

# STRONGER REGIONS, STRONGER NATION

## **STATEMENT BY**

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# FOREWORD

Our Government's commitment to regional Australia is strong and longstanding.

Last year, we made one of the biggest investments ever in regional health, education, infrastructure and skills development.

With our economy in transition, we set out to position regions to embrace the huge economic transformation occurring globally, to seize the opportunities in it and not be threatened by it.

Much has been done to lay the foundations for success, but there is much more to be done.

We want our regions to be their best - and positioning them to seize future opportunities for growth and economic diversification remains one of our highest priorities.

## **REGIONALISM'S TIME HAS COME**

Our Government understands the fundamental importance of regionalism to contribute more effectively to the strength of the nation.

This is supported by the OECD which last year stated that 'strong regions are the building blocks for strong countries' and that 'the performance of a single region can have a larger overall impact than the performance of a country'.

Regionalism's time has come; stronger regions make for a strong nation and our Government is determined to ensure that all of the patches in our patchwork economy contribute to and share the benefits of growth.

We have the opportunity to strengthen regions and the nation, if we think smarter and build a new basis for long-term competitiveness.

## **POWER OF LOCALISM**

Localism can be the greatest generator of our nation's collective strength, diversity and prosperity.

But it requires leadership and vision driving the ideas.

It also requires genuine partnerships across all three levels of government, the private sector and the community.

To that end, we are actively engaging the regions to identify new opportunities to diversify and strengthen their economic base.

In last year's Federal Budget, we provided \$4.3 billion for regional health, hospitals, education, infrastructure and skills development and put in place the programs and mechanisms to enable local communities to identify local solutions to local issues.

We have strengthened the network of 55 RDA Committees, and the role of local governments in working with them.

We have established the Ministerial Advisory Council of Regional Australia (MACRA) – to work with RDAs on location-based solutions to regional priorities and on how best to grow regional economies.

We have also established the new Regional Australia Institute – because sound policy research can help turn challenges into opportunities.

And in terms of driving new partnerships, we are also working with State and local governments to develop new cooperative agreements and frameworks to advance economic diversity on a place by place basis – applying good on-the-ground knowledge to drive practical and effective local solutions.

In last year's Budget, we announced \$1.0 billion through our Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) to support investment-ready projects that will distribute the proceeds of the resource boom to the regions of Australia.

The \$150.0 million Round One of RDAF delivered funding to 35 projects across the country and the outcomes of the \$200.0 million Round Two will be announced shortly – and the passage of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT) legislation paves the way for three more rounds before mid-2013.

Under this new ground-up structure, local leadership have refined and strengthened their vision and priorities.

## **NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK**

Our Government has worked hard to help position regional communities to seize the opportunities ahead.

And one of the greatest enablers of the regions – for economic diversification, growth and service delivery – is the National Broadband Network.

More than 3.5 million homes, businesses, schools and hospitals will have construction of the National Broadband Network either commenced or completed within the next three years as part of the first three-year fibre rollout plan. This includes 238 regional centres.

The NBN will change the way all Australians live and work.



It will end the tyranny of distance between rural and regional Australia and will transform the way regional businesses operate, how health services are delivered and how regional students access educational and career opportunities.

When I go to the regions, all people want to know is when and how they can access it.

The NBN will ensure that every community gets fair and equal access to affordable high-speed broadband, including prices that are the same in the regions as they are in the city.

There is enormous potential in sectors such as e-commerce, e-health and e-education.

But the NBN is only the highway – the challenge for the regions is to join the dots and develop the applications that will become the vehicles to go on the highway.

## **A CLEANER ENERGY FUTURE**

Wherever I go in the regions, two common themes have emerged: a willingness to diversify their economic base and embrace a cleaner energy future.

This is reflected in the RDA's regional plans.

Communities, local government and businesses have determined the 'what'. Our programs help them join the dots and understand the 'how'.

That is what goes to the heart of our Clean Energy Future Plan.

A carbon market is one of the newest markets of all – a market that will reward good behaviour and reward creativity and innovation, playing to the strengths of our regions and create new job opportunities.

We want regions to realise their vision of a more sustainable future, but we don't expect them to do it alone.

That is why we are providing support for new manufacturing jobs, new service jobs and green jobs from green energy solutions.

There is also a Jobs and Skills package to develop green job skills to build our capability to develop better our competitiveness, a competitiveness that a carbon market will value and will reward.

The farm sector and local government can also be big winners.

Carbon farming will open up new income streams for farmers and other landholders through the sale of carbon credits on domestic and international markets.

And local councils or landfill operators can invest in equipment to capture methane and destroy it, or even more cleverly, turn it into electricity.

## **LOCKING IN REGIONAL GROWTH**

Our Government is determined to embed regionalism into the way Australia is governed.

We are looking beyond the electoral cycle to enable regions to unlock their potential – and lock in jobs and growth for the future.

We believe in the regions and their inherent capability.

We believe in the power of localism, the knowledge and skills of local communities to decide their priorities and fashion their responses to economic, social and environmental challenges.

The challenge for regions is to identify local projects that stack up and to work with all levels of government, the private sector and community organisations to make it happen.

That is what we are committed to doing.

We look forward to strengthening our partnerships across Australia to drive even stronger regional growth, and a more sustainable nation.

**Simon Crean**

**Minister for Regional Australia,  
Regional Development and  
Local Government**

# STRONGER REGIONS, STRONGER NATION

Strong regions are the building blocks of strong nations. The Australian Government's program of policy reform in rural and regional Australia has been about building stronger regions and is fundamental to the way this Government works. At its core is an understanding of the importance of the regions to Australia's economy, environment, wellbeing and identity.

The key 2012-13 Budget investments that will improve the lives, wellbeing and growth opportunities for regional Australia include:

- **\$3.7 billion** over five years for the national *Living Longer. Living Better* aged care plan – including improving aged care service delivery in regional, rural and remote areas, recognising special regional needs and including zero real interest loans and a viability supplement to assist providers in targeted areas;
- **\$1.5 billion** Remote Jobs and Communities Program to provide a more integrated and flexible approach to employment and participation services for people living in remote areas of Australia;
- **\$1.0 billion** over four years to start the first stage of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) – providing people with disabilities in up to four regions personalised care and support;
- **\$524.2 million** to strengthen Australia's biosecurity system – which underpins our unique biosecurity status, \$36.0 billion in agricultural exports and 300,000 jobs in rural and regional Australia;
- **\$225.6 million** to assist parents with the cost of child care, including those in rural and remote areas of Australia who are undertaking work, study or training, to better enable them to take advantage of employment opportunities;
- **\$77.7 million** over four years for a new grants program to help dentists relocate to regional, rural and remote areas;
- **\$34.9 million** to meet increased demand of GPs wanting to move to and remain in rural and remote communities;
- **\$8.2 million** for the removal of the MV Tycoon wreckage from the Port of Christmas Island and remediation work at the site;
- **\$7.1 million** to enable the not-for-profit organisation Community Based Employment Advice Services to better meet the demands of clients in regional areas with restricted access to employment services; and

- **\$2.9 million** to continue the reform process that the Australian and Norfolk Island Governments are undertaking to build a more sustainable future for the Island.

In addition the Gillard Government is continuing to invest significantly in regional Australia through a range of existing measures including the Regional Development Australia Fund, the Health and Hospitals Fund, the Education Investment Fund and the National Broadband Network.

The 2012-13 Budget reinforces the Government's long-term focus on generating social and economic development in regional Australia in recognition of the important role that the regions play in supporting Australia's national prosperity.

The regions of Australia are the patches in our patchwork economy, and are evolving in different ways at different speeds. It is for this reason that the Gillard Government is working with communities on place-based solutions to regional priorities, including on how best to grow regional economies.

It is a Budget that continues this Government's efforts to entrench regionalism in government policy-making to ensure people living in regional Australia are in the driver's seat – the regions know best what they can do to support their workforce, diversify their industries, strengthen their skills base and build prosperity in the face of change.

Ultimately, the dividend of the Government's efforts in regional Australia will not be limited to the communities that benefit directly through improved infrastructure and services, but will be felt by all Australians through better national economic performance and greater national wealth. This Government believes in harnessing the strength of Australia's regions to build a stronger, resilient nation.

The economy is undergoing structural change due to factors such as the continuing high dollar and the significant demand for our mineral resources from developing economies in Asia. This is creating uneven conditions in our economy and across regions, with boom times for some and significant challenges for others. The mining and mining-related parts of the economy are growing strongly, underpinned by strong demand for non-rural commodities. But some parts of the economy are under pressure from structural changes as well as ongoing global uncertainty.

The sovereign debt crisis in Europe continues to cloud the global outlook, undermining global growth and confidence and hitting government and industry revenues. This has had an impact on many of our key regional and trade-exposed industries as well as all spheres of government. Despite this, our commitment to deliver a surplus has remained resolute because it is the clearest possible sign of a strong economy. Returning the budget to surplus provides scope for monetary policy to respond to economic developments, as needed and consistent with the medium-term inflation target.

It is a testament to the importance this Government places on regional Australia that this Budget reaffirms our commitment to the regions in the midst of one of the toughest budgets in recent years.

## **STRONG REGIONAL ECONOMIES HELP BUILD A STRONG NATIONAL ECONOMY**

This Government's approach to regional development recognises that the performance of a single region can have an enormous impact on the performance of a nation. Our longstanding commitment to regional Australia is predicated, in part, on our understanding that the national economy relies on the strength of our regional economies. A diverse national economy is necessarily dependent on strong regional specialisation in trade-based industries, and it is by securing the future of the regions, that we secure the future of the nation.

The regions are crucial to shaping Australia's prosperity. One third of Australians live outside our major cities, yet it is the primary industries of regional Australia that produce almost three quarters of the country's export earnings—some \$181.5 billion per year. As Asia becomes the main driver of global economic growth in the decades ahead, growth in the exports and produce of our regions will be one of the major determinants of how much our nation benefits from this global shift.

### **The patchwork economy**

The regions of Australia are evolving in different ways at different speeds. An understanding of the patchwork economy as it relates to our regions is as critical to the national economy as it is to the Government's role in enabling each region to be its best. It is through this regional prism, underpinned by a strong evidence-base and advocated by some of the world's leading thinkers on regional and economic development, that the Gillard Government is playing its role in tackling the challenges facing our regions.

The Gillard Government no longer favours the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to regional development that prevailed for so long. Instead, we are tailoring national approaches to take into account the different opportunities and challenges faced by different regions. This is no simple task and requires an enduring commitment to consider how government policy levers are aligned and coordinated, and how they are designed to support the development of industries and regions from the bottom-up, not just from the top-down.

Making the patchwork stronger is, of course, made much simpler by acknowledging that each region knows best how to grow and prosper. They know their strengths and they have identified the hurdles. The Gillard Government will continue to help each region to capitalise on its opportunities, overcome its challenges and diversify its economic base in its own way. It is this commitment to localism that will see our regions, and our nation, flourish through self-determination.

## **Regions in transition**

Australia is an economy in transition. A strong Australian dollar, changing patterns of land and water use, extreme weather events, the countervailing forces of subdued growth prospects for developed economies and the rapidly increasing economic weight of the Asian region and shifting employment demands across sectors are all transforming Australia's economy. Importantly, each of these events is having differential impacts across regional Australia.

Meeting the challenges of a national economy in transition requires us to meet the challenges of our regions in transition. From regions establishing new industries to diversify their economic bases to regions undergoing rapid mineral-fuelled growth and development, the Gillard Government is supporting each of our regions as they adapt to new and challenging economic circumstances.

This Government understands that the best way to tackle the challenges associated with our economy in transition is through innovation at the regional level. The mechanics of innovation – and economic development more broadly – are regional in their nature. It is because of this that we have asked communities to set economic priorities at the regional level, through our Regional Development Australia network, to build long-term strategies for investment around unique local capabilities.

## **Determinants of regional economic development**

In developing its policies and programs for regional Australia, the Government has demonstrated how the principles that underlie growth and prosperity in our regions can benefit communities across Australia. This approach, based on a series of key determinants of regional economic development, seeks to maximise opportunities for regions to capitalise on their strengths.

The Government's program of place-based initiatives, for instance, demonstrates how competitiveness in our regions must be driven by skills, innovation, creativity and investment in modern infrastructure. The determinants of regional economic development are:

- education and skills;
- sustainable population growth;
- access to international, national and regional markets; and
- capitalising on comparative advantage and firm competitiveness.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA IN THE ASIAN CENTURY**

The global economy is changing dramatically. In this interconnected global environment, Australia faces a range of challenges from those parts of the globe

experiencing a prolonged period of sluggish economic growth and financial instability. It also faces immense opportunities from emerging economies closer to home. In Asia the scale and pace of economic transformation is unprecedented – its demand for goods and services has grown rapidly and its increasing economic weight is shaping its influence at the global level.

Australia's integration into Asia has contributed much to our national prosperity. Around three quarters of Australia's merchandise exports go to Asian nations such as China, Japan, South Korea, India and our ASEAN neighbours. Furthermore, around half of Australia's imports are sourced from Asia. Foreign Direct Investment from our Asian neighbours is also increasing in importance.

The economic significance of Australia's regions will become more important as Australia adjusts to the changing world economy and positions itself to capitalise on the Asian Century. We are seeing increased Asian demand for our natural resources and agriculture sectors, and we are likely to see increased opportunities for the service sectors of the economy including tourism and education, as well as specific areas such as water management and planning. Many of these industries are centred in regional Australia.

## **ENGAGING WITH REGIONAL COMMUNITIES**

Localism and regionalism have driven this Government's approach to regional development and formed the cornerstone upon which we have sought to engage with the regions. It is no coincidence, then, that we have placed significant value on our engagement with local communities. Our goal is to ensure regionalism becomes a fundamental part of Australia's governance.

### **Regional Development Australia and Local Government**

This Government has done more to empower, and engage directly with, regional Australians than any other. We have established and continue to strengthen Regional Development Australia (RDA), a national network of 55 committees made up of local leaders who work with businesses, community groups and all levels of government to support the development of their regions. The dynamic RDA network is a demonstration of the fundamental shift this Government has made in its approach to regional development – that is, by empowering local people to develop local solutions to local issues.

This Government has also forged a strong and lasting relationship with Australia's 565 local governments, which together represent a comprehensive network of local knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm. Working in partnerships, with RDAs, local governments and local business and community groups helps us to maximise the benefits of our investments in regional Australia.

## **Place-based approaches**

The Gillard Government has been working with all levels of government and individual communities to develop place-based solutions that meet the needs of regions in transition and support Australia's national priorities for better economic, social and environmental results. The basis for place-based solutions is simple: by working with local and State governments, communities themselves and relevant local stakeholders, the Government can help develop and deliver tailored policy responses that address the unique challenges facing individual regions. Over the past year, the Government has achieved significant outcomes for regions that have been the focus of these place-based, strategic interventions.

In Tasmania, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Commonwealth and Tasmanian Government - linked to the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement - to help improve economic and community outcomes by developing tailored Regional Economic Development Plans that identify specific place-based investment opportunities. A number of projects have recently been announced, including investment in dairy, aquaculture and a state-wide data sensor network that has the potential to transform agricultural production across Australia. The projects leverage private sector investment and will create thousands of new jobs for Tasmanian communities.

Work is underway to investigate economic diversification opportunities that will assist communities in the Murray Darling Basin prepare and adapt to a water constrained future. Through our Regional Development Australia committees, we have been working directly with communities to identify opportunities for growth and diversification with the support of regional experts. The focus of this work is to identify practical solutions which build on the strengths of regions, such as existing industries, local skills and the natural resource base, to support communities' economic resilience.

The Latrobe Valley is a major producer of electricity for Australia, fuelled by brown coal, which also makes it one of the country's largest carbon emitting areas. The Commonwealth's cooperative agreement with the Victorian Government takes a collaborative approach for the region that best responds to the impacts of a transition to a low carbon economy in the medium to longer-term, including through developing economic opportunities for the region.

In the Illawarra, a taskforce led by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, and comprising membership from the New South Wales Government and business, is delivering a \$30.0 million structural adjustment package to support workers and communities affected by industry changes in the region. The Illawarra Region Investment and Innovation Fund will help stimulate investment and diversify the economic and employment base of the region. Thirteen projects were announced under the first round of funding earlier this year, with a second round currently open to applications.



The Commonwealth has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Queensland Government to deliver place-based approaches to regional development in that State. The agreement will help regions to realise their economic potential by responding to their distinct challenges, such as disaster relief and the impact of a high Australian dollar, and opportunities, including the resources industry and tourism. Northern Queensland has been identified as the first priority region under this agreement.

Across Northern Australia more generally, the Commonwealth has established a Northern Australia Ministerial Forum, which brings together ministers from relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions to identify challenges and opportunities for one of Australia's most vast and untapped regions. The Forum is working on a collaborative way forward on key issues such as the opportunities for the beef industry, infrastructure priorities to support development, the implementation of carbon farming initiatives and ways to leverage efforts between tiers of government and the private sector. Building on this work, the Government has invested in a collaborative initiative with the Queensland Government to develop a North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy. The Strategy will identify and demonstrate the viability of new irrigated agriculture opportunities for northern Australia and assess potential environmental, economic and cultural impacts to ensure that future developments are genuinely sustainable.

## **AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA**

### **Projects coming online**

Over the last few years, the Government's commitment to regional Australia has been evident in the sheer size of the investments it has made in our regions, culminating in the \$4.3 billion of regional initiatives announced in last year's Budget. Many of these investments—including in regional digital productivity through the National Broadband Network, in regional health through the Health and Hospitals Fund, in regional education through the Education Investment Fund and in community infrastructure through the Regional Development Australia Fund—are coming online in this and coming years. Over the lives of these initiatives alone, the Government is investing over \$35.0 billion in the productivity, liveability and sustainability of communities in regional Australia.

Building the Education Revolution (BER) is a \$16.2 billion investment that provides education facilities, through new infrastructure and refurbishments, to all eligible Australian schools. The BER is the biggest capital investment in the education sector in the history of this country and the single largest element of the Government's \$42.0 billion Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan. It invested in the future of this country by modernising schools in every community across Australia, including in regional Australia, for the use of generations to come.

The Government's \$27.5 billion equity commitment for the construction of the National Broadband Network (NBN) is helping to connect regional communities to the internet, reducing the disadvantages faced by regions as a result of the significant distances and presenting opportunities for new ways of living and working. The NBN will deliver high-speed broadband access to all Australian homes, schools and businesses by 2020. It is a key nation building project that will help drive Australia's productivity and transform service delivery in key areas such as business, commerce, health and education. It will give regional communities the potential to benefit from the digital age, with fair and equal access to affordable, high speed broadband.

In October 2011 NBN Co Limited announced the twelve month rollout which included 32 regional areas. Building on this, in March this year NBN Co Limited released its three year fibre rollout plan with more than 3.5 million homes, schools, hospitals and businesses to have construction of the NBN either commenced or completed within the next three years - including 238 regional centres. The three year fibre plan massively increases the rollout to regions and will prioritise regional communities with limited or no current access to broadband, bringing unprecedented and transformative opportunities to the regions. Importantly, the Fixed Wireless and Long Term Satellite services will deliver high speed NBN services to homes and businesses outside the fibre footprint by the end of 2015, delivering the benefits to our remotest Australians.

The \$5.0 billion Health and Hospitals Fund (HHF) supports the building of new infrastructure for clinical care, training and research in the health sector, and for related needs such as patient and carer accommodation. Around \$1.8 billion of the HHF has been specifically allocated to meeting the needs of regional Australia. This funding will help to improve the quality of regional hospitals and clinical training, and provide better access to cancer treatment, renal dialysis and mental health services.

Funding has been allocated for 76 projects from the HHF Regional Priority Round 4 valued at \$475.0 million. The primary focus of the HHF Regional Priority Round is to provide capital funding to projects in regional communities to support upgrades to regional health infrastructure, expansions to regional hospitals and to help support the clinical training capacity of regional hospitals.

The Government's Education Investment Fund (EIF) is supporting world-leading, strategically-focused infrastructure investments that will transform Australian tertiary education and research. Over the four competitive rounds of the EIF that have been held to date, \$274.5 million (or 21 per cent) of allocated funds went to regional institutions or campuses, for teaching and learning infrastructure and \$180.9 million for research infrastructure projects.

