



Australian Government

BUDGET

2011-12

Investing in Australia's regions

May 2011



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May 2011

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The Manager
Communications Unit
Ministerial and Communications Division
Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600
medialiaison@treasury.gov.au

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The 2011-12 Budget: investing in Australia's regions

The Government is delivering over \$4.3 billion of initiatives commencing 1 July 2011 to ensure that individuals and communities across regional Australia share in the nation's prosperity.

\$1.8 billion over six years to provide critical infrastructure upgrades to hospitals and health services for regional Australians through the Health and Hospitals Fund regional priority rounds.

\$500 million over five years to strengthen regional higher education and vocational education and training institutions, through the regional priorities round of the Education Investment Fund.

\$109.9 million over four years for universities with regional campuses through increased and better targeted loading payments to regional areas.

\$916 million for the first projects under the Regional Infrastructure Fund to help unlock the economic potential of our regions.

\$1 billion over five years through the Regional Development Australia Fund to finance infrastructure projects that best fit the economic and community needs of the regions.

Building on our existing investments

These initiatives build on existing commitments that are strengthening Australia's regions, including:

- \$22 billion of investments in transport infrastructure;
- world-class telecommunications infrastructure provided by the National Broadband Network;
- over \$5 billion for school infrastructure in regional areas through Building the Education Revolution;
- \$690 million to regional higher education, training and research infrastructure through the Education Investment Fund;
- \$1.1 billion of investments in regional areas under Rounds 1 and 2 of the Health and Hospitals Fund, including \$560 million to establish 21 regional cancer centres; and
- strengthening national education policies to ensure they meet the needs of regional students.



Australia's regions are essential to our national economy, wellbeing and identity.

Over 8 million Australians live outside our major capital cities and two-thirds of the nation's export earnings are generated in the regions.

The devastation across the country due to severe flooding, cyclones and bushfires has demonstrated the resilience of the Australian community — and how essential this resilience is in difficult times.

The Australian Government is working with the states, territories and local communities to support recovery and reconstruction, and to build more resilient communities in the future.

Investing in regional Australia...

The Government is committed to empowering regional Australia to reach its full potential and become even stronger and more sustainable in the years ahead.

The 2011-12 Budget supports strong, resilient and creative regional communities through measures targeting health, education and skills, workforce participation, infrastructure, environmental sustainability and improved delivery of government services.

These measures build on the Government's record of investment in regional communities, with the Government recognising that strong, prosperous regions are essential for a strong, prosperous Australia.

That is why the Government has made investing in regional Australia a priority for this Budget even as we face the challenge of bringing the budget back to surplus by 2012-13.

In short, the Government is investing today to secure a sustainable future, including through building the infrastructure that regional Australia needs.



...to build prosperity for all Australians

There are different opportunities and pressures right across Australia, with the nation's vast size and diverse patchwork economy presenting challenges.

From Penrith to the Pilbara, some regions are struggling to keep pace with population growth while other regions face a chronic shortage of skilled labour.

The Government's role is to ensure each unique part of the patchwork can develop to its full potential.

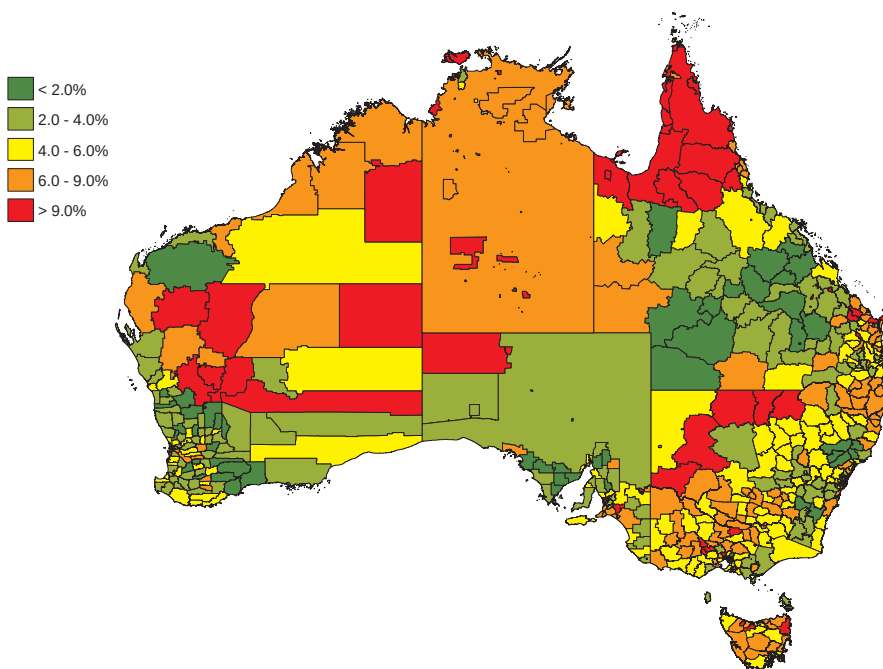
The Government is committed to working with local communities to find creative and place-based solutions to the challenges each community faces and, in turn, maximise productivity and flexibility which will help regions unlock their potential.

Such modern, integrated and local solutions reflect the complex nature of our patchwork economy and help us to deliver world-class services to all Australians, no matter where they live.



All Australians should share in our long-term prosperity regardless of where they live, whether they reside in our major cities or in the diverse areas that make up regional Australia — from our regional centres to our coastal towns to our rural and remote areas.

