procedural Training Support Initiative

This initiative aims to improve access to maternity services for women living in rural and remote communities, by supporting GPs to attain procedural skills in obstetrics or in anaesthetics.

This initiative targets existing GPs in rural and remote areas. In 2011, 26 obstetrics scholarships and six anaesthetics scholarships have been awarded to rural and remote doctors. Scholarship recipients commenced training from 1 January 2011.

The 2009-10 Budget included a \$120.5 million package of measures to improve choice and access to maternity services for pregnant women and new mothers in Australia. As part of this package, the Government announced \$5.4 million over four years for the GP Procedural Training and Support Program.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Initiative

Rural training encourages the next generation of health professionals to consider rural careers and enhances the capacity of health services to meet community needs. Involvement in education and training also reduces professional isolation for existing rural practitioners, enhancing workforce retention and sustainability.

This initiative comprises four discrete activities which aim to encourage the development of the medical, nursing and allied health workforce in rural and remote Australia through providing rural and remote training for students, thereby alleviating the shortage of adequate health care services in rural areas.

These are:

- the Rural Clinical Schools initiative;
- the Rural Undergraduate Support and Coordination initiative;
- the University Departments of Rural Health initiative; and
- the Dental Training Expended Rural Placements initiative.

Funds were also provided to support infrastructure, such as training facilities, for the activities. Funding of \$122.43 million was appropriated in 2010-11.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Rural Health Continuing Education

The Rural Health Continuing Education initiative, established under the *Continuing Education and Training Support* measure, is part of the Australian Government's strategy to provide equitable access to health services in rural and remote areas. Rural health professionals can sometimes face difficulties in accessing professional

development services. The Rural Health Continuing Education initiative is helping to address this issue by providing funding for support, education and training activities for rural medical specialists, and allied health professionals, nurses, general practitioners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers. This investment will provide valuable benefits for the sustainability of the rural health workforce, particularly in terms of workforce retention.

Funding of \$12.9 million over four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14 is available, with 12 specialist medical colleges and 15 allied health organisations currently receiving funding.

The Rural Health Education Foundation is also funded separately under the Rural Health Continuing Education initiative. The foundation provides rural health professionals with free access to professional development and medical education broadcasts through its satellite network, and via DVD and video, web streaming and podcasts.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

National Rural and Remote Health Initiative

This measure supports the rural and remote health workforce through activities such as the Bush Services Support (Bush Crisis Line) which averages around 65-70 calls per month from health professionals. This measure also encourages health service providers in remote areas of Australia to network and engage in professional development through activities such as conferences conducted by Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health and the Council of Remote Area Nurses Australia (CRANApplus).

Funding of \$500,000 per annum is available.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship Scheme

The Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship Scheme aims to increase the number of doctors practising in rural and remote areas of Australia. The scheme provides 100 additional graduate and undergraduate medical school places each year to Australian medical students. In return for a scholarship while they are studying medicine at university, students agree to work for up to six continuous years in a rural or remote area of Australia, once they have qualified and attained Fellowship of a specialist college (including General Practice). There are currently more than 1,000 participants in the scheme.

Funding of more than \$48.4 million over four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14 has been provided.

From 1 July 2011, funding for the activities supported under this program will be administered through the Health Workforce Fund.

Bonded Medical Places Scheme

The Bonded Medical Places Scheme is designed to help ease the shortage of doctors in outer metropolitan, rural and remote areas of Australia. In return for a medical school place at university, students agree to work for up to six continuous years in a district of workforce shortage, once they have qualified and attained fellowship of a specialist college (including General Practice). There are currently over 3,000 medical students and doctors participating in the scheme.

The allocation of Bonded Medical Places to participating universities constitutes 25 per cent of the total commencing Commonwealth Supported Places each year.

Connecting Health Services with the Future: Modernising Medicare by Providing Rebates for Online Consultations

From 1 July 2011, Medicare rebates and financial incentives will be available for video consultations across a range of medical specialties. The initiative is intended to address some of the barriers to access to medical services, and specialist services in particular, for Australians in regional, remote and outer metropolitan areas.

This initiative will promote the adoption of telehealth services because, for the first time, Medicare rebates will be available for the clinical service provided at both ends of a video consultation – the remote specialist consultation and the patient attendance.

The use of online consultations will, in many cases, provide patients in these areas with access to specialists sooner than would otherwise be the case, and without the time and expense involved in travelling to major cities.

The broader telehealth initiative brings funding of \$402.2 million over four years to provide Medicare rebates for online consultations; financial incentives for specialists, including GPs and other health professionals to participate in delivering online services; \$50 million to expand the GP after hours helpline, including the capacity for the helpline to provide online triage and basic medical advice via videoconferencing; and training and supervision for health professionals using online technologies.

Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Areas Program

The Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Areas Program funds Divisions of General Practice, Aboriginal Medical Services and the Royal Flying Doctor Service to deliver mental health services by appropriately trained mental health care workers,

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including psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, mental health nurses, Aboriginal health workers and Aboriginal mental health workers.

It provides funding for mental health professionals in communities that would otherwise have little or no access to mental health services. The program is designed to address inequities in access to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) by targeting areas where access to MBS-subsidised mental health services is low.

The program also addresses workforce shortage issues by providing flexible employment models suited to local needs and conditions. This includes flexibility to accommodate geographically, culturally and linguistically diverse populations in rural and remote areas of Australia.

Funding of up to \$125 million has been provided from 2006-07 to 2014-15 under the Program.

Supporting Women in Rural Areas Diagnosed with Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common cancer for women. This measure improves care for women in rural areas diagnosed with breast cancer where geographic isolation and limited contact with specialist health care workers may impede access to the full range of treatment options and support services.

A review undertaken in 2006 showed that the initiative had been successful in delivering innovative support services and found that there remained a strong need for continuation of this support for women in rural areas.

This is an ongoing initiative that commenced in 1999-2000. From 2008-09 to 2010-11, \$2.7 million was provided for activities, and \$2.5 million is allocated for the period 2011-12 to 2013-14.

Breast Care Nurses Initiative

The Commonwealth-supported McGrath Foundation breast care nurses are specially trained, registered nurses who provide vital information, care, and practical and emotional support to women diagnosed with breast cancer, and to their families and carers. There are 44 Commonwealth-supported McGrath Breast Care Nurses. Of these, 89 per cent are located in rural and remote communities.

To date, nearly 6,000 women with breast cancer have been supported through this measure.

The Government committed \$12.6 million to the McGrath Foundation to recruit, train and place breast care nurses across Australia for a period of four years until 30 June 2013.

National Suicide Prevention Program

The Australian Government's National Suicide Prevention Program (NSPP) allocated funding to 26 projects between 2009-10 and 2010-11 that target populations in rural and remote areas. Those who will benefit from these projects include farmers, workers and their families in rural and remote Australia, practitioners offering mental health services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and men in rural and remote areas.

While suicide is ranked as the 10th leading cause of deaths registered in Australia and accounts for only a relatively small proportion (1.5 per cent) of all deaths overall, it accounts for a greater proportion of deaths in some groups of people, including those in regional Australia and remote and very remote areas.

The total allocation to the NSPP in 2010-11 was \$23.8 million. Of this, \$7.62 million (or 32 per cent of total funding) was allocated to national and local community-based suicide prevention projects targeting rural and remote areas.

Approximately \$5.4 million has been provided to Indigenous projects through the NSPP in 2010-11 across the country.

Telephone Counselling, Self Help and Web-Based Support Programs

It is estimated that one in five Australians experience a mental health disorder in any given year. Only a third of the people with a mental disorder use mental health services, which leaves two thirds of that population not accessing support or treatment. Online mental health therapies have a sound evidence base and have benefited from a significant Australian contribution in their development and application, particularly in the treatment of anxiety and depression disorders.

Key measures funded under this measure include telephone crisis support services such as those provided by Lifeline and Kids Helpline. This initiative commenced in 2006 and is ongoing. Funding of \$50.8 million is available in the forward estimates under this measure to 2014-15.

Indigenous Chronic Disease Package

The Indigenous Chronic Disease Package is the Australian Government's contribution to the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes. This major investment aims to work towards closing the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation.

Under the Package, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in regional areas across Australia will benefit from a comprehensive suite of measures designed to help improve access to preventive care, primary health care and follow-up services.

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In the first two years, a total of 355 new health workforce positions have been funded under the package to improve the care provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and support them to make healthier lifestyle choices. Some 48 per cent of these positions are located in regional areas.

The Australian Government's commitment to the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package is \$805.5 million over four years from 2009-10. The package also includes \$54.7 million over four years for the expansion of the Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance initiative. This is funding medical specialists and multidisciplinary chronic disease teams to provide outreach services in rural Indigenous communities. The package is ongoing from 2009-10.

Improving Eye and Ear Health Services for Indigenous Australians for Better Education and Employment Outcomes

The Government is providing \$58.3 million over four years from 2009-10 to improve access to testing for vision and hearing loss for Indigenous Australians who suffer from high rates of eye and ear health conditions compared to non-Indigenous Australians. The measure also helps increase access to all necessary treatments, including surgery. Many of these services are specifically targeted to patients in regional, rural and remote Australia, including those screened for trachoma and those who receive specialist eye health services from visiting optometrists.

Child and Maternal Health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more likely to die before the age of five than non-Indigenous children. The Government's investment in child and maternal health programs aims to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade.

Health @ Home Plus (*Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program* - \$44.5 million over four years from 2011-12) and New Directions: An Equal Start in Life for Indigenous Children (*New Directions Mothers and Babies Services Program* - \$133.8 million over four years from 2011-12) will benefit women pregnant with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child and their families.

Both programs are ongoing. The Australian Nurse Family Partnership funding commenced in 2007-08 and New Directions commenced in 2007-08, with new or expanded service delivery funded over five tranches of funding until 2012-13.

Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative

This initiative provides a significant increase (28.6 per cent) in resources available to improve access to quality primary health care services for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory, and is being implemented in partnership with the Northern

Territory Government and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory.

The initiative supports the expansion and improvement of health service delivery in the Northern Territory, including through regionalisation of health service delivery, increased community control and participation and establishment of the Remote Area Health Corps to fill short-term gaps in the remote Northern Territory Aboriginal health workforce.

A total of \$192.4 million was provided over four years from 2008-09. The initiative commenced on 1 July 2008 and is funded until 30 June 2012.

Opal Fuel Rollout

The rollout of Opal fuel is designed to help young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and regional and remote Indigenous communities affected by petrol sniffing. Opal fuel has been shown to reduce the prevalence of petrol sniffing by as much as 94 per cent in communities where the fuel has been introduced.

The rollout of Opal fuel started in 2005 with an expanded rollout starting in 2010. The expanded voluntary rollout will address the storage and distribution problems that have prevented the rollout of the fuel to some locations in northern Australia. A minimum of an additional 39 sites will supply Opal fuel under the expanded rollout. Opal fuel is currently supplied by 110 sites in regional and remote Australia.

The Government provided an extra \$38.5 million from 2010-2014 for the further expansion of the voluntary rollout, bringing the total funding commitment to support the rollout of Opal fuel to \$84 million over four years.

Renal Access Program

This program is designed to improve access to renal dialysis for those suffering end-stage renal disease. For the period 2006-08, end-stage renal disease incidence was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all adult age groups, particularly the 45-64 year age groups. Indigenous people commencing end-stage renal disease treatment are much younger than other Australians commencing treatment, with over half under 55 years of age.

End-stage renal disease incidence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is much higher in outer regional and remote areas than urban areas. End-stage renal disease incidence is greatest in very remote and remote areas, with Indigenous Australians 20 and 18 times respectively more likely to acquire end-stage renal disease than other Australians in the same areas.

A total of \$5.3 million was provided in 2006-07 to support this program. It is funded until 30 June 2012.

Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples currently experience much higher rates of sexually transmissible infections and blood borne viruses than non-Indigenous Australians. New national sexual health strategies were endorsed by Health Ministers in 2010 that recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a priority group for activities aimed at reducing the burden of sexually transmissible infections and blood borne viruses.

The Australian Government provides \$11 million annually for culturally appropriate education, management and treatment of sexually transmissible infections and blood borne viruses in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The national sexual health strategies cover the period 2010-2013. The strategies will help guide the Australian Government's investment in this area over the next three years.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Use Initiative

Alcohol and drug use contributes significantly to the burden of disease and injury for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This initiative aims to increase access to, and equity of, drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services for Indigenous communities across Australia.

It benefits Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are affected by drug and alcohol misuse, their families and communities and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation workforce.

The Australian Government will provide approximately \$310 million over the next four years for the initiative, which is ongoing.

Establishment and Implementation of Medicare Locals

The Australian Government is establishing Medicare Locals to drive improvements in primary health care. General practitioners will remain at the centre of the primary health care system, with Medicare Locals taking responsibility for ensuring that primary health care services are better able to meet the needs of local communities. Better integrated primary health care, through the establishment of Medicare Locals, will help manage emerging challenges for the health system, including an ageing population and the increasing burden of chronic disease.

Medicare Locals will make it easier for patients to access the services they need, by better linking local GPs, nursing and other health professionals, hospitals and aged care, and maintaining up-to-date local service directories. They will identify where local communities are missing out on services they might need, including after-hours services, and coordinate services to address those gaps.

A total of around \$493 million over four years to 2013-14 will be provided to establish a national network of Medicare Locals across Australia, including funding to fast-track the establishment of 15 Medicare Locals from 1 January 2012. Once all Medicare Locals are established, the total annual core funding for the Medicare Local network will be about \$175 million.

Approximately 15 Medicare Locals will commence from 1 July 2011, with the remainder becoming operational in two tranches from 1 January 2012 and 1 July 2012.

Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation & Development Strategy Phase 3

Phase 3 of the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation & Development Strategy 2010-2014 helps to build Australia-wide primary health care research capacity and generates high quality, responsive, priority driven research. This is used to inform Australian primary health care policy development, and improve practice, services and patient outcomes.

The strategy has supported Research Capacity Building Initiative grants which have funded primary health care research and capacity building through 28 university departments of general practice or rural health around Australia since 2000.

From 2012, the Regional Capacity Building Initiative grants will be replaced by a network of up to 10 Centres of Research Excellence, forming collaborations with key stakeholders from metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas and universities.

Three Centre of Research Excellence commenced operations in the 2011 academic year and up to an additional seven are expected to commence in 2012. Each centre will operate over a four year period. A total of \$500,000 additional funding is available for each centre with a core research focus on rural and remote primary health care. The centre will be required to expend at least \$250,000 on research conducted in a physically remote environment, such as for the support of rural-based researchers.

Two of the three centres already awarded have either a direct rural and remote research focus and/or involve collaboration with a university department of rural health.

The strategy also supports a co-funded National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grant program for post doctoral NHMRC Career Development Fellowships that will further develop Australia's research capacity in primary health care. Supplementary funding is available for eligible rural and remote post doctoral fellows. The fellowships are expected to commence in 2012 and conclude on 31 December 2015. Up to \$35,000 per annum will be available for each eligible rural and remote post doctoral fellow.

From 1 July 2011, funding for these activities will be administered through the Health System Capacity Development Fund.

Rural Health Workforce Strategy

While attracting and retaining a skilled health workforce are key challenges facing health services across Australia as a whole, workforce shortages have reached a critical level in many regional, rural and remote communities. The Rural Health Workforce Strategy aims to address the mal-distribution of the medical workforce through the introduction of new and enhanced initiatives to encourage doctors to live and work in regional, rural and remote areas.

The strategy has significantly increased the number of doctors who will receive workforce incentives, with more than 2,400 doctors becoming eligible for the first time from 1 July 2010. About 500 communities in regional Australia are newly eligible locations in which doctors can receive financial and non-financial incentives.

The Australian Government committed \$134.4 million in the 2009-10 Budget, in addition to existing funding, to improve the health workforce in regional, rural and remote Australia.

Rural Primary Health Services Initiative

This initiative provides ongoing access to a variety of primary and allied health care services and activities for rural and remote communities, in particular, small and more remote communities. Services are targeted to areas of community identified health needs.

It commenced from 1 January 2010 following a consolidation of four previously separate primary and allied health care programs. Funding agreements are in place for three and a half years from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2013. In 2011-12, the initiative will link to Medicare Locals with potential to drive improved access to, and integration across, primary health care as well as helping to address the difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitability qualified staff for primary health care service delivery in rural and remote communities.

An annual appropriation of approximately \$78 million is provided.

Visiting Optometrists Scheme

The Visiting Optometrists Scheme (VOS) aims to improve the access of people living and working in rural and remote communities to optometry services. The scheme addresses some of the financial disincentives incurred by optometrists providing outreach services, with funding provided for costs that include travel, accommodation and meals; facility fees and administrative support at the outreach locations; external locum support at the home practice; and lease and transport of equipment.

The scheme is primarily targeted to remote and very remote locations. Communities in inner and outer regional areas with an identified need for optometric services may also be considered for VOS services

The VOS is an ongoing program, with funding of \$8.6 million available from 2011-12 to 2013-14. An expansion of the service for Indigenous Australians, the *Improving Eye and Ear Health Services for Indigenous Australians for Better Education and Employment Outcomes* measure, will receive \$7.1 million from 2011-12 to 2013-14.

Continued Support for the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia

The Australian Government is continuing its support for the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (RFDS) to provide emergency aero-medical evacuations, primary healthcare services, remote consultations and medical checks in rural, remote and very remote communities. A new four-year funding agreement will commence on 1 July 2011 and continue until 30 June 2015.

People in the bush rely on the RFDS to deliver essential health care services and undertake evacuations in times of medical emergencies. The continuation of funding will mean that people living, working and travelling in rural and remote Australia will continue to have access to emergency evacuations and a range of primary health care services.

The Government will be providing up to \$222 million in recurrent and capital funding for RFDS health care services. The Government's continued support of the RFDS will enable the organisation to replace aged aero-medical aircraft and improve infrastructure at RFDS bases.

Investing in primary care infrastructure – including GP Super Clinics

This initiative is a key element of the Australian Government's strategy to build a stronger primary health care system, including a greater focus on management of chronic disease, health promotion and illness prevention and better coordination between privately provided GP services, community health and other State or Territory Government services.

In 2010, the Australian Government invested \$370.2 million to establish 28 new GP Super Clinics and to upgrade around 425 general practices, primary care and community health services, and Aboriginal Medical Services to improve access to integrated GP and primary health care. This builds on the Government's previous investment of \$280.2 million to establish 36 GP Super Clinics across Australia.

GP Super Clinics aim to bring together general practitioners, practice nurses, visiting medical specialists, allied health professionals and other health care providers to deliver primary health care services aimed at addressing the health care needs and priorities of their local communities.