Evidence suggests that individuals trained in a region tend to stay in that particular region, which has significant flow on effects for regional economies. The Gillard Government recognises this fact and the important role that regional tertiary institutions play for students and for their local communities. The Prime Minister announced an EIF Regional Priorities Round in October 2011 that will provide

\$500.0 million to higher education institutions and vocational education training providers across regional Australia. This funding will boost participation in tertiary education and invigorate the growth of research capabilities in the regions whilst positioning them to meet domestic skills needs now, and into the future.

The Government has established a \$6.0 billion Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF), which will be largely funded from the proceeds of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT), to address critical infrastructure needs in areas supporting the mining industry. The RIF allows the Government to invest the proceeds of a resurgent resource boom to address urgent infrastructure needs, while supporting the mining industry, boosting export capacity and developing and growing regional economies.

The Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) is a national program to support Australia's regions and enhance their wellbeing and economic development. The program is administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport and is designed to ensure that new investments build on strengths and reflect the characteristics, opportunities and challenges of our diverse regions. Under Round One of the RDAF, 35 projects at a cost of \$150.0 million were funded across Australia to meet the identified needs of local communities. Applications for the \$200.0 million RDAF Round Two are currently being assessed. The recent passage of the MRRT legislation now allows the remaining \$573.0 million to flow towards the delivery of almost \$1.0 billion through the RDAF.

The Commonwealth's plan for a Clean Energy Future is comprehensive and provides significant support for regions to take advantage of opportunities that arise as the Australian economy transforms to a low carbon future. Regional Australia will be able to capitalise on the development of Australia's world-class energy reserves and share in \$10.0 billion of new investment through the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. Farmers and land managers will be able to gain rewards through various initiatives.

## **An ongoing commitment to regional Australia**

The 2012-13 Budget continues the Gillard Government's rich tradition in the regions by reaffirming its ongoing commitment to regional Australia, even through hard times. This Government will build on last year's \$4.3 billion of regional initiatives by continuing to invest in the productivity, liveability and sustainability of our regions.

The enduring commitment that this Government has made to regional Australia is evident in so many of the policy initiatives it has undertaken and major investments it has made. The approach has been one of empowerment, increased engagement with regional communities, improved coordination across Government and unprecedented investment in regional infrastructure and services. The creation of a dedicated regional development portfolio, for instance, has been a critical step in coordinating the delivery of the Government's policies and programs to drive economic diversification and growth and better service delivery in our regions.

The Gillard Government established the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Regional Australia, to work with RDAs on location-based solutions to regional priorities and on how best to grow regional economies. Under this new ground-up structure, local leadership have refined and strengthened their vision and priorities. The Government has also established the new Regional Australia Institute. The Institute is about connecting the work already done or underway and identifying the gaps. The Institute has the potential, for example, to make a contribution to the debate on the competing land issues around coal seam gas. It will also assist in our ability to realise the opportunities available through the carbon farming initiative.

The Government has already provided significant investment in skills in regional Australia including through investments in - the Building Australia's Future Workforce Package which supports regional employers, workers, trainees and job seekers; the establishment of the National Workforce Development Fund to develop a new partnership with industry; and the Regional Skilled Migration Scheme and the Regional and Enterprise Migration Agreements, so regions and major resource projects can tailor migration solutions to meet their skills needs.

This year's budget provides funding for the following key new initiatives in regional Australia:

### **Aged Care Reform**

The \$3.7 billion *Living Longer Living Better* national aged care plan will improve aged care service delivery in regional, rural and remote areas. The plan recognises special regional needs and includes zero real interest loans and a viability supplement to assist providers in targeted areas. This major reform program will assist in the creation of a flexible and seamless system that provides older Australians with more choice, control and easier access to a full range of services. It also positions us to meet the social and economic challenges of the nation's ageing population.

### **Remote Jobs and Communities Program**

The \$1.5 billion Remote Jobs and Communities Program will provide a more integrated and flexible approach to employment and participation services for people living in remote areas of Australia. Under the new arrangements, each of 65 remote servicing regions will be serviced by a single provider, and each provider will have a permanent presence in their region. Providers will work in close partnership with communities and they will jointly develop Community Action Plans that will direct effort to meet the needs of individual job seekers and communities.

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme**

The Gillard Government will provide \$1.0 billion over four years to start the first stage of the NDIS - providing people with disability in up to four regions personalised care and support. Under the NDIS, people with significant and permanent disability will have access to an assessment process that develops an individual support plan with funding allocated for reasonable and necessary supports. Local area coordinators will

work with clients, providing information needed to make informed decisions navigating the system and assisting in planning.

### **Biosecurity and Quarantine Reforms**

The Government has committed \$524.2 million to strengthen Australia's biosecurity system, protecting \$36.0 billion in agriculture, fisheries and forestry exports and 300,000 jobs in rural and regional Australia. This major investment will deliver a state-of-the-art quarantine facility, strengthen Australia's defences against pests and diseases and prioritise the reform of century-old legislation.

### **Jobs, Education & Training Child Care Fee Assistance program – Improving Education and Employment Outcomes**

The Government will provide an additional \$225.6 million over four years to assist more parents with the cost of child care in rural and remote areas of Australia who are undertaking work, study or training, to better enable them to take advantage of employment opportunities. This package will assist parents to enhance their skills and enable them to enter or re-enter the workforce, by providing significant support with the cost of child care so that it does not pose a barrier to participation.

### **Dental Relocation and Infrastructure Support Scheme**

The Government has committed \$77.7 million over four years for a new grants program to help dentists relocate to regional, rural and remote areas. This initiative aims to encourage and support dentists to practise in regional, rural and remote communities and to increase workforce and service delivery capacity in these communities.

### **General Practice Rural Incentives Program**

The Government will provide funding of \$34.9 million to meet increased demand from GPs wanting to move to and remain in rural and remote communities. This funding will ensure this highly successful program, which has already exceeded expectations, continues to encourage medical practitioners to practice in rural and remote communities and to promote careers in rural medicine.

### **Removal of the MV Tycoon Wreckage from the Port of Christmas Island**

The Government is providing \$8.2 million for the removal of the MV Tycoon wreckage from the Port of Christmas Island and remediation work at the site. The vessel broke free of its moorings and crashed into cliffs on 8 January 2012, and is now a wreck. In the absence of any practical action to commence a salvage or wreck removal operation by its owner, the Australian Government has stepped in to minimise disruption to port operations and restore vital maritime infrastructure for the Christmas Island community.

### **Community Based Employment Advice Services**

This \$7.1 million initiative will enable not-for-profit Community Based Employment Advice Services to better meet the demands of clients in regional areas with restricted access to employment services. This increased funding will support these important organisations to provide advice, assistance and information to Australians who experience difficulties in asserting and exercising their workplace rights.

### **Norfolk Island Reform Package**

The Government will provide \$2.9 million to continue the reform process that the Australian and Norfolk Island Governments are undertaking to build a more sustainable future for the Island. This investment delivers on the Government's commitment to ensuring the standards of living of residents of Norfolk Island are comparable with mainland Australia, without sacrificing the benefits to the community of self-government.

### **Student Income Support**

To ensure that every region has people capable of filling the employment needs of a productive economy, the Gillard Government is committed to improving opportunities for regional students to go to university. The Government's response to the Review of Student Income Support Reforms will benefit almost 21,000 students across the country and give almost 5,500 additional students in regional areas access to independent Youth Allowance. Around 15,000 students across the country will also receive more support from relocation scholarships in recognition that students from regional areas experience higher costs to relocate for study.

## **KEY AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA BY PORTFOLIO**

# **AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY**

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio provides significant benefit to regional Australia. The majority of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food industries are located throughout regional Australia, and their employees and related businesses underpin many local economies. These industries also contribute strongly to the Australian way of life, the food Australians eat, the sustainability of our environment and the state of the economy. In 2012–13 the portfolio will continue important work to improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of these critical industries and support their ability to move goods in and out of the country while managing the risks to the environment and animal, plant and human health.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will continue to support regional Australia by delivering services directly to those who need it and by maintaining a strong presence in regional Australia through the Department's regional activities. More than 15 per cent of the Department's employees are based in regional Australia. These officers undertake a range of functions including quarantine services and plant and animal pest and disease monitoring and surveillance. The Department will also continue to maintain a biosecurity service delivery network with over 2,500 quarantine approved premises located throughout Australia. In 2012–13 the Department will also continue to regulate more than 300 registered meat export establishments, many of which are in regional areas. The Department is responsible for three Australian Plague Locust Commission field offices which are located in Longreach, Narromine and Broken Hill with nine staff who undertake ongoing locust surveillance, monitoring and the implementation of the locust control program in regional Australia.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio agencies will also continue to support regional Australia. One of these agencies, the Cotton Research and Development Corporation is located in regional Australia and all of the staff of this agency are located in Narrabri - the centre of one of Australia's major cotton growing regions. Other portfolio agencies, such as the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Association, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and the Grains Research and Development Corporation have staff based in regional Australia.

## **SPATIAL REPORTING**

Table 1 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific locations for the budget year and forward estimates for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio.



**Table 1: 2012-13 Budget and forward years 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
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program 1.1: Tackling Climate Change	Regional	45	108	87	78
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.2: Sustainable Management Natural Resources	Regional	61	129	130	151
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.3: Forestry Industry	Regional	14	14	14	15
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.4: Fishing Industry	Regional	28	25	26	28
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.5: Horticulture Industry	Regional	89	90	90	91
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.6: Wool Industry	Regional	62	58	58	58
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.7: Grains Industry	Regional	158	152	153	156
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.8: Dairy Industry	Regional	54	55	56	58
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.9: Meat and Livestock Industry	Regional	183	187	192	194
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.10: Agricultural Resources	Regional	144	141	138	141
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.11: Drought programs	Regional	5	5	5	6
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.12: Rural Programs	Regional	19	17	16	16
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.13: International Market Access	Regional	35	35	36	40
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 2.1: Quarantine and Export Services	Regional	509	510	509	509
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 2.2: Plant and Animal Health	Regional	48	49	44	44
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Regional	1,454	1,575	1,552	1,586
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

**Table 1: 2012-13 Budget and forward years 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
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Cotton Research and Development Corporation	Regional	20	19	16	15
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	Regional	26	26	27	27
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation	Regional	22	23	23	23
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Grains Research and Development Corporation	Regional	181	182	185	185
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation	Regional	23	23	22	22
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sugar Research and Development Corporation	Regional	11	10	9	9
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Wine Australian Corporation	Regional	12	11	11	11
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	Regional	42	44	44	45
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	Regional	33	33	33	34
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Wheat Exports Australia	Regional	2	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
	Regional	1,827	1,946	1,922	1,956
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
Portfolio Grand Total	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
- nil					

The portfolio has a particular focus on regional Australia, aiming to enhance the sustainability, profitability and competitiveness of Australia's agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food 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 also benefits Australia's regional priorities.

The systems currently in place are not able to provide further delineation of regional expenditure.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

### **A sustainable biosecurity system for Australia**

Australia's biosecurity system lies at the heart of our position as a trading nation. It directly underpins 300,000 jobs and \$36.0 billion per annum worth of agriculture, fisheries and forestry exports; primarily from regional Australia. The Government is committed to building a sustainable biosecurity system that can meet the challenges of the future. Since the 2009-10 Budget, the Australian Government has committed more than \$1.6 billion to protect Australia's agricultural sector and reputation as a clean and wholesome supplier of food. Rural and regional Australia is a key beneficiary of a strong biosecurity system.

The 2012-13 Budget provides a \$524.2 million investment in Australia's biosecurity system to deliver a state-of-the-art quarantine facility and strengthen Australia's defences against pests and diseases. The Gillard Government is also prioritising the reform of century-old legislation.

On top of the wider biosecurity investment, a separate \$95.9 million over seven years allocated from the Caring for our Country program will fund existing eradication programs for nationally significant pests and diseases.

### **A new post-entry quarantine facility**

Australia as a trading nation, needs access to genetic material to underpin productivity growth and the development of our agricultural industries. Access to government operated post-entry quarantine facilities to manage the import of high risk animal and plant species is a key component of Australia's biosecurity system. In 2011-12, the Government provided funding to purchase land and undertake initial scoping and design work required to address future post-entry quarantine arrangements. The 2012-13 Budget commits \$379.9 million over seven years (\$220.5 million over four years) for the construction of a new government owned and operated post entry quarantine station and maintenance of current facilities until their leases expire. It is expected that a new facility will commence operations in a staged manner from 2015.

The new facility will ensure an ongoing sustainable capacity to facilitate the safe importation of high biosecurity risk animal and plant species – imports that are necessary if Australian agriculture is to build and maintain its competitiveness and

productivity through access to new genetic material. A secure, efficient and cost effective government-owned facility discourages smuggling, reducing the biosecurity risk.

### **Maintaining core biosecurity operations – a risk-based approach**

Terminating elements of core frontline operations and external review and verification processes will be maintained with funding of \$122.5 million (over \$30.0 million per annum) provided on an ongoing basis for core frontline biosecurity operations and external review and verification processes. This funding is critical to support core biosecurity functions, including screening of passengers and international mail, maintaining import risk assessment capacity, providing ongoing verification of the biosecurity system and delivering key elements of the national biosecurity management system. The ongoing funding will maintain over 200 full-time equivalent positions, many of which are located in regional areas delivering frontline border risk management outcomes.

Support for our ongoing business, together with the progress already made towards a risk based approach to biosecurity, enhanced data collection and new legislation will allow us to align resources to areas of highest risk. This includes refocusing border inspection effort to keeping risks offshore through enhanced compliance and verification activities. The reforms will increasingly deliver productivity improvements to importers, and exporters, and better biosecurity outcomes for the Australian community and the environment.

### **Support outdated information and communication systems**

The 2012–13 Budget provides \$19.8 million over three years to support current biosecurity ICT infrastructure and systems. This funding will sustain critical infrastructure and data storage and develops initial capacity to improve the management of information assets across the biosecurity environment to ensure client needs can continue to be met.

### **New Biosecurity legislation**

The Government is committed to ongoing reform of our national biosecurity system. A cornerstone of these reforms will be putting in place a new Biosecurity Act which will replace legislation that was first written in 1908. It will deliver broader, yet simpler provisions that provide flexible powers to efficiently and responsively manage Australia's biosecurity risks.

The new legislation will focus on responsive regulation, enabling a system that intervenes where there is a biosecurity risk that needs to be managed, and will promote effective cooperation between governments, trading partners, industry participants and the community. Exposure draft Bills and a consultation draft of the regulation impact statement are expected to be released in the first half of 2012, with the Bills anticipated to be introduced and debated in Parliament in the second half of 2012.

## **Pest and disease eradication programs**

Recognising that pests and diseases can reach our shores and impact unduly on regional Australia, the Commonwealth, in partnership with the States, Territories and industry, contributes to the effective control of outbreaks if and when they occur. The 2012–13 Budget allocates an additional \$95.9 million over seven years from the Caring for our Country program, for eradication of nationally significant agricultural, environmental, animal and plant pests and diseases. Existing eradication programs include: Red Imported Fire Ants; four tropical weeds; Electric Ants; Chestnut Blight; Branched Broomrape; Low Pathogenic Influenza; Siam Weed; and Cocoa Pod Borer. This investment includes ongoing funding for these types of responses and supports the collaborative approach by governments and industry to ensure pest and disease outbreaks are brought under control as quickly as possible.

During 2012–13 reform work will continue to develop and deliver business improvements to facilitate trade and strengthen a truly national biosecurity system, benefiting regional Australia by reducing the risk of pest or disease incursions and improving market access for agriculture export industries.

## **Commitment to another five years of Caring for our Country**

In the 2012-13 Budget, the Government agreed to the design elements for the ongoing Caring for our Country program. From July 2013 Caring for our Country will be delivered through two streams – ‘national sustainable environment’ and ‘national sustainable agriculture’. The agriculture stream will be overseen by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, enabling a greater program focus on the role farmers play in keeping our land productive and the projects needed to support their efforts. This will provide a significant benefit to our environment, communities, and farmers in regional Australia.

Funding of over \$500.0 million over five years, plus \$200.0 million already provided for Landcare from 2013, has been provided to the ‘national sustainable agriculture’ stream for a mix of grants and partnerships with regional and industry groups, including a focus on:

- encouraging more innovative and sustainable resource management practices in agriculture and fisheries;
- reducing the impact of agriculture and fisheries on the resource base;
- improving our national coordination of the management, information provision and surveillance of established and sleeper weeds and pest animals of agricultural significance;
- eradication of new weed, pest and disease incursions; and
- building community capacity and regional leadership.

## **Supporting farmers into the future**

The Australian Government is allocating \$22.8 million to continue household support for farm families in hardship under the Transitional Farm Family Payment, for a further two years to 30 June 2014.

The Government recognises that some farmers may experience significant financial hardship at any time for a range of reasons. Through this program, farm families experiencing hardship will be able to apply for up to 12 months of household income support, paid at the same rate as the Newstart Allowance.

The household income support will be combined with individualised case management assistance and activities for helping families improve their long term financial security. The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) will continue its central role in this process, helping farmers to consider their business and financial options to address climate variability and other pressures.

Eligible farmers Australia wide will be able to access the Transitional Farm Family Payment. Extension of the program will be transitional while proposals for future drought programs are finalised. The Government is looking at ways to better help farmers manage risks and prepare for future challenges through engagement with State and Territory governments and consultation with industry stakeholders.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Reform of Australia's biosecurity system**

The Australian Government recognises that an efficient and effective biosecurity system is critical to regional Australia and its economy. This budget reaffirms the Government's commitment to regional Australia by building a sustainable approach to minimise the threat of introduction of exotic pests and diseases that can adversely impact on our industries, people and natural environment and to enhance market access for our exports.

Australia's agricultural sector remains free from the most destructive pests and diseases - an advantage that confers a comparative advantage to Australia's agricultural exports. As a nation that exports approximately two thirds of its agricultural, fisheries and forestry produce (valued at \$36.0 billion in 2010-11), the Australian economy and rural communities, including over 300,000 jobs, are dependent on the flow of trade.

Effective management of the biosecurity system requires a regionally focused work force. In 2010-11 sixty per cent of the Department's Australia-based officers worked outside Canberra, with the vast majority of these undertaking biosecurity related activities and maintaining strong linkages with on the ground officers in regional areas in the States and Territories. The Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy is a strong advocate for Indigenous employment and currently employs a number of Indigenous

officers and engages closely with Indigenous communities to survey our northern coastline and neighbouring countries for early signs of new pests or diseases.

The announcements in the 2012–13 Budget build on the strong progress in reforming Australia's biosecurity system since 2008. This is highlighted in the report *Reform of Australia's biosecurity system – An update since the publication of One Biosecurity: A Working Partnership*, released by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig on 7 March 2012. The reform agenda focuses on building a sustainable system that manages risk across the continuum to better support consistent service delivery onshore, at the border and offshore; providing effective biosecurity risk management underpinned by sound evidence and policy; improving the efficiency and responsiveness of operations through modern legislation and technology systems; and strengthening stakeholder relationships.

During 2011–12, achievements were made across all areas of the reform agenda. Improved risk-based profiling and inspection processes at airports, mail centres and seaports allowed more targeted inspections to focus on the highest risks and offshore risk mitigation measures were enhanced through the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme and capacity building activities. The Department partnered strategically with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service through a new memorandum of understanding to develop sector specific biosecurity training packages and recognise importers' food safety management systems through compliance agreements. New legislation to replace the *Quarantine Act 1908* and subordinate legislation is close to being finalised and will be implemented with funding provided in the 2012–13 Budget.

In January 2012, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity came into effect to strengthen the collaborative approach between the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments in addressing Australia's biosecurity issues. The National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement is the first deliverable of the agreement and will further strengthen Australia's biosecurity system by establishing arrangements for responses to nationally significant biosecurity incidents where there are predominantly public benefits.

The Government, in partnership with industry, is also delivering a modern export certification system to maintain Australia's reputation as a producer of high quality, safe food products. The Government's investment of \$127.4 million (in 2009–10) has already delivered reduced regulatory costs to the meat industry of \$10.0 million per annum in the 2010–11 financial year. New arrangements, once fully implemented, are expected to reduce the cost of Government service delivery by up to \$30.0 million per annum.

### **Strengthening Australia's ability to combat foot-and-mouth disease**

Under the Australian Government's National Foot and Mouth Disease Action Plan (FMD Action Plan), regional Australia will benefit from a suite of projects that

strengthen Australia's preparedness and capacity to prevent or respond to an emergency animal disease outbreak, such as foot and mouth disease (FMD).