Unemployment rates by region, September 2010





Prioritising regional health and hospitals

This Budget sees the most significant government investment to strengthen regional health care in our history.

The Government is investing \$1.8 billion over six years to support upgrades to regional health infrastructure, expand regional hospitals and support the clinical training capacity of regional hospitals in the future.

This includes \$1.33 billion for 63 projects across the country and \$475 million for a further regional round which will open later this year.

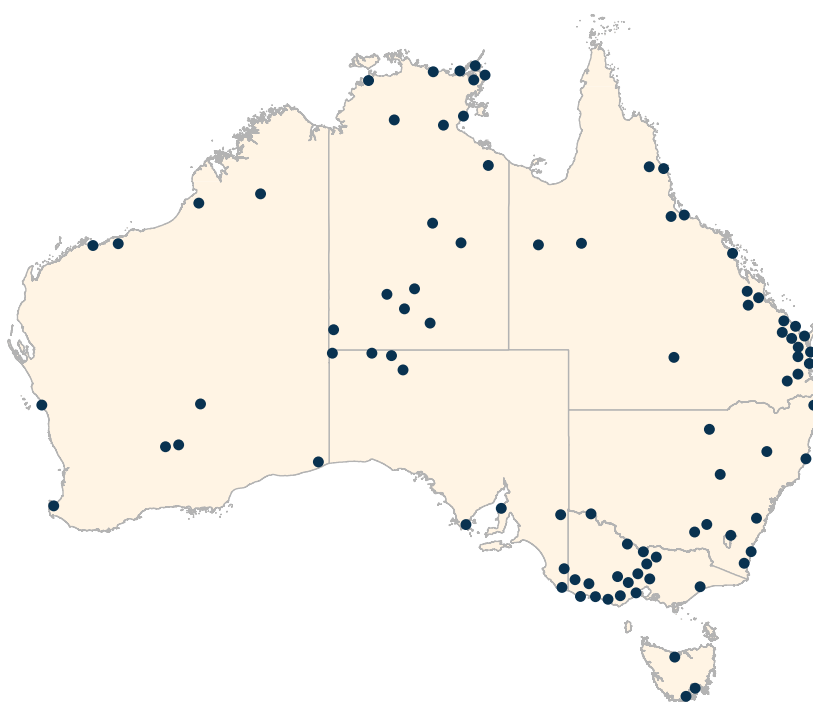
The Government recognises the importance of high quality health care in Australia's regions and for the first time is investing a dedicated \$1.8 billion in regional areas through the Health and Hospitals Fund to revolutionise health services for regional areas.

Funding will be provided to upgrade regional health infrastructure, expand regional hospitals and support clinical training. These investments will improve the quality of regional hospitals and target the particular needs of regional communities with better access to cancer, renal dialysis and mental health services.

The funding committed will help ensure that regional Australia receives a fair share of overall health infrastructure funding.

This funding builds upon the \$1.1 billion that has already been invested in regional areas under Rounds 1 and 2 of the Health and Hospitals Fund.

Map of Health and Hospitals Fund regional priority round locations - Round 3



Focusing on the health needs of regional communities

The Government recognises the unique health needs of Australia's regions and the challenges posed by distance from health services.

- The Government will provide \$205.9 million over five years to expand the Access to Allied Psychological Services Program which will help to enhance access to services in regional areas where people are having difficulty accessing Medicare-based mental health services.
- Funding of \$14.4 million over five years will make it easier for people with mental illness to access information and clinical support services by developing a national e-mental health portal and virtual clinic which will be enhanced by the NBN.

These initiatives build on the Government's existing commitments of:

- \$352.2 million of investments in telehealth consultations via the internet which will provide patients in remote, regional and outer metropolitan Australia better access to specialists. These investments will also be enhanced by the rollout of the NBN; and
- \$41 million for the expansion of existing primary care practices in regional Australia to fund general practices, primary care, community health services, and Aboriginal medical services.



The Government recognises the challenges for those Australians who live some distance from health services.

To address these challenges, the Government is funding the expansion of primary care practices and improved access to psychological services in regional Australia.

The Government is also establishing a dedicated unit within the Department of Health and Ageing to provide advice to the public on regional health and aged care matters.





The regional priority round will fund projects to upgrade infrastructure, expand emergency care, better integrate existing health facilities and increase patient bed numbers.

Health and Hospitals Fund...

The regional priority round of the Health and Hospitals Fund will be investing in hospitals to improve regional care:

- the Royal Hobart Hospital in Tasmania will receive \$240.0 million to redevelop hospital facilities;
- the Bega Valley Health Service Development in New South Wales will receive \$160.1 million for a new integrated health care facility;
- the Tamworth Redevelopment Stage 2 in New South Wales will receive \$120.0 million for high priority clinical and infrastructure upgrades;
- the Port Macquarie Base Hospital in New South Wales will receive \$96.0 million to expand its facilities including a new medical inpatient unit;
- the Palmerston Hospital in the Northern Territory will receive \$70.0 million to construct a 24/7 emergency care clinic and integrated specialist services;
- the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital in New South Wales will receive \$55.1 million to redevelop a range of facilities including an expanded emergency department;
- the Port Lincoln Health Service in South Australia will receive \$39.2 million to redevelop facilities and increase hospital capacity; and
- the Cairns Base Hospital in Queensland will receive \$12.1 million for construction of a Planned Procedure Centre.