Investing in Regional Australia

Thirty-five GP Super Clinics are being established in regional areas, increasing access to a greater range of primary health care services available to local communities. GP Super Clinics will also provide additional training placements for medical, nursing and other allied health students.

Further, over a third (\$41 million) of the Primary Care Infrastructure Grant funding has been allocated to regional and remote Australia. Of the applications shortlisted from the first grant round in 2010, approximately 45 per cent were from regional and remote Australia totaling \$31.47 million. It is anticipated that the remainder of the regional commitment for Primary Care Infrastructure Grants will be allocated through the second grant round, which opened in April and closes on 10 June 2011.

Healthy Communities Initiative

This is a key initiative under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health to support Local Government Areas in delivering effective community-based physical activity and healthy eating programs and a range of policies to support healthy lifestyle behaviours. The aim of the initiative is to promote healthy lifestyle behaviour change within target populations, primarily those adults not in the paid workforce and socially and economically disadvantaged. Up to 92 local governments across Australia, including those in regional, rural and remote areas, take part. Funding of \$61.5 million is available from 2009-10 to 2012-13.

Health and Hospitals Fund Rounds 1 and 2

Through the Health and Hospitals Fund the Australian Government is investing in major health infrastructure programs that will make significant progress towards achieving its health reform targets. The funding supports health infrastructure projects in each State and Territory.

Substantial community-wide benefits in health care and employment are being provided in the immediate areas in which the projects are located, and in the broader regions beyond.

Under Round 1, the Government committed \$557 million to projects in regional areas which will provide expanded hospital facilities, new or refurbished primary health care centres and major health research facilities. Funding of Round 1 projects commenced in June 2009 and will extend to June 2016.

Under Round 2, the Government has to date allocated \$540 million of \$560 million to build a network of best-practice regional cancer centres, together with four stand-alone patient accommodation projects, to help close the gap in outcomes for cancer patients in rural and regional areas. Funding of Round 2 projects commenced in July 2010 and will extend to June 2014.

Further Information

Further information about these and other health and ageing initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.health.gov.au.

HUMAN SERVICES

Rural and Regional Locations

The Human Services Portfolio is about people and the services we may require at different stages of our lives. It consists of a number of government agencies, including Medicare Australia and Centrelink.

In delivering services to people living in regional Australia, a lot of business can be conducted without having to visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre or a Medicare Office. Options for accessing services include the Centrelink Rural Call Centres, Centrelink Rural Services Officers, Centrelink Agents and Access Points and Medicare Australia Access Points. These options can help with accessing information, lodging claims and reporting information.

Online services provides an additional way to access a number of services, such as viewing and updating personal details, requesting information and, in some instances, lodging claims.

Australian Government Mobile Offices travel to rural and remote communities, including drought affected and areas declared to be Exceptional Circumstances, to assist with information and access to Government services. Staff on board the Mobile Offices live and work in regional communities, and can provide information, assistance and support to seniors, students, families, farmers and farm-dependent small businesses.

Medicare Australia is responsible for the administration of a number of health programs including Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register and the Australian Organ Donor Register.

Medicare Australia also administers rural-specific initiatives, such as the General Practice Rural Incentives Program, the Rural Procedural Grants Program and the Rural Locum Education Assistance Program. These initiatives are targeted at, and are beneficial to, the people living in regional Australia as they are aimed at addressing medical practitioner workforce shortages. Through recognition, reward and incentive payments these programs help to retain long-serving GPs and attract new GPs to rural and regional communities. Medicare Australia customers can now claim Medicare benefits for five of the most common GP consultations through Online Services. Claims can be lodged for anyone on the same Medicare card and benefits will be paid into a nominated bank account in one to two working days.

Further Information

Further information about these and other Human Services initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.humanservices.gov.au.

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme

Skill shortages pose major challenges to regional Australian businesses, with significant implications for the viability of towns and local economies. The Government is committed to supporting regional communities to address these issues, to find local, sustainable solutions that allow the flexibility for businesses to find the workers they need, while also protecting regional skilled workers' employment opportunities.

The Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme is a migration initiative that allows employers in regional Australia to recruit skilled workers from overseas, or those who are working in Australia on a temporary visa, to fill vacancies in their businesses that are unable to be filled by an Australian employee. Employers in all areas of Australia, except for Perth, Melbourne, Wollongong, Newcastle, Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast, can access the Scheme.

Employers must be able to show there is a genuine need for the skilled worker in their business, and the nominated position must be certified by a Regional Certifying Body. The employer must also be able to provide the skilled worker with at least two consecutive years of full-time employment.

Visa applicants must be less than 45 years old, hold an appropriate qualification and be able to provide evidence of their English language ability. Anyone who does not meet any of these requirements can still be considered if they can demonstrate that exceptional circumstances apply to their case. The visa requirements are similar to those of other permanent employer sponsored visas, but with lower thresholds in acknowledgement of the difficulties in attracting skilled migrants to live in regional Australia.

Labour Agreements

The Labour Agreement program offers regional employers a viable avenue to address skill vacancies that cannot be filled from the local labour market by sponsoring overseas workers. Labour agreements are negotiated arrangements between the Commonwealth and an employer which facilitate the entry of overseas workers where employers can demonstrate a need. A range of labour agreements are in place across regional Australia, including in the meat processing, fishing, snow sports and

construction industries. Labour agreements are also in place to help meet the skill needs of the resources sector.

Labour agreements provide a balanced response to the labour needs of regional Australia by ensuring that employers seeking access to overseas labour also make strong efforts to recruit and train Australian workers.

State and Territory Government Nominated and Family Sponsored Migration

Applicants under the General Skilled Migration program may be sponsored to regional Australia as the holder of a provisional Skilled – Regional Sponsored visa, leading to permanent migration after the holder has lived (for at least two years) and worked (for at least one year) in regional Australia.

The Skilled – Regional Sponsored Subclass 475 and Subclass 487 visas are provisional visas which provide access to the Subclass 887 permanent visa, provided that holders meet criteria requiring them to live and work in regional Australia. Both of these provisional visas allow for sponsorship by either a family member or nomination by a State or Territory government. These visas are accessed by the State and Territory Governments under State Migration Plans.

There are concessions under the points test for the Skilled – Regional Sponsored visas. The Government endorsed a revised General Skilled Migration points test on 11 November 2010. The revised points test maintains regional sponsorship points that are equal for both family sponsored and State and Territory Government nominated applicants.

Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme

The Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme is a three-year trial program (ending June 2012) to examine whether a seasonal worker program could positively contribute to Australia's Pacific economic development objectives while also assisting horticulture employers in regional Australia who cannot source local labour. Four Pacific Island countries were selected as a balanced representative sample of Pacific regional countries to participate in the Pilot: Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Sustainable Regional Settlement

A key objective of the Government's migration program is to successfully settle humanitarian entrants arriving in Australia.

While the vast majority of settlement occurs in metropolitan areas, regional settlement is an important component of this strategy. The settlement of refugees in regional areas is beneficial for both the refugees and the receiving communities. Regional settlement can provide refugees with good social and economic prospects, while at the same time

reduce the load on services in metropolitan cities, offset regional population decline and increase community diversity in regional areas.

The Government has directly settled humanitarian entrants in regional areas for some years now. Around 13,000 new humanitarian entrants are settled in Australia each year, 15-20 per cent of whom are directly settled in regional locations. Other migrants will move to regional areas as part of secondary movement and as a result of local initiatives by businesses and councils to attract new residents. A range of settlement related services (including Humanitarian Settlement Services, the Adult Migrant English Program and the Settlement Grants Program) are available to clients in regional, as well as metropolitan, locations.

The Government is working across government and with Regional Development Australia committees to make better use of existing capacity in regional areas to support settlement and ensure appropriate Government funding is available to do this.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

Nation Building Program

The 2011-12 Budget allocates \$954.3 million in new funding and accelerated investment for the Nation Building Program, in addition to \$394.4 million for projects under the Regional Infrastructure Fund. This funding will support jobs and help drive Australia's long-term productivity and international competitiveness. This includes additional funding for South Australian local roads. By investing in transport infrastructure of national significance across Australia we are boosting our economy's productivity by addressing infrastructure capacity constraints, relieving traffic congestion, improving road safety, and improving connections with major cities and ports.

Our investment will increase the efficiency of freight and passenger transport, and will bring long term economic benefits to our regions. Details on subcomponents of the Nation Building Program can be found below.

Black Spot Program

The Black Spot program provides funding for safety works such as roundabouts, crash barriers and street lights at places where there have been serious crashes or where serious crashes are likely.

The investment of \$502.2 million from 2008-09 to 2013-14, with \$74.5 million to be provided in 2011-12, is helping to make our local roads safer for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. Each State and Territory receives a share of the total funding, based on population and crash data.

State and Territory Governments, councils, community groups and individuals can nominate a black spot for funding. Nominations are considered by Black Spot Consultative Panels, which are made up of road experts, government advisors and local representatives. After examining each nomination, the panels make a recommendation to the Australian Government about a project's merit for funding.

Approximately 50 per cent of Black Spot funds in each state (except Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory) are reserved for projects in non-metropolitan areas. This ensures that crash locations in rural and regional areas are treated, ensuring that rural and regional areas will receive the road safety enhancements they need.

Roads to Recovery Program

The Government will provide \$350 million in 2011-12 to councils through the Roads to Recovery Program. Of this, \$244.2 million will be provided to councils in regional areas.

The Roads to Recovery program provides funding directly to local councils for road works chosen by the councils and to states and territories for roads in areas where there are no councils. Each funding recipient has a set allocation of funding over the life of the program. The Australian Government has increased funding for the program by \$42.5 million per annum, from 2009-10.

WA Grain Rail Lines

The Australian Government has allocated \$135 million in the current Nation Building Program towards the upgrade of WA Grain Rail Lines, in conjunction with the West Australian Government. This project is providing improvement works on the Western Australia grain freight network. The WA Grain Rail project has three stages: the Avon to Albany line, the Kwinana North zone and the Albany zone.

Intermodal Terminals

The Australian Government has allocated \$177.6 million from 2008-09 to 2013-14 for the development or enhancement of intermodal terminals in Western Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and in New South Wales. When complete, these projects will provide benefits across the supply chain including in rural and regional Australia, improve Australia's productivity and economic performance and promote significant industry development and investment. The projects will also reduce heavy vehicle traffic, improve road and rail safety, improve air quality and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Tasmanian Rail Investments

The Australian Government has allocated over \$193.6 million from 2008-09 to 2013-14 to undertake capital upgrades on the Tasmanian freight rail network. This investment is helping keep the core of the Tasmanian network operational, whilst supporting the ongoing growth of freight movements to and from Tasmania's ports. Major works currently underway include upgrades of the Melba Flats to Burnie line and the Hobart to Burnie line. This is in addition to the proposed upgrade to Rhyndaston rail tunnel to overcome the most substantial bottleneck in the Tasmanian network.

Nation Building Plan for the Future

The Nation Building Plan for the Future is an \$8.4 billion investment of nationally significant transport infrastructure projects across Australia that are critical to boosting our economy's productivity. This is part of the Australian Government's continued rollout of the most significant infrastructure program in our nation's history, supporting jobs, productivity and sustainability right across the country.

Projects will help to connect our regional areas with major towns and cities and with commercial and export markets. They will increase the efficiency of freight and passenger transport, and will bring long-term economic benefits to our regions.

An example of this investment includes a contribution of \$488 million to upgrade the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra. This investment will separate long distance from local traffic and improve safety and travel times for all people travelling on this section of road.

Infrastructure Employment Projects

The Government allocated \$150 million as part of its successful Economic Stimulus Plan to support jobs and skills development through projects that build long-term community infrastructure and social capital across Australia.

An example is the Government's investment of \$12.5 million for the Three Capes Track eco-tourism project on the Tasman Peninsula in Tasmania. The project will upgrade 38 kilometres of existing trails, construct 30 kilometres of new connecting trails, and build environmentally-sensitive accommodation and assorted amenities following community consultation on how best to protect the region's environmental heritage values.

Investment in the Australian Rail Track Corporation

The Australian Government is providing equity investments of \$2.2 billion to the Government-owned Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) to support the ARTC's extensive capital upgrade program across regional Australia to modernise and improve the capacity of the interstate and Hunter Valley rail networks, helping to get

more trucks off rural and regional roads. These projects are expected to create some 1,500 jobs, mostly in regional Australia.

In a boost for regional economies, the required material – the new concrete sleepers and metal rails – are being sourced from factories in Whyalla, Grafton, Geelong, Mittagong and Wagga Wagga.

The equity is being provided through two packages. The Government is providing \$996 million for the Rail Productivity Improvements Package, having already made an equity injection of \$375 million towards this commitment, with the remaining \$621 million in equity injection to be provided over 2011-12 and 2012-13.

This productivity package includes:

- \$170 million to straighten the line between Maitland and the Queensland border at 58 locations (New South Wales).
- \$24 million to build three double track passing loops near the New South Wales towns of Maldon, Moss Vale and Glenlee.
- \$312 million to re-rail the lines between Whyalla and Broken Hill and between Parkes and Broken Hill.
- \$253 million to replace the existing old wooden sleepers on the line between Parkes and Broken Hill with one million new concrete sleepers.
- \$110 million to re-rail the line between Albury to Melbourne to Geelong.
- \$32 million to build four new passing loops between Gheringhap and Maroona in Victoria.
- \$95 million project to re-rail the line between Koolyanobbing and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia and build two new passing loops, subject to ARTC concluding contractual arrangements with WestNet over this section of the interstate track.

In addition, the Government provided an equity injection to the ARTC through the Economic Stimulus Plan to support 17 major rail projects, of which 11 have been completed. Completed projects include:

- the Wodonga Rail Bypass Duplication (\$50 million);
- the Western Victoria Track Upgrade (\$105.7 million);
- the Queensland Border – Acacia Ridge upgrade (\$55.8 million); and
- the Adelaide – Kalgoorlie New and Extended Loops (\$23 million).

Investing in Regional Australia

Work on the Hunter Valley Rail package (\$580 million provided through the Economic Stimulus Plan) is also progressing.

All of these projects are supporting significant rural and regional construction and economic activity and boosting the cost competitiveness of freight rail along the North-South and East-West rail corridors.

High Speed Rail

Work has commenced on a \$20 million strategic study commissioned by the Australian Government to determine the economic benefits and financial viability of a high-speed rail network along Australia's east coast. The Newcastle – Sydney 'spine' will be a central aspect of the study.

The study is focusing on identifying possible routes, corridor preservation and station options, including city-centre, city-periphery and airport stations. This will provide a basis for route development, indicative transit times and high-level construction costs. It will draw on international experience, public and private sector expertise, growth forecasts and other contemporary data. As well as define a potential route alignment, the study will provide information which will help guide future investment decisions, including likely demand and an estimated construction cost.

The initial phase of the study will identify the requirements for implementation of a viable high speed rail network on the east coast, and identify strategic route and station options, including high level costing. From mid 2011, more detailed corridor alignments will be assessed and costed, and potential financing and business operating models for the construction and operation of a high speed rail network will be developed.

The study is scheduled for completion in mid 2012.

Infrastructure Australia

The Government established Infrastructure Australia as an independent advisory council to the Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments, as well encompassing an advisory role for investors in infrastructure and owners of infrastructure, on issues related to the industry. Infrastructure Australia promote rigorous planning and reform of nationally significant infrastructure, and is currently working with States, Territories and other stakeholders to build a long-term pipeline of reforms and investments.

The national ports strategy released by Prime Minister Gillard on 7 January 2011 will deliver significant improvements to how ports are planned, and to their performance and productivity as the Government plans for a growing trade task in the future.

Those regions servicing ports will have a greater say through improved planning processes that engage the whole supply chain. For example the strategy will have a significant impact on regions such as the Pilbara, Hunter Valley, Bunbury, Abbott Point and Gladstone, Green triangle in Victoria, Launceston and Bell Bay.

Infrastructure Australia is also working on a draft national land freight strategy and a draft regional water strategy (drinking water), working with state, territory and local governments and communities on the infrastructure needs of our regions.

The 2011-12 Budget provides an increase in funding for Infrastructure Australia to \$36 million over the four years to 2014-15.

Strengthening Aviation Security – Regional and Domestic Aviation Security

The Government will invest \$32.1 million over four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14 on initiatives to strengthen aviation security. Measures include:

- increasing explosive trace detection capability for passenger screening at existing domestic airports from 1 July 2012;
- implementing passenger screening for all regular public transport and open charter air services utilising aircraft with a maximum takeoff weight greater than 20,000 kg; and
- extending the requirement for hardened cockpit doors to be fitted to all aircraft with a maximum takeoff weight greater than 10,750 kg.

The Government will assist with the cost of additional explosive trace detection machines at domestic screened airports, screening equipment at unscreened regional airports, and installation of hardened cockpit doors.

Benefits to regional Australia will be an improved security outcome, enabling the introduction of a more seamless travelling experience when flying to a major airport. Additionally, upgraded aviation security measures will remove any aviation security related disincentives from operating large aircraft in regional ports.

Regional Aviation Access Program

The Regional Aviation Access Program provides weekly subsidised passenger and freight services and aerodrome infrastructure funding. The program has a 2011-12 Budget allocation of \$32.8 million. The funding components under the program are as follows.

Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme

The Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme subsidises weekly passenger and freight air transportation to communities which would otherwise have no regular access to transport. From May 2009 to December 2010, the scheme carried over 7,000 passengers and over 412,500 kg in freight and mail to 252 remote communities (including 82 Indigenous communities) in 10 remote regions across the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

Remote Airstrip Funding

Funding is provided to upgrade remote Indigenous airstrips that received a Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme service and were also identified as requiring priority works. These upgrades will make them safer and more accessible. The airstrips present a vital lifeline to people living in remote Indigenous communities across Australia. They allow these areas access to essential items such as medical and business supplies, fresh food and long-distance educational materials.

Grants are also available over the next two years for communities to improve the safety and accessibility of airstrips and facilitate the provision of non-commercial essential community air services including delivery of food supplies, community mail, passenger transport services, medical supplies and medical care.

Remote Aerodrome Inspection Program

The Australian Government's Remote Aerodrome Inspection Program provides an aerodrome inspection service for 59 designated Indigenous communities.

This Australian Government funded service provides practical assistance to remote communities heavily reliant on air services. The program facilitates training of aerodrome reporting officers as required for compliance with aviation safety regulations. Normally, aerodrome inspections of this type would be the responsibility of the aerodrome owner/operator. However, they require specialised technical expertise not readily available in remote communities.

The Airservices Australia Enroute Charges Payment Scheme

The Australian Government is providing \$14 million over four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14 under the current Airservices Australia Enroute Charges Payment Scheme (Enroute Scheme) to support vulnerable regional and remote routes.

Further Information

Further information about these and other infrastructure and transport initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.infrastructure.gov.au.

INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Enterprise Connect

Enterprise Connect is a national network of 12 centres that provides high quality business advisory services to established small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Enterprise Connect's role is to connect firms to the knowledge, tools and expertise necessary to improve productivity, increase competitiveness and fully capitalise on their growth potential. The network employs around 100 experienced Business Advisers and Facilitators, including 29 located in regional Australia. Since its establishment in 2008, Enterprise Connect has established a client base of over 4,000 SMEs with over 1,200 of these firms being regionally located.

Enterprise Connect has two specific Centres whose activity is focussed on Australia's regions. The Innovative Regions Centre (IRC) based in Geelong currently works in 10 designated Innovative Regions across Australia. The IRC's role is to drive regional entrepreneurship by supporting business groups and networks. It encourages these networks, in conjunction with local government, universities, researchers and communities, to identify local strengths and resources (including those in local universities, training institutions and large firms) and bring these resources together to access larger markets outside their regions, while growing the capacity of SMEs within the regions. The IRC has deployed a Regional Facilitator to each of the 10 regions and they have been tasked to maintain close relationships with local representatives of Regional Development Australia.

The facilitation efforts of Enterprise Connect's Innovative Regions Centre in Central Queensland have resulted in delivery of a national first – the Central Queensland Innovation Accord. This regional level agreement is backed by the commitment of over 100 regional leaders and companies to work collaboratively within and across sectors to accelerate uptake of innovative practice. Practical regional outcomes have included innovation being embraced in regional strategic plans, collaborative projects such as incorporation of a transport and logistics hub, workshops and data management for strengthening supply chains and improving access to major projects, establishment of a Digital Economy Taskforce, development of a regional innovation centre and the branding of the region as 'Central Queensland – a Region of Innovation'.

The Remote Enterprise Centre is headquartered in Alice Springs and provides Enterprise Connect's services to firms from the Northern Territory to remote areas of Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia. There has been strong demand from SMEs for Enterprise Connect's services in these locations as they face particular challenges related to the availability of skills and access to infrastructure. The program provides concessional eligibility criteria for remote businesses and around 200 firms are being assisted through a Business Review across regional and remote areas of Australia.

Australian Research Council

The Australian Research Council manages the National Competitive Grants Program and Excellence in Research for Australia initiative.

The National Competitive Grants Program supports research across a wide range of disciplines including areas relevant to regional and rural issues. Recipients of funding under the National Council Grants Program include universities in regional areas. In addition, the Australian Research Council encourages partnerships between researchers and industry, government, community organisations and the international community.

Research Block Grants

In 2011-12 the Government will provide approximately \$1.59 billion to 41 eligible higher education providers as block grants for research and research training through a number of performance-based schemes administered by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. A total of 13 of the 41 research block grant recipients are in regional areas. In many instances, the support provided through the grants will be utilised in regional Australia as a number of the other eligible higher education providers also have regional campuses.

The research block grants administered by the department are: Research Training Scheme; Research Infrastructure Block Grants; Commercialisation Training Scheme; Joint Research Engagement; Sustainable Research Excellence in universities; Australian Postgraduate Awards; and International Postgraduate Research Scholarships.

The research block grants are established under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and provide block grant funding to support research and the research training of students undertaking their Research Masters or Research Doctorate at an eligible Australian higher education provider.

Education Investment Fund

The role of the Education Investment Fund is to build a modern, productive, internationally competitive Australian economy by supporting world-leading, strategically-focused infrastructure investments that will transform Australian tertiary education and research.

Since its establishment in 2008, funding of \$180.9 million has been awarded to universities in regional Australia for research infrastructure projects including the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies at the University of Tasmania; the Australian Institute for Innovative Materials – Processing and Devices and Retrofitting for Resilient and Sustainable Buildings at the University of Wollongong; the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources at the University of Newcastle; and the Australian Future Fibres Research and Innovation Centre at Deakin University.

South East South Australia Innovation and Investment Fund

The \$12 million South East South Australia Innovation and Investment Fund is part of a \$17 million assistance package announced by the South Australia and Australian Governments in January 2011 following the decision by Kimberly-Clark to close its operations at Millicent in South Australia. Funding is to be provided over the 2011-12 and 2012-13 financial years to assist industry development in South East South Australia by providing grants to support innovative job creation projects that strengthen the region's manufacturing and technology base.

AusIndustry Regional Managers Network

The AusIndustry Regional Managers Network provides regional businesses with improved access to information and programs. There are offices in 15 regional centres across Australia. The Network provides an important interface between regional businesses and government, with its strength being the 'face-to-face' delivery method employed by the AusIndustry Regional Managers. The Network is also helping to increase collaboration within regional communities, facilitating inter-business networks and relationships – a key factor in encouraging innovation.

Small Business Advisory Services

The Small Business Advisory Services program provides advice to small businesses on business planning, loans and banking products, simple marketing plans, legal and accounting services, leasing guidance and government regulation, and mentoring for business. The program aims to maximise the growth potential, prosperity and sustainability of small businesses. There are 37 Business Enterprise Centres across Australia funded under the program to assist small businesses. Eighteen of these are located in regional Australia.

Small Business Online

The Small Business Online program provides advice to small businesses to help them go online or improve their presence on the internet. The Australian Government has provided \$14.3 million to fund 47 service providers. These organisations offer training seminars on e-business, advice on establishing an online presence and help with developing other e-business resources. Forty two grants have been made to businesses providing services to regional Australia. The program is scheduled to end on 30 June 2011.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has 25 sites across regional Australia, delivering scientific expertise and research capability and linking with the local innovation infrastructure. Some key CSIRO achievements which have regional applications include the following.

Investing in Regional Australia

- *Wireless broadband for the bush:* CSIRO's Ngara technologies are being developed to bring wireless broadband communications to people living in regional and rural areas of Australia. A field trial in Tasmania in December 2010 proved the viability of this technology, with near error-free digital transmission from farms up to 8.4 kilometres away. Work on this technology will continue in 2011-12 to improve the data speeds and transmission distances.
- *Disease resistant cotton:* CSIRO has developed cotton varieties with improved disease resistance that effectively combat serious diseases. These varieties comprise over 95 per cent of the Australian cotton crop.
- *A sustainable water future for Australia:* this is the most comprehensive and systematic study of water availability in Australia's major water systems. It will underpin policies and management strategies for a sustainable water future.
- *Northern beef herd:* CSIRO is undertaking a significant program of research toward improving the beef industry in northern Australia, including improving the quality and availability of irrigated pastures and crops, which are vital to overcoming seasonal feed shortages and for intensifying production.
- *Solar power:* CSIRO is building the world's largest solar tower Brayton Cycle system, which will pave the way for solar power that only requires the sun and air to create electricity, making it ideally suited to many parts of regional Australia that receive minimal rainfall.
- *New energy technologies:* CSIRO conducts a range of energy research which brings direct benefits to regional Australia, either through promoting the development of new regional industries (such as biofuels) or developing novel energy technologies which will help deliver a low-carbon electricity supply to regional Australia (such as geothermal or distributed energy generation technologies).

International Science Linkages

The International Science Linkages (ISL) program has, for ten years, been the Australian Government's leading mechanism for increasing Australia's participation in international research, for strengthening strategic partnerships between the Australian and overseas research communities, and for facilitating access by Australian researchers to global technology and science facilities. The ISL program (which included bilateral funds that attracted matching funding from partner governments, namely the Australia-China Special Fund, the French-Australian S&T Fund and the Korea Fund) provided support to Australian universities (including Curtin University of Technology, the University of Tasmania and James Cook University), publicly funded research agencies (including many CSIRO divisions), independent research institutes and the Learned Academies to carry out research projects, workshops, conferences and research exchanges across Australia and across

the spectrum of scientific disciplines. Well over 3,000 projects and activities have been supported.

Total expenditure of administered funds under the program from 2002-03 to 2010-11 inclusive is expected to be \$92.5 million. The program will terminate on 30 June 2011.

An example of how ISL has supported research collaboration that can benefit regional communities is the Australia-China Centre on Water Resources Research. Water is a major public policy issue for both Australia and China, especially when it comes to river and groundwater sources being over utilised by agricultural irrigation systems. The Australia-China Centre on Water Resources Research focuses on priority areas of river basin and groundwater management, irrigation water efficiency, water allocation policy and the linking of climate and catchment models. Just one of the outcomes of this project is a water and fertiliser management decision support system, developed and applied in both Australia and China, which has created \$416 million (over 866-fold return on investment) in economic benefits (ABARES estimate) and gained huge environmental benefits. The ISL program helped found the Australia-China Centre on Water Resources Research in 2006.

Australian Astronomical Observatory

The Australian Astronomical Observatory generates a variety of benefits for the people of Coonabarabran, the Warrumbungle Shire and regional New South Wales, through the operations of the Anglo-Australian Telescope and the UK Schmidt Telescope, and through its outreach activities and community engagement.

The observatory employs 29 staff at its Siding Spring Observatory site. Additionally, it offers local contracts for services at the telescope and for the supply of goods and services to support the operations of the Observatory. The observatory is a major drawcard for tourists to the region, with approximately 17,500 visitors each year.

The observatory is collaborating with the local community, regional councils, the Coonabarabran District Chamber of Commerce, the Coonabarabran Local Aboriginal Land Council, and the NSW Department of Planning to develop and update the Orana Regional Environmental Plan, a Regulation under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder and Square Kilometre Array Radio Telescopes

The Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP), a next-generation radio telescope, is an approximately \$120 million project being designed and built by the CSIRO near Murchison in the mid-west of Western Australia. Construction of the Pathfinder is due to be completed in 2013. When complete, ASKAP will be one of the world's premier radio telescopes and will help to answer fundamental questions about our universe.

As well as being a world-leading telescope in its own right, ASKAP will be an important test bed for the multi-billion dollar Square Kilometre Array, a future international radio telescope that will be the world's largest and most sensitive, for which Australia is competing to become the host site (see Budget Initiatives section). CSIRO is leading the construction of ASKAP, and is ensuring that it involves local communities and local businesses in regional Australia as much as possible.

Excellence in Research for Australia

The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative evaluates research in Australian higher education institutions at a discipline level using a combination of indicators and expert review. The 2009-10 Budget included an allocation of \$35.8 million for the development and implementation of ERA.

ERA is a comprehensive and detailed metrics-based analysis that is designed to recognise the quality of Australia's research efforts, as compared to those internationally. The combination of indicators used in ERA has been designed according to the most appropriate proxies for quality in each discipline, and includes citation analysis, and peer-review, esteem and applied measures. In this way, ERA is able to provide evidence-based data regarding the quality of research in all research-discipline areas, regardless of the quantity of research outputs. Areas of research strength and areas that require a renewed research focus are thus identified, in both metropolitan and regional universities, and within established and emerging fields of research.

ERA outcomes inform government policy decisions and investment to support improvements in Australia's research capacity. Industry, universities, academics and students can also draw on ERA data to make informed decisions about higher education and research. ERA allows for comparisons of Australia's research nationally and internationally, for all discipline areas. This information will also better inform institutions, industry and individual researchers and, in this way, facilitate the fostering of new avenues of collaboration, including collaboration between regional universities and other institutions.

Higher Education and Research Promotion

In 2011-12 the Government has allocated approximately \$4.4 million to the Higher Education Research Promotion program to support activities that foster an understanding of the importance of, or promote research and scholarship in any discipline.

Up to nine eligible bodies receive funding under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA), including the four learned academies and other organisations such as the Australian Centre for Child Protection based at the University of South Australia, and the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. The

academies will also receive an additional \$1 million in 2011-12 under the complementary non-HESA Learned Academies supplementation funding program.

The funding supports a range of activities including forums so that the academies can engage on issues of national importance, multidisciplinary research and service delivery to enhance the life opportunities of children at risk of abuse or neglect in Australia, and students from each Australian State and Territory attending an annual youth conference on science.

Questacon

Questacon, the National Science and Technology Centre, welcomes over 400,000 visitors per year. This includes school visitors, adults and other members of the community, including those from regional Australia.

Questacon runs outreach programs to make science and technology programs accessible to communities throughout Australia with a focus on regional areas. These programs include the *Shell Questacon Science Circus*, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in October 2010. This world class outreach program has a significant impact on engaging regional Australia with science. In 2009-10, over 80,000 people experienced a Science Circus show with 351 schools visited. During 2009-10, outreach programs visited 1065 schools in geographically isolated communities across Australia and in every State and Territory. A total of 10 per cent of all Australian schools were visited and 15 per cent of schools outside capital cities were visited. Each year over 300,000 people participate in an outreach program in their own community.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is the world's premier institution for information and research about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past and present. Under its Return for Materials to Indigenous Australians program, AIATSIS has provided items from its audio-visual collection free-of-charge to Indigenous families and communities across Australia for both personal and family use. In particular the service is used by regional and remote communities to access details relating to family and community histories. AIATSIS has been conducting intensive Community Access Programs in places such as Brewarrina, Fitzroy Crossing, Palm Island, Taree, Cherbourg and Barunga communities.

AIATSIS' Native Title Research Unit assists Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate or Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) including the Djabugay in Kuranda and the Torres Strait PBCs, with whom it has entered into Research Action Partnerships through its PBC project. AIATSIS holds an annual national Native Title Conference which brings together the largest number of regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants of any policy focussed conference in the country.

Cooperative Research Centres Program

Currently, there are 14 Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) with a direct focus on regional Australia. These CRCs contribute to strengthening regional development in areas such as our agriculture and livestock industries, water security, farming systems and grain research. CRCs also contribute to increasing participation of remote communities and improving health outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Of the 186 CRCs funded since 1991, there have been 63 rural focused CRCs with some \$1.2 billion in Commonwealth funding being provided.

The priorities for the fourteenth CRC selection round, announced on 4 November 2010, included sustainable regional communities. This priority area will find solutions to ensure the sustainability of regional communities to protect the natural wealth that underpins the Australian economy.

National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training

The National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training has been established to undertake scientific research in all aspects of groundwater. It will provide high quality training for postgraduate and postdoctoral students and for professional hydrogeologists, groundwater engineers and groundwater managers. This will ensure that Australia will have the skills and knowledge regarding this most important water resource, and in turn allow groundwater to be a sustainable water source for industries and communities across Australia, and in particular in regional Australia. The total funding commitment from the Australian Research Council and the National Water Commission over the period 2009 to 2014 is approximately \$29.5 million.

Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics

The Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics uses key genomic technologies to develop techniques for improving the resistance of wheat and barley to hostile environmental conditions such as drought, salinity and mineral deficiencies. It also evaluates the commercial potential for products and services resulting from the research. The total Australian Government funding commitment to the ACPFG from 2002 to 2012 is approximately \$41.1 million. This comprises funding commitments from the Australian Research Council and the Grains Research and Development Corporation. This program will assist the agriculture industries in regional Australia to remain environmentally sustainable and economically competitive.

Australian Institute of Marine Science

The Australian Institute of Marine Science is Australia's Tropical Marine Science Agency, undertaking innovative, world class marine research that generates new understanding of the marine ecosystems across northern Australia. Through effective transfer of this knowledge the institute supports the sustainable use and protection of the tropical marine environment. The offshore oil and gas, mining, aquaculture,

tourism and fishing industries have all benefited from the institute's research. These industries make an important contribution to the regional economies of northern Australia and to the national economy. In 2008-09 the total measureable value of economic activity based in the marine environment in Australia was around \$44.5 billion, a growth of 6 per cent from the previous year. This was largely driven by offshore oil and gas exploration and tourism, major industries in northern Australia.

The Government recognises the importance of northern Australia in the increased demand for marine research. In 2011-12 it has allocated \$31.3 million to the institute to help support important research in the region and has invested in Tropical Marine Research Facilities (\$55 million) at the institute, as part of the Marine and Climate Component of the Super Science initiative. These facilities, located in Townsville (North Queensland) and Darwin, will be completed in 2012 and will help address the need for strengthened marine science capability both regionally and nationally.

Cairns Institute – Tropical Innovation Hub

The Cairns Institute, located at James Cook University's Cairns Campus will support greater collaboration in areas of national significance such as marine and climate science, public health, social and community welfare, tourism and Indigenous development. The Institute will become a focal point for tropical innovation, research and research training. The total Australian Government funding commitment to the Institute from 2010 to 2013 is approximately \$19.5 million announced as a special Budget appropriation in 2009.

Further Information

Further information about these and other innovation, industry, science and research initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.innovation.gov.au.

PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program

The Government allocated \$13.2 million in 2010-11 to local government, community groups, and organisations across Australia (including the Australian Sports Commission (ASC)) for community based projects. The projects focus on activities that require physical exertion that may promote the health, wellbeing and fitness of participants. Demand for funding under the Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program is strong: over 230 applications were received in 2010-11 (seeking funding of over \$36 million). A total of 107 projects were funded \$10.4 million under the program in 2010-11 with a further \$2.5 million provided to employ up to 28 Indigenous Sport Development Officers and provide grants to assist Indigenous elite sportspeople with the cost of travel and accommodation to attend ASC-recognised national and

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international competitions. Funding is used for a wide range of activities including the management and conducting of outside school hour sport and recreation activities such as coaching clinics, sport carnivals and the employment of sport and recreation officers. Activities are delivered primarily in remote and regional parts of Australia.

This program forms part of the whole-of-government approach to Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage by increasing the opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in sport and recreation activities and capacity building within Indigenous communities.

Jobs Creation Package – Sports and Recreation Component

The Government's Jobs Creation Package funds around 2,000 positions in government service delivery, expanding Indigenous employment opportunities. These positions were previously subsidised by the Community Development Employment Projects Program. The sport and recreation component of the package, known as Jobs Creation Package – Sport and Recreation Program, provides local government and sport and recreation sector employers with approximately \$5 million to employ, train and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to deliver government sport and recreation services in regional and remote areas. Positions include, but are not limited to, recreation officer, coach/gym instructor, sport/event coordinator, umpire/referee, administration and grounds/facilities maintenance. The Jobs Creation Package – Sport and Recreation Program funds 92 full-time-equivalent positions (176 part-time) in the Northern Territory, Queensland (including Torres Strait), New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia.

This program also forms part of the whole of government approach to Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

Australia Council Programs

The Australia Council is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. It supports Australia's arts through funding, strengthening and developing the arts sector.

The Government will provide funding of \$176.7 million to the Australia Council in 2011-12 to continue to fund artistic endeavours across Australia. The Australia Council makes funding decisions at arm's length from the Government through a process of peer assessment and has allocated approximately \$12 million specifically for arts in rural and regional areas. Australia Council funding provides rural and regional areas with enhanced access to the arts and the opportunity to be involved in the production or experience of various art forms.

Regional Touring Programs

Regional Arts Fund

The Government has allocated \$3 million for 2011-12 to support sustainable cultural development in regional and remote Australia. The Regional Arts Fund is a devolved fund which is delivered on behalf of the Government by regional arts organisations in the States and arts agencies in the Territories.