Australia has a strong record for biosecurity control with respect to FMD, however we all need to remain vigilant to ensure Australia is adequately prepared to effectively manage the threat of such high impact diseases. The consequences of an outbreak of a high impact emergency animal disease such as FMD in Australia would be significant – the costs of a FMD outbreak in Australia could reach \$16.0 billion.

The FMD Action Plan provides the framework for collaborative and coordinated action across State and Territory governments and industry. It will strengthen regional community resilience, increase preparedness, prevention and anticipation capacity and improve emergency response capacity against the threat of FMD. Activities under the FMD Action Plan facilitates a more rigorous application of the risk based approach, which will see program activities focus on the regional communities at greatest risk, and strategies designed for the unique risk profile of each regional area.

### **Caring for our Country and Landcare**

Through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative (2008 to 2013) significant support is provided to Landcare, in particular to regional Australia. Caring for our Country seeks to achieve an environment that is healthier, better protected, well managed, productive and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

Through the Landcare component of Caring for our Country \$189.0 million over five years from 2008 (\$37.2 million in 2012–13) is supporting national, regional and local Landcare activities. This includes \$33.6 million over four years (\$8.4 million in 2012–13) to employ a Regional Landcare Facilitator in each of the 56 natural resource management (NRM) regions across Australia. Facilitators support community Landcare groups and assist production groups and farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices.

Community Action Grants are small grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to target established local community based organisations that are successfully delivering projects to support sustainable farming and to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Landcare and sustainable agriculture projects in regional Australia are also supported by Caring for our Country through baseline funding provided to the 56 NRM regions across Australia in addition to the annual open call grants round (through the Caring for our Country Business Plan 2012–13).

### **Carbon Farming Future: Filling the Research Gap**

The Carbon Farming Future: Filling the Research Gap Program will invest \$201.0 million over the next six years for research into emerging abatement



technologies, strategies and innovative management practices that support farmers and other landholders to participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) and improve sustainable agricultural practices. This initiative is also part of the Clean Energy Future – Creating Opportunities on the Land program and will benefit regional Australia.

Research will include innovative cropping and grazing practices or new crop species to build soil carbon, new fertiliser technologies and management strategies to reduce soil nitrous oxide emissions, cattle genetics and feed alternatives to reduce livestock methane emissions and waste management strategies.

Surveys of common practice in different agricultural industries across different regions will be undertaken to inform the ‘common practice additionality’ test under the CFI and target research where it will be most effective.

The program will engage internationally through the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases to ensure Australia is at the cutting edge of on farm innovation, productivity and sustainability outcomes in order to address the global challenge of food security.

The program will increase the ability of farming businesses across regional Australia to generate multiple income streams through the CFI. It will help farmers to increase the diversity of their assets and activities, and in doing so will provide the flexibility to substitute between them in response to climate change. This will ensure a positive impact on families living in regional communities by increasing farm resilience in the long term.

### **Action on the Ground**

Action on the Ground will invest up to \$99.3 million (\$89.3 million from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2017) in competitive grant funding for on farm projects over six years to June 2017. Up to \$7.0 million will be spent for on-farm projects in 2012–13. This is the second initiative administered by the Department under the Clean Energy Future – Creating Opportunities on the Land program. It is designed to assist landholders and farmers commence on farm trial and demonstration of practices and abatement technologies to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and / or increase carbon sequestered in soil.

Action on the Ground projects will create new opportunities for landholders and farmers to participate in the CFI by trialling and demonstrating outcomes from research programs, including the Climate Change Research Program and the Filling the Research Gap program. Projects under Action on the Ground will ensure that research results can be practically applied on the ground in real farming situations under a range of geographic and climatic conditions.

The outcomes of Action on the Ground will assist landholders and farmers reduce on-farm emissions and maintain productivity by trialling and promoting the adoption of improved farm management practices and abatement technologies. The outcomes from Action on the Ground will help underpin the development of new land sector CFI abatement methodologies that landholders across peri-urban and regional Australia may be able to use to increase on-farm incomes.

### **Extension and Outreach Program**

The Extension and Outreach initiative is the third component of the Clean Energy Future – Creating Opportunities on the Land program. The Government has allocated \$64.0 million, from 2011–12 to 2016–17, to provide farmers, forest growers and other land managers with technical information and support about carbon farming and the CFI through trusted and credible sources.

The program complements the Carbon Farming Initiative Communications Program as the next step for land managers in rural, regional and remote communities to access more technical information to help them understand how to integrate CFI activities into their business planning.

Over the next year, the Government will provide around \$7.6 million to raise awareness and understanding about ways land managers can reduce their on farm greenhouse gas emissions and how to participate in the CFI, communicate climate change research outcomes and establish a support base for land managers thinking about participating in the CFI. This funding will be used to provide extension officers - building on existing extension networks and providing additional officers where required - to assist people in rural, regional and remote Australia to realise the benefits of creating land based carbon credits. Funding will also continue the development of communication material and decision support tools to enable people to take action on the land.

### **Carbon Farming Initiative Communications Program**

In 2010, the Australian Government allocated \$4.0 million over three years to 30 June 2014 to provide information and tools to improve:

- farmers', forest growers' and other land managers' understanding of the CFI;
- the opportunities arising from reducing on farm greenhouse gas emissions or sequestering carbon and creating land-based carbon credits; and
- participation from farmers, forest growers and other land managers in the CFI.

This program is enabling people in rural, regional and remote Australia to make informed decisions about the CFI by providing credible, clear and consistent information.

To connect with land managers across regional, rural and remote areas of Australia, the Government is providing \$1.3 million in grant funding in 2012–13 to the Regional Landcare Facilitators, across the 56 NRM regions, to deliver CFI communication activities. This funding will support training workshops, field days, forums, road shows and other information sessions across Australia. The Regional Landcare Facilitators are also engaging with local experts and organisations within their region – such as farming/industry groups and Landcare groups – to deliver information on the CFI and carbon farming that is industry and regionally relevant.

New communication tools and Regional Landcare Facilitator training on the CFI will complement the grant funding.

### **National Food Plan**

The Australian Government is developing Australia's first ever National Food Plan to ensure the Government's policy settings are right over the short, medium and long term. To support this important initiative, the Government has allocated \$1.5 million over four years to 2014–15.

The Government is developing the plan through a highly consultative green paper/white paper process. The Government has already begun work developing the green paper, which will outline how current policy addresses food issues and discuss any potential changes the Government might consider to policy, programs and governance arrangements. The green paper will be released for public consultation to allow stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback before the National Food Plan, to be released as a white paper, is prepared.

Through the National Food Plan, the Government aims to ensure a sustainable, globally competitive, resilient food supply, supporting access to nutritious and affordable food. In this regard, the plan will help position Australia to meet the emerging challenges and opportunities derived from the long term changes set to influence our food system, which include:

- shifting consumption patterns and economic growth;
- ongoing globalisation;
- population and income growth strongly driving food demand; and
- environmental and natural resource constraints potentially limiting growth in food production.

Given the strong linkages between regional Australia and the food industry, a productive and competitive food industry will deliver benefits to regional Australia in the form of employment and income generation.

## **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 (RDCs) 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.

In June 2011 the Government reaffirmed its commitment to continue to match 50 per cent of the funding contributions for rural research and development provided to the RDCs. While the Government is committed to maintaining the funding, it has acknowledged that improvements can be made to the RDC model. The Government is in the process of developing a final response to the Productivity Commission's report on the RDC system and to the National Strategic Rural Research and Development Investment Plan prepared by the Rural Research and Development Council.

## **Rural labour and skills**

The Government is committed to addressing labour and skills issues in regional Australia. In late 2011, the ministerial Standing Council of Primary Industries endorsed an agricultural productivity work plan to be implemented cooperatively by officials from all Australian jurisdictions. Under the work plan, seven key projects were identified; one of which is the building human capital project. The building human capital project will examine how primary industries agencies may be able to influence and address the significant issues facing the primary industries workforce. The Government is also continuing to work 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.

## **Better Regulation of agricultural and veterinary chemicals**

The Government will continue the Better Regulation of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (agvet) reform initiative that will directly benefit the community, manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, retailers and users of agvet chemicals. The reform aims to reduce regulatory complexity for farmers and other businesses 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, providing a predictable path 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 people and 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 Governments is progressing reforms of the control of chemical use of agvet chemicals. This process complements the Government’s Better Regulation reforms and aims to improve consistency of agvet chemical regulation across Australia.

### **Rural Financial Counselling Service**

The Government also funds, in partnership with participating State and Territory Governments, the Rural Financial Counselling Service which employ more than 190 individuals in regional Australia—119 of which fill rural financial counselling positions.

The Government is providing \$13.6 million in 2011–12 to fund the 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. Figure 1 shows the distribution of office locations across Australia. In 2010–11, the service provided assistance to more than 10,737 people. During 2011–12, the service has already assisted 7,826 clients (as at 30 April 2012). The service will continue to provide critical support to clients who are dealing with the longer term outcomes of the past decade of drought and will assist clients to access government support available for other events as they occur.

**Figure 1: Distribution of Rural Financial Counselling Service office locations across Australia**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Office Locations</b>
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, Merridin and Albany

### **Fisheries for the Future**

Australia’s fisheries production is distributed all along Australia’s coastline and extends beyond Australia’s Exclusive Economic Zone to the high seas. A number of coastal towns are highly dependent on fishing and associated industries.

In support of the regional Australian communities that rely on the fishing industry as an employer and supplier of fish for export and domestic markets, the Government continues work to ensure the sustainability of Australian fisheries. In 2012-13 a number of important reviews on the Commonwealth’s Fisheries Harvest Strategy and Bycatch policies will be undertaken.

Work will also continue with State and Territory Governments on sustainable marine resource sharing issues and progress the outcomes of the projects funded under the Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy.

### **National Indigenous Forestry Strategy**

The National Indigenous Forestry Strategy aims to encourage Indigenous participation in forestry through business partnerships that provide long term benefits to Indigenous communities and to the forest and wood products industry.

In support of the National Indigenous Forestry Strategy, the former Bureau of Rural Sciences (now the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics and Sciences (ABARES)) developed the National Indigenous Forest Mapping website. The site is able to be used to produce forest related maps for land areas managed by Indigenous Australians.

The forest maps, capacity building through mentoring, and facilitating relationships between government agencies and Indigenous communities are mechanisms that continue to support Indigenous participation in sustainable forest management.

During 2012–13 this ongoing program will continue to facilitate business partnerships between Indigenous stakeholders and the forestry sector to support Indigenous communities' participation in the forest industry.

### **Australian Fisheries Management Authority**

The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) manages the Commonwealth's fisheries on behalf of the Australian community using the provisions of the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*. Most Commonwealth fisheries are based in rural and regional Australia and many form a vital economic and social component of these communities. AFMA manages Commonwealth fishing activities to ensure healthy fish populations and profitable fisheries now and into the future and in so doing contributes to maintaining and improving the prospects for the associated communities.

Key initiatives for AFMA in 2012–13 include streamlining regulatory and other business processes including adoption of innovative technologies such as electronic logbooks and new electronic at sea monitoring tools to reduce the costs of fisheries management and improve profitability of all Commonwealth fisheries. AFMA will also continue to commission fisheries research based on balancing catch and cost against risk, and using ecological risk assessment and ecological risk management to meet AFMA's responsibilities for environmentally sustainable fisheries and prevent unacceptable impacts of Commonwealth fisheries on marine ecosystems and organisms.

## **Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority**

The Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is a Government statutory authority established in 1993 to centralise the registration of all agricultural and veterinary chemical products into the Australian marketplace. There are currently over 9,000 different pesticides and veterinary medicines products in the Australian marketplace.

Pesticides and veterinary medicines are vital to quality food and fibre production and primary producers rely on the pesticides and veterinary medicines that are regulated to protect crops and animals from disease and pests. APVMA operations deliver these chemicals so that farmers and others working across regional Australia can protect their crops and animals.

In 2010–11, the Government announced funding for the APVMA of \$8.8 million over four years to support reforms to the regulation of agvet chemicals in Australia. These reforms aim to improve the systems that protect human health and the environment; reduce the regulatory burdens on industry and businesses; and enhance the APVMA's business and operational functions. This funding will also enable the APVMA to upgrade its information and communications technology infrastructure and underpin the APVMA's financial sustainability.

The APVMA's focus for 2012–13 will be working with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to bed down the reform changes.

## **Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation**

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) invests to develop knowledge that fosters sustainable, productive and profitable new and existing rural industries in government and industry partnerships. All of the rural industries which RIRDC supports are based in regional Australia. Key strategies under the RIRDC 2012–17 Corporate Plan that directly benefit regional Australia include:

- increase knowledge about rural industry development options that offer regional economic development opportunities; and
- facilitate investments for rural industries that deliver economic, social and environmental benefits for rural industries and their regional communities.

The RIRDC will invest \$2.2 million to the National Hendra Virus Research program as part of a \$3.0 million investment over the period 2011–12 to 2014–15. The aim of the investment is to minimise the impact of Hendra virus. The outcomes will primarily benefit regional Australians in Queensland and northern New South Wales, but also extend south through Victoria and South Australia. RIRDC is the managing agency of collaboration between four Commonwealth agencies (the Departments of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education;



and Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities and RIRDC) as part of a multi-jurisdictional (with New South Wales and Queensland Governments) coordinated investment.

Investment will be in research aligned to the following priority outcomes:

- the capacity to predict periods of high risk for Hendra virus transmission from flying foxes to horses - understanding Hendra virus ecology and modelling Hendra virus risk;
- the improved strategies to prevent transmission of Hendra virus from flying foxes to horses, from horses to humans, from horses to horses, and potentially to other susceptible species. Research areas could include:
  - horse-flying fox interactions;
  - horse and property management;
  - factors influencing risk awareness and adoption of risk mitigation strategies; and
- the capacity to detect and respond effectively to Hendra virus incidents in horses, humans and potentially other susceptible species.

The RIRDC will invest \$180,000 in 2012–13 (\$1.5 million total investment) and partner with the Queensland Government on a four year project to gather lessons learnt from cyclones Larry and Yasi. The project will also test and analyse cyclone protection measures for various crops and production systems in tropical Australia and produce a report to inform regional farmers and communities devastated by cyclones and contemplating their future in tropical Australia. Having been hit by two cyclones in five years, many farmers are questioning their continued involvement in agriculture in tropical Australia. Many regional communities in tropical Australia owe their existence to thriving agricultural industries and businesses that flourish in a tropical environment. When a cyclone destroys many local businesses or entire industries, the whole region suffers financially and emotionally. However, experience shows that there are measures that farmers can take to protect their livelihood by lessening the impact of cyclones on their operations.

The RIRDC will invest \$200,000 in 2012–13 on a collaborative primary industries health and safety project. The aim of this program is to further reduce accidental deaths and injuries in the farming, fishing and forestry communities in rural and regional Australia. The program ensures health and safety issues are given a high priority by farmers, fishers and foresters as an important factor in increasing their productivity and profitability. It also focuses on changing health and safety culture (beliefs and values) in order to minimise accidents, injuries and fatalities. An ageing workforce

combined with ongoing skills shortages means that protecting the health of the current workforce is one of the keys to the sectors' competitive advantage.

In 2012–13 RIRDC will also invest \$100,000 (\$300,000 over three years) in the development of the Gubinge Industry. This project will develop a foundational research project to underpin the further development of the Gubinge/Kakadu Plum industry to assist Indigenous communities in northern Australia. Critical to the development of this industry is the capacity to deliver consistent high quality product in sufficient volumes to match the considerable market interest in this product. To be able to achieve this, the significant variability in the natural population of Kakadu plum needs to be understood. Through the project Indigenous communities will be involved in the collection of genetic material and the establishment of genetic orchards within both a conventional horticultural and enrichment planting models. The variability in these collections in terms of meeting market specifications will be assessed utilising collaborative expertise from the Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organisation (CSIRO), University of Western Australia, Charles Darwin University and Broome TAFE.

The RIRDC will also invest \$40,000 in the essential oils and plant extracts industry. The essential oils and plant extracts industry in Australia is of strong regional significance in Tasmania and is well supported by leading research from the Tasmanian Government and significant industry infrastructure centres in and around Devonport, Ulverstone and Hobart. The industry is characterised by vertically integrated approaches between contract growers of raw materials and manufacturers that utilise state-of-the-art extraction technology to produce unique products where Australia has a competitive advantage. The industry has recently chosen to undertake a significant collaborative research effort with six industry partners from the region who are exploring new product development for both new and existing plant extracts. The development of new products in the personal care market will offer increased demand and new opportunities in the region where the raw materials are produced and then manufactured into high value products.

### **Cotton Research Development Corporation**

The Cotton Research Development Corporation (CRDC) was established to enhance the performance of the Australian cotton industry and community through investing in research and development, and its application. Cotton is the major agricultural crop grown in many rural and remote regions of Queensland and New South Wales. It is a major employer and contributor to the local, State and national economy with annual exports worth in excess of \$2.0 billion.

There are around 200 publicly funded researchers and related staff involved in cotton related research across 20 sites across Australia. The Australian Cotton Research Institute at Narrabri is the focus for around half of all cotton research. The CSIRO facilities at Black Mountain in the Australian Capital Territory and Geelong, Victoria are also key facilities.

In 2012–13 the CRDC plans to invest \$19.7 million in research and development that benefits the Australian cotton industry and the wider community by supporting the adoption of innovation that leads to increased productivity, competitiveness and environmental sustainability. Examples include research and development on improving energy and nitrogen use, reducing carbon pollution and soil carbon, and the adoption of more efficient irrigation technology and management practices.

The CRDC will also seek to better link initiatives with the education system for the supply of capable people with the workforce demands of industry and the research community. CRDC will be broadly supporting collaboration in human capacity development with RDCs and rural industry. Further, the importance of the capacity of people has been central to the resilience of the industry through two consecutive seasons of significant floods. CRDCs will continue to develop best practices and technologies that can assist growers improve risk management and flexibility of farming systems to prepare for and recover from climate change and natural disasters.

### **Fisheries Research and Development Corporation**

The fishing and aquaculture industry is one of the most complex of Australia's primary industries in terms of its structure and the natural resources on which it depends. A large component of the fishing and aquaculture industry activity is undertaken in regional Australia. As a result, a large proportion (around 40 per cent) of the 350 plus active Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) research and development projects and the associated research staff are based in regional Australia. Key regional locations include Geraldton, Broome, Port Lincoln, Lakes Entrance, Hobart, Launceston, Cairns, Townsville and Darwin.

The FRDC estimates that it will invest around \$9.0 million per annum in regional and rural Australia. The benefit of FRDC's investment is twofold – research, development and extension benefits that have a positive impact on the fishing and aquaculture industry in the regions, and direct employment.

The FRDC will invest \$2.4 million in 2012–13, through a partnership with the Australian Government Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, to develop a blueprint for coastal regional communities that enable these communities to understand the biophysical, social and economic implications of climate change; and guide climate change adaptation strategies for fishers, aquaculturists and fishery managers across Australia.

In 2012–13, the FRDC will invest \$1.4 million in fourteen Atlantic Salmon research and development projects in Tasmania. Farmed Atlantic Salmon continue to be the largest aquaculture species group produced, and also the most valuable fishery in Australia. Atlantic Salmon accounts for around 40 per cent of the total value of Australian aquaculture production and 17 per cent of the total value of fisheries production. A key factor contributing to the rapid growth of this industry is a strong focus on marketing salmon to Australian consumers. The investment will enable the sector to

adopt improved feeding techniques, apply better disease control measures, and control marine mammal incursions.

The FRDC will also invest \$700,000 in Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) research and development projects in 2012–13. The majority of this investment will be in Port Lincoln. Farmed production of SBT makes up the major share of the value of fisheries production in South Australia. The majority of SBT in Australia is caught by Commonwealth endorsed vessels in the Great Australian Bight, for delivery to aquaculture farms off Port Lincoln in South Australia for fattening. SBT accounts for around 35 per cent and 53 per cent of South Australian aquaculture production and value, respectively. This investment will allow the sector to continue to focus on improving production by reducing mortality from liver fluke, improving feeding techniques and closing the SBT life cycle through propagation and breeding.