...Regional projects

The regional priority round of the Health and Hospitals Fund will be investing in health services in Australia's regions:

- the Albury-Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre on the New South Wales/ Victorian border will receive \$65.0 million to improve cancer care facilities;
- \$50.3 million will be provided for Improving Aboriginal Access to Primary Health Care by constructing a number of new clinics in the Northern Territory;
- the Bringing Renal Dialysis and Support Services Closer to Home service in Western Australia will receive \$45.8 million to address Indigenous health priorities;
- \$40.4 million will be provided to Regional Mental Health Community Care Units to improve mental health facilities in Queensland;
- \$33.1 million will be provided to expand the capacity of mental health care in Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Toowoomba;
- \$26.1 million will be provided for Integrated Regional Cancer Services to construct a new Supportive Cancer Centre in Geelong, Victoria; and
- the Ballarat Dental Clinic will receive \$8.3 million to relocate and expand the current facilities.



63 major health infrastructure projects will be funded in regional areas across Australia under the Health and Hospitals Fund regional priority round.





Ensuring students in regional areas...

The Government's investments will provide a real choice to school leavers in regional areas on where they advance their education.

The Government is building on existing EIF investments in regional areas, like \$5 million from Round 2 for a new trade training facility at the Bendigo Regional TAFE in Echuca.

The Government believes that every student in Australia should have access to a world-class education — not only so each student can reach their potential but also so each community can reach its potential.

That is why the Government has already committed \$690 million to regional higher education, training and research infrastructure through the Education Investment Fund (EIF). The Government is building on existing investments to provide further support for our regional students (who are under represented in higher education), which, in turn, supports each region's economic growth and wellbeing.

Higher Education

The regional priorities round of the Education Investment Fund will deliver \$500 million to support capital investment projects in regional higher education and vocational education and training institutions.

Funding for universities with regional campuses will be increased by \$109.9 million over the next four years through an increase in regional loading payments. Funding will be provided to help overcome the higher costs of regional campuses, with changes to the regional allocation formula to target campuses that most need support.



...can access a world class education

The Government is committed to ensuring all schools provide a quality education so that their students can become productive members of Australian society.

The 2011-12 Budget includes new measures which will benefit regional schools:

- \$222 million will be provided over three years to extend and expand the National School Chaplaincy Program until December 2014. The program will operate in around 3,700 schools in total, and will target regional and remote communities.
- The Teach Next initiative will invest \$18.1 million over four years to establish a pathway into a teaching career for professionals with specialist qualifications or relevant work experience, with a focus on regional and remote schools.
- The Government is also investing \$425 million over four years in the National Rewards for Great Teachers program. The program will provide \$125 million each semester from 2014 to reward top performing teachers with a bonus of up to 10 per cent of their salary.
- The Government will also provide \$200 million over three years to provide immediate and targeted assistance to teachers and schools to support students with a disability.

These measures build on the Government's current initiative to provide \$388 million over five years from 2012-13 to provide reward grants to schools that have shown the most improved performance over 12 months, including a minimum of \$125 million for regional schools.



Regional communities are well represented in the National School Chaplaincy Program, with 43 per cent of current funding already directed to regional areas.





Improving opportunity...

Our economy is strong but the diverse patchwork economy presents challenges. The Government is working with regional communities to develop local solutions to their labour market needs.

Supporting education and employment in regional Australia

The Government is investing \$19.1 million over three years to develop a more strategic approach to combating high unemployment in regions. The funding will be used to develop 34 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans. This will help identify the needs of each region and will improve coordination of local employment initiatives.

Funding of \$45.2 million will be provided to extend the Priority Employment Areas initiative, including Local Employment Coordinators and Jobs and Skills Expos until 30 June 2013.

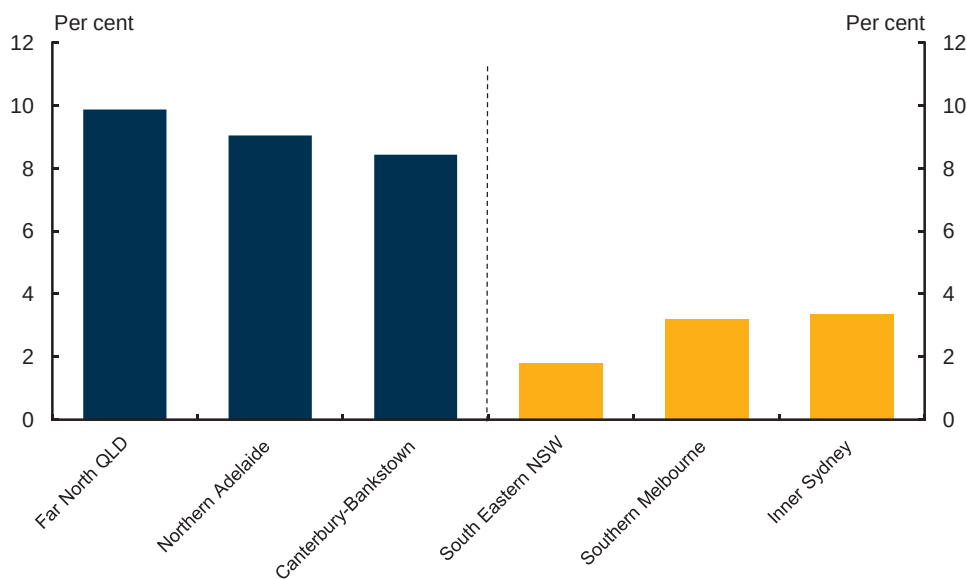
Each area is the focus of a range of Government activities designed to ensure maximum effectiveness of government, community and business efforts to stimulate the local economy and generate new jobs.