Festivals Australia

The Government has allocated \$1.1 million for 2011-12 to the Festivals Australia program, which assists in the presentation of new arts and cultural activities at Australian regional and remote community festivals. Since the program's inception in 1997, the program has supported over 1,200 new arts and cultural projects with funding totalling over \$17 million with projects ranging from dance, music, theatre, literature, comedy, circus, parades, instrument making to film and video, animation, puppetry, visual arts and crafts and multimedia.

Playing Australia

For 2011-12, the Australian Government has allocated \$6.5 million to the Playing Australia program, the Australian Government's national touring program for the performing arts. Since its inception in 1992, Playing Australia has assisted over 750 tours with funding totalling \$68 million to take performing arts across Australia, particularly to regional and remote communities. The program supports projects ranging the disciplines of theatre, music, opera, dance, puppetry and circus performance to tour regionally where it would otherwise not be commercially viable and there is a demonstrated public demand.

Visions of Australia

For 2011-12 the Australian Government has allocated \$2.2 million to the Visions of Australia program. The Visions of Australia program supports access to exhibitions of Australian cultural material by providing funding to eligible organisations to develop and tour exhibitions. Through this, the program provides more Australians in regional and remote areas access to Australian cultural material.

Contemporary Touring Initiative

For 2011-12, the Australian Government has allocated \$0.5 million to the Contemporary Touring Initiative. The Contemporary Touring Initiative assists collecting institutions and other organisations with the costs of developing and touring major exhibitions of contemporary Australian visual arts and craft across Australia. The Contemporary Touring Initiative is part of the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to contemporary Australian visual arts and craft and aims to encourage wider audience access to Australian visual arts and craft through quality publications,

education and public programs that are a part of touring exhibitions. It also encourages collecting institutions to form curatorial partnerships and collaborate with other organisations contributing to mentoring opportunities and skills transfer.

National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program

The National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program is an initiative announced by the Government in 2009-10 Budget and provides \$4 million over four years to assist the National Collecting Institutions in the development and touring of their collections both nationally and internationally. The eligible institutions are the National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, National Library of Australia, National Film and Sound Archive, National Portrait Gallery, Australian National Maritime Museum, Bundanoon Trust and Museum of Australian Democracy. The aim of the Program is to improve access for all Australians to the national collections, with a particular emphasis on providing access for audiences in regional Australia; to promote Australia by supporting works from Australian national collections to tour overseas; and to attract smaller international collections to tour to multiple venues, particularly in regional Australia. The development and tour of 19 exhibition projects have been supported since the Program's inception in 2009. The exhibitions have toured, and will continue to tour, to regional and metropolitan locations across Australia.

Community Heritage Grants Program

The Community Heritage Grants Program, which the National Library of Australia administers, aims to preserve and provide access to nationally significant, Australian cultural heritage material such as objects, artefacts, letters, diaries, maps, photographs, film/video and oral history recordings held by community groups across the country. Grants of up to \$15,000 are available for preservation projects and collection management training for staff and volunteers. Not-for-profit community organisations such as historical societies, museums, public libraries, archives, Indigenous and migrant community groups which collect and provide public access to their cultural heritage collections are eligible to apply. The Office for the Arts is the major funding source for program, and this financial year contributed \$480,000 of the total funding pool of \$560,000. The other program funding partners are the National Library of Australia (\$20,000), the National Archives of Australia (\$20,000), the National Film and Sound Archive (\$20,000) and the National Museum of Australia (\$20,000). The Library and the other partner institutions also provide significant in-kind support in the form of training for grant recipient organisations. Since the program's inception in 1994, 806 projects across Australia, many of them in regional locations, have received over \$3.6 million in funding.

Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme

The Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme, which the Australian National Maritime Museum administers, provides funding support to not-for-profit

organisations caring for Australia's maritime heritage. Funding of up to \$10,000 is available to eligible organisations for projects that will increase standards of practice for the care and management of maritime objects and/or collections of significance. The object or collection must contribute to an understanding of Australia, its people and developments which have influenced its maritime history. It is the only funding program that assists small collecting organisations to care for maritime heritage and it is highly valued by the sector. In addition to collections management, interpretation and conservation support, the scheme also supports internships with funding of up to \$3,000 to develop skills to increase standards of practice for caring and managing maritime collections. The Office for the Arts is the major funding source for the scheme and the Museum contributes approximately \$20,000 plus in-kind support to administer grants and manage the internship program. Since its inception in 1995, the scheme has provided almost \$0.8 million in funding to 226 projects across the country, including regional locations.

Indigenous Arts and Culture Programs

Indigenous Repatriation – Return of Indigenous Cultural Property and International Repatriation Program

Both programs aim to return Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestral remains and secret sacred objects held in major government-funded museums and in overseas collections to their communities of origin where possible and when requested.

Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records Program

The Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records program addresses the steady erosion and loss of Australia's estimated 250 original Indigenous languages by providing support for the maintenance and revival of these languages to community organisations throughout Australia.

Indigenous Culture Support

The Indigenous Culture Support program supports the maintenance and continued development of Indigenous culture at the community level. The program supports activities that maintain Indigenous culture through community involvement; support new forms of Indigenous cultural expression; increase public awareness of Indigenous culture, including through the presentation and exchange of culture; and support the sustainable development of community organisations involved in cultural activities.

National and Northern Territory Jobs Transition

The Government has allocated \$17.8 million in 2011-12 to support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in entry-level positions supporting the arts, culture, language and broadcasting sectors in regional and remote areas. These

jobs are being funded as part of Australian Government reforms to the Community Development Employment Projects Program.

Cape York Welfare Reform Trials

The Government will support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in entry-level positions supporting the arts and broadcasting sectors. The jobs are being funded as part of Australian Government Cape York Welfare Reform Trials which aim to promote engagement in the real economy, reduce passive welfare and rebuild social norms.

Torres Strait Island Jobs Creation

The Government has allocated \$2.7 million in 2011-12 to support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the visual arts industry in the Torres Strait Islands. These jobs are being funded as part of Australian Government reforms to the Community Development Employment Program.

Support for Indigenous Visual Art

Since 2007, the Government has increased funding to the Indigenous visual arts sector by over \$17 million. This includes \$2 million over four years from 2009-10 to support professional development in the sector, including a national training package that will provide workforce skills to Indigenous arts workers.

Support to the sector is delivered through the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support program that provides funding of approximately \$10.4 million per annum to over 80 Indigenous-owned art centres, mostly in remote and very remote locations, and a number of allied industry support organisations.

The Government has allocated \$0.5 million over three years from 2009-10 to assist the Indigenous visual arts industry to implement the Indigenous Australian Art Commercial Code of Conduct. The Code sets out a minimum standard for commercial galleries and dealers, supports the rights of Indigenous artists to negotiate fair terms of trade for their work and gives buyers greater certainty of an artwork's origin.

Visual Arts and Craft Strategy – Indigenous Visual Arts Component

The Visual Arts and Craft Strategy is a joint initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments to support a strong, sustainable and dynamic contemporary visual arts and craft sector. A component of the funding is provided to the Indigenous visual arts sector.

Arts Training

Flying Fruit Fly Circus

The Australian Government provided \$3.8 million for the expansion and redevelopment of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus Training Centre in Albury. The funding was provided as part of the Australian Government's 2008-09 round of the \$800 million Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

As a result of the Australian Government's investment, the Flying Fruit Fly Circus has a world-class training facility that ensures its staff and students enjoy a healthy, safe and productive training environment.

Further Information

Further information about these and other initiatives that fall under the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.pmc.gov.au, www.arts.gov.au and www.sport.gov.au.

REGIONAL AUSTRALIA, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Better Regions Program

The Better Regions program is providing around \$172 million over five years to assist regions to build on their strengths and improve liveability. The Program is designed to fund projects that have been identified as priority investments by local communities.

The funding is helping local communities deliver local infrastructure and other regional community projects including arts and cultural centres, sports facilities and community centres. This investment by the Government seeks to address the economic and social needs of communities by providing important community infrastructure, built through partnerships between the community and all levels of government.

Under this program, the Government is funding over 100 diverse projects. Projects completed under the program include the provision of pit lane infrastructure for the V8 Super Car race in Townsville, Queensland, which was also used as rehearsal space for the Australian Festival of Chamber Music; a \$2 million contribution towards the regional aquatic centre in Launceston, Tasmania; and a \$40,000 grant for the installation of rainwater tanks for the Kyabra Community Association in outer Brisbane.

Community Infrastructure Grants

During the 2010 election, the Australian Government made a significant commitment to fund projects that were identified by local communities across regional Australia as

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priority investments for their region. Projects include the construction and upgrade of local sport, recreation and community infrastructure, significantly enhancing the liveability of Australia's regions.

The Government has agreed to transfer \$49 million to the Community Infrastructure Grants in 2011-12, to fund a number of infrastructure projects, including:

- road maintenance within the Greater Taree City Council;
- the mid-north coast aviation plan; and
- the upgrade of the Buckett's Way at Krumbach.

East Kimberley Development Program

The Australian Government's contribution to the East Kimberley Development Package was launched by the then Prime Minister on 3 July 2009. The Government is providing \$195.2 million from 2008-09 to 2011-12 to support economic development and reinvigorate essential community infrastructure in Kununurra and the surrounding region. The Package was developed in close collaboration with the Western Australian Government.

Through this package, the Australian Government is investing directly in social and common use infrastructure that will promote healthy, strong and resilient communities and provide meaningful and sustainable jobs for local Indigenous people in the East Kimberley region.

Local Government Financial Assistance Grants

The Government is providing a record \$2.082 billion in Local Government Financial Assistance Grants in 2010-11, which includes \$536.6 million of the 2011-12 allocated funding that was brought forward and paid in June 2010 to improve the financial capacity of Councils and assist in planning Councils' work programs for 2010-11.

Local Government Financial Assistance Grants are provided under the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995*. They have a general purpose and an identified local road component, both of which are untied to enable councils to fund local infrastructure and service priorities.

South Australian councils will also receive \$15.6 million in supplementary local road funding in 2010-11 to address the relative disadvantage of South Australian councils in the local road component of the Financial Assistance Grants.

Local Government Reform Fund

The Local Government Reform Fund was established by the Government to accelerate the implementation of the Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council agreed asset and financial management frameworks, deliver improved capacity and sustainability for councils, and provide better outcomes for local communities.

The Government is providing funding of \$22.2 million under the Local Government Reform Fund in 2009-10 and 2010-11, with \$21.2 million to be delivered to the States and Territories under a National Partnership Agreement covering a range of innovative and collaborative reform projects. The balance of funding of \$1 million will be used to support the collection and analysis of nationally consistent local government data. Improved national data capabilities will bolster local government's workforce planning ability and support States and Territory reforms to increase business, asset and financial planning capacity.

Ministerial Council on Regional Australia

As part of the reforms to the COAG Council system, COAG agreed at the meeting of 13 February 2011 to establish a Standing Council on Regional Australia. The Standing Council will pursue and monitor priority issues of relevance to regional Australia which require sustained, collaborative effort across the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

Regional and Rural Research and Development Grants

The Regional and Rural Research and Development Grants program is a flexible \$228,000 per annum Australian Government initiative to fund research into issues affecting Australia's regions, and to help communicate this research to national and regional decision makers. In 2010-11 the program is supporting three strategic priorities: Australian Government regional priorities (including priorities such as innovation, regional disadvantage, impacts of natural disasters and promoting social inclusion); small local government and community support (including strategic planning, capacity building and community services); and regional development conference support. Funding under the program in 2010-11 is limited to amounts between \$5,000 and \$25,000 per project. Funding recipients in 2009-10 included universities, research institutions, local government and the private sector. Projects in 2009-10 included child health research, women in local government, local government innovation and planning, tree change migration and strategic leadership.

National Bike Path Projects

National Bike Path Projects is a \$40 million initiative that develops, extends and refurbishes cycling infrastructure across Australia.

Over 170 projects have been approved for funding and are expected to support approximately 1,900 jobs in local communities across Australia. Improved cycling

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infrastructure will provide more Australians with a greener, healthier way of getting to and from school or work, and over time will help take cars off local roads and reduce carbon emissions.

Bike path projects will include off-road bike paths (excluding mountain bike trails); on-road bike lanes (road-widening or marking bike lanes on an existing road); and bicycle parking facilities.

Office of Northern Australia

The Office of Northern Australia provides policy advice to the Government on sustainable development issues in, or affecting, northern Australia. It enables better coordination across the Government and between governments, businesses and communities on issues affecting northern Australia.

The Office of Northern Australia coordinates the Northern Australian Sustainable Futures Program. The implementation of this program will strengthen the capacity of the Office of Northern Australia to lead policy development, facilitate collaboration with the northern jurisdictions and to provide accurate advice to Government.

Northern Australia Sustainable Futures Program

The Government provided \$6 million in funding over 2010-11 to 2012-13 for the Northern Australia Sustainable Futures Program. A key part of the program is the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum, which had its first meeting in Darwin on 13 December 2010. Other elements of the program focus on:

- infrastructure and investment priorities;
- sustainable water management in remote communities;
- energy supply and demand balance;
- indigenous employment and skilled labour shortages;
- opportunities to improve service delivery;
- improving the sustainability of the northern Australian beef industry; and
- strengthening community participation and engagement in planning.

Administrative arrangements to deliver all elements of the program will be in place by mid 2011, with work to be completed in 2012-2013.

Regional Development Australia

The Government has created a national network of 55 Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees to engage with regional communities and provide advice to government. The key functions that underpin the role of this network include:

- providing support for informed regional planning;
- consulting and engaging with regional communities on economic, social and environmental issues, solutions and priorities;
- liaison with all levels of government and local communities about government programs, services, grants and initiatives for regional development; and
- contributing to business growth plans and investment strategies, environmental solutions and social inclusion strategies in the region.

The Government is working with the RDA network and regional partners to enhance their role in prioritising investment in infrastructure and services for regional communities to make sure that it meets their needs and matches their growth. Guidelines for the recently announced Regional Development Australia Fund provide for a major role for RDA committees in identifying projects to be supported.

The Government initially committed almost \$15 million per annum to supporting RDAs. The Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government announced in March 2011 that the Government will be providing \$4 million in additional funds to strengthen RDAs in 2010-11.

Regional Development Australia Fund

On 3 March 2011, the Government launched the Regional Development Australia Fund as part of its commitment to Regional Australia. The fund will direct in the order of \$1 billion to support economic and community growth in regional Australia. Program funds will support regional infrastructure projects which will improve economic outcomes and build on unique regional capability, capacity and potential.

Funding of between \$500,000 and \$25 million is available for projects, with project grants over \$5 million required to be matched on at least a dollar for dollar basis. Potential projects should be strategic, support at least one of the Government's national priorities, and reach across regional boundaries. Applicants must leverage investment from State, Territory and local governments and the private sector, and must be supported by the local Regional Development Australia committee.

An advisory panel will assess eligible projects and recommend projects for funding to the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government. Of the program funds, \$573 million are subject to the passage of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax legislation.

Regional Development Policy Centre

The Government is working to establish an \$8 million Regional Development Policy Centre to provide an additional source of independent advice on regional issues. The Centre will encompass a mix of expertise and resources to provide practical policy advice on issues facing regional Australia. The Regional Development Policy Centre will provide input to new policy options and propose innovative ways of tailoring national investments to benefit regional Australia.

Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program

Since it was announced in November 2008, the Government has provided funding of more than \$1.1 billion under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program. This funding is provided to local government authorities to support jobs and continue the process of building and modernising infrastructure that revitalises our communities and promotes long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability in Australia's regions. Under this program local government authorities have identified projects of significance.

By providing communities with the opportunity to nominate their priorities, the Government's investment has resulted in more than 6,000 projects being funded including town halls, libraries, community centres, sports grounds and environmental infrastructure. More than two-thirds of these projects are complete.

Territories

The Government has announced funding of \$97 million over 3 years for the remote island community of Christmas Island (\$50 million in December 2009 and \$47 million in May 2010). This is providing new housing, upgrade works to power and sewerage infrastructure and funding feasibility studies into options to upgrade the road to the Immigration Detention Centre and for a new Australian Federal Police Headquarters. It also funds additional air services providing increased access to passenger flights and air freight. The Commonwealth Ombudsman's report of 2 February 2011 on Christmas Island Detention Facilities identifies a shortage of facilities for detainees requiring health services. Part of the \$97 million infrastructure package expanded the provision of health services on Christmas Island.

Disaster Recovery

Between November 2010 and February 2011 extreme weather events occurred across Australia. Communities in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia were severely affected.

The damage to Queensland communities and infrastructure was compounded on 2 February 2011 when Tropical Cyclone Yasi swept across Far North Queensland. As a result of these events all of Queensland is currently officially declared as affected by disaster.

These events have had an enormous impact on families, communities, farmers, businesses and infrastructure across regional Australia. In economic terms they combine to be the biggest natural disaster in Australia's history, an extraordinary event requiring an extraordinary response. The immense national challenge of rebuilding disaster affected regions across Australia is expected to cost more than \$7 billion in Commonwealth programs and financial contributions.

On 11 February, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of an Australian Government Reconstruction Inspectorate to ensure value for money is achieved in the massive task of rebuilding disaster affected regions. The Inspectorate is chaired by John Fahey, former state premier of New South Wales, and former federal Finance Minister and will work with relevant State authorities to provide an additional level of oversight and accountability in regard to expenditure of funds. The Inspectorate reports directly to the Prime Minister.

A National Disaster Recovery Taskforce has been established in the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government to provide specialist advice and assistance to Federal Ministers involved in the disaster recovery efforts and support the Reconstruction Inspectorate.

Commonwealth representatives have been appointed to the board of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, which is responsible for administering the rebuilding effort in Queensland's flood and cyclone affected regions.

Further information

Further information about these and other initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.regional.gov.au.

RESOURCES, ENERGY AND TOURISM

Clean Energy Initiative

The Australian Government is investing \$4.5 billion through the Clean Energy Initiative to support the development of clean energy and energy efficiency technologies. This consists of the following programs.

Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships Program

The Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships program supports the construction and demonstration of large scale integrated carbon capture and storage projects in Australia, which may include gasification, post-combustion capture, oxy-firing, transport and storage technologies. Complementing this program is the National Low Emissions Coal Initiative, which aims to accelerate the development and deployment of technologies that will reduce emissions from coal use.

Solar Flagships Program

The Solar Flagships Program supports the construction and demonstration of large scale, grid connected solar power stations in Australia, which may include solar thermal, photovoltaic and energy storage technologies. In addition, the Government has established the Australian Solar Institute, which aims to increase the cost-effectiveness of solar technologies and accelerate the capacity of solar industries in Australia, thereby assisting in meeting the Government's expanded Renewable Energy Target of 20 per cent by 2020.