### **Grains Research and Development Corporation**

Across regional Australia there are over 22,000 grain growers nurturing the land to grow the best crop possible to generate on farm profit and to produce food for Australia and the world. Critical to growers' continued success is access to new information, products and services made possible through ongoing research, development and extension (RD&E) funded by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC).

The GRDC is a statutory authority established to invest in RD&E and related activities to benefit the Australian grains industry and the wider Australian community. The GRDC's primary objective is to drive the discovery, development and delivery of world class innovation to enhance the productivity, profitability and sustainability of Australian grain growers and benefit the industry and the wider community. The GRDC investment covers 25 crops, spanning temperate and tropical cereals, coarse grains, pulses and oilseeds.

The GRDC will invest \$2.6 million in nine Regional Cropping Solutions networks, across the southern and western grain growing regions, to listen to the local needs of growers and their advisers and deliver customised products and services. Headed by facilitators with an understanding of local issues, the networks link growers, advisers, agribusiness and researchers, and provide feedback to the GRDC and its advisory panels. The initiative also complements the National Grains Industry Research, Development and Extension Strategy.

With the aim of improving water use efficiency of grain based farming systems the GRDC is investing \$17.6 million over six years to 2013 (with \$4.4 million invested in 2012–13) in a coordinated initiative across the southern and western regions. The aim of the investment is to help growers make more profitable use of the rainfall received. CSIRO is assisting the initiative by providing science and crop, soil and climate modelling support to each of 17 regional projects.

In 2012–13 GRDC will invest \$6.0 million in a Crop Sequencing Initiative that will help grain growers and advisers to identify viable alternative crops and make effective crop sequencing decisions, through a combination of tactical and strategic farming systems RD&E. Trials have been established to assess the agronomic and economic value of grains, including brassica, pulse and pasture crops and fallow.

Through the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative and regional partners, the GRDC is investing \$3.0 million in 2012–13 for the Grain & Graze 2 program. The program is tackling climate variability and shifting market prices to help mixed farmers across 65 million hectares of rural and regional Australia to develop more resilient, viable and sustainable systems. The program will engage farmers and advisers through on farm research activities, demonstration trials, field days and workshops. The program aims to show growers how to minimise paddock downtime between cropping and pasture phases, match land use to land capability, implement better grazing strategies, improve water capture and storage, and reduce input costs.

The National Variety Trials (NVT) program represents the largest independent variety evaluation program in the world: in 2010–11, 632 trials were conducted across more than 260 locations covering the breadth of the Australian winter grains cropping region. In 2012–13 GRDC will invest approximately \$5.0 million in NVT to provide grain growers with an unparalleled source of varietal performance information for winter cereals, oilseeds and pulses. All winter cereals, pulse and canola breeding programs participate in the NVT program. The trial results are published on the NVT website and in State department of agriculture crop sowing guides.

In 2012–13 GRDC will also invest \$5.1 million in Plant Pathology research and services to growers and advisers throughout regional Australia to be proactive and responsive in disease control and management. This supports additional GRDC investments in improving genetic resistance to crop disease.

## **Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation**

The Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation (GWRDC) supports a competitive Australian wine sector by investing in and directing RD&E programs along the whole value chain 'from vine to glass'.

The GWRDC's research providers include the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI), the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre (NWGIC), CSIRO, universities and State agencies. While these are mainly located in major cities, the grapegrowing and winemaking community (who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the research delivered) are predominantly located in regional Australia. The NWGIC is located in Wagga Wagga and GWRDC's estimated research and development expenditure at NWGIC will be \$1.0 million in 2012–13.

In addition to collaborating with the key research organisations to invest in research and development programs that benefit the whole sector, GWRDC has a number of

projects that deliver investment funding directly to regional Australia to encourage the adoption of the research and development outcomes and thus support a competitive Australian wine sector. Three of these projects are:

- **Regional Program:** \$725,000 per annum to fund regionally specific extension and adoption activities in Australian wine regions to ensure funds spent in regional areas achieve maximum impact. The Regional Program is delivered through 11 Regional Partners;
- **Innovators' Network:** \$600,000 per annum to maintain a network of people actively engaged in winegrape production in the Australian wine sector who want to stay across the latest information and tools. The Innovators' Network is a key extension and information dissemination platform. Members include viticulturists, consultants, industry development officers, grower liaison officers, agribusiness representatives, chemical resellers and State Government extension officers. Members help spread knowledge to others in their regions through their networks and feed relevant information back to the GWRDC; and
- **PhD, Masters and Honours scholarships:** \$450,000 per annum to students to engage in grape and wine research. While most of these students are studying at institutions in major cities, many of them come from grapegrowing and winemaking areas in regional Australia.

## **Sugar Research and Development Corporation**

The Sugar Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) research and development investment portfolio benefits regional Australia as the sugarcane industry is located mainly along Australia's eastern coastline, from Mossman in far north Queensland to Grafton in northern New South Wales. The SRDC works in partnership with the Australian sugarcane industry and the Australian Government to foster an innovative and sustainable sugarcane industry, through targeted investment in research and development.

The SRDC plans to invest around \$9.0 million in 2012–13 in research aligned to the needs and opportunities for the sugarcane industry under the following programs:

- **Growing the Crop:** which aims for a technology savvy, market driven, profitable, reliable and increasing supply of sugarcane;
- **Milling the Crop:** which aims for a profitable milling sector utilising improved technologies and processes;
- **Sustaining the Environment:** which aims for a sugar industry maintaining an awareness of and implementing best practices to ensure the impact of the industry's operation on the environments is kept to an acceptable minimum; and

- **Skills and Capabilities:** which aims for an industry committed to a culture of education, learning and innovativeness.

The SRDC will continue to invest in the commercialisation of a low cost trash separation plant. This NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative project is based on the design, construction and optimisation of a low cost, factory based trash separation plant at Condong Sugar Mill. A separation plant is of interest to the Co-operative as they wish for growers to harvest whole-crop cane (i.e. includes stalk, trash and tops) to eliminate field burning of cane and increase the mass of fibre available for cogeneration activities.

The SRDC will also continue to invest in the integration of sugarcane, grains, grain legumes and cotton in sustainable irrigated cropping systems in the Burdekin. This Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation led project will conduct baseline studies to determine the feasibility and likely productivity issues associated with developing an integrated farming system involving sugarcane, with possible rotation crops such as maize, grain legumes and others in the Burdekin Irrigation area. The expected outcome of this project will be that growers will be able to make informed decisions on the likely impact that crop diversification may have on enterprise profitability and cane productivity, with the resulting benefit of improved farming system flexibility and industry resilience in periods of fluctuating seasonal conditions and commodity prices.

## **Wine Australia Corporation**

Wine Australia was established in 1981 to provide strategic support to the Australian wine sector. Wine Australia's specific services for the wine sector include strategic marketing, information and analysis, export and labelling regulation, advice on trade and market access issues, and the identification and protection of the nation's distinctive wine regions. Australia has just four percent of total world wine production but is the fourth largest exporter of wine by volume.

The international visitors program (IVP) enables Wine Australia to provide wine sector influencers with a first-hand experience of Australian wine and its regional diversity. Wine Australia organises and hosts visits to Australia and its wine regions by international media, key trade representatives, wine educators, sommeliers and other influential wine personalities. In 2012-13 Wine Australia has budgeted approximately \$800,000 for the IVP program which will fund approximately 80 visitors spending 350 days in Australia with over 200 regional visits.

Wine Australia will be conducting regional information workshops in 2012-13. The workshops will be held in key regions in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. The main purpose of the workshops is to improve awareness of the global wine sector intelligence that Wine Australia makes available to the Australian wine community. A core component of the workshops will be to demonstrate to the regions Wine Australia's new industry website and how they can

access the information. The overall goal is to assist better decision making within the Australian wine sector, particularly at a regional level. In 2012-13, approximately \$20,000 will be allocated for this program.

In 2012-13 Wine Australia will be coordinating a month long celebration of Australian wine following the inaugural A plus Australian Wine Celebration which was held in April 2012. This event provides a unique occasion for Australians to celebrate the great wine created in their own backyard, with close to 100 events being held across Australia in 2012 with more than 50 taking place in 35 regions. These events provide wine lovers with the opportunity to enjoy an exciting collection of wine, food and music festivals, meet winemakers and experience gourmet dining events and exclusive tasting opportunities. Total audience visiting these regional events is estimated to be approximately 20,000. In 2012-13, approximately \$150,000 will be allocated for this program.



# 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.

## SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 2 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Attorney General's portfolio.

**Table 2: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Attorney-General's Portfolio**

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
<b>Program 1.3: Justice Services</b>					
Financial assistance towards legal costs and related expenses	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	5	5	5	5
Payments for the provision of community legal services	Regional	8	8	8	8
	Non-regional	25	26	26	26
	Non-specific	3	3	3	3
<b>Program 1.4 Family Relationships</b>					
Family Support Program - Family Law Services	Regional	55	57	58	59
	Non-regional	61	62	64	65
	Non-specific	51	51	52	53
<b>Program 1.5: Indigenous Law and Justice</b>					
Payments under the Indigenous Justice program	Regional	6	6	6	6
	Non-regional	2	3	3	3
	Non-specific	4	3	3	4
Payments for the provision of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services for Indigenous Australians	Regional	19	20	20	21
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
Indigenous legal aid and policy reform program	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
	Regional	52	54	56	57
	Non-regional	14	14	14	14
Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory Law and Order Measures	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
	Regional	29	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
Native title system	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
	Regional	170	145	148	151
	Non-regional	102	105	106	109
		63	63	64	67

- nil

The Attorney-General's portfolio is committed to supporting rural and regional Australia. All Regional Family Dispute Resolution and Post Separation Cooperative Parenting services under the Family Support Program are located in regional Australia. These two services will receive \$11.5 million in 2012-13.

Forty-six Community Legal Centres (CLCs) are located in regional, rural and remote Australia. While a significant amount of funding for this program is indicated in the above table as non-regional there are a number of CLCs that provide state-wide services including outreach services to rural, regional and remote areas. Approximately 60 per cent of the Attorney-General's portfolio grants for legal assistance are provided to persons who reside in non-metropolitan areas.

Indigenous Australians living in regional Australia are served through a number of Attorney General's portfolio programs. Eighty eight per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services Program service outlets and the entirety of the Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program are targeted at regional Australia.

It should be noted 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. The Attorney-General's portfolio also supports the Australia Government's agenda in regional Australia through the delivery of a number of Specific Purpose and National Partnership programs such as the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment and the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) that are expressly excluded from the above table in this spatial report.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment**

The Commonwealth may provide direct assistance to disaster affected individuals and families through the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) or via an equivalent ex gratia payment to eligible New Zealanders. The AGDRP and the ex gratia payment are intended as a helping hand, rather than emergency assistance, to support individuals and families that have been so significantly affected by a disaster that assistance beyond that already provided by the Commonwealth and State Governments through the NDRRA is needed.

In 2011-12 a provision of \$85.5 million has been made based on estimated payments for the current financial year (\$68.9 million has been paid up to 3 May 2012).

The AGDRP is a one-off payment provided under the *Social Security Act 1991* (the Act) to eligible Australian residents. It is made pursuant to the Act if the Attorney-General and Minister for Emergency Management determines an event is a major disaster.

The AGDRP provides short-term financial assistance of \$1,000 to adults and \$400 to children who are adversely affected by a major or widespread disaster, either in Australia or overseas.

### **Family Support Program – family law service stream**

The Department provides ongoing funding for a range of post-separation services under the family law stream of the Family Support Program (FSP). The funded services are: Family Relationship Centres; the Family Relationships Advice Line; Family Dispute Resolution; Regional Family Dispute Resolution; Children's Contact Services; Parenting Orders Program; Post Separation Cooperative Parenting; and Supporting Children after Separation Program and Counselling.

The family law services stream aims to provide alternatives to formal legal processes for families who are separated, separating or in dispute to improve their relationships in the best interests of children.

These FSP family law stream services are provided by not for profit community based organisations and are located throughout Australia, including regional areas. All Regional Family Dispute Resolution and Post Separation Cooperative Parenting services are located in regional Australia. These two service types will jointly receive \$11.5 million in 2012-13.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services Program**

Commonwealth funding for Indigenous legal aid will be \$65.6 million in 2012-13. 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. Funding agreements are in place from July 2011 to June 2014. Management of legal assistance services to the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula will be added in July 2012. An additional \$2.3 million will be made available in 2012-13 under the Stronger Futures initiative in the Northern Territory.

### **Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program**

The Government will commit \$19.1 million in 2012-13 to 14 Indigenous 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.

### **Community Legal Centres**

There are 138 Community Legal Centres (CLCs) funded under the Commonwealth Community Legal Services Program. Forty-six (33 per cent) of these services are located in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia. In addition to these 46 regionally located CLCs, there are other organisations located in metropolitan areas that receive Commonwealth funding to provide targeted specialist assistance in both

metropolitan and regional or rural areas through outreach work and 1800 or 1300 telephone advice lines. Several CLCs are funded to employ rural women's outreach lawyers for the provision of legal services to women in rural and remote areas, particularly where isolation is exacerbated by factors such as disability, age and domestic violence. Dedicated women's legal services and CLCs funded to provide Indigenous Women's Projects also provide extensive outreach services to outlying communities.

### **Access to Justice Website**

The Access to Justice website, [www.accesstojustice.gov.au](http://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 \$154.0 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. The Government's total investment in Commonwealth legal assistance services for 2012-13 is \$333.0 million, and is provided to the programs below.

#### **Legal aid commissions**

Commonwealth legal aid funding in 2012-13 is \$198.0 million, which includes \$9.9 million for the Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases Fund. There are approximately 79 legal aid commission offices across the country, and around 46 are located in rural, regional and remote areas (approximately 58 per cent). Approximately 60 per cent of grants of legal assistance are provided to persons who reside in non metropolitan areas.

The National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services between the Australian Government and the States and Territories came into effect from 1 July 2010. One of the aims of the Agreement is to improve the targeting of services for disadvantaged Australians, including those living in regional, rural and remote locations. The enhanced focus on preventative and early intervention services that is required by the Agreement is expected to lead to more outreach services to areas which now lack services.

## **National Broadband Network Regional Legal Assistance Program**

The National Broadband Network (NBN) Regional Legal Assistance Program provides grant funding to trial NBN-based initiatives that seek to strengthen and increase legal assistance delivery in regional and remote areas. Legal assistance providers will be funded to trial the use of the NBN in innovative service delivery as well as to support regional or remote legal assistance staff. The total Program funding is \$4.0 million over four years.

## **Regional, Rural and Remote Legal Assistance Services and Initiatives**

The Australian Government is committed to working collaboratively with legal assistance services and the private legal sector in order to raise awareness of the particular problems facing lawyers and communities in regional and remote areas. The Attorney-General's Department has contributed one-off funding towards a number of projects and initiatives that aim to alleviate these problems and encourage long term solutions. These include: the Recruitment and Retention of Lawyers in Regional, Rural and Remote (RRR) Areas Project, managed by the National Association of Community Legal Centres to pursue initiatives to attract and retain lawyers in selected locations across Australia; a Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales research project to report on recruitment/retention of public legal service lawyers in RRR areas of New South Wales and factors likely to affect recruitment and retention; and a Professional Legal Training Program aimed at encouraging law graduates to work in rural, regional and remote legal centres for their professional legal training work experience placement.

## **Indigenous Justice Program**

The Department provides funding through the Indigenous Justice Program for projects to reduce adverse contact of Indigenous Australians with the criminal justice system. The objective is to support safer communities by reducing Indigenous offending, and through that, reduce Indigenous victimisation and incarceration.

The Indigenous Justice Program will provide funding of \$11.7 million in 2012-13, of which, approximately \$6.0 million has already been allocated to projects in regional and remote areas.

## **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 2012-13 will include an additional \$18.4 million provided as part of the \$50.1 million in new money agreed by the Government in the 2009-10 Budget. Included in this funding is approximately \$541,000 for the Native Title Anthropologist Grants Program in 2012-13 for projects to attract a new generation of junior anthropologists to native title work and encourage senior anthropologists to remain within the system.

## **Northern Territory Community Night Patrols**

Community night patrols assist people at risk of either causing or becoming the victims of harm in order to break the cycle of violence and crime. The core functions of services are to provide basic services such as safe transportation, diversion from contact with the criminal justice system, and intervention to prevent disorder in communities. Community night patrols across 80 communities in the Northern Territory including both remote and regional areas. The Australian Government will provide \$28.8 million in 2012-13 towards this initiative. The value of community night patrols in increasing community safety in remote and regional Australia and reducing contact with the criminal justice system is well known.

## **Australia's Human Rights Framework**

From 2010-11, the Government is providing funding of \$2.0 million over four years to non government organisations for the development and delivery of human rights education and engagement programs for the community. Projects funded under this Grants Program include initiatives providing human rights education in regional Australian communities.

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 Commission has developed an on-line social media platform that provides an interactive space for everyone in Australia to learn about human rights and engage in human rights discussion.

The Government is working in partnership with community organisations and the Australian Human Rights Commission to make sure education, information and engagement on Australia's new National Human Rights Action Plan are available across all Australian communities, including regional communities.

# **BROADBAND, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY**

The Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio is committed to improving services to regional, rural and remote Australia. Over the past 12 months there has been significant progress made in delivering the National Broadband Network (NBN), with a priority rollout commitment to regional areas. The NBN provides regional Australia with opportunities for individuals and businesses to connect via high-speed broadband to distant markets, both in Australia and overseas, and can also provide better access to health, education and a range of other services.

The Department administers the switchover to digital television, which includes programs to assist eligible Australians. To date, the Household Assistance Scheme and the Satellite Subsidy Scheme has assisted over 100,000 Australian households to switch to digital mainly in regional and remote Australia. Switchover has already occurred in several areas of regional Australia in Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

Many regional communities will benefit from the number of digital productivity initiatives the Department is implementing. This includes the Digital Local Government, Digital Hubs and Digital Enterprise programs, as well as a number of telehealth and education program trials, through the Digital Regions Initiative.

The Department continues to improve access to telecommunications for Australians living in remote Indigenous communities through the provision of public internet access and training opportunities as well as the installation and maintenance of community phones in small remote communities. In addition, the Indigenous Broadcasting Program enriches the regional and remote Indigenous communications landscape by supporting Indigenous radio in these areas. Indigenous radio is a critical communication tool that enables local messages to be distributed cost effectively, provides entertainment and training, helps in the maintenance of Indigenous languages and promotes Indigenous culture and identity.

## **SPATIAL REPORTING**

Table 3 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio.

**Table 3: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forward estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy					
Program 1.1: Broadband and Communications Infrastructure	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional <sup>2</sup>	26	25	27	29
	Non-specific <sup>1,3</sup>	5,807	6,619	4,119	3,619
Program 1.2: Digital Economy and Postal Services	Regional	11	8	4	4
	Non-regional <sup>2</sup>	74	68	66	71
	Non-specific <sup>3</sup>	16	10	5	5
Program 1.3: Broadcasting and Digital Television	Regional	94	34	11	12
	Non-regional <sup>2</sup>	146	76	22	15
	Non-specific <sup>3</sup>	82	95	42	32
Total - Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy	Regional	105	42	15	16
	Non-regional	246	168	115	115
	Non-specific	5,905	6,724	4,165	3,655
Australian Broadcasting Corporation					
	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific <sup>3</sup>	1,200	1,206	1,219	1,240
Australian Communications and Media Authority					
	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional <sup>2</sup>	110	102	96	95
	Non-specific <sup>3</sup>	145	-	-	-
Special Broadcasting Service					
	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific <sup>3</sup>	332	363	358	360
Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency					
	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	5	5	5	5
	Non-specific <sup>3</sup>	329	334	325	325
Portfolio Grand Total					
	Regional	105	42	15	16
	Non-regional	361	276	216	215
	Non-specific	7,912	8,627	6,067	5,581

<sup>1</sup> Includes equity payments to NBN Co Limited, NBN RBBP capital.

<sup>2</sup> Includes departmental expenses, which are capital city based.

<sup>3</sup> Includes overseas and nationally delivered services.

- nil

Expenditure in the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio is through five agencies.

- Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, which delivers a range of programs delivering benefits to regional Australia, including:
  - provision of \$20.1 billion in equity funding to the NBN Co Limited (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 12 megabits per second;

- \$271.2 million over the period 2012-13 to 2015-16 to continue programs to support the switchover to digital television, including to support the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service, the Satellite Subsidy Scheme and the Household Assistance Scheme. It is expected \$139.9 million of this funding will be provided to support services in regional Australia;
  - \$87.2 million over the next three years will be provided to meet the costs of digital television services being reorganised (or restacked) across the nation. This will enable spectrum (the digital dividend) to be reallocated, via an auction process, to support the introduction of new communications services;
  - \$64.1 million over four years for the Indigenous Broadcasting program which provides assistance to Indigenous community radio stations, Indigenous media organisations and Indigenous broadcasting services;
  - \$29.7 million over two years for the Digital Productivity program, to enable local governments to maximise opportunities provided by the NBN, and to establish digital enterprise services and a digital hub in each of the first 40 communities to be connected to the NBN; and
  - \$19.2 million over four years for the Satellite Phone Subsidy program and the Indigenous Communications program (Regional Telecommunications Review Response), which provides and maintains community phones in remote Indigenous communities.
- 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.
  - Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), which is responsible for regulating broadcasting, radio communications, telecommunications and online content.
  - Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA), which is responsible for the administration of contracts and grants to ensure standard telephone services and payphones are reasonably accessible to all people in Australia on an equitable basis, wherever they reside or carry on business.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

### **Special Broadcasting Service – Free-to-Air Indigenous Television Indigenous Television Channel**

The Government is providing \$63.0 million over four years for SBS to establish a free-to-air national Indigenous television channel for all Australians, including those in regional areas. The channel will be available through the full reach of SBS's terrestrial network and on the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service. SBS will launch the new Indigenous television channel during 2012-13.

The new Indigenous channel on SBS, which replaces the National Indigenous Television Service, will realise the government's aims to increase both the amount and overall quality of original Australian Indigenous content on free-to-air television. The new channel will have its own distinctive identity, a high level of editorial independence and appropriate Indigenous representation.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **National Broadband Network**

The Australian Government's goal for the 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 to design, build and operate the NBN, connecting 93 per cent of Australian homes, schools and businesses with fibre-to-the-premises technology capable of providing broadband speeds of up to one gigabit per second. Seven per cent of Australian premises will have access to next-generation fixed wireless and satellite technologies providing peak speeds of 12 megabits per second.

The NBN provides regional Australia with opportunities for individuals and businesses to connect via high-speed broadband to distant markets, both in Australia and overseas. It can also provide better access to health, education and a range of other services.

The Government's 2010 Commitment to Regional Australia included an undertaking to prioritise regional areas in the rollout of the NBN and to fast track the introduction of NBN fixed wireless and satellite services so that regional Australia can get better broadband access sooner.

The planning and construction of the NBN is well underway. Commercial services on the NBN fibre network are now available in eight Australian communities:

- Armidale and Kiama Downs/Minnamurra (New South Wales);
- Brunswick (Victoria);

- Townsville (Queensland);
- Willunga (South Australia); and
- Midway Point, Scottsdale and Smithton (Tasmania).

On 29 March 2012, NBN Co released its first three year rollout plan. The plan shows that over 3.5 million premises will be covered between 1 April 2012 and 30 June 2015.

NBN Co also released an updated 12 month rollout schedule on 15 February 2012 which lists 66 locations covering over 758,000 premises across all States and Territories where construction of the fibre network is expected to commence or be completed by the end of December 2012.

The NBN will provide access to enhanced broadband services to all Australian premises and aims to close the gap for those in rural and regional areas. NBN Co's fixed wireless network will provide peak speeds of 12 megabits per second. The first trial services on the fixed wireless network have commenced in Armidale (New South Wales).

On 3 August 2011, NBN Co announced the first five communities to receive the fixed wireless service. These sites cover the less densely populated areas surrounding Geraldton (Western Australia), Toowoomba (Queensland), Tamworth (New South Wales), Ballarat (Victoria) and Darwin (Northern Territory).

NBN Co is delivering on the Government's commitment to regional Australia. The Interim Satellite Service was successfully launched on 1 July 2011 and as at 3 April 2012 there were nine retail service providers to choose from and 5,050 interim satellite service end users connected to the service.

The Interim Satellite Service offers peak speeds of six megabits per second downlink and one megabit per second uplink which provides a significant improvement in speed and service performance for satellite customers in regional and remote Australia. This service is a transition service to the long term satellite service which will be available in 2015.

NBN Co reached a major milestone in the delivery of the long term satellite service when it announced on 8 February 2012 that it had signed a contract valued at approximately \$620.0 million with Space Systems/Loral for the delivery of two next generation Ka-band satellites and associated tracking, telemetry and control systems.

The two new satellites mean that upon launch in 2015, NBN Co will be able to offer a 12 megabit per second download/one megabit per second upload service, at uniform national wholesale prices, to premises outside the fibre and fixed-wireless footprints. In terms of speed and reliability, this will deliver a step-change in performance for satellite users compared with existing satellite services.

Additionally, 6,000 kilometres of fibre optic cable rollout under the Government's \$250.0 million Regional Backbone Blackspots Program (RBBP) has been completed, providing more competitive broadband services for regional Australia. The RBBP has provided competitive fibre backhaul services in more than 100 regional locations and will enable service providers to deliver high quality and better value broadband services. Locations to benefit from the program include Geraldton (Western Australia), Darwin (Northern Territory), Broken Hill (New South Wales), Victor Harbor (South Australia), Emerald and Longreach (Queensland) and south west Gippsland (Victoria).

On 7 March 2012, Definitive Agreements between NBN Co and Telstra were finalised and came into force. These agreements allow NBN Co access to suitable Telstra infrastructure and for Telstra to progressively migrate customers from the old copper network to the new NBN. The Definitive Agreements will mean less disruption to communities, less use of overhead cables and faster access to the NBN for Australians.

NBN Co will be funded with Government equity until NBN Co has sufficient cash flows to support private sector debt without explicit Government support. The Government has currently provided equity injections totalling \$2.8 billion into NBN Co.

## **Digital Switchover**

The switchover to digital television has already occurred in the Mildura/Sunraysia, regional South Australia and Broken Hill, regional Victoria and regional Queensland switchover areas. It is scheduled to occur in regional southern and central New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area on 5 June 2012 and regional northern New South Wales on 27 November 2012. Switchover in all parts of Australia will be completed by the end of 2013. To date around 1.2 million households are now digital-only, almost entirely in regional and remote Australia.

Digital Switchover programs include:

- 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;
- 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, any necessary cabling and antenna work and an in-home after care service - all free of charge;
- the VAST satellite service, to enable Australians in remote areas and those in signal blackspots to receive the same number of channels as Australians in metropolitan areas;

- the Satellite Subsidy Scheme which assists people in communities previously served by analog self-help towers to move to the VAST service; and
- infrastructure assistance programs to enable regional commercial broadcasters to provide new digital services.

### **Indigenous Broadcasting Program**

The Government allocated \$15.4 million to the Indigenous Broadcasting Program in 2012-13. Funding is aimed at assisting Indigenous community radio stations and support is provided to five urban, 23 regional and remote radio stations, nine Remote Indigenous Media Organisations and 124 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services situated in remote communities. The Program funds a range of organisations such as Imparja Television, Indigenous Community Television and peak bodies and activities such as broadcasting training and content production.

A funding round for the program has been conducted each year since 1987, with applications assessed against the published program guidelines and assessment criteria.

### **Digital Local Government**

The Government's \$17.1 million Digital Local Government program is assisting local councils in the first 40 communities to benefit from the high-speed broadband connectivity that the NBN provides to deliver improved online services, particularly to homes and businesses.

Each eligible council can apply for funding of up to \$375,000 (GST exclusive). Twenty four of the eligible councils provide local government services to regional (as per the ABS Remoteness Structure) Australians. In total, \$9.0 million in funding is being made available for councils representing regional Australians.

Eligible councils are expected to begin making new NBN enabled services available to their residents from the second half of 2012.

The benefits of these services for regional Australians are expected to include:

- reduced travel times for local council staff and ratepayers between locations and across local government areas;
- improved customer service by enabling local residents and businesses to access council staff and services by video;
- more efficient use of council resources, enabling the re-allocation of staff to other priority tasks; and
- more efficient dissemination of information to local residents and businesses.

## **Digital Regions Initiative**

The four-year \$60.0 million Digital Regions Initiative commenced in July 2009 and co-funds digital enablement projects with State, Territory and local governments through a National Partnership Agreement. The initiative takes a collaborative approach to improve services in the key sectors of health, education, and emergency services in regional, rural and remote Australian communities. The initiative concludes on 30 June 2013.

Examples of projects include:

- introducing telehealth services into remote communities across Australia;
- implementing chronic disease management systems;
- creating a broadband-based virtual data centre to enable schools and organisations across Tasmania to share resources; and
- developing a bushfire simulator to improve bushfire prediction.

In addition to the fourteen digital enablement projects, funding has been provided for the following three trials that will take advantage of the NBN:

- the NBN Diabetes Telehealth Trial in Townsville is delivering high quality in-home telehealth services to improve the health outcomes of patients with type 2 diabetes who live in Townsville;
- the New South Wales NBN Telehealth to the Home Trial will deliver high quality in-home telehealth services to improve the health outcomes of older Australians with chronic conditions who live in Armidale and Kiama, as well as video-based mental health services for young people in Kiama; and
- EduONE – Education Our New England NBN-enabled tele-education trial is trialling new models of education services and resources using the NBN by providing state-of-the-art virtual interactive training rooms, laboratories and community learning capability.

## **Indigenous Communications Program**

### **Telephones**

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 to family and friends. In 2012-13, around 500 phones in remote Indigenous communities will be monitored and maintained.

### **Public Internet Access**

The public internet access and training component of the Indigenous Communications Program is delivered in collaboration with participating State and Territory governments through the Closing the Gap: National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access. Approximately 1,900 Indigenous Australians have received basic training in computer use across 106 communities since the inception of the program in 2009.

### **Satellite Phone Subsidy Scheme**

The Satellite Phone Subsidy Scheme improves the affordability of mobile communications for people living, working and travelling in those areas which do not have 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.

Since the Scheme's inception in June 2002, over 18,000 subsidies have been provided.

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio has a number of initiatives for Australia's regions that will play an important role in the response to climate change and assist in Australia's transition to a Clean Energy Future. Primary among these are programs to create opportunities in the land sector to reduce pollution, while maintaining productivity and improving sustainability and resilience.

The carbon price will not apply to agricultural and land sector emissions. This means that farmers will not have carbon price liabilities for agricultural activities, or for the fuel they use for farm equipment. Fuel used in light motor vehicles (such as personal cars) will not be covered by the carbon price.

Over \$1.7 billion of carbon price revenue will be invested in the land sector in regional Australia, through new funding programs to help farmers and land managers reduce pollution and enhance biodiversity. Components of the land sector package are being delivered by the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio, as well as the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

### National Climate Change Adaptation Program

Climate change will have significant effects on regional economies and our way of life. Decisions we take now are crucial to our economic prospects and living standards over coming decades. Climate risks will vary from region to region and communities are at the frontline in dealing with the impacts. Over the past five years the Australian Government has worked with over 90 local councils to build capacity for effective local adaptation. The Australian Government will provide \$3.0 million in 2012-13 to: support further analysis of how well placed Australia is to deal with the unavoidable impacts of climate change; and develop policy to enable business and communities to build resilience and adapt to a changing climate.

### Carbon Farming Initiative

The Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) is a key measure that provides economic rewards for farmers and landholders who take steps to reduce carbon pollution or store carbon on the land. Participation in the CFI is voluntary; farmers and landholders can choose whether or not to be involved. Those that do participate in the CFI can receive carbon credits for the carbon pollution saved or stored by their activities.

The CFI is a legislated scheme with an independent Administrator. The CFI Administrator commenced operations in December 2011 and is now part of the Clean Energy Regulator, which administers the carbon price mechanism.



The Government allocated \$45.6 million between 2010-11 and 2013-14 to implement the CFI. This includes funding for the CFI Administrator and \$4.0 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 CFI creates a new income stream for farmers, new jobs for rural and regional Australia and provides incentives to identify and implement low-cost methods of pollution reduction. Credits earned by farmers and land managers under the CFI can be sold to people and businesses to offset their emissions. The CFI also helps the environment by encouraging sustainable farming and providing a source of funding for landscape restoration projects.

### **Carbon Farming Initiative non-Kyoto Fund**

Under the non-Kyoto Fund, the Government will purchase non-Kyoto compliant CFI credits that cannot be purchased by companies to offset liabilities they may have under the carbon pricing mechanism. This program will increase incentives for activities that are not counted towards Australia's emissions target under current international carbon accounting rules. Such activities include the storing of soil carbon, revegetation and forest conservation projects.

The Fund will commence on 1 July 2013, with funding of \$250.0 million over its first six years.

### **Carbon Farming Skills**

The Carbon Farming Skills program (\$4.2 million over five years from 2011-12) will ensure that landholders have access to credible, high quality advice and carbon services. This measure will support employment opportunities in regional Australia through development of:

- a new nationally accredited qualification for carbon service providers; and
- an accreditation scheme for carbon service providers operating under the CFI.

### **Carbon Farming Futures – Methodology Development**

The \$20.0 million Methodology Development program — a component of the Carbon Farming Futures measure — will convert research, including outcomes from other research programs funded by the Government, into estimation methodologies to use in the CFI.

To ensure the integrity of the CFI and the ongoing value of credits generated, abatement projects need to meet scheme eligibility criteria and use an approved methodology. This program will expand abatement opportunities under the CFI by facilitating the development of methodologies that comply with CFI requirements,

meet the needs of agricultural industries and rural and Indigenous communities, and are supported by scientific evidence.

The Domestic Offsets Integrity Committee is responsible for assessing and providing advice to the Government on methodology proposals for use under the CFI.

## **Regional Natural Resource Management Planning for Climate Change Fund**

The Government is providing \$44.0 million over five years from 2011-12 to help regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations incorporate the impact of climate change on the land in their regional NRM plans and develop scenarios of climate change impacts at a regional level.

The updated regional plans will provide a guide for finding the most appropriate locations for new projects to store carbon or to build connectivity in the landscape. This will help to maximise the benefits from carbon farming and biodiversity projects. The fund is divided into two streams:

- Stream 1, delivered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, will provide \$29.0 million over five years to support the 56 regional NRM organisations revise existing regional NRM plans to help identify where, in the landscape, carbon plantings, revegetation, restoration and other CFI mitigation activities should be undertaken; and
- Stream 2, delivered by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, will provide \$15.0 million over four years to support information delivery, research and analysis to develop scenarios on regional climate change impacts which can be used for natural resource management and land use planning.

## **Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund**

The Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund (\$22.3 million over five years from 2012-13) will provide support to Indigenous Australians to participate in the CFI. The Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund comprises two streams:

- A research and development stream (\$5.2 million over five years from 2012-13, delivered by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) will provide funding for research to support and develop methodologies and reporting tools for CFI methodologies. This funding will support low-cost methodologies likely to have high Indigenous participation to help create real and lasting opportunities for Indigenous Australians; and
- A capacity building and business support stream (\$17.1 million over five years from 2012-13, delivered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) will help Indigenous communities establish or participate in carbon farming projects.

## **National Solar Schools Program**

The National Solar Schools Program (NSSP) offers primary and secondary schools the opportunity to apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to install solar and other renewable power systems, solar hot water systems, rainwater tanks and a range of energy efficiency measures. The NSSP commenced on 1 July 2008 and closes on 30 June 2013.

Applications are assessed using merit-based criteria, meaning schools have to demonstrate value for money, environmental and educational benefits in their applications. Additionally, applications from schools located in remote or low socio-economic areas receive additional assessment weighting.

The program has been very popular, with more than 8,000 schools (85 per cent of all eligible schools) having already registered to participate. Since the NSSP commenced, over 4,500 schools have been awarded a grant, totalling more than \$190.0 million in funding. By the end of the program it is expected that approximately 60 per cent of all primary and secondary schools in Australia will have received an NSSP grant.

Each year's total funding budget is allocated between government and non-government school sectors based on the proportion of eligible schools in each sector and funding already received under the program. Funding for State and Territory Government schools is paid to each jurisdiction through a National Partnership Agreement. In 2012-13, the final year for the program, \$45.7 million of funding is available.

## **Community Energy Efficiency Program**

The Government has established the \$200 million Community Energy Efficiency Program to work with councils and community organisations to implement energy efficiency measures across diverse local communities. The program will demonstrate and encourage smarter energy use by supporting local councils and community organisations to improve the energy efficiency of non-residential council and community buildings, facilities and lighting. Special assistance will be made available for regional and rural councils to ensure they are not disadvantaged during the application and assessment processes. Funding for projects under the program will commence from 2012. All successful projects will need to be completed by June 2016.

## **Energy Efficiency Information Grants Program**

The Government has allocated \$40.0 million to the Energy Efficiency Information Grants (EEIG) program covering the 2011-12 to 2014-15 financial years. The program is intended to improve awareness about energy efficiency amongst small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and community organisations. Under the program, funding will be provided to industry associations and not-for-profit organisations to deliver practical, tailored energy efficiency information to SMEs and community organisations.

Funding under Round One of the EEIG program is scheduled to commence in 2012.

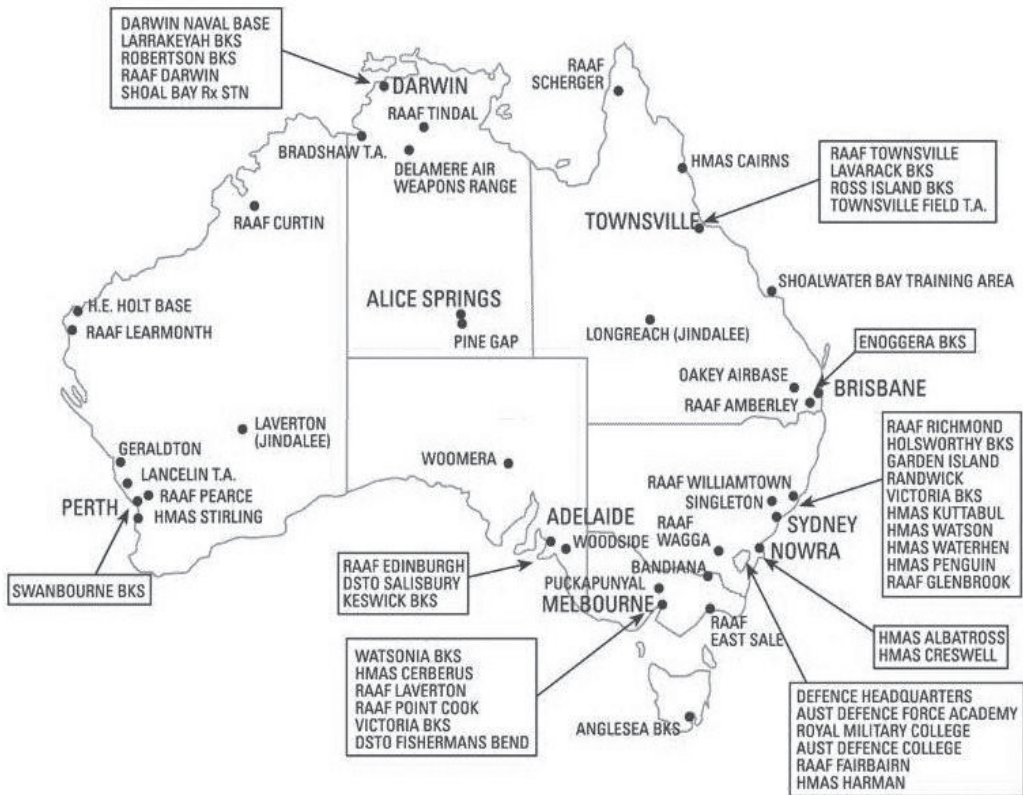
## **Further Information**

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](http://www.climatechange.gov.au).

# DEFENCE

The Department of Defence and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) make a significant contribution to the development of regional Australia through the establishment of defence facilities and by fostering linkages with the communities in which Defence members are based. Defence activities provide considerable indirect support to regional communities surrounding its facilities. Thirty per cent (approximately 30,000 full-time and Reserve personnel) of the ADF is located in regional Australia (Darwin and outside of Australia's major cities), with the defence footprint evident through employment, industry, community involvement and services, childcare facilities, housing, cooperation on heritage issues, Indigenous affairs and economic activity. Figure 2 depicts the location of major Defence facilities across Australia.