The Government is also providing \$7.1 million to continue the highly successful Small Business Support Line which provides an important service for small businesses in regional areas, allowing them to access vital information wherever they are located.

Between October 2009 and December 2010, 40 Keep Australia Working Jobs and Skills Expos were held attracting over 154,000 attendees, 3,000 exhibitors and connecting over 15,500 job seekers with job opportunities.

As part of the extension of Priority Employment Areas, Local Employment Coordinators will be given extra support through a \$20 million flexible funding pool to help the coordinators undertake activities such as creating linkages between government services or provide training to help improve labour market outcomes in their area.

Unemployment rates – highest and lowest unemployment regions (February 2011)



(a) excludes the Northern Territory

...and delivering skills in regional Australia

The Government's *Building Australia's Future Workforce* Package will support regional employers, workers, trainees and job seekers.

The Budget will establish a National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) to develop a new partnership with industry. The Government will provide \$558 million over four years for industry-led training projects in key sectors and for priority occupations. A fair share of this funding will go to regional Australia. The NWDF includes funding from the Critical Skills Investment Fund.

The Government knows that skills needs differ across the regions. Through a new partnership with industry, the National Workforce Development Fund will help ensure our training investment is focussed on the needs of industries and regions.

To attract skilled migrants to work in regional Australia, the Government is specifying 16,000 places to the Regional Skilled Migration Scheme and fast tracking permanent residency for 457 visa holders who live and work in regional Australia for two years. The Government is also introducing Regional and Enterprise Migration Agreements so regions and major resource projects can tailor migration solutions to meet their skills needs.



The Government's initiatives will help address skills shortages in regional Australia by building better education infrastructure in the regions, funding training projects, coinvesting with regional employers, and more effective use of skilled migration to fill skills shortages that can't be met in other ways.



Investing in regional infrastructure...



The Government is investing around \$1 billion over five years to fund a diverse range of economic and community infrastructure projects — with the projects designed to best fit the priorities of regions.

The Government continues to invest in the economic and community infrastructure essential to regional development and to building a strong, prosperous Australia.

Regional Development Australia Fund

The Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) is an investment of around \$1 billion over five years to fund a diverse range of economic and community infrastructure projects across Australia, \$573 million of which is contingent on the passage of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax.

Projects are to align with the regional plans developed by Regional Development Australia committees to ensure they best fit the priorities of the region. Projects will be assessed on a competitive basis through multiple funding rounds — with the first round looking to contribute up to \$100 million in funding and another round to be held in late 2011.

The RDAF builds on the \$1.1 billion invested under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program from 2008 to 2011.

Transport infrastructure

The Government is already investing \$22 billion in transport infrastructure, including \$299 million for the Caboolture Motorway in Queensland, \$164 million for the Brighton Bypass in Tasmania and \$55.1 million for upgrades to the Sturt Highway in South Australia.

The Government will also invest a further \$1.02 billion in this Budget in the Pacific Highway.



...to unlock the economic potential of regions

Regional Infrastructure Fund

The Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) comprises \$6 billion in funding, targeted at the resource rich states that face large infrastructure demands, \$5.6 billion of which is contingent on the passage of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax.

Investments in regional infrastructure will improve productivity, transport efficiency and safety, more efficiently link regions to markets, and promote economic and social development.

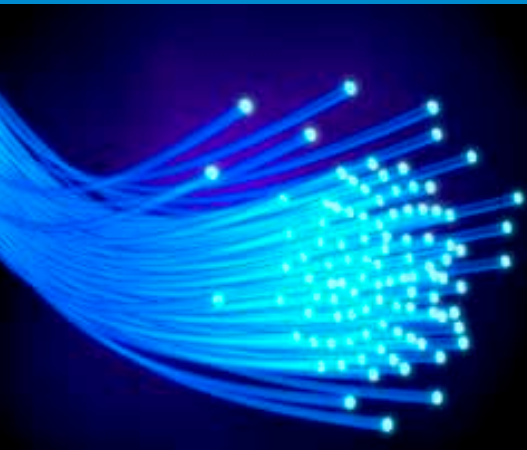
The Budget provides \$916 million for the first projects to be funded from the RIF:

- \$480 million for the Gateway WA project to upgrade the public arterial road network around Perth Airport to improve transport safety, and maximise productivity, sustainability and liveability in the region (WA);
- \$160 million to complete the section of the Townsville Ring Road which will link the Douglas Arterial to the Bruce Highway at Mt Low (QLD);
- \$120 million for a package of works to improve safety on Peak Downs Highway (QLD);
- \$54 million to upgrade the Blacksoil Interchange at the intersection between the Warrego and Brisbane Valley Highways (QLD);
- \$50 million to complete the final two stages of the Gladstone Port Access Road, which will extend this road from Glenlyon Street to Red Rover Road (QLD);
- \$40 million to upgrade the intersection of the Bruce and Capricorn Highways (QLD);
- \$10 million for the Mackay Ring Road Study, which will deliver a detailed business case for the Road and establish a preferred route, cost and construction timelines (QLD); and
- \$2 million for planning work necessary to build an overpass for the rail line on the New England Highway in Scone (NSW).



Regional infrastructure

Two-thirds of Australia's export earnings are generated in regional Australia. By investing in infrastructure we can unlock the untapped economic potential of our regions which will benefit all of Australia.



Optic fibre will connect 93 per cent of all homes, schools and workplaces and provide speeds up to 100 times faster than many people experience today. The remaining 7 per cent of premises will have access to peak speeds of at least 12 megabits per second through next generation wireless and satellite technologies.

