



National Campaign Headquarters

Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association

Since 2007, Federal Labor has delivered the better deal regional communities have long deserved. The Rudd Labor Government has made sure that regional communities get their fair share, with almost two thirds of our infrastructure funding going to projects outside our cities. In fact, Federal Labor has doubled spending in regional Australia to around \$40 billion.

Supporting the rural transport sector

Since coming to power in 2007, the Federal Labor Government has committed \$60 billion as part of our Nation Building programs to modernising the nation's road, rail and public transport infrastructure.

We have built and upgraded 7,500 kilometres of road, resulting in a marked improvement in the condition and safety of our highways.

We have completed 137 major projects, with work underway on a further 67.

The 2013-14 Budget continues this work. A reelected Rudd Government will:

- Continue the rollout of our \$5.7 billion investment in a better, safer Bruce Highway.
- Make further substantial progress towards the full duplication of the Pacific Highway, the largest, most complex road construction project ever undertaken in this country. The funding being provided in 2013-14 will allow upgrade work to begin and continue along 165.5 kilometres of the Highway.
- We have recently completed the full duplication of the Hume Highway between Sydney and Melbourne more than half a century after work began on this great national endeavour, a milestone made possible by the almost \$1.0 billion we have invested in this road since coming to office in late 2007.

Road Safety

The Federal Labor Government is continuing to improve safety for truck drivers through the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program which commenced in 2008 and is the first Commonwealth dedicated program of its kind.

In last year's budget, Federal Labor provided an additional \$150 million to this program to allow the continued construction of rest areas, parking and decoupling bays, road enhancement projects and technology trials and projects aimed squarely at improving safety and productivity.

This additional funding brings the total program to \$220 million and adds a further 58 projects to the 236 projects already delivered including 95 new or upgraded rest areas and 46 new or upgraded parking/decoupling bays.

An era of fewer and smarter regulations

As well as improving and modernising the infrastructure which the nation's \$61 billion transport industry relies upon, the Federal Labor Government is also implementing historic reforms to the way this is regulated.

By late 2013, three national regulators each administering one set of modern, nationwide laws will be up and running. They will replace the 23 separate state, territory and federal regulators which up until now regulated heavy vehicles, rail safety and maritime safety.

With the abolition of the costly and confusing array of regulations, there will be a freeing up of the movement of interstate trade which is expected to boost national income by up to \$30 billion over the next 20 years.

Fairer Charging for Heavy Vehicles

The Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure brings together Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for transport and infrastructure issues, as well as the Australian Local Government Association.

At the May 2013 meeting, the Standing Council considered the outcome of discussions with industry and stakeholders on the major longer-term reforms to investment and charging arrangements under consideration in the Heavy Vehicle Charging and Investment initiative, and agreed that a co-design approach with industry was needed to develop a detailed, integrated package of reform options for public consultation.

Following this period of public consultation, the recommendations from the Council on the options will be provided to COAG in July 2014.

Supporting Small Business

The Rudd Labor Government understands how important it is to support small business people.

We have announced measures that will reduce red tape for small businesses, give small business a bigger say in policy making and deliver tax relief for small business. These new announcements build on the Federal Labor Government's achievements in supporting small business over the last six years.

Cutting red tape

The Rudd Labor Government will cut red tape for small businesses by extending the free small business superannuation clearing house to businesses with less than 100 employees from 1 July 2014. This free service helps small businesses to save on time and paperwork by enabling them to pay their employees' superannuation to a single location in just one simple electronic transaction. As a result of this policy, an additional 92,000 small businesses will be able to access the Clearing House, bringing the total number of small businesses eligible to more than 850,000.

We will also enable businesses with fewer than 20 employees to streamline administration of our successful Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme. Small businesses will be able to have Centrelink make PPL payments to their employees whilst they are on parental leave. This will slash red tape and compliance costs for small businesses. Those small businesses that wish to stay connected with their staff will still

be able to opt-in if that meets their needs. This will slash red tape and compliance tape costs for more than 700,000 businesses with fewer than 20 employees.

Federal Labor will reduce the number of times that small and medium businesses need to lodge GST returns from four times a year to just once. Businesses with a GST turnover under \$20 million a year will be allowed to lodge their Business Activity Statement (BAS) once a year from 1 July 2014. This is a ten-fold increase from the current \$2 million turnover threshold for annual lodgement. These businesses will be able to pay simple instalments based on GST paid in the previous year, and lodge an annual BAS at the end of the financial year to reconcile any difference. This aligns GST more closely with the Pay As You Go income tax system and means businesses will no longer have to make complex GST calculations throughout the year.