Australian Centre for Renewable Energy

The objective of the Australian Centre for Renewable Energy is to promote the development, commercialisation and deployment of renewable energy and enabling technologies, and to improve their competitiveness in Australia. It does this by:

- developing and implementing a funding strategy capable of supporting projects along the innovation chain;
- encouraging additional investments, including investments from the private sector and State and Territory Governments;
- managing the cost-effective delivery of government-funded renewable energy and enabling technology programs;
- providing support and advice to governments, industry and the community on renewable energy and enabling technologies, strategies and related issues when requested;
- fostering collaboration between governments, industry and the research community on renewable energy projects; and
- supporting growth in skills and capacity in renewable technologies for the domestic and international markets.

The centre draws together more than \$690 million of renewable energy investment in a range of renewable energy programs including from the Renewable Energy Venture Capital Fund, the Emerging Renewables Program, the Australian Biofuels Research Institute, the Australian Centre for Renewable Energy Solar Projects, the Renewable Energy Demonstration Program, the Second Generation Biofuels Research and Development Program and the Geothermal Drilling Program. Projects funded by the centre through these programs are potentially located in regional areas, for example, the centre funded Kogan Creek Solar Boost project near Chinchilla, Queensland, is seeking to augment an existing coal fired power station with a solar energy boost to generate an additional 44 megawatt peak of clean energy.

Connecting Renewables Initiative

The Connecting Renewables Initiative will invest \$1 billion over the next decade to support the connection of remote renewable generation to the electricity network as part of the Government's Connecting Renewable Energy to Australian Homes policy. The initiative aims to accelerate investment in transmission infrastructure to support renewable generation and position the electricity sector to respond to a future carbon price.

The proposed Townsville and Mt Isa transmission line will be the first program assessed under the initiative, with a Government commitment of up to \$185 million towards the project, subject to certain conditions, with up to an additional \$150 million if the line's anticipated market load growth is not achieved. The initiative has \$100 million allocated for the first 4 years from 2010-11, with \$2 million allocated for the 2011-12 Budget.

Rum Jungle – Northern Territory

The Government has provided \$8.3 million over four years from 2009-10 to contribute to the resolution of environmental, economic development and Indigenous land access issues currently presented by the former Rum Jungle Mine site. The initiative is having a positive impact on the Batchelor region in the Northern Territory.

The project is:

- supporting ongoing management of the site to maintain the current effectiveness of the historical rehabilitation structures;
- conducting site monitoring activities and investigations which provide regional employment opportunities and will contribute to the protection of the Finnis River system; and
- bringing together the site's traditional Aboriginal owners, the Northern Territory Government and other stakeholders, including the local community, to contribute to this process.

Ethanol Production Grants Program

The Ethanol Production Grants Program was introduced in 2002 to encourage the use of biofuels, including ethanol in transport in Australia. The EPG Program allows eligible producers of ethanol a grant of 38.143 cents per litre to offset their fuel tax liabilities and is scheduled to cease on 30 June 2011.

The program will be extended until 30 November 2011, to coincide with the Government's decision to delayed introduction of excise and excise-equivalent customs duty on alternative fuels (including ethanol) until 1 December 2011. Grants are paid to ethanol producers at a rate of 38.143 cents per litre. Current recipients are

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Dalby Biorefinery (Dalby, Queensland), Sucrogen Bioethanol Pty Ltd (Sarina, Queensland), and Honan Holdings (Nowra, New South Wales).

Working in Partnership Program

The Working in Partnership program is allocated \$0.5 million a year to support and encourage cultural change taking place in relations between Indigenous communities and the mining industries, promoting long-term, effective partnerships that benefit all stakeholders. It provides funding for regional workshops and support for committees and projects that address issues such as employment, education and training, business opportunities, cultural awareness, capacity building and economic empowerment.

Kimberley Liquefied Natural Gas Precinct

The Australian Government is working with the Western Australian Government, Woodside Energy and the Kimberley Land Council to move forward with the Kimberley Liquefied Natural Gas Precinct at James Price Point.

Implementation of the National Long-Term Tourism Strategy

Tourism is Australia's largest services export industry, employing directly around half a million people and contributing \$34 billion or 2.6 per cent of Australia's gross domestic product in 2009-10. Around 46 cents in every dollar of tourism expenditure occurs in regional Australia.

The National Long-Term Tourism Strategy, which was launched by the Government in December 2009, seeks to address the industry's structural weaknesses and provides the policy framework to position the Australian tourism industry as a sustainable and economically vibrant industry. A number of working groups have been established to address key elements of the Strategy and good progress is being made across a range of areas, including in relation to investment and regulatory reform, addressing labour and skills gaps, increasing the participation of Indigenous Australians in the tourism industry and improving industry resilience. For example, the first national survey to identify and forecast the labour and skills needs of tourism and hospitality employers across regions is being undertaken. Data from this survey will be used to develop and implement regional labour and skills plans, to address identified skill shortages and labour force issues.

The Government will provide \$6 million dollars over four years from 2011-12 to support the ongoing implementation of the Strategy.

TQUAL Grants Program

The Government will provide \$40 million over four years from 2011-12 for tourism quality (TQUAL) Grants to stimulate growth in the tourism industry by making funding available for projects that enhance and renew Australia's tourism offering and

its competitiveness as a destination. This program will assist tourism in regional areas. TQUAL Grants was officially launched on 11 March 2011.

- Tourism Quality Project grants of up to \$100,000 are available for smaller scale projects to support collaborative community tourism industry development projects. Applications for the first round of Tourism Quality Projects grants have closed, with announcements of successful projects expected by mid-2011.
- Strategic Tourism Investment grants of up to \$1 million will be available to fund a small number of nationally significant, larger scale projects to support Indigenous tourism, economic development and tourism employment. The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism has started scoping a pilot project (the Indigenous Tourism Business Skills Project at Ayers Rock Resort) and will continue to develop arrangements for delivery of this project over coming months. It is proposed to fund around 20 projects over the four years of the program and to use these projects to pilot approaches that could be adopted more widely across Australia.

TQUAL Grants actively encourages additional private sector investment, with applicants required to provide funding which matches at least the amount of funding sought from TQUAL Grants.

Rollout of the National Tourism Accreditation Framework

In May 2010, the Government announced funding of \$5.5 million over four years to establish a National Tourism Accreditation Framework to raise the quality of Australia's tourism products and services. The framework provides an umbrella under which existing tourism accreditation programs can co-brand with a common national standard that recognises and promotes quality customer experiences.

The Tourism Quality Council of Australia has been established and is responsible for overseeing the development and operation of the National Tourism Accreditation Framework. The Minister for Tourism officially launched the National Tourism Accreditation Framework, including the tourism quality (TQUAL) logo, and opened the program for general industry applications on 2 April 2011.

Tourism Research

Tourism Research Australia (TRA) continues to provide statistics, research and analysis to support tourism industry development, policy development and marketing. TRA enables access to reliable, independent visitor information which can support the development of the tourism industry in regional areas and the growth of regional economies.

Identifying the regions where tourism is most important is crucial to the industry, as it can identify regions most vulnerable to tourism-related shocks. TRA's report *The Economic Importance of Tourism in Australia's Regions* measures the economic

importance of tourism in 77 of Australia's tourism regions. The report identified a significant number of regions with a relatively high dependence on tourism. The next stage of this research will involve profiling regions at different levels of dependency, including an analysis of visitor patterns in the different regions as well as tourists' motivations to visit the regions and satisfaction with their experience in the regions.

Australia-China Tourism Summit

China is a very significant market for Australia in terms of both visitor arrivals and expenditure. In 2010, China was Australia's fourth largest tourism market with 453,800 arrivals. The Tourism Forecasting Committee forecasts that Chinese visitor arrivals to Australia will increase at an average annual rate of 8.5 per cent to reach 897,000 in 2020.

On 21 June 2010, Cairns was announced host of an Australia-China Tourism Summit, as part of a \$30 million investment in marketing Australia to the Chinese travel market. The Summit will be held from 7 to 9 June 2011, and the Government is working closely with the Chinese Government and Australian stakeholders on the program for the Summit. The Summit will provide an excellent opportunity to further promote tourism cooperation between Australia and China.

China Approved Destination Status Scheme

The Government provided \$4.1 million in the 2010-11 Budget to extend the highly successful China Approved Destination Status Scheme for a further four years to 30 June 2014, thereby further assisting the tourism industry across Australia, including in regional areas.

The scheme is a bilateral arrangement between Australia and China that allows Australia to receive group leisure tourists from China and permits the Australian Government to promote Australia as a leisure travel destination in China. Since the scheme's inception in 1999, Australia has received around 640,000 China Approved Destination Status Scheme visitors. Approved tour operators are required to comply with the China Approved Destination Status Scheme Code of Business Standards and Ethics to ensure ongoing improvement in the quality of services provided to Chinese tourists.

Regional Airports – Enhanced Regional Benefits Package

The National Aviation Policy White Paper, *Flight Path to the Future*, released in December 2009, highlights the value the Australian Government places on regional airports in Australia. The White Paper includes an Enhanced Regional Benefits Package which can be included in air services negotiations to provide additional capacity at Australia's major gateways on the proviso that the service operates via or beyond a regional airport. The package aims to improve the commercial potential of services to Australia's regional airports and encourages tourism and investment into

regional economies. It supports regional Australia and the dispersal of international visitors more broadly across the country.

The Government seeks to ensure that tourism interests and concerns are appropriately considered during air services negotiations, and advocates the inclusion of the package within the operational rights or the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for foreign airlines. The Government has participated in air service negotiations on four occasions where this policy has been accepted by the foreign delegation and included in the MoU, including the air service negotiations with China in March 2011.

Queensland Tourism Industry Support Package

During 2010-11, the Australian and Queensland governments are jointly funding a \$12 million tourism industry support package, to assist with tourism industry recovery in Queensland following the 2011 Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi. The package includes \$10 million for immediate marketing initiatives to reinforce the message that most of Queensland's iconic tourism destinations are open for business, and \$2 million for other industry development measures. Industry development measures will focus on:

- recovery workshops;
- support for tourism businesses to attend trade shows or participate in overseas trade missions, including industry workshops to highlight new opportunities being presented by the China market;
- trade advisory support; and
- technology workshops.

An advisory board has been established to provide oversight on the delivery of the package in consultation with industry.

Tourism Australia Campaigns

Tourism Australia continues to market Australia as a tourism destination, both internationally and domestically. Through its campaigns, Tourism Australia seeks to stimulate consumer travel demand and increase regional dispersal of the economic benefits of tourism by encouraging people to travel throughout Australia.

Tourism Australia's new global marketing campaign *There's Nothing Like Australia* was launched in 2010 and has been widely commended in the industry. The campaign features the personal holiday experience recommendations of the Australian people and uses digital, print and broadcast media to show what is unique and iconic about Australia. Tourism Australia's partnership to bring filming of the Oprah Winfrey program to Australia builds on the *There's Nothing Like Australia* campaign by tapping

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into audiences around the world and encouraging them to come and explore our country for themselves. *Oprah's Ultimate Australian Adventure* aired in Australia between 19 and 23 January 2011 and in the United States between 18 and 21 January 2011 and has generated a significant increase in interest in Australia.

The *No Leave No Life* campaign, launched in March 2009, is Tourism Australia's key domestic campaign encouraging Australians to use their stockpiled leave for an Australian holiday. The second series of the *No Leave No Life* television show aired from December 2010 to January 2011 and attracted an average audience of 912,000 people. More than 1,200 Australian employers (with a potential reach of over 1.1 million employees) have registered for program materials and Australia's annual leave stockpile has declined from 123 million days (March 2009) to 117 million days (June 2010).

Further Information

Further information about these and other resources, energy and tourism initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia are available at www.ret.gov.au and www.tourism.australia.com.

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES

Caring for our Country

Caring for our Country is an ongoing program under which the Government funds environmental management of Australia's natural icons and productive lands, in order to achieve a healthier, more resilient, well managed and better protected environment. The Government is investing \$2 billion for projects across the country, most of which are in regional Australia, to regional natural resource management groups, local, State and Territory Governments, Indigenous groups, industry bodies, land managers, farmers, Landcare groups and communities.

The program continues to focus on six priority areas, including:

- the National Reserve System;
- biodiversity and natural icons;
- coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats;
- sustainable farm practices;
- natural resource management in northern and remote Australia; and

- community skills, knowledge and engagement.

The Government will continue working with Natural Resource Management regional bodies to effectively manage natural resources throughout Australia. A review of the Caring for our Country initiative has commenced and will look at the effectiveness of the program, achievements to date and options for natural resource management delivery in the future.

Environmental Stewardship Program

The Environmental Stewardship Program is part of the Caring for our Country initiative, which aims to strengthen conservation management capacity at the regional level and provide on-the-ground, local support for contracted land managers. The program aims to maintain and improve the condition and extent of targeted matters of National Environmental Significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, in particular endangered ecological communities.

Environmental Stewardship uses competitive auctions through which eligible private land managers can bid to provide a range of agreed management activities to protect, rehabilitate and improve particular ecological communities, with contracts for up to 15 years. Eligible land managers include farmers, Indigenous communities and other managers of private freehold and leasehold land in regional areas.

The Environmental Stewardship Program is providing Australian farmers with market-based opportunities to get involved in the long-term conservation of their land, and recognising the vital role they can play in biodiversity conservation and in protecting our natural environments. Since 2008, the Stewardship program has engaged farmers in New South Wales and Queensland in the long-term protection of more than 25,000 hectares of nationally endangered grassy woodland ecological communities on their properties.

Marine Bioregional Planning

The Government is committed to building knowledge of Australia's oceans and improving conservation and sustainable use of our marine resources.

The Marine Bioregional Plans being developed by the Government will provide clear and up-to-date information on regional conservation values and priorities, and be a guide to industry who have an interest in marine environments in their region. The proposed marine reserves, like national parks and reserves on land, will benefit regions across Australia by playing an important role in the long-term conservation of marine ecosystems and the biodiversity of our oceans.

The Government is continuing to consult the public on the development of Marine Bioregional Plans and associated marine reserve networks. These new reserves will

also fulfil Australia's international and national commitments to establish a National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas by 2012.

Water for the Future

Water for the Future is a long-term Government initiative to better balance the water needs of communities, farmers and the environment. It contains a suite of urban and rural policies and programs, including significant funding for water purchasing, irrigation modernisation, desalination, recycling, and stormwater capture.

A major focus of this initiative is on the Murray-Darling Basin. The initiative aims to provide farmers and communities across regional Australia with more confidence to plan for a future with less water, to put water use on a sustainable footing, to enhance irrigation productivity, and to improve river and wetland health.

The Government will continue implementing the Water for the Future initiative in partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the National Water Commission. This initiative is driving a program of national water reform based on four key priorities: taking action on climate change; using water wisely; securing water supplies; and supporting healthy rivers. It is designed to deliver effective water markets, including a National Water Market System for trading in rural water.

Murray-Darling Basin Authority

The Murray-Darling Basin is a major source of agricultural production and supports many regional communities. The way we are currently managing water will not support these outcomes in the long term. The vision for Basin water reform is a healthy working Basin, with healthy rivers, more productive and efficient industries, and resilient communities.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority is working closely with Basin states as well as a range of community, Indigenous, environment and industry groups to develop the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

However, Basin water reform involves much more than the forthcoming plan. It also includes a broad suite of Commonwealth and state policies and programs designed to support the transition to a healthy working Basin.

Commonwealth and State Ministers from across the Murray-Darling Basin have agreed that:

- all opportunities should be examined to strengthen the involvement of local communities in the design and rollout of programs, such as water use efficiency projects, environmental works and measures and environmental watering actions; and

- Commonwealth and State Governments will work together to align programs and policies relating to water use efficiency and infrastructure, recovery of water for the environment and environmental water use and infrastructure.

The Basin Plan will be developed by the Authority in close consultation with State Governments and key industry and community stakeholders, taking into account environmental and socio-economic impacts. This will be done in accordance with a timetable that ensures that the Basin Plan can be presented to the Commonwealth Parliament in early 2012.

Building Better Regional Cities

The Government has committed \$100 million to help build more affordable homes in regional cities and relieve pressure on our major capital cities so Australia can grow sustainably. This program will assist participating councils to invest in local infrastructure projects that support new housing developments, such as connecting roads, extensions to drains and sewerage pipes, and community infrastructure such as parks and community centres. Funding will only be given to cities that produce robust evidence of future job growth projection, and that can show how many extra affordable homes will be created as a result of these upfront development costs being borne by the Government. Across Australia, 47 regional cities will be invited to participate in the program. The first round of funding will commence in 2011–12.

Housing Affordability Fund

The Housing Affordability Fund is investing up to \$450 million over five years to lower the cost of building new homes across Australia. The Fund is supporting projects that improve the supply of new housing, and make housing more affordable for home buyers entering the market. It is addressing two significant barriers to the supply of housing: holding costs incurred by developers as a result of long planning and approval waiting times; and infrastructure costs, such as water, sewerage, transport, and open space.

The Fund targets greenfield and infill developments where high dwelling demand currently exists or is forecast. Proposals were assessed against transparent, needs-based selection criteria, with priority given to projects that improve the supply of new, moderately priced housing and demonstrate how cost savings are passed on to new home buyers. Some of these projects will benefit home buyers in rural and regional Australia. Projects include \$8.5 million to Mackay Regional Council to reduce the price of 1,000 new housing lots, and \$8.5 million to the Victorian Growth Areas Authority to speed up development planning and approval by over 12 months for more than 70,000 new housing lots.

National Rental Affordability Scheme

The National Rental Affordability Scheme is a long term commitment by the Government to invest in affordable rental housing. The scheme includes support for communities in regional areas by increasing the supply of new affordable housing, reducing rental costs for low and moderate income households and encouraging large scale investment and innovative delivery of affordable housing. The scheme offers financial incentives to the business sector and community organisations to build and rent dwellings to low and moderate income households, providing affordable private rental properties for Australians and their families.

Further Information

Further information about these and other sustainability, environment, water, population and communities initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at www.environment.gov.au.

SPATIAL REPORTING

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Government is committed to giving all Australians access to improved reporting of the Government's expenditure. This year, the 2011-12 Budget will take the first step towards better reporting of Government's expenditure in regional Australia.

Spatial reporting is about capturing and reporting Government's expenditure by geographical location. This chapter provides information on major government expenditure by regional and non-regional Australia.

MyRegion.gov.au

As part of its commitment to promote greater transparency and accountability of government spending, the Australian Government has committed \$4 million over four years to fund the myregion.gov.au website.

The myregion.gov.au website is due to go live in July 2011, with more detailed spatial reporting of Government's expenditure to be progressively placed onto the website – allowing all Australians to see how the Government is working with their local community to deliver the best outcomes for all Australians, regardless of where they live.