The National Broadband Network...

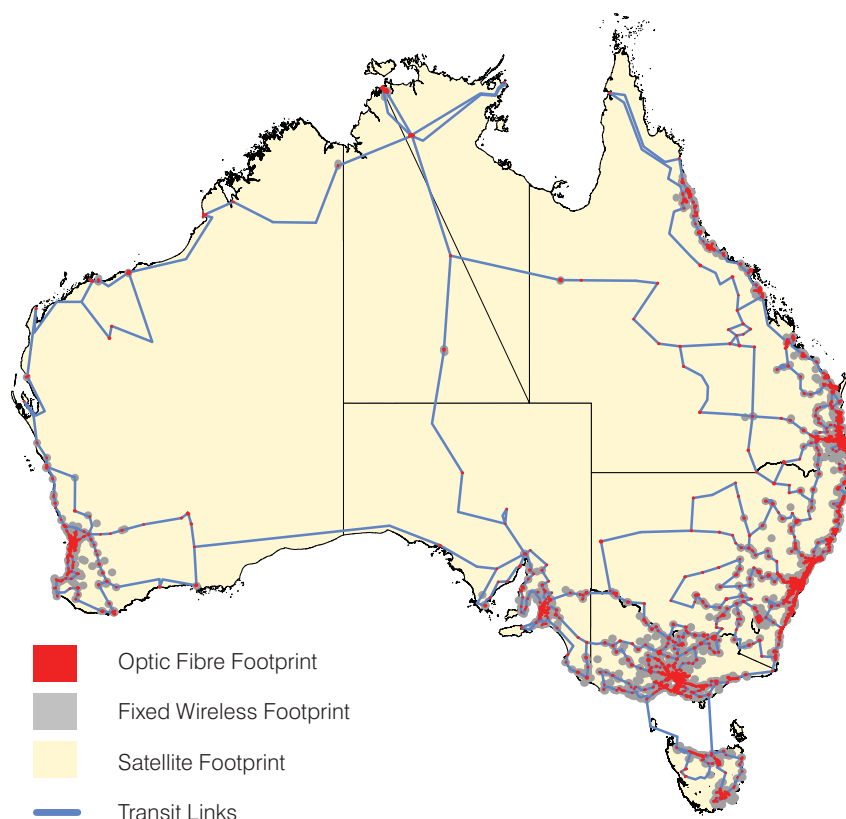
The Government's investment in the National Broadband Network (NBN) is helping to connect people, families, communities, businesses and regions — thus reducing the tyranny of distance and presenting opportunities for new ways of living and working.

The NBN is a key nation building infrastructure project that will help drive Australia's productivity and transform service delivery in key areas such as health and education.

The network will consist of fibre optic cable to 93 per cent of the population, with a combination of high-speed fixed wireless and satellite technologies to ensure people, schools and businesses in even the most isolated areas of Australia have access to peak speeds of at least 12 megabits per second. The NBN will ensure that every community in regional Australia gets fair and equal access to affordable high-speed broadband. This includes the delivery of uniform national wholesale pricing within the three technology platforms.

Please visit www.dbcde.gov.au/broadband/national_broadband_network and www.nbnco.com.au for further information on the implementation of the NBN.

The NBN will provide coverage to all of Australia by 2020



...harnessing the potential of regional Australia

Unlocking the community and productivity benefits of the NBN

The NBN will be critical in helping regional communities overcome the challenges of distance and isolation, both in connecting people and connecting commerce. It will mean that regional communities have the same potential as the capital cities to benefit from the digital age, including through the Government's e-health and e-education initiatives.

The NBN has already been rolled out in three regional communities in Tasmania — Scottsdale, Smithton and Midway Point — where high-speed broadband services are now available. Construction will soon begin in the Tasmanian communities of Deloraine, Kingston Beach, George Town, Sorell, St Helens, South Hobart and Triabunna.

Construction of the network is nearing completion in first release sites on mainland Australia, including in Armidale, Kiama Downs and Minnamurra, New South Wales; in Townsville, Queensland; and in Willunga, South Australia.

Construction in 19 mainland second release sites is on-track to begin later this year.



Regional Australia will be transformed by the NBN — it will provide economic opportunities to our regional areas which are currently out of reach.

David runs a small signwriting business in regional Tasmania. He specialises in high resolution images, digital photos and computerised printing for Australian and foreign customers. Prior to the NBN, David's business was constrained by a reliance on slow internet or postal services. Now, on the NBN, he can receive and deliver work faster and more cheaply. He says the change is like going from 'walking around in sandals to driving a Ferrari.'



Securing the future of rural Australia

The Government is continuing the Rural Financial Counselling Service program which provides funding to non-government organisations to deliver decision making support to farmers across Australia who are experiencing financial difficulty, including assistance with accessing government support.

This Budget builds on our existing commitment to agriculture which includes an estimated \$251 million in matched funding to rural research and development corporations to support productivity and innovation in 2010-11.