**Figure 2: Location of Major Defence Facilities across Australia**



## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Defence infrastructure / capital facilities projects**

Defence bases and facilities around the country are being redeveloped and upgraded to deliver increased capability and support the ADF. In 2012-13 capital infrastructure projects located in regional Australia include:

- HMAS Albatross Redevelopment Stage 3 - This project will replace ageing and obsolete engineering services and infrastructure and provide a combination of new and refurbished facilities to support operational and training outcomes as well as enabling functions. The project received Parliamentary clearance in March 2012. Construction is scheduled to commence in early 2013.
- RAAF Base East Sale Redevelopment - This project will replace ageing and obsolete engineering services and infrastructure and provide a combination of new and upgraded facilities to support operational and training outcomes as well as enabling functions. The project received Parliamentary clearance in March 2012. Construction will commence in late 2012.
- Scottsdale: Specific Nutritional Capability - This project provides a reinvestment in the existing Defence Science and Technology Organisation nutritional capability at Scottsdale through the construction of replacement food technology laboratories and working facilities. Construction is scheduled to commence in mid-2012, with completion scheduled in late 2013.

### **ADF support for natural disaster recovery**

The ADF continues to provide significant assistance to the Australian community following natural disasters, and has demonstrated its adaptable nature and ability to respond to challenging and complex tasks at short notice, when called upon by the Government. Most recently, the ADF has assisted communities in regional Australia devastated by flooding in Southern Queensland, Northern New South Wales, Wagga Wagga (New South Wales) and the Shepparton area (Victoria) and by storms in Townsville (Queensland). Tasks performed by the ADF included aeromedical and land evacuation of residents, search and recovery operations, reinforcement of levees, airlift and land movement of emergency supplies, clearance of debris and filling sandbags.

### **Defence Community Organisation Program**

Defence, through the Defence Community Organisation (DCO), conducts functions that promote the engagement of ADF families with their local communities. These activities and the extent of the engagement vary by location, but tend to be strongest in regional areas. Activities include annual welcome functions and local information sessions. DCO also administers Defence's Family Support Funding Program (FSFP), which offers non-recurrent annual grants to community organisations that have a

focus on supporting Defence families. The emphasis of FSFP is on supporting groups that encourage engagement with the wider community.

DCO has commenced a program of community capacity building that is designed to promote connection between Defence families and their local communities. In time this will also enhance the ability of local communities to support the families of ADF members because of increased awareness of the contribution that Defence families bring to their communities.

ADF Transition Centres are located across Australia, to provide practical guidance and information to ADF members who are planning to leave Defence. Support services include practical information seminars, personalised assistance to prepare for transition, referrals, help with administration, and support for post Service training and employment. ADF members and their families are linked into other Defence and government support services (such as the ADF Rehabilitation Program, Department of Veterans' Affairs, ComSuper and Centrelink) and community resources.

### **Defence Housing Australia**

The main function of Defence Housing Australia (DHA) is to provide housing and related services to members of the ADF and their families. DHA adds new properties to its portfolio across Australia, including in regional areas, with a significant ADF presence, through the renewal of expiring leases, constructions, acquisitions and leasing from private investors or in bulk from property developers. DHA has also supported the creation of 10 apprenticeship places in regional locations in the residential construction industry.

### **Defence industry development**

A range of defence industry segments are located in regional communities. Facilities in the Hume (Victoria) and Riverina (New South Wales) regions, provide the munitions and explosives for use by the ADF; regional workers in Loddon Mallee (Victoria) assemble Australia's Bushmaster vehicles; and a range of companies support major prime contractors at bases or facilities in Kwinana (Western Australia), Katherine (Northern Territory), North Queensland (Queensland) and Port Adelaide (South Australia), to name just a few.

Australia's defence industry maintains and supports the ADF's equipment wherever it is home-based. In regional Australia, Defence maintains, as a minimum, operational level support; if not deeper maintenance support capabilities. Examples of Defence maintenance and support locations in regional Australia include: Oakey, Townsville, Darwin and Nowra for helicopters; Bandiana and Darwin for military fighting vehicles; Lithgow for weapons manufacture and maintenance; and in the Northern Territory and Western Australia for the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) provided base support.

The DMO continues to promote efficiency, competition and value for money in defence procurement through its suite of industry programs. This includes programs aimed at up-skilling Australian industry, rewarding innovation in defence capabilities and promoting Australia's capabilities overseas. Many of the small to medium enterprises that receive support under these programs are based in Australia's regional areas. The DMO will continue to support defence industry in both metropolitan and regional areas to ensure the best possible support to the ADF.

### **Defence Force Posture Review**

On 22 June 2011 the Minister for Defence, the Hon Stephen Smith MP, announced a Force Posture Review (the Review) to assess whether the ADF is correctly geographically positioned to meet Australia's current and future strategic challenges. The Review focused at the strategic level, rather than focusing primarily on individual bases and training areas, to guide subsequent specific decisions that may be taken regarding ADF disposition and the Defence Estate, including in regional Australia. It builds on assessments made in the 2009 Defence White Paper, and Defence's existing assessment of its basing requirements over the next 25 years. It also complements current work underway with the United States (US) on the US Global Force Posture Review.

The final report of the Review was released by the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence on 3 May 2012. The Review's findings will feed into the next scheduled Defence White Paper in 2013. Further information is available at: <http://www.defence.gov.au/oscdf/adf-posture-review>.



# EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

The Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio is committed to supporting rural and regional communities in Australia. A number of portfolio 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, a skilled workforce with greater participation, and the achievement of productive workplaces.

## SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 4 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio.

**Table 4: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio**

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
EEEWR Transfer/Subsidy Payments					
Program 1.1: Support for the Child Care					
System					
Sub-Program: Jobs Education and Training (JET) Child Care fee Assistance	Regional	24	23	31	38
	Non-regional	58	56	74	91
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.2 Child Care Fee Assistance					
Sub-Program: Child Care Benefit	Regional	723	756	779	801
	Non-regional	1,721	1,800	1,853	1,907
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-Program: Child Care Rebate	Regional	413	466	527	582
	Non-regional	1,580	1,781	2,014	2,223
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 2.11 School Student Assistance					
Sub-Program: ABSTUDY (Secondary)	Regional	85	82	83	83
	Non-regional	49	47	47	47
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-Program: ABSTUDY (Tertiary)	Regional	53	55	55	56
	Non-regional	30	32	32	32
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-Program: Assistance for Isolated Children	Regional	61	67	69	71
	Non-regional	3	3	3	3
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 3.2 Indigenous Employment					
	Regional	112	104	105	107
	Non-regional	60	56	57	58
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

**Table 4: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio**

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program 3.4 Working Age Payments	Regional	49	50	51	53
Sub Program: Mobility Allow ance	Non-regional	95	97	100	103
	Non-specific	..	..	..	..
Sub-Program: New Start Allow ance	Regional	2,853	3,154	2,893	3,133
	Non-regional	4,897	5,413	4,966	5,378
	Non-specific	17	19	17	19
Sub-Program: Parenting Payment Single	Regional	1,666	1,588	1,639	1,585
	Non-regional	2,573	2,451	2,530	2,447
	Non-specific	8	8	8	8
Sub-Program: Parenting Payment Partnered	Regional	362	357	362	359
	Non-regional	652	642	652	646
	Non-specific	3	3	3	3
Sub-Program: Partner Allow ance Pension	Regional	41	23	2	-
	Non-regional	58	32	3	-
	Non-specific	1	..	..	-
Sub-Program: Pensioner Education Supplement	Regional	26	24	23	26
	Non-regional	47	44	42	48
	Non-specific	..	..	..	..
Sub-Program: Sickness Allow ance	Regional	32	33	33	36
	Non-regional	60	62	62	67
	Non-specific	..	..	..	..
Sub-Program: Widow Allow ance	Regional	116	114	104	97
	Non-regional	250	245	224	209
	Non-specific	2	2	2	2
Sub-Program: Youth Allow ance - Other	Regional	409	495	455	486
	Non-regional	512	620	570	609
	Non-specific	2	3	2	3
Portfolio Agency - Comcare					
Program 1.1 Comcare	Regional	26	21	23	25
	Non-regional	42	34	38	41
	Non-specific	..	..	..	..
Total Transfer/Subsidy Payments	Regional	7,051	7,412	7,234	7,539
	Non-regional	12,684	13,415	13,265	13,909
	Non-specific	35	36	34	36

**Table 4: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio**

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
EEWR Reportable Grants Programs					
Program 1.1 Support for the Child Care System					
Sub-Program: Child Care Services	Regional	117	116	123	120
Support	Non-regional	128	126	134	131
	Non-specific	100	99	105	102
Program 2.2 Non-Government Schools	Regional	712	768	829	895
National Support	Non-regional	2,054	2,218	2,395	2,584
	Non-specific	5,547	5,991	6,467	6,978
Program 2.3 Schools Support					
	Regional	119	112	67	67
	Non-regional	13	12	7	7
	Non-specific	73	76	41	47
Program 2.10 Youth Support					
Sub-Program: Youth Engagement	Regional	3	3	2	2
	Non-regional	2	2	1	2
	Non-specific	5	4	3	4
Total Grants Programs					
	Regional	951	999	1,022	1,085
	Non-regional	2,197	2,358	2,537	2,723
	Non-specific	5,726	6,170	6,617	7,132
Portfolio Grand Total					
	Regional	8002	8411	8256	8623
	Non-regional	14882	15773	15802	16632
	Non-specific	5761	6206	6651	7167

.. Not zero, but rounded to zero

- nil

The portfolio administers a number of programs on behalf of the Australian Government which seek to improve participation and outcomes in education, training and employment in regional Australia. A number of programs specifically target regional Australia, while other programs provide support to regional Australians through the Government's priorities for early childhood development, quality education outcomes, a skilled workforce with greater participation, and the achievement of productive workplaces.

Information regarding spatial expenditures for material programs (those programs with annual expenditure outlays exceeding \$50.0 million), are included in Table 4. It should be noted that the portfolio also supports the Australian Government's agendas 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 consistent with the delivery arrangements supported by the Federal Financial Relations Framework.

In relation to the transfer payment programs reported in Table 4, the regional split of funding has been derived for the 2012-13 Budget and forward estimates years based on the location of current customers in receipt of the relevant benefits and payments. The applicable percentage of recipients, as determined under the major cities Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Structure, has then been applied against the current program forward estimates.

Reportable grants program expenditures have been based on the portfolio programs that are currently committed in accordance with the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines, and published on the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website as at 31 March 2012. Due to the amounts being based on current contractual commitments as at that date, the table may not reconcile to the full program estimates for these grants programs over the period 2012-13 to 2015-16 as set out in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

### **Early Childhood Education and Care**

#### **Jobs, Education & Training Child Care Fee Assistance program – Improving Education and Employment Outcomes**

The Government will provide an additional investment of \$225.6 million over five years to assist more parents to access Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA). This package also better targets JETCCFA to support work, study and job outcomes for eligible parents in line with the Government's skills reform agenda.

This package will assist parents on eligible income support payments, predominantly sole parents, to enhance their skills by undertaking appropriate work, study or training to enable them to enter or re-enter the workforce, by providing significant support with the cost of child care so that it does not pose a barrier to participation.

This initiative will benefit parents in rural and remote areas of Australia who wish to undertake work, study or training to better enable them to take advantage of employment opportunities.

#### **Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory – continued support for crèches established under the Northern Territory Emergency Response**

Ongoing support will be provided for nine crèches in very remote Indigenous communities through a \$30.2 million allocation over ten years. The nine Northern Territory Emergency Response crèches funded under this measure are located in small remote communities in which there is little or no other form of early childhood education and care and in which the population would not support a larger service model, for example, a long day care centre. These crèches will continue to play an important role in better preparing up to 225 children for school, and can provide an

effective platform for delivering a range of programs aimed at improving their health and development.

### **Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)**

The Government has committed \$55.7 million to expand the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) in 100 locations. \$13.8 million will be provided over three years to continue HIPPY in the existing 50 locations for one additional cohort of children operating over the 2013 and 2014 school years. An additional \$41.9 million will be provided over four years to extend HIPPY to 50 additional locations, with a focus on Indigenous remote locations, commencing from the 2014 school year.

This expansion will continue to complement the suite of existing early childhood initiatives aimed at enhancing life experiences for children, increasing parental and community skills and closing the gap targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

HIPPY is a two year home based parenting and early childhood enrichment program that empowers parents and carers to be their child's first teacher. The program builds the confidence and skills of parents and carers to create a positive learning environment to prepare their child for school. Parents and their children enrol in the program in the year before the child commences formal school and they participate in the program for two years.

The program specifically targets disadvantaged communities with a high proportion of families with young children and is spread across metropolitan, regional and remote communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The expansion of HIPPY to 100 sites ensures a continuation of support for children and parents in the existing 50 sites as well as expanding the program into 50 Indigenous specific sites, and will continue to provide employment outcomes for parents who have the opportunity to be trained and employed as tutors through the program.

## **Schools**

### **Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory**

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory is a comprehensive ten-year plan to support Aboriginal people in remote areas of the Northern Territory to live productive, independent lives. The Government will provide \$582.6 million for education initiatives to ensure Indigenous children across the Northern Territory continue to have better access to improved education and are actively engaged in learning.

## **Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory – Building a Quality School Workforce**

### **Additional Teachers**

The Government will continue to support an extra 200 teachers and engagement officers in remote Northern Territory schools.

### **Quality Teaching**

The Government is also providing better support for those teachers so they are ready to teach in remote communities. Initiatives include a ten-year investment in training and support to ensure teachers have the skills to obtain better literacy and numeracy results for Aboriginal children, and to ensure that teachers can achieve the best possible outcomes for students for whom English is a second language or for who may experience hearing or learning difficulties.

The Government is also continuing funding to build career paths and improve qualifications so local people can become teachers and educational workers in their communities.

### **Teacher Housing**

The Government will build around 100 teacher houses in remote Northern Territory communities over the next ten years to address critical staff housing shortages and help attract and retain high quality teachers in remote schools.

## **Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory – Expansion of the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure**

Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory have been clear that they want children to attend school regularly and that parents have a responsibility to help make this happen. As announced in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook the Australian Government has provided \$85.6 million over 11 years to both improve and expand the current School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) so that it aligns with the NT Government's Every Child Every Day attendance policy to provide a clear and consistent set of supports and consequences for parents whose children do not attend school regularly.

This funding also helps manage unacceptable levels of under-enrolment. Education authorities and Centrelink will now be able to share data to ensure children are enrolled in a school and attending school even if they move during the school year. This will prevent children from falling through the cracks, especially where families move frequently.

The measure will apply to all parents on income support in affected areas.

## **Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory – School Nutrition Program**

The School Nutrition Program provides nutritionally sound meals to approximately 5,000 students in participating schools in the Northern Territory. Good nutrition has

been shown to help improve student behaviour, attention and health. The Government will continue to provide funding for the program over the next ten years.

### **Teach Remote Stage 2**

As well as specific work in the Northern Territory, the Government is helping to create a more stable teaching and learning environment for all students living in remote and very remote locations in Australia. Funding of \$14.3 million over three years for Teach Remote Stage 2, will help the National Alliance of Remote Indigenous Schools (NARIS) to continue its work to attract and retain high calibre teachers in remote areas. This funding will help by:

- providing a new funding pool of up to \$6.0 million over two years, to allow NARIS schools to offer salary supplements in order to attract and retain up to 200 highly qualified and experienced staff in remote schools;
- providing a professional development bonus for new teachers so they can undertake focused training in best practice in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in remote settings;
- resolving teacher registration and mobility issues; and
- partnering new teachers with an experienced principal or teacher mentor.

### **Clontarf Foundation and Engagement Strategies for Girls**

The Government is providing \$4.8 million over three years through the Sporting Chance program to encourage improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through sport and recreation activities. This funding will support the Clontarf Foundation to establish and operate new school-based academies targeting 348 Indigenous secondary school boys in New South Wales.

Girls are currently under-represented in this successful program and this funding will enable it to be expanded to target an additional 348 Indigenous secondary school girls through new girls only academies.

## **Employment**

### **Remote Jobs and Communities Program**

Following extensive consultations with remote communities, service providers, employers and other stakeholders, the Government will introduce a new Remote Jobs and Communities Program in remote Australia from 1 July 2013.

The program will replace four major programs in remote Australia: Job Services Australia (JSA), Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program, Disability Employment Services (DES), and the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP).

The Government will provide \$1.5 billion over five years from 2013-14 to fund the program.

Under the new arrangements, each of 65 remote servicing regions will be serviced by a single provider, and each provider will have a permanent presence in their region. Providers will work in close partnership with communities and they will jointly develop Community Action Plans that will direct effort to meet the needs of individual job seekers and communities.

There will be a 'jobs-first' focus which will see job seekers participating in activities in line with their participation requirements and capacities and that are meaningful to them because they provide work-related skills and help build better communities. A Participation Account will provide funds to address vocational and non-vocational barriers that are preventing people from getting work or participating in their communities. A new Remote Youth Leadership and Development Corps will be the flagship program for youth. The Youth Corps will assist young people aged 24 and under to make better transitions to work by providing up to 12,000 places over five years.

A Community Development Fund will provide grants for larger projects to buttress community capacity building and economic development. This will open up opportunities for communities to become more involved in services delivered in their communities.

This initiative is being implemented by the Departments of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

### **Community Based Employment Advice Services**

This measure provides ongoing funding for five Community Based Employment Advice Services (CBEAS) through the provision of Government grants to the Working Women's Centres in Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia, the Employment Law Centre of Western Australia, and JobWatch in Victoria. From 2012-13 the Government will significantly increase existing funding levels for the CBEAS by committing \$7.1 million over four years to enable the centres to continue their important services.

The CBEAS are not-for-profit organisations which play a valuable role in providing advice, assistance and information to Australians who experience difficulties in asserting and exercising their workplace rights. Some of the services that CBEAS offer include self-help information sessions for people representing themselves before Fair Work Australia, evening legal advice services, community legal education and research services, and telephone advisory services.



CBEAS provide vital services to local communities, including regional, remote and rural areas. By increasing existing funding levels, the Government will further the capacity of CBEAS to meet the demands of clients in regional areas who have restricted access to employment services.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Early Childhood Education and Care**

#### **Early Childhood Education and Care – Childcare Reform Agenda Workforce**

The Childcare Reform Agenda Workforce Package consists of two initiatives which will build the early childhood education and care workforce. The Government is investing \$9.2 million over four years from 2011-12 to support the early childhood workforce by improving the quality and uptake of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for experienced early childhood educators; with a focus on rural and remote areas of Australia.

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 Government is also investing \$500,000 to consider the inclusion of competencies in early childhood mental health and wellbeing, within early childhood qualifications.

#### **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) which represents an investment of approximately \$28.0 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.

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 the Council of Australian Governments 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 provide Government and communities, including regional, remote and Indigenous communities, with the information they need to inform policy and planning around early childhood development.

The ongoing commitment includes funding for AEDI coordination and targeted community engagement activities in each State and Territory; the aim of which is to support communities, schools, teachers and government agencies to participate in the AEDI data collection and engage with the results.

### **Budget Based Funded Child Care Services – improved standards**

The Australian Government has provided \$59.4 million over four years from 2010-11 to assist centre-based Budget Based Funded (BBF) services meet key aspects of the new National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and care. In particular, the investment will improve the existing infrastructure of centre based BBF services, increase the qualifications of staff in all such child care services and improve their governance. Ongoing funding for repairs and maintenance of infrastructure as well as the increased costs for qualified staff will also be provided. BBF child care services support some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and operate largely in rural, remote and Indigenous communities, where the childcare market is unable to provide services.

### **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 which was introduced from January 2012. 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 Government is providing \$955.0 million to States and Territories over five years, to achieve universal access to early childhood education – so that 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 Government 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.

### **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 are being 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 leading the establishment of the centres, including undertaking community consultations.

## **Schools**

### **National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program**

This measure provides \$222.0 million to extend and expand the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program for a further three years, from 2012 to 2014, thus delivering on the Government's election commitment. The 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 funding being directed to regional and remote schools.

This measure extends funding to December 2014 for the approximately 2,550 schools previously funded, as well as providing funding for up to an additional 1,000 schools from 2012 to 2014. There will be a focus on disadvantaged regional and remote schools in the expansion of the program.