The website will be released in stages and will provide users with a suite of information about government services and expenditure. It will be interactive, allowing community members to engage with each other as well as providing feedback to government on regionally specific issues.

Interpreting this chapter

In this chapter, expenditure is disaggregated between regional and non-regional Australia for portfolios that deliver major services or have a large expenditure pattern in regional Australia.

The spatial expenditure tables in this chapter report budgeted expenditure for material programs between regional Australia, non-regional Australia and non-specific locations. Non-specific location comprises expenditure that cannot be analysed for various reasons including expenditure of a discretionary nature subject to future competitive processes or where geographic data is not available for particular expenditure programs. The allocation for some programs is based on signed agreements, and for other programs it is based on historical patterns which are presumed to continue into the future.

Investing in Regional Australia

There are some limitations to the accuracy of the data being reported. Agencies have historically not been required to account for expenditure by geographical location. Consequently, reliable data is not readily available for all portfolios. For example, the billing address has been used in some cases rather than the location of activity.

Each portfolio has prepared its information based on existing systems, definitions and available data. Further information on each portfolio is available in the respective Portfolio Budget Statements.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Table 3 provides a summary of expenditure relating to transfer payments and grants paid by the Government through the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.

Table 3: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
1.1 Tackling Climate Change -	Regional	43	10	9	8
Australia's Farming Future -	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
Climate Change	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.2 Sustainable Management	Regional	62	57	57	57
Natural Resources	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.3 Forestry Industry	Regional	25	16	16	16
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.4 Fishing Industry	Regional	26	26	26	27
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.5 Horticulture Industry	Regional	89	88	90	91
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.6 Wool Industry	Regional	54	54	53	53
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.7 Grains Industry	Regional	142	129	120	119
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.8 Dairy Industry	Regional	47	48	49	51
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.9 Meat and Livestock Industry	Regional	180	189	193	195
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.10 Agricultural Resources	Regional	146	141	139	137
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.11 Drought programs	Regional	38	6	6	6
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.12 Rural Programs	Regional	15	16	16	16
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.13 International Market Access	Regional	51	50	50	50
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
2.1 Quarantine and Export	Regional	456	430	433	426
Services	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
2.2 Plant and Animal Health	Regional	63	54	54	54
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Subtotal-Department		1,439	1,313	1,311	1,305

Table 3: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio continued

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2014-15 \$m
Cotton Research and Development Corporation	Regional	14	14	12	9
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	Regional	26	26	26	27
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation	Regional	26	24	23	23
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Grains Research and Development Corporation	Regional	165	143	131	129
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation	Regional	27	23	23	24
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sugar Research and Development Corporation	Regional	12	11	10	9
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Wine Australian Corporation	Regional	13	12	12	12
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	Regional	43	42	44	43
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Australian Pesticides and Veterinar Medicines Authority	Regional	33	30	29	31
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Wheat Exports Australia	Regional	4	4	4	4
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total - Portfolio		1,802	1,642	1,625	1,616

The portfolio has a particular focus on regional Australia, aiming to enhance the sustainability, profitability and competitiveness of Australia's agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry industries.

A significant proportion of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries, their employees and related businesses, are located throughout regional Australia. These industries are very important to local economies. Consequently, a large proportion of the Government's activity in this portfolio directly benefits regional Australia.

Specific information on each program and portfolio agencies is provided in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

While there are offices and staff based in urban areas, their work benefits Australia's regional priorities.

The systems currently in place are not able to provide further delineation of regional expenditure because this is the first year spatial expenditure information has been produced.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

The Attorney-General's portfolio serves the people of Australia in regional and non-regional localities by supporting the Government in the maintenance and improvement of Australia's system of law and justice and its national security and emergency management systems. Many of the Government's programs and payments for law and justice, and emergency management, are specifically targeted to meet the needs of regional and remote communities.

Table 4 provides a summary of expenditure relating to grants paid by the Australian Government through Attorney-General's portfolio.

Table 4: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Attorney General's portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2014-15 \$m
Program 1.3: Justice Services					
Payments for the provision of community legal services	Regional	11	11	11	11
	Non-regional*	21	21	22	22
	Non-specific	2	2	2	2
Commonwealth human rights education grants program	Regional	0	0	0	0
	Non-regional	0	0	0	0
	Non-specific	0	0	0	1
Program 1.4: Family Relationships					
Family Support Program – Family Law Services	Regional	54	55	57	58
	Non-regional	60	61	62	64
	Non-specific	49	50	51	52
Program 1.5: Indigenous Law and Justice					
Payments for Indigenous interpreter services in the Northern Territory	Regional	1	1	1	1
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory Law and Order Measures	Regional	30	4	4	1
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Payments under the Indigenous Justice Program	Regional	3	2	0	0
	Non-regional	1	1	0	0
	Non-specific	8	9	12	14
Payments for the provision of family violence prevention legal services for Indigenous Australians	Regional	20	20	21	21
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Indigenous Legal Aid and Policy Reform Program	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	65	67	69	71
Program 1.6: National Security and Criminal Justice					
Special Appropriation					
<i>Social Security (Administration) Act 1999</i> - Australian Government	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
Disaster Recovery payment	Non-specific	56	56	56	56
Contingent Payments					
National Disaster Relief delivering Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	80	80	80	-
National Partnership Payments					
Legal Aid	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	203	209	205	210
Total		663	650	654	584

Note: * A number of these community legal centres provide state-wide services including rural, regional and remote outreach.

Community Legal Services Program

The Community Legal Services Program provides grant-based funding to 42 community legal centres in regional, rural and remote areas. There are also a number of community legal centres that provide state-wide services including outreach services to rural, regional and remote areas.

Commonwealth human rights education grants program

The Commonwealth human rights education grants program provides funding to non-government organisations to prepare and deliver human rights education and awareness-raising programs to the Australian community.

The estimates are based on grants awarded in the 2010-11 funding round when \$250,000 in community education grants were awarded to 15 non-government organisations.

Family Support Program — Family Law Services

The Family Support Program – Family Law Services was formerly known as Family Relationship Services Program – Post Separation Services. ‘Non-regional’ covers funding for services provided to capital cities and urban areas contiguous with the edge of capital cities. ‘Regional’ covers funding for services provided to all other areas. ‘Non-specific’ covers funding received for both ‘regional’ and ‘non-regional’ areas, or funding that is not utilised for service provision.

Payments for Indigenous interpreter services in the Northern Territory and Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory – Law and Order Measures

Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory - Law and Order measures include community night patrol services, additional funding for legal assistance services, interpreter services, and the Northern Territory Welfare Rights Outreach Project.

Payments under the Indigenous Justice Program

The Indigenous Justice Program will fund projects – many of which are in rural and remote areas – to support Indigenous Australians and reduce adverse contact with the criminal justice system. The program will focus on more strategic justice related projects that can demonstrate outcomes that reduce recidivism or incarceration by diverting offenders or rehabilitating those in prison or juvenile detention.

Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program

The Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program is an ongoing program which provides grant funding to organisations to deliver legal assistance and support for Indigenous Australians who are victims/survivors of family violence across 31 high need rural and remote areas.

Indigenous Legal Aid and Policy Reform Program

The Legal Aid for Indigenous Australians program provides culturally sensitive and accessible legal aid and related services across Australia. Currently, 88 per cent of service outlets are located in regional, rural or remote locations.

The Attorney-General has agreed to the re-negotiation of funding arrangements with the eight existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services for the delivery of indigenous legal assistance services for the period July 2011 to June 2014.

Disaster Relief and Recovery

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) provides immediate, one-off financial assistance to eligible Australians who have been adversely affected by disaster. The payment rate is \$1,000 per eligible adult and \$400 per eligible child. AGDRP expenditure is driven by the frequency and extent of natural disaster events. The assistance does not distinguish between regional or metropolitan locations rather they are specific to an event, which may impact both regional and metropolitan Australia.

The Australian Government's Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) is a comprehensive national policy and financial framework for disaster relief and recovery. Through the NDRRA, the Australian Government supports State and Territory Governments in meeting the financial burden of providing emergency assistance to disaster affected communities, as well as the costs of community recovery. NDRRA expenditure is driven by the frequency and extent of natural disaster events and generally occurs through reimbursement to states and territories for costs incurred in undertaking certain natural disaster relief and recovery activities. NDRRA assistance does not distinguish between regional or metropolitan locations rather they are specific to an event, which may impact both regional and metropolitan Australia.

Legal Aid

Commonwealth funding for legal aid is paid under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services with the States and Territories. As such, funding is not regionally specific. Legal aid commissions maintain locations in regional Australia and also provide a range of 'outreach' services for those unable to access main offices.

Further information on expenditure in the Attorney General's portfolio can be located in the Current Initiatives in Regional Australia and Budget Initiatives chapters.

BROADBAND, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

Table 5 provides a summary of expenditure paid by the Australian Government through the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio.

Table 5: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2014-15 \$m
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy					
1.1: Broadband and Communications Infrastructure	Regional	22	-	-	-
	Non-regional ²	27	20	19	22
	Non-specific ^{1,3}	3,093	4,405	6,605	4,105
1.2: Digital Economy and Postal Services	Regional	8	6	4	4
	Non-regional ²	81	72	67	72
	Non-specific ³	4	4	4	5
1.3: Broadcasting and Digital Television	Regional	116	91	42	11
	Non-regional ²	47	172	102	23
	Non-specific ³	46	30	31	32
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific ³	1,166	1,184	1,197	1,212
Australian Communications and Media Authority	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional ²	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific ³	184	183	172	163
Special Broadcasting Service Corporation	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific ³	342	328	338	334
Total		5,139	6,495	8,581	5,983

1) Includes equity payments to NBN Co Limited.

2) Includes departmental expenditure, which are capital city based.

3) Includes overseas and nationally delivered services.

Expenditure in the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio is made through four agencies:

- The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, which delivers a range of programs benefitting regional Australia, including:
 - provision of \$18.2 billion in equity funding to NBN Co over the Budget and forward years, including capital expenditure of \$9.9 billion on fibre-to-the-premises technology and \$2.2 billion on next-generation fixed wireless and satellite technologies providing speeds of 12 megabits per second.
 - \$438 million over the period 2011-12 to 2014-15 to continue programs to support the switchover to digital television, including to support the Viewer Access

Investing in Regional Australia

Satellite Television (VAST) service, the Satellite Subsidy Scheme and the Household Assistance Scheme. It is expected \$256 million of this funding will be provided to support services in regional Australia.

- \$20 million over four years for the Satellite Phone Subsidy program and the Indigenous Communications program, that provides and maintains community phones in remote Indigenous communities.
- \$12 million under the Australian Broadband Guarantee program pending the delivery of an interim satellite broadband service by NBN Co.
- \$10 million in 2011-12 under the \$250 million Regional Backbone Blackspots Program, which will provide for more competitive broadband services for regional Australia.
- The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS) are national broadcasters, providing a range of nationally delivered television, radio and online services; and
- The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), that is responsible for regulating broadcasting, radiocommunications, telecommunications and online content.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

Table 6 provides a summary of expenditure relating to transfer payments (being personal benefits and subsidies), and grants paid by the Australian Government through the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (EEWR) portfolio.

Note: The determinant of 'regional' applied for the EEWR portfolio is based upon the Australian Statistical Geography Standard, and utilises the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia methodology to calculate remoteness.

Table 6: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forward estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forward estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m
EEWR Transfer Payment Programs					
Program 1.1 Support for the Child Care System					
Sub-program: Jobs Education and Training (JET)					
Child Care Fee Assistance					
provides eligible parents with extra financial assistance to help with the cost of approved child care	Regional	15	16	17	18
	Non-regional	38	40	41	44
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.2 Child Care Fee Assistance					
Sub-program: Child Care Benefit					
assists parents with cost of approved and registered child care	Regional	667	696	724	742
	Non-regional	1,510	1,575	1,638	1,678
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: Child Care Rebate					
supports eligible families with cost of child care if they are using approved child care for work-related reasons	Regional	345	373	400	438
	Non-regional	1,255	1,354	1,454	1,592
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 2.11 School Student Assistance					
Sub-program: Abstudy Secondary					
supports student and apprentice participation in secondary and tertiary education and training	Regional	91	85	81	82
	Non-regional	41	38	37	37
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: Assistance for isolated children					
ensures all Australian children have access to a school education	Regional	60	61	63	65
	Non-regional	6	6	6	6
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
Program 3.3 Tertiary Student Assistance					
Sub-program: Abstudy Tertiary					
addresses education disadvantage faced by Indigenous people in accessing tertiary education and training	Regional	40	41	42	42
	Non-regional	32	33	33	34
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: Youth Allowance - Tertiary					
supports students and apprentices in need of financial assistance to undertake studies and training	Regional	590	519	494	491
	Non-regional	1,843	1,622	1,544	1,534
	Non-specific	24	21	20	20
Sub-program: Austudy					
supports students and apprentices in need of financial assistance to undertake full-time post-compulsory secondary or tertiary education or training	Regional	85	85	84	85
	Non-regional	313	311	309	310
	Non-specific	2	2	2	2

Table 6: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio continued

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forward estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forward estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m
Program 4.4 Working Age Payments					
Sub-program: Mobility Allowance supplementary support for people with a disability who are unable to use public transport without substantial assistance					
	Regional	47	48	50	51
	Non-regional	90	91	95	97
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: New start Allowance supports eligible job seekers improve their employment					
	Regional	2,381	2,404	2,671	2,790
	Non-regional	4,096	4,136	4,596	4,800
	Non-specific	14	15	16	17
Sub-program: Parenting Payment - Single assists single parents on income support payments with the costs of caring for children					
	Regional	1,743	1,745	1,728	1,690
	Non-regional	2,767	2,771	2,743	2,683
	Non-specific	10	10	10	9
Sub-program: Parenting Payment - Partnered assists families on income support payments with the costs of caring for children					
	Regional	380	395	391	407
	Non-regional	660	687	678	706
	Non-specific	4	5	5	5
Sub-program: Partner Allowance - Pension assists mature age people who are partners of income support recipients facing difficulty gaining employment					
	Regional	63	39	21	1
	Non-regional	88	54	29	1
	Non-specific	1	1	-	-
Sub-program: Pensioner Education Supplement assists income support recipients who are participating in approved full or part time study					
	Regional	29	28	27	25
	Non-regional	46	45	43	41
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: Sickness Allowance assists Australians over 21 (but under pension age) who are temporarily incapacitated for work or study as a result of illness or injury					
	Regional	31	32	33	33
	Non-regional	59	61	62	62
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: Widow Allowance supports older working age women who no longer have a partner and have no recent workforce experience					
	Regional	129	119	118	107
	Non-regional	266	246	243	221
	Non-specific	3	3	3	2
Sub-program: Youth Allowance - Other supports eligible people aged 16-20 years who may be required to seek or prepare for paid employment					
	Regional	262	299	393	388
	Non-regional	340	389	511	504
	Non-specific	1	1	2	2
Portfolio Agency: Comcare - Program 1.1 Comcare Compensation payments delivering compensation support for injured workers					
	Regional	24	23	23	22
	Non-regional	43	41	41	41
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total Transfer Payment Programs		20,537	20,566	21,520	21,927

Table 6: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio continued

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2014-15 \$m
EEWR Reportable Grants Programs					
Program 1.1 Support for the Child Care System					
Sub-program: Child Care Services Support					
delivering support to child care services so more families can access quality early childhood education and child care services					
	Regional	130	125	123	130
	Non-regional	107	106	107	113
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 2.2 Non-Government Schools National Support					
delivering funding for non-government schools and students					
	Regional	72	82	106	108
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	62	62	63	63
Program 2.3 Schools Support					
delivering funding for initiatives that aim to improve the quality outcomes for all Australian students.					
	Regional	44	31	31	31
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	308	212	374	424
Program 2.4 Trade Training					
provides funding to support secondary students to access vocational education					
	Regional	38	-	-	-
	Non-regional	23	2	-	-
	Non-specific	30	108	115	119
Program 2.5 Digital Education					
supports teaching and learning in Australian schools to prepare students for further education and training.					
	Regional	2	2	2	2
	Non-regional	2	2	2	2
	Non-specific	70	70	70	70
Program 2.10 Youth Support					
Sub-program: Youth Engagement					
delivering programs w hich support young people to transition to independent living, and to provide assistance to vulnerable young people					
	Regional	2	2	1	-
	Non-regional	1	2	1	-
	Non-specific	7	7	7	7
Program 3.1 Higher Education Support					
for institutions, students and staff in order to achieve national grow th in skills, qualifications, productivity and social inclusion.					
	Regional	409	183	77	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 3.5 VET National Support					
delivering system support, apprenticeships and training services in respect of Australia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and its clients					
	Regional	134	135	128	132
	Non-regional	133	133	122	127
	Non-specific	1,658	1,658	1,512	1,577

Table 6: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio continued

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2014-15 \$m
Program 3.6 International Education Support					
delivers funding to build					
linkages betw een Australian and international students, institutions and governments	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	70	65	57	58
Program 4.2 Indigenous Employment					
delivering employment and economic development					
assistance to Indigenous Australians throughout Australia	Regional	89	100	102	104
	Non-regional	68	76	78	79
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total Grants Programs Attributed		3,460	3,165	3,076	3,149
Total Programs Attributed		23,997	23,731	24,596	25,076

The Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (EEWR) portfolio is committed to supporting rural and regional communities in Australia. A number of EEWR programs specifically target regional Australia in the areas of educational support, employment participation and in enhancing opportunities for Indigenous Australians. Other programs provide considerable support to regional Australia through the Government's priorities for early childhood development, quality education outcomes at all levels, a skilled workforce with greater participation, and the achievement of productive workplaces.

Information on material programs (those programs with annual expenditure outlays exceeding \$50 million) are included in the above table. It should be noted that the EEWR portfolio also supports the Australian Government agenda's via other administered program purchasing arrangements, and through the delivery of a number of Specific Purpose and National Partnership programs that are expressly excluded from the above tables in this initial year of spatial reporting. In relation to the transfer payment programs reported by EEWR in the above tables, the regional split of funding has been derived for the 2011-12 Budget and forward estimates years based on the location of the current customers in receipt of the relevant benefits and payments. The applicable percentage of recipients, as determined by the required location classification, has then been applied against the program forward estimates.

Reportable grants programs expenditures have been based on the EEWR programs that are currently committed in accordance with the *Commonwealth Grants Guidelines* (CGS), and published on the EEWR website as at 31 March 2011. Due to the amounts being based on current contractual commitments, the above table does not agree to the full program estimates for these grants programs over the period 2011-12 to 2014-15 as set out in the Portfolio Budget Statement.

FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Table 7: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
1.1 - Family Support	Regional	93	94	96	97
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	122	123	125	126
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.2 - Family Tax Benefit	Regional	6,313	6,499	6,633	6,792
Special Appropriations	Non-regional	11,739	12,084	12,335	12,630
	Non-specific	53	55	56	58
1.3 - Parental Payments and Care	Regional	-	1	2	-
Incentives Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	-	2	3	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.3 - Parental Payments and Care	Regional	815	856	901	934
Special Appropriations	Non-regional	1,508	1,584	1,666	1,727
	Non-specific	7	7	8	8
2.2 - Housing Assistance and	Regional	12	13	12	12
Homelessness Prevention	Non-regional	19	21	19	19
Annual Appropriations	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.1 - Financial Management	Regional	49	47	47	41
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	71	67	67	59
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.2 - Community Investment	Regional	24	26	26	28
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	20	22	22	24
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.3 - Income Support for	Regional	9	9	10	10
Vulnerable People	Non-regional	76	77	85	92
Special Appropriations	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.4 - Support for People in	Regional	-	-	-	-
Special Circumstances	Non-regional	1	1	1	1
Annual Appropriations	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.4 - Support for People in	Regional	2	3	3	4
Special Circumstances	Non-regional	3	4	4	5
Special Appropriations	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.5 - Supplementary Payments and	Regional	-	-	-	-
Support for Income Support	Non-regional	9	8	9	9
Recipients - Annual Appropriations	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.5 - Supplementary Payments and	Regional	5	5	5	5
Support for Income Support	Non-regional	9	9	9	9
Recipients - Special Appropriations	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
4.1 - Income Support for Seniors	Regional	11,858	12,794	13,498	14,441
Special Appropriations	Non-regional	21,235	22,912	24,172	25,861
	Non-specific	1,085	1,170	1,234	1,319
4.2 - Allow ances, Concessions and	Regional	68	73	78	83
Services for Seniors	Non-regional	122	130	139	149
Special Appropriations	Non-specific	6	7	7	8
5.1 - Targeted Community Care	Regional	63	77	89	95
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	88	106	124	132
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

Table 7: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio continued

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2014-15 \$m
5.2 - Disability Support Pension	Regional	5,398	5,606	5,794	6,030
Special Appropriations	Non-regional	8,283	8,602	8,892	9,253
	Non-specific	171	177	183	191
5.3 - Income Support For Carers	Regional	1	-	-	-
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	2	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	2,042	2,280	2,538	2,823
	Non-regional	3,618	4,047	4,510	5,017
	Non-specific	20	21	22	23
5.4 - Services and Support for People with Disability	Regional	111	109	111	101
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	272	266	270	246
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
5.5 - Support for Carers	Regional	4	4	4	4
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	8	8	8	8
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
6.1 - Gender Equality for Women	Regional	4	3	4	4
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	30	24	28	26
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.1 - Economic Development and Participation	Regional	235	171	177	181
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	14	10	10	11
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.2 - Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure	Regional	44	26	27	27
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	63	38	39	39
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.3 - Native Title and Land Rights	Regional	56	58	59	60
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	28	29	30	30
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.4 - Indigenous Capability and Development	Regional	53	52	40	34
	Non-regional	20	20	15	13
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.5 - Northern Territory Emergency Response	Regional	9	-	-	-
Annual Appropriations	Non-regional	14	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Subtotal - Department		75,986	80,439	84,247	88,904
Torres Strait Regional Authority	Regional	40	28	30	28
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Regional	60	57	56	54
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Subtotal - portfolio bodies		100	85	86	82
Portfolio Total		76,686	80,524	84,333	88,986

(a) This data has been boundary tagged using the Australian Standard Geographic Classification (AGSC) 2006. FaHCSIA has grouped the 'Remote' and 'Very Remote' AGSC tags within the 'Regional' category.

(b) For transfer payments where the benefit recipient resides overseas, their benefit is included in the 'non-specific' category.

The spatial reporting table above sets out the estimated payments and grants funding to be provided by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs from 2011-12 to 2014-15 to support individuals and families. In 2011-12 around \$27.3 billion (or about 36 per cent) of the Department's appropriations will support people in regional Australia. This broadly reflects the proportion of Australians living in regional Australia.

Of the Department's total expenditure in regional Australia, 97 per cent is comprised of income support and family assistance payments such as the Aged Pension, Disability Support Pension, Family Tax Benefit, and Paid Parental Leave.

The Department will continue to make a significant investment to support Indigenous Australians, with many programs specifically targeting Indigenous people living in regional, remote and very remote Australia.

- The Economic Development and Participation Program provides funding through the Community Development Employment Projects program, for community development and participation opportunities for Indigenous people in remote areas that develop skills, improve capacity, work readiness and employability and link with local priorities.
- The Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program funds a range of housing and accommodation projects for Indigenous people from remote communities, along with infrastructure, municipal and essential services in selected communities pending agreement of roles and responsibilities with States and Territories.
- The Native Title and Land Rights Program funds representation and assistance for native title holders and claimants, mostly in regional Australia, and supports Indigenous rights to land recognised and provided for under Commonwealth land rights legislation.
- The Indigenous Capability and Development Program funds a wide range of national and local activities across urban, regional and remote areas including community development projects in Remote Service Delivery National Partnership priority communities.
- The Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory Program (also known as the Northern Territory Emergency Response Program) funds a wide range of support for remote Northern Territory communities such as family support, youth diversion, food security, substance abuse prevention and leadership and governance development.

The Government also provides information on its Indigenous initiatives separately in the Indigenous Ministerial Statement.

Investing in Regional Australia

The Department is also responsible for a number of community programs that provide valuable assistance to regional communities and families:

- The Family Support Program provides integrated services for families, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged families, to improve child well-being and development, safety and family functioning. Services are provided across more than 2,700 service outlets in major capital cities, in country towns and in some of the most remote parts of the country. \$362 million over four years, out of a total of \$834 million, is being provided for services under this program in regional Australia.
- The Community Investment Program aims to strengthen communities and promote social inclusion and participation of vulnerable people in community life. Funded activities are delivered in metropolitan, regional and remote settings, 63 per cent of the Community Projects being funded have a regional delivery footprint.
- In 2011-12, 41 per cent of funding under the Financial Management Program is allocated to regional areas. Funding for Emergency Relief and Commonwealth Financial Counselling services has been increased in the 2011-12 Budget providing additional support for 537 emergency relief services and 81 financial counsellors in regional areas. Innovative money management initiatives are providing regional access to 148 SaverPlus, Step-Up and No Interest Loans scheme services, Indigenous financial literacy projects in regional and remote areas, are also being continued.
- The Broadband for Seniors initiative under Program 4.2 is being continued in this Budget with \$10.4 million in funding over four years. More than half of funding allocated to this initiative will support seniors in regional Australia.
- Other programs targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians, such as the Targeted Community Care Program (Program 5.1), Services and Support for People with a Disability (Program 5.4) and Support for Carers (Program 5.5) provide significant levels of support to people living in regional Australia. The Department's investment through these programs to regional Australia in 2011-12 will total approximately \$179 million, of a total of \$548 million.
- Community mental health programs are receiving an increase in the 2011-12 Budget of \$269 million over five years which will include a substantial increase in services in regional Australia.

In this year's budget, people living in regional Australia will also benefit from the new Better Start for Children with a Disability initiative, which provides children with certain developmental disabilities access to up to \$12,000 in funding for early intervention services. Families living in outer regional, rural and remote areas will receive a \$2,000 additional payment to assist with the extra costs of accessing early intervention services in these areas.

The following parameters should be noted in relation to the data provided:

- Program data is based on the Department's 2010-11 data as not all funding commitments from 1 July 2011 have been finalised, and transfer payment information needs to be forecast;
- It is based on the ABS Australian Standard Geographic Classification 2006 and includes remote and very remote as part of regional Australia;
- Information on grants funding has been produced at the level of locations of service provider outlets as well as the 'billing address' of the grant recipient;
- All programs have been included rather than applying a financial threshold as a measure of materiality. Although some FaHCSIA programs are relatively small, their collective impact is significant;
- Data has been included as non-specific only where it relates to funding to national organisations with multi-region reach or funding to individuals, including those overseas.

HEALTH AND AGEING

The Health and Ageing portfolio works towards achieving a health care system that meets the health care and ageing needs of all Australians, including those of regional Australia. The responsibilities of the portfolio are covered in the 2011-12 Portfolio Budget Statement.

Table 8.1: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Health and Ageing portfolio

Program Name and Number	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Pharmaceutical Services and Benefits (Programs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)	Regional	3,117	3,259	3,508	3,714
	Non-regional	6,450	6,757	7,279	7,712
	Non-specific	290	299	273	277
Medical Services and Benefits (Program 3.1)	Regional	3,328	3,572	3,825	4,125
	Non-regional	13,413	14,395	15,413	16,623
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Residential Aged Care (Program 4.8)	Regional	2,517	2,625	2,797	3,006
	Non-regional	4,476	4,667	4,972	5,344
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Targeted Rural Programs (various program numbers)	Regional	1,232	1,223	1,230	1,172
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Other Programs (various program numbers)	Regional	742	760	795	828
	Non-regional	660	681	708	735
	Non-specific	11,571	11,778	11,750	12,230
Total		47,797	50,016	52,550	55,764

Table 8.1 shows that total expenditure (grants, subsidies and personal benefits) for the Health and Ageing portfolio is estimated to be almost \$48 billion in 2011-12. It is divided between almost \$11 billion in regional areas, almost \$25 billion in non-regional areas and over \$11 billion that is non-specific. The proportion of total identifiable expenditure in regional areas is around 23 per cent and this identifiable proportion remains broadly constant over the forward estimate years.

The top four program groups listed in Table 8.1 represent around 73 per cent of the total estimated expenditure for the portfolio in 2011-12. The regional profile of these program groups is readily identifiable. For many Health and Ageing programs classified under *Other Programs* it is not possible to determine a geographical split. Estimated expenditure for these programs is generally classified as 'Non-specific'.

Pharmaceutical services and benefits cover assistance to individuals, primarily under the Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme, and a number of relatively small support programs. Table 8.1 indicates that in 2011-12 almost 32 per cent of expenditure on pharmaceutical services and benefits is directed to regional Australia. This is consistent with the population split between regional and non-regional Australia.

Medical services and benefits cover payments to individuals, primarily under the Medical Benefits Scheme, together with a number of support programs. Table 8.1 indicates that around 20 per cent of expenditure on medical services and benefits is directly attributable to regional Australia. Increasing access to regional medical services is the primary focus of the *Targeted Regional Health Programs* outlined below.

The major aged care program relates to *Residential Aged Care*, where it is estimated that around 36 per cent of spending on residential aged care is in regional Australia. This proportion is based on 2010-11 expenditure directed to residential aged care facilities in regional Australia and has been applied consistently across the 2011-12 Budget and the Forward Estimates. However, this may not be a valid assumption over these years as the number of residential aged care places allocated to regional Australia may change over time. Additionally, some regionally targeted residential aged care programs (multi-purpose facilities) are included under *Targeted Rural Programs*. Estimated regional expenditure as a share of total estimated expenditure for this program exceeds the population share for regional Australia.

Over the next four years the Government is investing more than \$1 billion per year in *Targeted Rural Programs*, in addition to funding provided through national programs. In 2011-12, this investment will exceed \$1.2 billion covering over 100 programs. Regional health investments are targeted towards improving access to appropriate health and medical services, including health promotion and disease prevention, investing more effectively in regional health infrastructure, strengthening workforce education and training, and addressing workforce shortages through better workforce distribution and support. For example, 50 per cent of General Practitioner (GP) trainees and 48 per cent of specialist trainees are being trained in regional Australia.

Key Health and Ageing investments in regional Australia in 2011-12 include:

- almost \$336 million for regional workforce measures (including the GP Rural Incentives program – almost \$70 million) and the Multidisciplinary Training program (\$126 million) which incorporates the Rural Clinical Schools program, the University Departments of Rural Health program, the Dental Training Expanding Rural Placements program and the John Flynn Placement program;
- almost \$194 million to directly improve rural health, including over \$79 million to improve rural primary health services;
- almost \$192 million to improve primary care through additional support for health practitioners in regional Australia;
- over \$177 million to improve aged care services in regional Australia (including over \$115 million for multi-purpose aged care facilities);
- almost \$110 million to improve access to medical services;
- over \$92 million for Indigenous health; and
- over \$71 million to support improved access to pharmaceutical services.

The Private Health Insurance Rebate has been included in the *Other programs* category as around 90 per cent of these payments are made direct to insurers and therefore cannot be allocated between regions.

National Partnership Agreement and the Health and Hospital Fund

Table 8.2 below provides details on National Partnership Agreement (NPA) payments from the Commonwealth to the States and Territories pertaining to the Health and Ageing portfolio. While NPA payments are part of the Treasury portfolio, these payments have an important bearing on the delivery of health and aged care services, particularly for regional Australia. These specific programs are in addition to the national programs which also will assist regional Australia.

The main identifiable regional NPA relates to the Home and Community Care program where it is estimated that around 39 per cent of funding is directed to supporting eligible people in their own homes in regional Australia (around \$589 million in 2011-12).

Table 8.2: 2011-12 National Partnership Agreement payments for the Health and Ageing portfolio ^(a)

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
National Partnership Agreements	Regional	669	245	235	253
	Non-regional	932	318	342	369
	Non-specific	2,852	2,455	2,428	1,059
Total		4,453	3,018	3,005	1,681

(a) Excludes the NPA component of the Health and Hospital Fund, and the National Healthcare Agreement.

Caveats, Regional Definition and Program Materiality

The non-specific category in the above tables has generally been used where the programs are multi-regional and cannot be allocated to a specific location. As with any forward estimates, the reliability of the estimates being spent in regional Australia reduces the further in time from 2011-12.

The regional distribution of medical benefits, pharmaceutical benefits and residential aged care are projected on the basis of historical outcomes.

For the Health and Ageing portfolio, regional Australia has been defined as far as practicable using the Australian Bureau of Statistics remoteness classification ASGC-RA (major cities) for all material programs with estimated expenditure of \$5 million or more in any one year. Darwin and Hobart are treated as part of regional Australia. There is some variation around these definitions as some programs are based on older regional classification systems and materiality will depend on the ease of which regional components can be identified.

This statement does not cover the National Health and Medical Research Council and other Health and Ageing portfolio agencies which are not considered material for the purposes of this first year of spatial reporting.

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Table 9 provides a summary of expenditure relating to transfer payments (being personal benefits and subsidies) and grants paid by the Australian Government through the Immigration and Citizenship portfolio.

Table 9: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Immigration and Citizenship portfolio

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees	Regional	5	0	-	-
	Non-regional	8	3	-	-
	Non-specific	30	40	44	46
Multicultural and Citizenship Services	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	5	3	3	3
Total		48	46	47	49

Most of the funding for Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees relates to the Settlement Grants Program (SGP). This is an ongoing grants program with funding provided through a grants application round each year for projects over a maximum of three years, though the majority of funding usually occurs in the first year. The successful applicants for each year's funding round are announced shortly after Budget. The analysis for 2011-12 and 2012-13 is based on 2nd and/or 3rd year funding for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 SGP.

Humanitarian entrants frequently arrive unfamiliar with cultural and social norms, a lack of family or social support, limited education or employment experience and with limited English language proficiency. Those settling in regional locations may face the challenges of limited local availability of a range of relevant services, limited local experience in delivering services to culturally and linguistically diverse clients and limited understanding of the particular settlement needs of each group.

The Department provides a range of settlement support through the SGP in both metropolitan and regional locations to overcome these barriers.

Funding to organisations is made on a project basis, with funding priorities for particular regions and communities determined by an annual need based planning process. Regional locations receive a higher weighting in recognition of the higher cost of delivering services in those areas and possible lack of access to mainstream services

Investing in Regional Australia

that are available in metropolitan areas. The total funding allocated to regional areas in the 2010-11 program year is approximately \$5 million.

The settlement of humanitarian entrants in regional locations can have benefits for both the entrants and the receiving communities, for example:

- reduce the load on services and resources in capital cities;
- capacity building in regional areas that are growing in population;
- humanitarian entrants from rural backgrounds or with employment skills suited to regional areas can provide a labour force; and
- increase cultural diversity.

Key benefits of regional settlement programs include the importance of pathways to training and employment in the local area to ensure the retention of new settlers, the availability of permanent affordable housing and the availability of public transport.

Distribution of SGP funding to individual states and territories is determined by a number of factors, including the percentage of humanitarian arrivals in each state/territory, recency of arrival, regional spread and overall target group numbers.

Funding for services to new arrivals in regional areas supports the settlement of these groups thereby reducing secondary migration to metropolitan areas. A growing regional population can create more employment opportunities in regional areas. The availability of employment opportunities as well as community support makes regional areas attractive destinations for more new migrants.

Within each State and Territory, the annual assessment of needs identifies settlement patterns, needs and general information including:

- communities and/or groups that are most in need of SGP assistance; and
- capacity building in regional areas that are growing in population.

Most of the funding for Multicultural and Citizenship Services relates to the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (DSCP). These grants are funded over a maximum period of 12 months. Over the last two years, approximately 34 per cent of funding was provided for projects in regional Australia. While it is likely that this proportion of funding will continue through 2011-12 into the forward years, funding is only committed for one year at a time and depends on the relative merits of the grant applications received. Accordingly, no attempt has been made to quantify the regional funding for this program.

The DSCP is funded under the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda for new initiatives to address the particular needs of vulnerable migrants and refugees and, build community cohesion in regional locations. The social aspects of regional settlement will include the presence of family and friends, a welcoming and accepting community and the small city/town environment.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

Table 10 provides a summary of expenditure relating to transfer payments and grants paid by the Australian Government through the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio.

Table 10: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Component of Program 1.1	Regional	244	244	244	-
Nation Building Roads to Recovery	Non-regional	87	87	87	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Component of Program 1.1	Regional	20	1	1	-
Nation Building Program Investment (ARTC)	Non-regional	71	111	173	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Component of Program 2.2	Regional	114	119	124	129
Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Component of Program 3.1	Regional	44	-	-	-
Jobs Fund - Infrastructure Employment Projects	Non-regional	12	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total		592	562	629	129

The Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) portfolio is making a substantial contribution to regional Australia through various grant programs such as the Roads to Recovery, National Building and the Infrastructure Employment Projects. The Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme makes transfer payments which benefit regional Australia.

National Building – Roads to Recovery Program

The Government will provide around \$244 million in 2011-12 for rural and remote councils through the Roads to Recovery Program.

The Roads to Recovery program provides funding directly to local councils for road works chosen by the councils and to states and territories for roads in areas where there are no councils. Each funding recipient has a set allocation of funding over the life of the program. The Australian Government has increased funding for the program by \$213 million over the five year period 2009-10 to 2013-14, bringing the total program funding to \$1.75 billion.