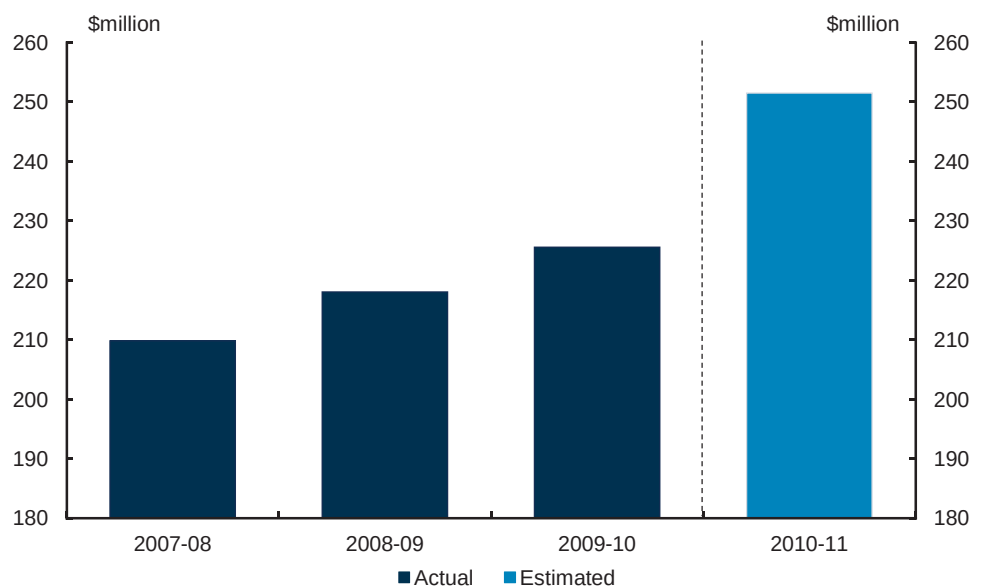
Agriculture is a vital component of Australia's economy. In 2009-10, the gross value of total agricultural production was \$48.4 billion and Australia's rural exports were worth \$25.5 billion, representing 10 per cent of Australia's total exports.

This Government has provided more than \$2.5 billion dollars to farmers and small businesses since 2007-08 through the Exceptional Circumstances (EC) drought policy and will continue to provide financial, personal and business assistance for farmers and agriculture dependent small businesses in EC declared areas.

This Budget continues to reform Australia's biosecurity system, providing funding for initial work on post-entry quarantine arrangements and \$425.4 million over three years for core biosecurity functions.

The Budget also includes \$44.1 million to continue the pilot of drought support measures in an expanded region of Western Australia (WA) in partnership with the WA Government, subject to formal endorsement by both governments. The pilot is designed to support farming communities to manage risk and prepare for future challenges rather than waiting until they are in crisis to offer assistance.

Commonwealth matching funding to agricultural research & development corporations



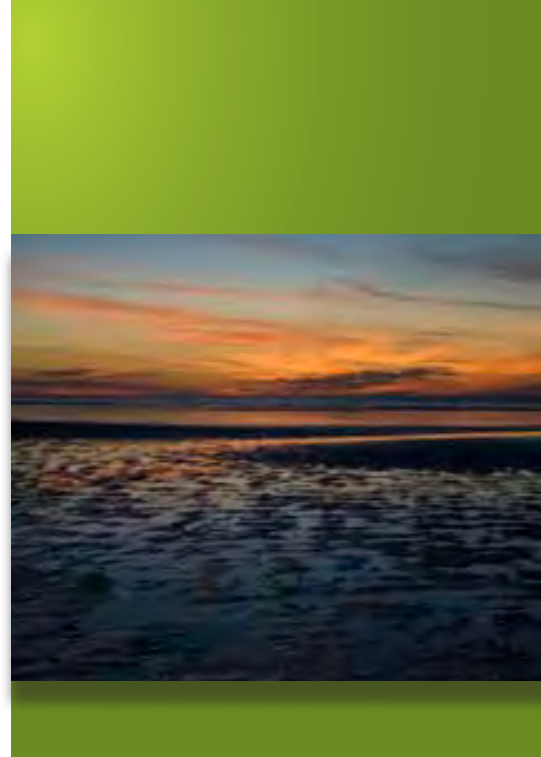
Protecting our unique environment

The environmental sustainability of Australia's regions is essential to our wellbeing. Many environmental assets are located in regional Australia and protecting our environment is critical to the economic future of many of our regions and industries.

The Government is expanding the Environmental Stewardship Program with an extra \$84.2 million over four years. This funding builds on the success of the first four years of investment under the program. Recognising the important role that private landholders play in protecting our environment, the program uses competitive tenders to engage landholders in contracts (of up to 15 years) to protect nationally significant habitat. The program will support conservation of up to an additional 34,000 hectares of endangered habitat, while also contributing to more sustainable regional communities.

The Government will also provide \$10 million over three years to develop the National Wildlife Corridors Plan to guide future investments in conservation management.

Tasmania's economy is being boosted by Australia's activities to protect the Antarctic, with around 60 per cent of the Australian Antarctic Program's annual expenditure of approximately \$100 million paid to Tasmanian staff and suppliers.



Land for the environment

The Environmental Stewardship Program provides payments to landowners to protect the environment, creating an alternative income stream for farmers and helping to preserve our unique biodiversity.





New markets for farmers

According to Professor Garnaut, incentives that realise the 'immense technical potential' of the land sector to absorb emissions could 'greatly expand the economic prospects of rural Australia'.

The Carbon Farming Initiative will inject money into rural communities by allowing farmers, forest growers or landholders to generate carbon credits to sell into domestic and international carbon markets.

Creating new opportunities for Australian farmers and landholders

Carbon Farming Initiative

The rural sector can play a critical role in Australia's carbon mitigation effort. In recognition of this the Government will establish the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) to create a new income stream for farmers and landholders at the same time as reducing emissions. The Government will provide \$45.6 million over four years to support the Initiative.