### **More Support for Students with Disability**

This initiative is providing \$200.0 million in additional funding to government and non-government education authorities to support their work with students with disability and/or learning difficulties.

Through this initiative, to be delivered over the 2012 and 2013 school years, education authorities will have the flexibility to select a range of activities that will best meet the needs of students, teachers and schools in their jurisdiction. This includes flexibility to provide targeted support for teachers and schools operating in regional and remote areas.

The major focus of this short-term initiative is to build the capacity of Australian schools and teachers to better support students with disability, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work.

### **Empowering Local Schools**

The Government committed \$69.1 million over four years from 2010-11 to empower local communities to assist in improving student performance and outcomes at their schools. Around a third of participating schools will be 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 Phase Two commencing in 2015.

### **Rewards for School Improvement**

The Reward for School Improvement initiative aims to encourage a nationally consistent and rigorous approach to school self-evaluation and improvement planning through implementation of a National School Improvement Framework and reward payments to schools showing the most improvement.

Commencing in early 2015, around 500 schools will receive a reward payment of up to \$75,000. From 2016 around 1,000 schools will be rewarded each year for four years. In total, \$275.6 million in reward payments to schools will be provided over five years, with a minimum of \$88.8 million in reward payments to be made to regional schools.

### **Smarter Schools National Partnerships**

The Government is committed to improving the educational outcomes of all school students, particularly those at risk of falling behind. The Government is providing \$2.6 billion over 7 years to the States and Territories under three Smarter Schools National Partnerships in the key areas of addressing disadvantage, raising literacy and numeracy outcomes and improving teacher quality. Over a quarter of all Australian schools (over 2600) have been targeted for support through the National Partnership for Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities and/or the National Partnership for Literacy and Numeracy, and a significant number of these National Partnership schools are located in regional Australia.

Across Australia, 57.3 per cent of all National Partnership schools are located outside a major city. Approximately 28 per cent of all schools in regional areas and approximately 47.4 per cent of all schools in remote areas will participate in at least one National Partnership. These figures indicate the National Partnerships are reaching greater percentages of schools in regional and remote areas of Australia, than they are for major cities. These National Partnerships are contributing to improved learning engagement and outcomes for students in participating school communities.

### **Youth Connections Program**

The Youth Connections program provides \$287.0 million over four years (to December 2013) for individual support services to ensure young people at risk of not attaining Year 12 or an equivalent qualification build resilience, skills and attributes that promote positive choices and wellbeing.

The School Business Community Partnership Broker program provides \$183.0 million over four years (to December 2013) to harness resources and build local infrastructure

to support communities to share responsibility for young people's learning and development.

According to the Accessibility/Remote Index of Australia, these programs provide 67.6 per cent of annual funding (GST exclusive) to non major city regions.

### **National Broadband Network Enabled Education and Skills Services Program**

To support the development and trialling of online education and skills services that take advantage of the high speed broadband connections being made available through the NBN, the Government has appropriated \$27.2 million over four years from 2011-12 to implement the NBN-Enabled Education and Skills Services Program. The program seeks to develop and trial services that provide more interactive and effective learning opportunities for all Australians, no matter where they live.

The program will focus on proposals that conduct NBN enabled projects within, connecting to, or preferably between NBN early release sites, including both regional and metropolitan areas. Funded projects should reach students, learners, and trainees in new and innovative ways, including in their homes and workplaces. Program funding will target those communities to first benefit from the NBN, which will impact education and skills development in regional and remote areas.

### **Additional Commonwealth Support for school students in regions**

The Government is the primary source of public funding for non-government schools. Under the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*, the Government provides recurrent and capital funding to non-government schools as well as additional funding for programs designed to support school students in regional areas.

#### **Remoteness Loading**

Non-government schools, which bear higher costs of delivering education services in regional and remote areas of Australia, will receive a loading on their per capita recurrent grant funding if they have students studying at eligible locations. Non government schools or campuses classified as 'Moderately Accessible', 'Remote' or 'Very Remote' receive an additional 5 per cent, 10 per cent or 20 per cent respectively of the funding entitlement associated with their socioeconomic status (SES) score.

#### **English as a Second Language – New Arrivals Program**

The English as a Second Language - New Arrivals Program delivers intensive English language tuition to eligible newly arrived migrant school students, many of whom are located in regional areas/locations.

#### **Country Areas Program**

The Country Areas Program (CAP) assists students at rural, regional and remote schools in the States and the Northern Territory with the additional educational costs that result from geographical isolation.

CAP is intended to support quality learning outcomes for rural and geographically isolated primary and secondary school students. Non-government education authorities may use the Country Areas Program funding for projects which support curriculum enhancement. Examples of such projects include excursions, travel or educational opportunities where the costs are greater because of geographic isolation, information and communication technology initiatives, teacher professional development, and the promotion and support of the CAP program.

## **Review of Funding for Schooling**

An independent Review of Funding for Schooling, undertaken by a panel, chaired by David Gonski AC, concluded at the end of 2011 with the panel's report being delivered to Government in late 2011.

The Government publicly released the Review Report on 20 February 2012, together with an initial response. The Report makes far-reaching recommendations for school funding reform. The Report also makes clear that, before its recommendations could be implemented, a significant amount of further work would need to be done.

The Government's response sets out how further work will be undertaken. The recommendations are being worked through with the education community, including those authorities that run schools – the States and Territories, the Catholic system, and Australia's independent schooling sector. This work commenced immediately following the release of the Report.

The Government is also engaging the whole Australian community with this reform effort, and a nation-wide series of events has commenced to engage directly with Australian families, teachers, principals, education stakeholders and the wider community.

The Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Hon Peter Garrett MP, has also hosted a number of forums in regional Australia including: Mount Pleasant (Victoria), Mango Hill (Queensland), Narre Warren (Victoria), Wollongong (New South Wales), Port Macquarie (New South Wales), Rockingham (Western Australia), East Devonport (Tasmania), Burnie (Tasmania), Redbank Plains (Queensland) and Ipswich (Queensland).

## **Supporting Teachers**

### **Reward Payments for Great Teachers**

The Government has committed \$225.0 million to 2014-15 for the Rewards for Great Teachers election commitment with a total commitment of \$1.1 billion to 2018-19. This funding will facilitate the development of a new nationally consistent and objective performance management and development system for all teachers, along with a nationally consistent approach to teacher certification at the Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher levels, and the provision of a one-off teacher reward payment for teachers who achieve certification at the Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher levels.

The Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership is leading the development of the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework and a nationally consistent approach to teacher certification. The Framework and certification process will be introduced in schools across Australia from 2013.

The Rewards for Great Teachers initiative will help to improve teacher performance while providing an incentive to encourage quality teachers to remain in the classroom where they have the biggest impact on student achievement.

### **Teach Next**

The Teach Next initiative provides an employment-based pathway into teaching for highly skilled professionals. The \$15.9 million program aims to help address ongoing teacher shortages in specialised subject areas such as mathematics and science, and in hard to staff schools, particularly in regional areas.

Four intakes over July 2012, January 2013, July 2013 and January 2014 will provide places for up to 395 participants in the program.

### **Teach for Australia**

The Teach for Australia initiative is supported under the Smarter Schools - Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership. The \$22.0 million investment in the Teach for Australia initiative provides a new employment-based pathway into teaching for high-achieving university graduates. The program attracts those who may have been destined for alternative career paths by offering a unique combination of university study and employment-based teacher education. It involves a two-year supported placement for participants in disadvantaged secondary schools (with reduced teaching load), while they complete their Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching with the University of Melbourne.

The program has been successfully implemented in Victorian and Australian Capital Territory Government schools and the Victorian Catholic sector. The program expanded into the Northern Territory for the first time in 2012. Almost 40 per cent of associates have been placed in regional or remote schools since the program began in 2009.

### **Trade Training**

#### **Trade Training Centres in Schools Program**

The Government is providing \$2.5 billion from 2008 to 2018 to fund the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program to give all secondary students access to greater training opportunities and to help address skill shortages in traditional trades and other eligible occupations.

Trade Training Centres are being established to help increase the proportion of students achieving Year 12 or an equivalent qualification. An important step in

achieving this increase is to ensure students have access to high quality, relevant education and training opportunities that continue to engage and encourage them to complete their studies while opening pathways for future employment.

After five years, more than \$1.2 billion has been announced for over 370 projects benefitting over 1,070 schools. Of those, more than 60 per cent (over 670 schools) are located in regional (non-metropolitan) Australia.

A priority for funding is to support secondary school communities with Indigenous students, and students from remote, regional or disadvantaged communities.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander School Education**

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments and launched by Education Ministers in June 2011. The Action Plan contains outcomes, targets and performance indicators as well as 55 actions at the national, systemic and local levels across six domains of activity that evidence suggests will have the most impact on lifting the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These domains are: readiness for school; engagement and wellbeing; attendance; literacy and numeracy; leadership, quality teaching and workforce development; and pathways to real post-school options. Focus schools were identified under the Action Plan to assure Education Ministers that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were receiving the benefits of national reforms. Education Ministers agreed that a number of the local level actions will be specifically progressed in these Focus schools.

### **Focus School Next Steps Initiative**

As part of its commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan, the Government is investing \$30.0 million until the end of 2013 to support 100 focus schools to close the gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other Australian students. Sixty nine of these schools are located in regional areas. The Focus School Next Steps Initiative uses proven approaches to lift the attendance and classroom engagement and achievement of over 9,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with over 6,000 of these students in regional Australia. Participating schools were identified on the basis of those schools with the greatest need for additional Australian Government assistance. Participating schools will commit to the development of school-community partnerships and personalised learning plans for each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student.

### **Increased funding for Indigenous boarding students**

The Government has committed \$22.4 million over four years from 2010-11 to provide increased Indigenous Supplementary Assistance (ISA) to non-remote, non-government boarding schools with more than 50 Indigenous boarding students from remote Indigenous communities. This initiative will provide a higher rate of ISA for these



students and will assist these schools to better serve the needs of Indigenous students from remote Indigenous communities.

### **200 Additional Teachers in the Northern Territory**

In order to improve attendance and education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and support remote schools in the Northern Territory, the Government provided \$107.8 million in the four years from 2009 to 2012 for an additional 200 teachers to be recruited by the end of 2012. Since 2009, \$91.6 million has been allocated for the recruitment, placement and retention of up to 170 classroom teachers in agreed remote and very remote Northern Territory government schools (this \$91.6 million is inclusive of \$14.7 million that was redirected to Teacher Housing and is included in the \$35.7 million noted below under Teacher Housing). An allocation of \$16.2 million has been made for the engagement of 30 additional teachers in non-government schools in remote communities.

### **Teacher Housing**

Since 2009, the Australian Government has provided \$35.7 million for the construction and renovation of teacher housing in remote areas of the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Attracting the best and brightest teachers to commit to teach in remote locations, and to stay on long enough to make a real difference, depends on a number of critical factors, including the provision of housing which is an important component of the overall package offered to teachers in remote and very remote communities.

### **Building Australia's Future Workforce – Indigenous Ranger Cadetship Pilot**

To assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to complete school, this \$4.1 million pilot program will provide culturally relevant training in a school setting linked to natural resource management, heritage-related activities and cultural studies. Students in regional and remote communities will be supported through the Indigenous Ranger Cadetship pilot to build capacity for further study, training, jobs and careers in natural resource management.

The pilot also aims to generate strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement and improve school capacity to retain students to Year 12 and to assist students with their transition from school to further education, training and work. It is anticipated that the first cohort of pilot schools (up to six) will begin activity in Term 3 2012, with the second cohort of pilot schools (up to six) beginning from the start of the 2013 school year.

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

In 2011-12, the Indigenous Youth Career Pathways Program (IYCP) commenced to assist more Indigenous young people to make the transition from school to further education and work. It provides \$50.7 million over four years to fund 6,400 School

Based Traineeship commencements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 11 and 12.

While the measure focused on the provision of School-Based Traineeships and associated support, including Active Case Management to students in Years 11 and 12, funding is also available for aspiration building and mentoring for younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students, to move into a School-Based Traineeship, complete their schooling and then transition into further vocational training or education, or a job.

The program operates in schools with large Indigenous populations or those located in low socio-economic status areas with viable labour markets. The IYCP will not be available in the 65 Remote Areas where the Remote Jobs and Communities Program will operate.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Income Support**

### **ABSTUDY**

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.

Student Start-Up Scholarships worth \$2,050 (two payments of \$1,025) in 2012 and indexed annually from 2013 are paid to eligible ABSTUDY recipients in higher education. Relocation Scholarships are paid to university students receiving ABSTUDY Living Allowance who are dependent recipients and 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.

These Relocation Scholarships are worth \$4,000 for the first year that students are required to live away from home to attend university. For students from major cities the Relocation Scholarship is worth \$1,000 for each subsequent year of study. Students from regional and remote areas receive \$2,000 for the second and third years of study and \$1,000 each year thereafter. The Relocation Scholarship is indexed annually and particularly benefits rural and regional students.

Generally, 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 ABSTUDY Living Allowance through employment. Since 1 January 2011, young people who have worked part-time for at least 15 hours a week for at least two years since leaving school, or earned, in an 18-month period since leaving school, an amount equivalent to 75 per cent of the maximum rate of pay under the appropriate National Training Wage Award, may also qualify as independent if they are required to relocate to study, their family home is in an outer regional, remote or very remote area (according to the Australian Standard Geographical Classification) and their parents'

income is less than \$150,000 a year. These provisions were extended on 1 January 2012 to eligible students from inner regional areas.

Also on 1 January 2012, the staged reduction from 25 years in the age at which independence status is achieved for ABSTUDY was completed, with independence set at age 22 years.

Further, the Parental Income Test threshold for the maximum payment of ABSTUDY for dependent students which is indexed each January was increased to \$46,335 for 2012.

On 1 July 2012 the income free area for the personal income test will increase to \$400 per fortnight from \$236 per fortnight and the Student Income Bank will increase to \$10,000 from \$6,000. This will mean that students will be able to earn more from part time work before their payments are affected.

## **Employment**

### **Building Australia's Future Workforce package**

Building Australia's Future Workforce (BAFW) was a centrepiece of the 2011-12 Budget to build the nation's workforce capacity and ensure that every Australian has the opportunity to enjoy the dignity of work. BAFW initiatives encourage, support and reward some of the most disadvantaged Australians who are outside of the active workforce – people with disability, very long-term unemployed people, parents and those facing geographical disadvantage.

Through BAFW, the Australian Government is harnessing support across government, industry, employers, communities and individuals to increase workforce participation to build the nation's longer-term prosperity and economic growth.

### **Building Australia's Future Workforce – Extension of Priority Employment Areas, Local Employment Coordinators and Jobs and Skills Expos**

The Government allocated \$45.2 million over two years to extend the Priority Employment Area initiative, including Jobs and Skills Expos and Local Employment Coordinators (LECs) until 30 June 2013. Twenty priority employment areas were identified against a range of indicators as vulnerable to labour market disadvantage and requiring extra assistance. Thirteen of the twenty areas are located in regional Australia. A LEC is engaged in each priority employment area to drive local solutions to local labour market issues. LECs implement a Regional Employment Plan and work closely with the Regional Development Australia Committees, Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators (where these align); and other stakeholders to ensure strategic and coordinated responses. LECs also have access to a flexible funding pool to support their work. Around 40 Jobs and Skills Expos will also be held across Australia up to 30 June 2013.

## **Building Australia's Future Workforce – Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans**

The Government is providing funding of \$19.1 million over three years, to 30 June 2014, for 34 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators to work in regional communities across the country. These coordinators work with community stakeholders, including Regional Development Australia Committees, to develop Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans that include strategies to improve participation and outcomes in education, training and employment in regional Australia. The Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators are working to ensure communities are aware of the opportunities available including facilitating linkages across Government programs.

The Coordinators will ensure regions can access and gain maximum benefit from suitable Government initiatives; and will look for opportunities to solve local problems in education, skills and jobs development through better connections of stakeholders and/or programs. The Plans, built from local knowledge, meet local needs and can be drawn upon to inform the delivery of a range of Government policy and programs. The Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators work closely with LECs.

### **Indigenous Employment Program**

The Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) offers funding for a range of activities focused on employment, training, aspiration building and business support. The IEP complements employment services available under Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services, which are the largest provider of employment services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The services provide customised and flexible assistance for Indigenous job seekers, including pre-employment and job-specific training; employment placement, support and mentoring to help Indigenous Australians stay in work; and support for employers such as wage subsidies and cross-cultural training.

The IEP funds projects which:

- encourage and support employers to provide sustainable employment opportunities;
- encourage and support Indigenous Australians to take up training and employment opportunities, stay in jobs and enhance their future employment prospects;
- develop the Indigenous workforce and economic development strategies that support local and regional economic growth; and
- develop sustainable Indigenous businesses and economic opportunities in urban, regional and remote areas. The Remote Jobs and Communities Program, referred to earlier, will replace the IEP in remote areas from 1 July 2013.

### **Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council**

The Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council (AIMSC) is an initiative that works to strengthen business-to-business links between Indigenous enterprises and corporate and government Australia. Established in September 2009, with \$3.7 million in Government support, AIMSC helps Indigenous-owned businesses integrate into the supply chain of private sector corporations and government agencies, thereby contributing to a sustainable and prosperous Indigenous enterprise sector in Australia. AIMSC certifies Indigenous businesses from across the country, including regional Australia.

Due to the initiative's success, the Government is providing additional funding of up to \$7.5 million from 2012-13 over three years through the IEP to support the ongoing work of AIMSC.

### **Job Services Australia**

The Australian Government launched Job Services Australia on 1 July 2009. Representing an investment of over \$6.0 billion over four years from 2009-10, Job Services Australia provides individualised assistance and tailored employment services to help job seekers secure sustainable employment. This tailored assistance, including access to prevocational and vocational training, is available to all regional job seekers.

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 2,000 sites across Australia. Nearly 40 per cent of job seekers being assisted under Job Services Australia live outside the capital cities.

### **Building Australia's Future Workforce – Job Services Australia Demonstration Pilots**

As part of the Building Australia's Future Workforce Package in the 2011-12 Budget, the Government announced \$4.7 million towards the Job Services Australia Demonstration Pilots. The primary objective of this initiative is to demonstrate how enhancements to current service delivery arrangements for Stream Four in Job Services Australia can be used to achieve improved employment and education outcomes for highly disadvantaged job seekers. Four of the twenty pilots are in regional areas of Australia.

### **New Enterprise Incentive Scheme, Harvest Labour Service and National Harvest Information Service**

Eligible job seekers who are interested in starting and running a small business can access assistance through the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS). NEIS provides accredited small business training, business advice and mentoring for eligible job seekers, as well as ongoing income support for up to 52 weeks.

There are 48 NEIS Panel Members (NPMs) nationally. NPMs provide a range of services to assist eligible unemployed people to establish and run a small business.

The Harvest Labour Service (HLS) is a part of Job Services Australia. Where there is an acknowledged shortfall in a local labour market during harvest periods, HLS helps growers to supplement local labour with out-of-area workers.

HLS is delivered by 11 organisations (which are also Job Services Australia providers) through 33 sites across 19 Harvest Areas in the Northern Territory and all States except Tasmania.

The National Harvest Labour Information Service (NHLIS) provides national coordination and dissemination of information about harvest related work opportunities across Australia, including those areas not serviced by HLS. The NHLIS is delivered by a single national provider.

NEIS, HLS and NHLIS are funded through the Job Services Australia appropriation.

### **Job Services Australia and Indigenous Job Seekers**

This three-year, \$6.1 million measure was announced in the 2011-12 Budget and will commence from 1 July 2012. 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. The pilot will be evaluated at the end of the first and second year of operation and inform future policy.

### **Job Services Australia and Redundant Workers**

The BlueScope Steel Labour Adjustment Program provides \$9.9 million from 2011 to 2015 to support workers made redundant as a result of restructuring at BlueScope Steel's Port Kembla Plant in New South Wales and its Hastings Plant in Victoria.

- This support recognises the significant disadvantage faced by workers made redundant in these regions and provides immediate access to Stream 3 support through Job Services Australia.

The Forestry Industry in Tasmania Structural Adjustment Program provides \$14.0 million from 2011-2016 to support workers made redundant as a result of restructuring in the native forestry industry in Tasmania.

- This support recognises the significant disadvantage faced by workers made redundant in the forestry industry in Tasmania and provides immediate access to Stream 3 support through Job Services Australia.