Increasing the voice of small business is decision making

On 24 August 2013, the Prime Minister announced that small business will be given a bigger say in workplace relations policy, practice and advocacy. The package has three components:

- Appointing a Small Business Adviser with demonstrated small business experience to the Fair Work Ombudsman. The Small Business Adviser will work across the Ombudsman and Fair Work Commission to develop policy and practice to reflect the needs of small business at a cost of \$1.1 million over the forward estimates. The Small Business Adviser will also liaise with the Fair Work Ombudsman and Fair Work Commission on small business matters and help small businesses to navigate the national workplace relations system.
- Creating a Small Business Consultative Council as a subcommittee of the National Workplace Relations Consultative Council, which is the consultative body on national workplace relations policy. This will ensure a strong voice for small business employers and union representatives from the small business sector in national workplace relations.
- New funding for the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA) of \$200,000 a year for two years to undertake research and advocacy to government on behalf of Australia's small businesses.

These changes will ensure a fair go and an improved operating environment for small business. They will give small business a seat at the table and extra resources to contribute to workplace relations policy.

They will also bring government, small business and unions together to ensure small businesses are strong, safe and secure places to work.

In addition to these components, a Rudd Labor Government will make permanent funding for the successful Small Business Commissioner at a cost of \$0.5 million over the forward estimates.

Tax relief for small business

A re-elected Rudd Labor Government will deliver Australia's small businesses tax relief so they can invest, grow and create new jobs.

Federal Labor's *Small Business Investment Boost* will provide an upfront tax deduction for small businesses when they buy equipment and assets worth up to \$10,000.

Under the *Small Business Boost*, businesses with an annual turnover of less than \$2 million will be able to immediately deduct against their tax the cost of assets they purchase that are valued at less than \$10,000, such as IT equipment like computers and servers, photocopiers, fridges and workshop tools.

The instant asset write-off provides immediate up-front cash flow benefit to businesses, rather than making them wait to deduct the asset over a longer period. This makes it more attractive to businesses to make the investments they need to grow their business.

This initiative builds on Federal Labor's record of increasing the instant asset write-off from applying only to assets under \$1,000 when we came to Government to the current level of \$6,500. The instant asset write off will remain at \$6,500 from 1 July 2015.

This policy highlights the choice between Federal Labor and the Coalition at this election. Federal Labor has a positive plan to create jobs beyond the boom. We recognise that small firms will play a vital role in growing and diversifying our economy. By contrast Tony Abbott has pledged to scrap the existing small business instant asset write off tax deduction as part of his wide-ranging program of cuts.

Supporting regional economies

All Australians deserve access to good jobs, high quality education, better health services, and quality infrastructure. We believe in providing opportunity for all Australians, no matter what their circumstances or where they live.

We're delivering new investments in infrastructure to create faster and safer transport links, as well as implementing measures to protect and grow jobs and support families in regional communities.

Australia's regional communities are central to our national identity and economic prosperity – generating nearly three-quarters of our export earnings. The Rudd Labor Government will continue to work with them to maximise their economic potential.

We created Regional Development Australia – a new body which provides strategic input into national programs, helps improve the coordination of regional development initiatives, and works closely with local government and other regional organisations.

In 2013-14, the Rudd Labor Government will continue the rollout of our Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF), building on the first two rounds which invested \$350 million to leverage projects worth \$1.2 billion. 75 projects are already underway, ensuring people living in rural and regional Australia will get the services and support they need.

We created the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program – the largest ever federal investment in local facilities such as parks, swimming pools, sporting fields, community halls and child care centres. Already this \$1.1 billion program has funded 6,000 small and larger-scale projects.

We're providing more than \$200 million in Community Infrastructure Grants to build priority local projects such as upgrades to local sporting and recreational community infrastructure to enhance the liveability of our regions and invest in the health, fitness and wellbeing of communities.

Two-thirds of our infrastructure budget is directed to projects in rural and regional Australia, delivering major safety and capacity improvements to vitally important roads such as the Bruce Highway, the Pacific Highway, and the Hume and Midland Highways.

The Rudd Labor Government is continuing the rollout of the National Broadband Network. Regional Australia is being prioritised in the NBN rollout. Towns like Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Gosford, Townsville, Toowoomba, and Willunga are already connected to the NBN, with many more regional areas to follow.

Under the \$5 billion Health and Hospitals Fund, 25 Regional Cancer Centres are being established, which when operational, will provide world class treatment for over 7,600 additional patients annually and over 127,000 additional chemotherapy treatments each year.

We have announced \$475 million in new and upgraded health facilities in regional Australia, funding projects to give greater access to health services for patients living in rural, regional and remote communities.

We have brought forward two quarters of Financial Assistance Grants for local government of \$1.1 billion to support councils to manage reconstruction efforts in light of the recent natural disasters in Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

We will continue to deliver on our record investment in regional Australia with the announcement of funding decisions for Round 5 of RDAF in 2013.

We will roll out \$99.4 million over four years in new farm household support payments under reforms to the National Drought Program which move away from crisis assistance, to measures that help farmers better manage risk and prepare for future challenges, including drought.

We will roll out the \$100 million Murray-Darling Basin Regional Economic Diversification Program. This will fund community driven projects designed to improve employment opportunities in Basin communities.

Over the next four years, the Federal Labor Government's Jobs and Growth Plan for Tasmania will invest \$100 million in projects located in distressed communities to create new job opportunities in the Tasmania.

A re-elected Rudd Labor Government will continue to support regional communities through these and other initiatives.

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