Nation Building Program Investment — Australian Rail Track Corporation

Funding totalling almost \$936 million is being invested to improve rail freight in Australia over the next two years to continue to modernise Australia's interstate rail network. This funding will help deliver improved access and freight handling facilities at Port Botany, Enfield Yard, the Australian Rail Track Corporation's (ARTC) Junee train control centre and improved intermodal facilities. This will help improve the efficiency of the rail line between Brisbane and Sydney, reducing delays caused by interfacing rail freight movements between the ARTC leased track and the NSW Rail Corp track.

Investment in rail will provide significant benefits for the economy including favourable environmental outcomes (saving around 218,000 tonnes of carbon emissions over the next 30 years), and lifting Australia's productivity by supporting new business activity and boosting the competitiveness of our exporters.

Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme

The Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme assists in alleviating the sea freight cost disadvantage incurred by shippers of eligible non-bulk goods moved by sea between Tasmania and mainland Australia. Its objective is to provide Tasmanian industries with equal opportunities to compete in mainland markets, recognising that, unlike their mainland counterparts, Tasmanian industries do not have the option of transporting goods interstate by road or rail. The Government has committed around \$114 million in 2011-12 and \$372 million in the forward years to the Scheme.

Jobs fund – Infrastructure Employment Projects

The Infrastructure Employment Projects (IEP) program is one of three streams of the Jobs Fund initiative. The other two streams; Local Jobs and Get Communities Working; are administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The IEP provides funding for investment in infrastructure projects that generate jobs in regions affected by the economic downturn, or in areas suffering from other external shocks.

The focus of the IEP program is to build, renovate or refurbish community infrastructure or improve community amenities in areas such as recreation and tourism, the environment, children's, youth and seniors' facilities, and social and cultural infrastructure.

The Government allocated \$56 million in 2011-12 to support jobs and skills development through projects that build long-term community infrastructure and social capital across Australia. Of this, \$44 million has been committed to projects in regional Australia.

Key projects that are supporting regional jobs include the Cairns Cultural Precinct and the construction of the Black Saturday Memorial Stadium in Wandong, Victoria. The

Cairns Cultural Precinct project (\$180 million), which includes partner funding from the Queensland Government and Cairns Regional Council, involves the construction of a regional performing arts centre and is estimated to generate over 1200 jobs. The Memorial Stadium project (\$3 million), which includes partner funding from the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, involves the construction of an indoor sports and recreation stadium and is estimated to generate ninety full time jobs during construction.

PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Table 11 provides a summary of grants expenditure paid by the Australian Government through the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio.

Table 11: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forward estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forward estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet					
Program 1.1: Prime Minister and Cabinet	Regional	4	4	4	4
	Non-regional	6	5	5	5
	Non-specific	5	5	4	5
Program 2.1 Arts and Cultural Development	Regional	63	65	64	66
	Non-regional	101	97	96	96
	Non-specific	16	15	16	16
Program 3.1: Sport & Recreation	Regional	17	15	15	15
	Non-regional	8	4	3	4
	Non-specific	13	13	14	15
Total		233	223	221	227

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet through the Office for the Arts and the Office for Sport support a number of programs that are focused or targeted towards regional and remote areas of Australia.

The Government supports a number of programs to assist tours of performing artists and exhibitions. The Government is also delivering on an election commitment with a program for new support for the arts (\$10 million over five years). This program focuses on increasing access to and participation in the arts by people living outside major metropolitan areas.

Ongoing funding supports a number of Indigenous arts programs targeting communities in regional and remote areas. While targeting arts industries these programs also provide significant support to Indigenous communities as a whole.

Investing in Regional Australia

The Government supports the delivery of sport and recreation services in regional Australia through the Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program and its Jobs Creation Package – Sport and Recreation. These programs support the employment of Indigenous people in roles such as sport and recreation officers, coach/gym instructors, sport/event coordinators, umpires and referees, administration officers, and grounds or facilities maintenance officers, as well as assisting organisations to deliver sport and recreation activities.

In addition to the Arts and Sport programs, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Program 1.1), through its Office of the Not-for-Profit Sector, provides grant funding for volunteering activities across Australia.

Non-specific is defined as funding that does not relate to a specific location or is subject to a competitive process.

Disaggregation of anticipated program delivery location reflected in the above table is based on past trends where available, as the majority of funding for the 2011-12 Budget year and forward estimates has yet to be formally committed as much of the funding is subject to competitive application processes. Other agencies within the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio were excluded as they are either considered immaterial or the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines do not apply.

REGIONAL AUSTRALIA, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Table 12 provides a summary of grants expenditure paid by the Australian Government through the Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government portfolio.

Table 12: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forward estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forward estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m
OUTCOME 1					
Program 1.1 Regional Development	Regional	189	174	212	77
	Non-regional	13	3	3	3
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.2 Local Government	Regional	1,189	1,620	1,686	1,744
	Non-regional	477	639	665	684
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
OUTCOME 2					
Program 2.1 Services to Territories	Regional	8	8	9	9
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total		1,877	2,444	2,575	2,516

The allocation of estimates between Regional and Non-regional are based on prior year expenditure with Regional excluding Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

The Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government (DRARDLG) supports the Government's commitment to improve the social, economic and environmental outcomes for Australia's regions.

DRARDLG works across the Government and in partnership with states, territories, regional groups, Regional Development Australia committees and local government to ensure a coordinated approach to delivery of the Government's policies, programs and investments that impact on regional Australia. The department is ensuring that the needs of different regions are understood and considered by Government to maximise economic growth, flexibility and diversity.

The department achieves this through two outcomes:

- Outcome 1 - Coordinated community infrastructure and services in rural, regional and local government areas through financial assistance; and
- Outcome 2 - Good governance in the Australian Territories through the maintenance and improvement of the overarching legislative framework for self-governing territories, and laws and services for non self-governing territories.

In 2011-12 and across the forward years, the department will continue to develop and implement a range of new initiatives focused on policy development and implementing the Australian Government's initiatives in an environment where regional areas are impacted by differing levels of economic activity. To implement these initiatives, DRARDLG will administer grant funding of \$9,412 million over the Budget and forward estimates period, with \$6,925 million (73.6 per cent) to be spent in regional areas.

In addition, DRARDLG delivers services, support and undertakes capital works in the Australian Territories with the objective of ensuring territory communities enjoy the same level of services as equivalent state communities. This funding represents expenditure of \$356 million over the Budget and forward estimates period.

Outcome 1

Outcome 1: The Regional Development and Local Government programs contribute to the achievement of Outcome 1 through a range of regionally focused stakeholder consultation and engagement, research, policy development, and program delivery activities.

Program 1.1 Regional Development

Total grants expenditure in regional areas of \$652 million over the Budget and forward estimates period. The majority of the grants expenditure in Program 1.1 is allocated to the following three sub-programs:

Investing in Regional Australia

- The *Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF)*, program will fund projects that support the infrastructure needs, and will enhance the economic and community development, of Australia's regions. The RDAF program represents grants expenditure of \$301 million (46 per cent) over the Budget and forward years.
- The *Community Infrastructure Grants (CIG)* program will focus on implementing community and social infrastructure projects identified by local communities as priority investments for their regions. The CIG program represents grants expenditure of \$187 million (29 per cent) over the Budget and forward estimates period.
- The *Regional Development Australia Committees (RDAC)* support the engagement with states, territories, local government and regional communities to promote regional planning; promotes economic development initiatives; and provides advice to Government on issues affecting, and opportunities for, regional Australia. RDAC represents expenditure in regional areas of \$65 million (10 per cent) over the Budget and forward estimates period.

The remaining \$98 million of grants expenditure under Program 1.1 encapsulates funding to not-for profit, private and local communities in regional areas including:

- Constructing priority regional community and social infrastructure;
- Researching into issues affecting Australia's regions, and helping communicate this research to national and regional decision makers; and
- Promoting the benefits and opportunities of living and working in regional cities.

Program 1.2 Local Government

Total grants expenditure in regional areas of \$6,240 million over the Budget and forward estimates period. The Local Government Financial Assistance Grants program represents around 99 per cent of total estimated expenditure in regional areas over the Budget and forward estimates period. The grants are provided under *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* and comprise two components:

- a general purpose component which is distributed between the States and Territories according to population; and
- an identified local road component which is distributed between the States and Territories according to fixed historical share

The grants pool of funds changes annually in line with the population and is indexed across the forward years to maintain real per capita value.

The National Principles guiding the allocation of Financial Assistance Grants to local councils seek to ensure similar levels of service can be provided by local councils who, through no fault of their own, have limited ability to raise revenue or incur higher costs to implement services. As a result of these arrangements, the majority of grants are provided to councils in rural or regional Australia. Both components of the grants are untied in the hands of local government, allowing councils to spend the grants according to local priorities.

The remaining regional grants expenditure for Program 1.2 represents funding allocated for improving the asset and financial management capabilities of councils around Australia.

Outcome 2

Outcome 2 Program 2.1 Services to Territories

The total grant expenditure in regional areas under Outcome 2 is estimated at \$34 million over the Budget and forward estimates period. Grants are paid to the shires of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands, the funding amount being based upon a determination made by the Western Australian Grants Commission. Grants available to the territory communities are comparable to state grants available in Western Australia.

In addition, DRARDLG delivers services, supports, and undertakes capital works in the Australian Territories with the objective of ensuring territory communities enjoy the same level of services as equivalent state communities. This funding represents expenditure of \$356 million over the Budget and forward estimates period.

RESOURCES, ENERGY AND TOURISM

Table 13 provides a summary of expenditure relating to grants paid by the Australian Government through the Resources, Energy and Tourism portfolio.

Table 13: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Resources, Energy and Tourism portfolio

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program 1: Assistance to State and Territory Governments for Resources and Energy					
Other programs	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	17	17	17	17
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 2: Resources Related Initiatives and Management					
Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships					
Supports construction and demonstration of large-scale integrated carbon capture and storage projects in Australia.	Regional	64	93	155	238
	Non-regional	18	-	-	-
	Non-specific	15	20	15	6
Ethanol Production Grants	Regional	67	-	-	-
Facilitates ethanol as part of the transport fuel mix in Australia.	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
National Low Emissions Coal Initiative					
Accelerates the development and deployment of technologies that will reduce emissions from coal use.	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	31	33	30	5
	Non-specific	18	19	41	30
Other programs	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	25	35	20	20
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 3: Energy Related Initiatives and Management					
Australian Centre for Renewable Energy					
Promotes the development, commercialisation and deployment of renewable energy and enabling technologies to improve their competitiveness in Australia	Regional	7	8	6	-
	Non-regional	53	22	65	110
	Non-specific	13	15	16	16
Australian Solar Institute					
Drives collaborative, focused research and development that will have a major impact on the efficiency and cost effectiveness of solar technologies	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	36	36	27	3
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Connecting Renew ables Initiative	Regional	-	-	25	50
Facilitates connecting renewable energy projects to electricity networks.	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	2	48	24	-
Solar Flagships					
Supports the construction and demonstration of large scale, grid connected solar power stations in Australia, which may include solar thermal, photovoltaic and energy storage technologies	Regional	26	45	63	70
	Non-regional	41	156	148	44
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

Table 13: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Resources, Energy and Tourism portfolio continued

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Other programs	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	155	10	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 4: Tourism Related Initiatives and Management					
TQUAL Grants					
Stimulates sustainable economic grow th					
in the Australian tourism industry					
by enhancing the supply of quality	Regional	-	-	-	-
tourism products and experiences	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
to support marketing promises.	Non-specific	10	10	10	10
Total		597	565	662	617

Resources and Energy

In 2011-12 over a quarter of the portfolio's grant expenditure for resources and energy will be made to regional Australia. This expenditure is set to increase over the forward estimates to just under two-thirds in the final year.

The sub-programs under programs 2 and 3 in the above table indicate that successful grant applicants often have head offices based in non-regional areas while their projects may be based in regional areas resulting in significant benefits to those communities.

A number of programs are still considering applications and are not able to determine whether expenditure will occur in regional Australia and as such these funds have been identified as 'non-specific'.

Tourism

The TQUAL Grants program, consisting of the Tourism Quality Projects and Strategic Tourism Investment Grants, is open for applications and project suggestions, respectively. Consequently, expenditure in regional or non-regional Australia for this program is not yet known and has been identified as 'non-specific'.

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES

Table 14 provides a summary of expenditure relating to grants paid by the Australian Government through the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio.

Table 14: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forw ard estimate 2014-15 \$m
Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment ^{a,b}	Regional	226	235	24	22
	Non-regional	44	39	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	374	406
Water Reform Program	Regional	578	-	-	-
	Non-regional	242	-	-	-
	Non-specific	97	833	650	800
Total		1,188	1,107	1,048	1,228

(a) Includes Caring for our Country, Working on Country and Environmental Stewardship Program.

(b) Does not include the Landcare component of Caring for our Country which is a program of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio contributes to the development of regional Australia primarily through two material programs: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment; and Water Reform. These programs represent 90 per cent of administered expenditure for the portfolio over the forward estimates period.

The Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment program incorporates Caring for our Country and the Environmental Stewardship Program. Due to the nature of these programs, the majority of the funding for these activities is delivered in regional and rural areas across Australia. A review of Caring for our Country has commenced to determine funding priorities beyond 2012-13.

Water Reform, incorporating the Water for the Future program, is a long-term Government initiative to better balance the water needs of communities, farmers and the environment. While it contains urban projects, such as desalination and stormwater capture, the majority of the program includes funding for water purchasing, irrigation modernisation and recycling. Only approved projects have been defined against regional and non-regional classifications. The remaining funding is subject to competitive grants or tendering of infrastructure projects, or the purchase of water entitlements, which is yet to be undertaken and has been defined as non-specific.

TREASURY

Table 15 provides a summary of expenditure relating to transfer payments (being personal benefits and subsidies) by the Australian Government through the Treasury portfolio.

Table 15: 2011-12 Regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Treasury portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2011-12	Forward estimate 2012-13	Forward estimate 2013-14	Forward estimate 2014-15
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Product Stewardship for Oil	Regional	14	15	16	16
	Non-regional	26	29	31	32
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Cleaner Fuels Scheme (ATO)	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	26	-	-	-
Australian Screen Production Incentive	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	158	159	160	160
Research and Development Tax Offset	Regional	102	108	114	121
	Non-regional	1,001	1,057	1,116	1,178
	Non-specific	34	36	38	40
Private Health Insurance Rebate	Regional	56	58	61	63
	Non-regional	149	155	161	168
	Non-specific	2	2	2	2
Superannuation Co-Contribution	Regional	195	178	173	167
	Non-regional	393	358	347	335
	Non-specific	3	3	3	3
Fuel Tax Credits Scheme	Regional	1,357	1,482	1,509	1,536
	Non-regional	3,713	4,053	4,126	4,202
	Non-specific	72	79	80	81
Education Tax Refund	Regional	251	258	263	270
	Non-regional	623	642	656	671
	Non-specific	14	15	15	15
National Rental Affordability Scheme	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	56	104	150	137
First Home Saver Accounts	Regional	4	5	7	9
	Non-regional	35	45	61	80
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Domestic Ethanol Assistance	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	67	85	66	46
Government superannuation contributions tax rebate for low-income earners	Regional	-	261	265	258
	Non-regional	-	665	677	660
	Non-specific	-	5	5	5
Total		8,351	9,857	10,102	10,255

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) administers a range of subsidies and benefits, listed in the table above, in accordance with relevant legislation. These initiatives are not designed specifically for regional or urban areas, but rather to assist people or organisations, wherever they are, that satisfy the eligibility criteria. An analysis of the larger program is set out below.

Several of these programs deliver other government agencies' outcomes, with the ATO acting as a service delivery agency.

It should be noted in relation to some benefits and subsidies, an amount will be shown as non-regional where the address of the claimant is non-regional, even though the activity that gave rise to the claim might have taken place in a regional area. This location/billing address issue might occur if for instance, a head office or tax agent lodged a claim on behalf of a company which had offices all across Australia.

Fuel Tax Credits Scheme

The Fuel Tax Credit Scheme provides relief in the form of credits for fuel tax, such as excise or customs duty, on fuel used in machinery, plant, equipment or heavy vehicles engaged in a wide range of business activities. Figures show that approximately 26 per cent of this subsidy is recorded as being related to regional Australia; however, due to the location/billing address issue, it is possible that the real percentage is higher.

Research and Development Tax Offset

Research and Development Tax Offsets are designed to encourage research and development by Australian companies.

This program is jointly administered by the ATO, AusIndustry and Innovation Australia. The ATO is responsible for assessing the claim made on the Company Income Tax Return.

Innovation Australia and AusIndustry are responsible for assessing research and development activities for eligibility as well as the registration of eligible companies.

Approximately 9 per cent of this program is shown as relating to regional Australia. However, as above, it is possible that the proportion of activities occurring in regional areas may be higher.

Australian Screen Production Incentive

This incentive comprises three film tax offsets: the Producer Offset, the Location Offset and the Post, Digital and Visual Effects Offset. The offsets are designed to ensure Australia remains competitive in attracting high budget film and television productions and are aimed at providing increased opportunities for Australian casts, crew, post production companies and other services to participate in these productions. This program is jointly administered by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Screen Australia and the ATO.

It was not possible to estimate a regional/non-regional split for this incentive. Whilst most film production companies are based in non-regional centres, the actual location of filming and production could be both regional and non-regional.

Superannuation Co-contribution

The Superannuation Co-contribution Scheme is an initiative to help low to middle income earners save for retirement. Eligible individuals that make personal superannuation contributions to a complying superannuation fund or retirement savings account receive a co-contribution from the Government up to certain limits.

Approximately 33 per cent of co-contributions are made to individuals in regional Australia.

Education Tax Refund

The Education Tax Refund is an initiative to help with the cost of educating primary and secondary school children. It means eligible parents, carers, legal guardians and independent students can get 50 per cent back on qualifying education expenses.

Approximately 28 per cent of this program benefits families in regional Australia.

Private Health Insurance Rebate

There are a number of ways in which the private health insurance rebate (a percentage of the premium paid for a complying health insurance policy) can be paid. The ATO pays the rebate when claimed through individual tax returns. The Department of Health and Ageing pays the rebate to either the health insurance funds (who then provide a reduced premium to clients) or directly to individuals.

Approximately 27 per cent of the Private Health Insurance rebates claimed through individual tax returns are paid to individuals in regional Australia.

Government superannuation contributions tax rebate for low-income earners

If enacted, this scheme will provide a superannuation contributions tax rebate of up to \$500 per annum for low income earners, with effect from the 2012-13 income year. The intention is to effectively rebate most of the tax payable on concessional superannuation contributions made by or for low-income earners.

It is expected that approximately 28 per cent of this scheme will benefit individuals in regional Australia