By enabling farmers to generate and sell carbon credits, the CFI will grant farmers access to lucrative abatement markets. These credits will provide a new revenue stream for rural and regional Australia worth hundreds of millions of dollars even with agricultural emissions excluded from the carbon price mechanism.

As the National Farmers Federation has stated '...the CFI demonstrates the positive role agriculture can play in mitigating against carbon emissions through on-farm management.'

The Initiative will provide farmers, landholders and forestry growers with the tools to understand how to generate carbon credits. The Initiative also includes funding for Landcare to assist farmers reduce their emissions and benefit from the Initiative.



Greenhouse gas emissions being measured using a fully automated system. These measurements will be used in the development of methodologies under the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Renewable energy providing benefits for regional areas

Benefits from investing in renewable energy will flow to regional communities

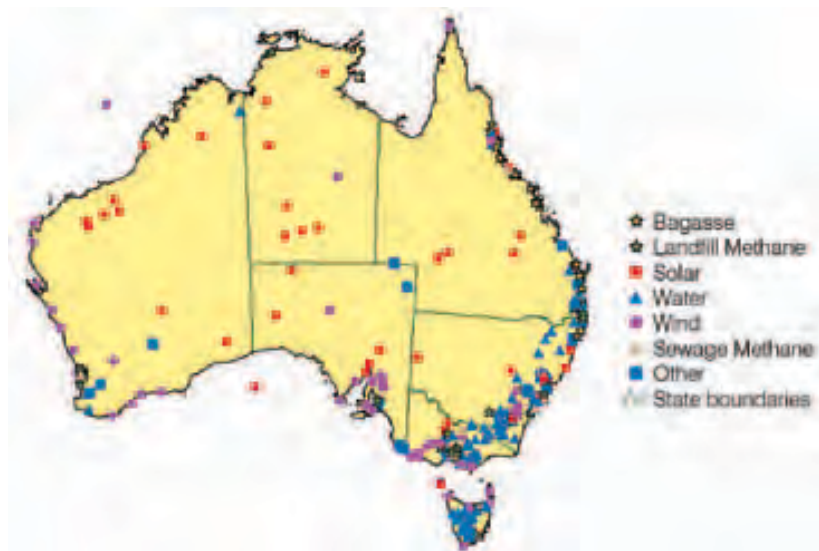
Most of Australia's renewable energy resources are located in regional Australia. The substantial economic transformation required to reduce our carbon emissions and transform our economy will benefit regional Australia by generating investment in infrastructure and job opportunities.

The Government is providing significant support for renewable energy, including through the Renewable Energy Target (RET), designed to ensure 20 per cent of Australia's energy supply comes from renewable sources by 2020. The RET is expected to drive \$16 billion in investment in renewable energy by 2020.

Through the Connecting Renewables Initiative the Government will invest \$1 billion over the next decade to accelerate the development of transmission infrastructure that supports the connection of remote renewable energy. The expanded \$102.2 million Emerging Renewables program will support the development of emerging renewable energy technology, such as geothermal and ocean energy.

The Government supports the deployment of large-scale solar generation through the \$1.3 billion Solar Flagships program. In addition, \$20 million will be provided to establish the Australian Biofuels Research Institute, including a \$5 million foundation grant to James Cook University in Townsville for a biofuels development project.

Operating renewable energy power stations in Australia



Supporting renewable energy

The Government has a range of measures to support the deployment of renewable energy in Australia.

The deployment of renewable energy will particularly support investment and employment in regional communities.



Sustainable development for our regions

The Government is committed to a sustainable population and a sustainable Australia which delivers better services and a better quality of life.

These measures build on the \$100 million already committed to the Building Better Regional Cities Program to support housing affordability in regional areas.

Sustainability is about our quality of life including population density, the state of our infrastructure and the quality of our services. We can take pressure off urban communities by making sure that the regions are attractive places to live, work and raise a family and promoting balanced growth across our major cities and regions.

Australia's regions face a range of different sustainability opportunities and challenges.

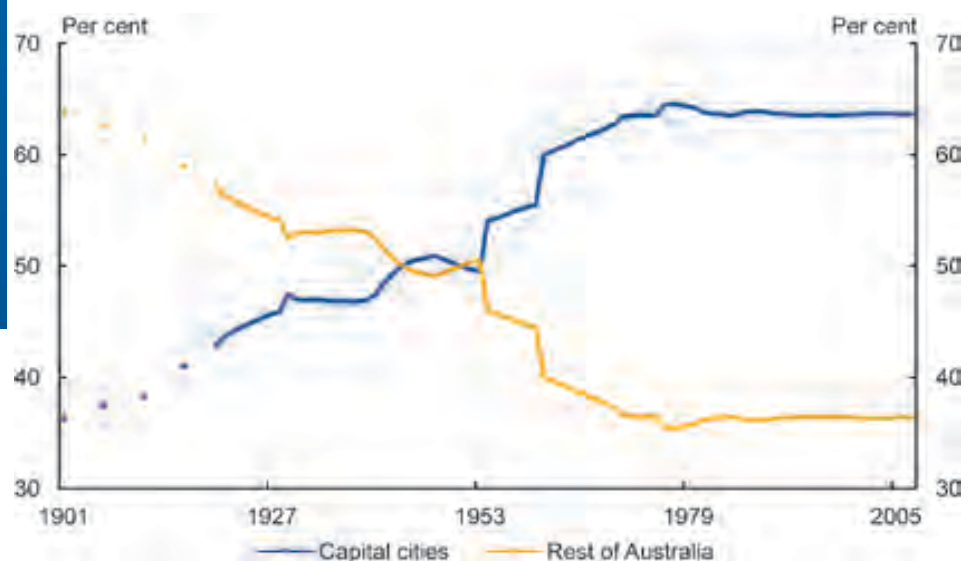
The Government is committed to harnessing these opportunities and managing these challenges.

Liveable regional communities

In addition to our \$4.3 billion investment in regional hospitals, healthcare, universities and roads, this Budget provides funding to help regions become more productive, sustainable and liveable, including:

- \$29.2 million over four years to improve strategic planning for regional and coastal high growth centres, reducing red tape for business and fast-tracking investment
- \$11.5 million over four years to support regional cities to promote the benefits and opportunities of living away from the capital cities
- \$10.1 million to develop a set of sustainability indicators to develop a stronger understanding and enable closer monitoring of sustainability issues.

Australian population distribution, 1901-2006



ABS Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008

A focus on local solutions



Regional development is best advanced through empowering local communities to derive local solutions — and through our industry, all levels of government and communities working together.

The Government is entrenching the concept of regionalism in national decision-making. It is working with regional communities to develop long-term, creative solutions to local issues, including through Australia's 55 Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees.

To strengthen RDAs is to strengthen government decision making. To ensure RDA committees have the resources they need to deliver for their communities, the Government is increasing funding by a third, an investment of \$20.3 million over four years, targeted to:

- knowledge, capacity building and community engagement through training and development opportunities for committee members
- facilitate ongoing engagement at state and national levels
- enable consultations on emerging regional priorities
- strengthen the governance arrangements and support for RDAs provided by the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government.



Our diverse regions are best served by local communities being empowered through strong and active engagement in policy making — and by all levels of government and industry working together.

RDA committees are about engaging local people to develop local solutions. Each RDA is comprised of local leaders with a broad range of skills and experience with a commitment to sustainably developing their region. See www.rda.gov.au for more information.



Improving regional service delivery

Regional Australians will be major beneficiaries of the Government's service delivery reforms. Better co-ordination of Government service delivery and taking advantage of technology will help regional Australians access the services they need, when they need them.

This Budget provides an investment of \$1.3 billion over four years to improve government service delivery. This will enhance and better target services for the Australian community. These reforms will particularly benefit people living in regional areas to access services more easily, including:

- Allowing people to carry out simple transactions and interactions with Centrelink and Medicare from home;
- Co-location of Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support Agency offices where possible to provide a one-stop shop for interaction with Government;
- Making individuals' interactions with government quicker and easier with a focus on the most disadvantaged Australians; and
- Expansion of the mobile office service to provide services to areas without a local Human Services presence.

These reforms build on the Government's commitment to place-based initiatives, including *Local Connections to Work* which links up services to help disadvantaged job seekers find work and *Place Based Services* which defines and addresses problems at the local level.



Better reporting on our investments in regional Australia

The Australian Government is committed to providing better information on regional expenditure across Australia.

The 2011-12 Budget represents the first instalment in providing enhanced information on Government spending and service delivery in regional Australia.

For the first time, the 2011-12 Budget includes information on Commonwealth spending in regional Australia by including spatial reporting on where funding is delivered.

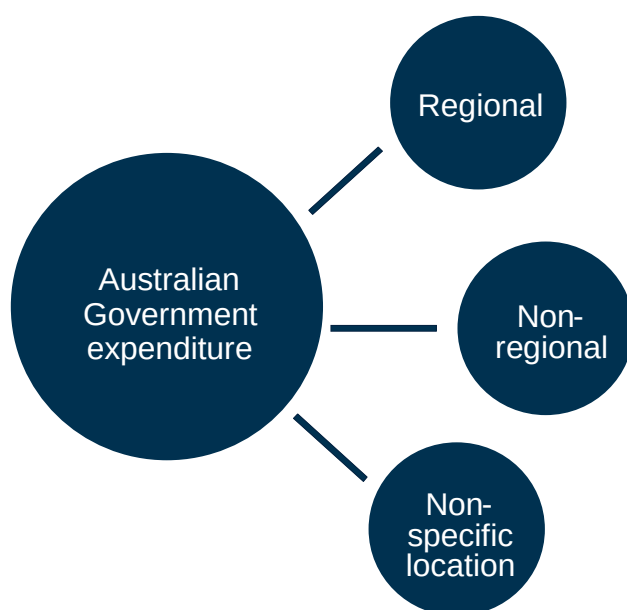
Over time, spatial reporting will provide greater visibility of government spending and service delivery in regional areas.

The Ministerial Statement, *Investing in Regional Australia*, provides an initial breakdown of the expenditure for material programs between regional and non-regional for government transfer payments and grants.



For the first time, the 2011-12 Budget provides greater visibility of government expenditure and service delivery across Australia.

It provides an initial breakdown of expenditure between regional and non regional areas for significant expenditure in regional Australia.





Easier access to regional information

The new MyRegion website will ultimately allow easier access to regional information on government expenditure, services and performance.

The website will allow users to interact with government by using social media technologies to make enquiries and provide feedback.

The Australian Government's MyRegion website will ultimately make it easier for people to see the results of improved budget reporting for their region.

The website will be rolled out in stages, with the first phase of the website to be launched in July 2011.

The website will provide information on government investment as well as data relating to regional Australia, including for transport, infrastructure, health, aged care, education, social services, communications, agriculture and the environment.

MyRegion will allow users to view information, download government data, and share views and interact.