The Live Cattle Exports Assistance Package provides \$0.9 million from 2011 to 2014 to support workers made redundant as a result of the Government's temporary suspension of live cattle exports to Indonesia.

- This support recognises the significant disadvantage faced by workers made redundant in this industry and provides immediate access to Stream 2 support through Job Services Australia.

**Building Australia's Future Workforce – Better Futures, Local Solutions: Compulsory Participation Plans and Supports for Teenage Parents ('Helping Young Parents' measure)**

The Government is investing \$47.3 million over four years to trial a new approach to supporting young parents. The Helping Young Parents trial provides new services, opportunities and responsibilities to boost the educational attainment, job readiness, child wellbeing and functioning of families with young children in some of the most disadvantaged locations in the country.

The trial commenced on 1 January 2012 in ten identified Local Government Areas—Kwinana (Western Australia), Rockhampton (Queensland), Logan (Queensland), Wyong (New South Wales), Bankstown (New South Wales), Shellharbour (New South Wales), Greater Shepparton (Victoria), Hume (Victoria), Burnie (Tasmania) and Playford (South Australia).

The trial aims to ensure that participants undertake education and training leading to the attainment of a Year 12 or equivalent qualification, and participate in activities that focus on the health and early childhood development of their children. The success of the trial depends upon not only a tailored service offer based on Australian Government services, but from successful linkages with State government services, local community organisations, local service arrangements and the work of the Government and Community Action Leaders, Local Employment Coordinators and Local Steering Committees. Early indications from the trial indicate that it is operating well in local communities, and that young parents are taking full advantage of the opportunities on offer.

**Building Australia's Future Workforce – Better Futures, Local Solutions: Compulsory Participation Requirements for Jobless Families in 10 locations**

The Government is investing \$71.1 million over four years to trial a new approach to supporting Jobless Families. As part of the trial, jobless families will have more engagement with the Department of Human Services when their children are young. This will be combined with extra support for these families, including helping parents access early childhood development opportunities for their children, to prepare them for starting school as well as services to help parents meet their participation and employment goals through voluntary access to Job Services Australia.

The trial will commence on 1 July 2012 in 10 identified Local Government Areas—Kwinana (Western Australia), Rockhampton (Queensland), Logan (Queensland), Wyong (New South Wales), Bankstown (New South Wales), Shellharbour (New South Wales), Greater Shepparton (Victoria), Hume (Victoria), Burnie (Tasmania) and Playford (South Australia).

### **Seasonal Worker Program**

The Government will provide \$18.0 million over three years from 1 July 2012 for the Seasonal Worker Program.

This initiative builds on the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme. The program will be open to employers in the horticultural industry and seasonal workers from East Timor, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to meet unmet demand.

The Government will also undertake a small-scale, three-year trial of seasonal labour mobility arrangements with cotton and cane growers, aquaculture ventures and accommodation providers in the tourism industry.

A total of 12,000 visas will be available under the program – 10,450 for horticulture and the remaining 1,550 for the three-year trial.

### **Disability Employment Services**

Disability Employment Services (DES) has been in operation since 1 March 2010. The objective of the program is to help individuals with injury, disability or a health condition to secure and maintain sustainable employment. The services focus on the needs of job seekers, with an increased emphasis on employment, skills development and education and training.

DES 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 (ESS) for job seekers with permanent disability and with an assessed need for more long-term, regular support in the workplace.

DES-ESS will be the subject of a competitive tender in 2012. The Government will offer a five-year contract term for DES-ESS, from 2013 to 2018. The procurement process is part of the Government's commitment to quality services for people with disability. It means that job seekers, employers and the community at large, including those in regional locations, can be confident that the best possible providers are delivering those services.



For four years, from 2012–13, the Government will invest more than \$3.2 billion in DES.

## **Workplace Relations**

### **General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy Scheme**

The Government is committed to assisting employees who lose their job as a result of the liquidation or bankruptcy of their employer. Protection is provided under the General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy Scheme (GEERS) to employees in these circumstances and eligible employees may be able to gain assistance for up to three months unpaid or underpaid wages, unpaid annual leave, unpaid long service leave, up to five weeks payment in lieu of notice and up to four weeks redundancy pay for each year of completed service.

In 2010-11, the Government assisted 15,412 employees under GEERS and provided \$151.5 million in assistance.

## **Social Investment**

### **Social Enterprise Development and Investment Funds**

The Government has provided \$20.0 million to improve access to seed and growth capital for social enterprises through the Social Enterprise Development and Investment Funds (SEDIF). The SEDIF funds managers are Social Enterprise Finance Australia and Foresters Community Finance which will provide innovative financial products and support services to social enterprises that are ready to take on investment.

This approach seeks to improve the ability of social enterprises to access finance and support at the right time in order to grow their businesses, and by doing so, increase the positive impact of their work in their communities.

The SEDIF funds managers are committed to making loans to social enterprises and organisations that can demonstrate significant social impact as well as economic viability and the ability to create employment opportunities for communities, including those in regional Australia.

## **FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

The Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio administers a large number of initiatives designed to increase the social and economic well-being of all Australians, particularly those who are vulnerable or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Many of the Department's programs and services have a direct impact on people living in regional and remote Australia by ensuring they are accessible and focussed on individual needs. Indigenous Australians living in regional and remote locations in particular, benefit from a range of initiatives designed to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. These include National Partnership arrangements with State and Territory governments and support services specifically targeting the needs of Indigenous Australians.

### **SPATIAL REPORTING**

Table 5 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio.

**Table 5: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
<b>Program 1.1: Family Support</b>					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	61	94	95	97
	Non-regional	81	126	127	129
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
<b>Program 1.2: Family Tax Benefit</b>					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	13	4	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	6,955	7,304	7,499	7,677
	Non-regional	12,894	13,541	13,904	14,233
	Non-specific	28	30	31	31
<b>Program 1.3: Parent and Baby Payments</b>					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	1	1	-	-
	Non-regional	2	3	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	684	704	722	754
	Non-regional	1,665	1,732	1,783	1,859
	Non-specific	3	3	3	3
<b>Program 2.1: Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention</b>					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	14	13	13	13
	Non-regional	20	18	19	19
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
<b>Program 2.2: Affordable Housing</b>					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	16	19	21	24
	Non-regional	171	106	117	138
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
<b>Program 3.1: Financial Management</b>					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	51	56	43	35
	Non-regional	87	94	72	58
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
<b>Program 3.2: Community Investment</b>					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	24	25	27	29
	Non-regional	16	16	18	19
	Non-specific	2	2	2	2
<b>Program 3.3: Income Support for Vulnerable People</b>					
Special Appropriations	Regional	8	9	10	10
	Non-regional	72	80	86	92
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1

**Table 5: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2012-13 \$m	Forward estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m
Program 3.4: Support for People in Special Circumstances					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
Special Appropriations	Regional	2	2	2	3
	Non-regional	3	3	4	4
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 3.5: Supplementary Payments and Support for Income Support Recipients					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	17	9	9	9
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	5	5	5	6
	Non-regional	9	9	9	10
	Non-specific	-	1	1	1
Program 4.1: Income Support for Seniors					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	6	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	12,822	13,608	14,557	15,646
	Non-regional	22,693	24,084	25,764	27,691
	Non-specific	1,262	1,339	1,432	1,538
Program 4.2: Allowances, Concessions and Services for Seniors					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	1	1	1	-
	Non-regional	2	2	2	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	82	108	117	123
	Non-regional	145	191	206	218
	Non-specific	8	11	11	12
Program 5.1: Targeted Community Care					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	76	88	94	96
	Non-regional	108	125	133	136
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 5.2: Disability Support Pension					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	2	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	5,811	6,021	6,312	6,632
	Non-regional	8,881	9,202	9,647	10,137
	Non-specific	154	160	168	176

**Table 5: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs**

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate	
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	
Program 5.3: Income Support For Carers						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	1	1	1	1	
	Non-regional	2	2	2	2	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Special Appropriations	Regional	2,264	2,515	2,796	3,078	
	Non-regional	4,004	4,462	4,969	5,479	
	Non-specific	10	10	11	11	
Program 5.4 - Services and Support for People with Disability						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	99	104	95	100	
	Non-regional	221	232	223	235	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Program 5.5: Support for Carers						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	4	4	4	4	
	Non-regional	8	8	8	9	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Program 5.7: Early Intervention Services for Children with Disability						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	26	27	26	26	
	Non-regional	59	60	61	61	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Program 6.1: Gender Equality for Women						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-	
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-	
	Non-specific	27	32	30	30	
Program 7.1: Economic Development and Participation						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	168	74	82	83	
	Non-regional	14	6	7	7	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Program 7.2: Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	67	77	78	80	
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Program 7.3: Native Title and Land Rights						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	76	77	79	80	
	Non-regional	11	11	11	11	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Program 7.4: Indigenous Capability and Development						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	39	32	26	26	
	Non-regional	32	26	21	22	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Program 7.5: Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory						
Annual Appropriations	Regional	6	5	5	5	
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-	
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-	
Total - Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs		Regional	29,361	30,974	32,709	34,630
		Non-regional	51,237	54,153	57,203	60,580
		Non-specific	1,497	1,588	1,689	1,807

**Table 5: Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Portfolio Bodies**

Portfolio Body	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw arc	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Regional	20	20	20	20
	Non-regional	36	35	35	35
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	5	5	5	5
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Indigenous Business Australia	Regional	68	68	69	69
	Non-regional	49	49	50	51
	Non-specific	69	45	50	52
Indigenous Land Corporation	Regional	29	23	19	17
	Non-regional	17	18	18	18
	Non-specific	28	34	40	38
Torres Strait Regional Authority	Regional	29	35	35	31
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Portfolio Grand Total	Regional	29,507	31,120	32,852	34,767
	Non-regional	51,344	54,260	57,311	60,689
	Non-specific	1,594	1,667	1,779	1,897
- nil					

The spatial tables above set out the estimated payments and grants funding to be provided by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and portfolio bodies from 2012-13 to 2015-16 to support individuals, families and communities.

In 2012-13 it is estimated that \$29.0 billion (or about 36 per cent) of the Department's appropriations will support people living in regional Australia. Of the Department's estimated expenditure to support regional Australia, 98 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 following parameters should be noted in relation to the data provided:

- program data is based on the Department's 2011-12 data as not all funding commitments for future years have been finalised, and transfer payment information needs to be forecast;
- estimated non-regional and regional expenditure has been derived using the attribution of grant funding by service provider location/outlet data held by the

Department. In minor instances the billing address of the grant recipient has been used;

- the Department has not applied a materiality threshold; and
- data has been included as non-specific only where it relates to funding to organisations that provide multi-region support and payments to individuals, including those overseas.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme**

The Australian Government will provide \$1.0 billion over four years for the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This initiative will deliver personalised care and support to up to 10,000 Australians from 2013-14, increasing to 20,000 Australians from 2014-15. Eligible individuals will be entitled to reasonable and necessary care and support that reflects their individual circumstances.

This first stage of a NDIS will occur in up to four regions, to be announced following negotiations with State and Territory Governments. The Government will be seeking to share the costs with State and Territory Governments of individual care and support for people with a significant and permanent disability, and will bear the full remaining cost of this initiative.

The NDIS will fundamentally change the way disability care and support is provided. It will provide peace of mind for people with significant and permanent disability and those who care for them across Australia, including in regional areas.

### **Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children**

The Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children program is providing \$4.9 million over three years to improve access to allied health and education services to an additional 125 children with hearing and/or vision impairment in outer regional and remote Australia. This program will be delivered across Australia from 2012-13.

Utilising the National Broadband Network where available, children and their families will have access to information, guidance, support, and skills development from qualified allied health and education services where such expertise may otherwise be scarce in regional and remote locations.

The program will be delivered via a combination of high definition videoconferencing, mailed packages with lesson plans, information sheets, multi-media resources, telephone, fax, and email. In regions where the National Broadband Network is being rolled-out, the Government will provide for upgrades to existing videoconferencing infrastructure to ensure it is of high-definition quality.

## **Additional funding for Australian Disability Enterprises**

Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) will receive an ongoing funding injection from the Australian Government of \$59.6 million over four years to continue supporting more than 20,000 workers with disability across Australia.

This funding will help about 324 outlets operated by 199 organisations across Australia that provide supported employment opportunities for people with disability. ADEs provide meaningful work and training for people with a disability who need substantial ongoing support to maintain their employment. A total of 175 ADEs outlets (or 54 per cent) are located in regional areas.

## **Financial Counselling for Problem Gamblers**

The Australian Government will provide \$25.6 million over four years to implement 50 new financial counselling positions to support problem gamblers and their families. This initiative will be delivered nationally through existing Commonwealth Financial Counselling services. Currently, 61 per cent of the 95 Commonwealth Financial Counselling services are delivered to regional areas of Australia.

Under this measure, Commonwealth Financial Counsellors will undertake specialised training, and will work closely with local gambling venues and State government gambling counselling services. This measure was announced on 21 January 2012 as part of the Government's Tackling Problem Gambling Package.

## **Continuation of Income Management in Western Australia**

Income management in Western Australia will be continued, at a cost of \$13.5 million in 2012-13, to support around 1,000 people per year in metropolitan Perth and in the Kimberley region, to participate in income management and Financial Management Program services. Income management helps families balance their household budgets and ensure their welfare payments are spent in the best interests of their children. It ensures that money is available for life essentials, and provides a tool to stabilise people's circumstances and ease immediate financial stress.

Income management is part of the Australian Government's commitment to reforming the welfare payments system and supporting people to take responsibility for themselves and their families.

## **Extension of the means test exemption for the Western Australia Country Fuel Card**

The Australian Government is providing \$25.5 million over four years to continue the social security income test exemption for the value of the Western Australia Country Fuel Card and the Cost of Living Rebate Scheme. The exemption ensures that people living in an eligible Western Australia non-metropolitan local government area receiving the Western Australia Country Fuel Card and Cost of Living Rebate



maintain the full value of the Fuel Card and the Rebate to help with cost of living pressures.

### **Torres Strait Major Infrastructure Program Stage 5**

The Australian Government is providing \$21.2 million to work with the Queensland Government on a range of environmental health infrastructure projects in the Torres Strait related to water supply and reticulation, sanitation and wastewater, community roads and drainage, and serviced housing lots. Funding will also support new housing projects and help reduce overcrowding.

Previous projects have improved health outcomes in the region, with marked decreases in water and hygiene-related diseases. The program supports Indigenous economic development through local employment, training and business opportunities.

### **Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory**

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory is a comprehensive \$3.4 billion, ten year package, to support Aboriginal people to live strong lives and drive real change over a sustained period.

The package includes:

#### **Health**

The Australian Government is investing \$713.5 million over ten years to strengthen the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, youth and their families in Northern Territory communities, as part of the Stronger Futures package.

The Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory through Health measure is outlined in more detail in the Health and Ageing section of this Statement.

#### **Food security: strengthening remote stores**

Independent evaluation found a large improvement in the availability, range and quality of healthy food in remote communities as a result of the Australian Government's work to licence community stores. As announced in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the Government will provide \$40.9 million to continue stores licensing in the Northern Territory; expand it to more stores that are an important source of food, drink and groceries for remote Aboriginal communities and improve the range of available management options to make sure stores can stay open to service local people.

In addition, the Aboriginals Benefit Account has provided \$53.9 million to upgrade and construct new stores and store managers' housing in 18 communities throughout the Northern Territory. Participating stores are currently owned by, or in the process

of transferring ownership to, licensed Indigenous corporations. Works will commence in 2012 and are expected to continue through to 2015.

### **Community Safety and Justice**

The Australian Government is making a \$619.3 million long-term investment in community safety in the Northern Territory.

#### **More police**

Funding will continue for 60 remote area police officers for a further ten years. The Australian Government will also continue to support the Northern Territory's Child Abuse Task Force, the National Aboriginal Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Task Force, and the Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks, including the Dog Operations Unit. People in remote communities expressed concern about issues related to alcohol and drug abuse and these investments will continue to work on these issues.

The Australian Government is also funding an additional four remote area police stations, as well as funding to operate these stations, and the five permanent stations we have already funded in the Northern Territory, for the next ten years.

#### **Night patrols**

The Australian Government is also continuing to fund community night patrol services for the next ten years. These services operate across 80 communities to support community members, especially women and children, and defuse violent incidents before serious consequences arise to achieve community safety outcomes. This program not only provides an important safety service, but it also employs more than 350 people in Northern Territory communities.

#### **Legal support**

The Australian Government will provide additional funding for legal assistance and advice, primarily in remote communities, for a further ten years. These services ensure Aboriginal people have access to appropriate advice, support, referral and representation when in contact with the justice system.

### **Tackling Alcohol Abuse**

To support communities to better tackle alcohol abuse, the Government provided \$75.6 million over eleven years in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook to support communities to develop alcohol management plans and provide education and skills training about alcohol, prevention programs and referral services.

### **Building access to quality education outcomes**

To improve schooling outcomes in the Northern Territory, the Government is providing \$582.6 million over ten years in the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Package, including:

- building a quality school workforce;
- a school nutrition program; and
- support to increase school attendance.

These measures are outlined in more detail in the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations section of this Statement.

### **Supporting Children, Youth and Families**

The Australian Government is investing more than \$ 412.6 million over ten years to strengthen the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, youth and their families in the Northern Territory. This funding will support families with playgroups, home and parenting support services, youth workers and safe houses for the next decade.

Under this initiative, the number of Communities for Children sites in the Northern Territory will increase from four to 19, with a focus on remote locations. This approach encourages existing health, education and community organisations to get together to plan and deliver local parenting services, playgroups, and support to help people build healthy homes.

It also includes funding for another ten years for:

- eight existing supported and intensive playgroups to help develop children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive abilities;
- Intensive Family Support Services in up to 23 communities, for practical parenting help where children are at risk of entering the child protection system;
- continuing support for 16 women's safe houses in urban and remote areas to protect women and children through crisis accommodation and support; and
- continuing the Youth In Communities Program in more than 30 remote communities to keep young people connected with school or training and help prevent youth suicide, self-harm, and alcohol and substance abuse.

The Government is also continuing to invest in front line child protection through two mobile child protection teams. These teams provide 25 extra front line workers to support Northern Territory child protection officers so more investigations can occur in remote and regional communities to make sure more children are safe. An extra 12 part-time Aboriginal family and community workers will also be funded across 19 remote communities – on top of the current 35 full time workers, this will mean a total of 47 family and community workers in remote Northern Territory. These local workers inform and support people in communities to prevent child abuse and neglect.

In addition, a funding allocation of \$30.2 million over ten years will provide for ongoing support for nine crèches in very remote Indigenous communities. These crèches will continue to play an important role in better preparing up to 225 children for school. This measure is outlined in more detail in the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations section of this Statement.

### **Funding for Homelands and Outstations**

Approximately 9,000 people live in small, remote and dispersed communities across the Northern Territory, known as homelands or outstations.

Since 2007, the Australian Government has provided the Northern Territory Government with \$20.0 million each year to support the delivery of municipal and essential services to these communities. The Australian Government has also made an unprecedented investment in facilities and services for people who choose to live in or regularly visit outstations and homelands through a range of programs and financial assistance, like health services, boarding facilities, housing maintenance and economic development.

Under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package, outstations and homelands in the Northern Territory will benefit from a \$206.4 million investment from the Australian Government and \$15.0 million from the Northern Territory Government. This funding supports the continuation of basic essential and municipal services over ten years.

This investment will help supply outstations and homelands with access to power, water and sewerage and road maintenance. The funding will also support garbage collection, dog control programs and operational costs for organisations that provide municipal and essential services.

### **Jobs Package**

Aboriginal people in remote communities across the Northern Territory will have greater employment and economic opportunities under the jobs package announced in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, including the following components.

#### **Working on Country Indigenous Rangers Program**

The Government is providing \$19.1 million to create 50 new ranger positions in the Northern Territory under the Caring for our Country initiative. The program provides real employment and training for Indigenous people, many of whom live in very remote parts of regional Australia.

The Working on Country Indigenous Rangers Program measure is outlined in more detail in the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities section of this Statement.

## Improving opportunities for Aboriginal people to get access to existing jobs in their communities

Through this package the Government will provide more traineeships and job shadowing opportunities to help ensure local people fill jobs available in their communities. The new 'Local Jobs for Local People' Indigenous traineeships will ensure up to 100 Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are supported to fill service delivery jobs in their communities as these become available. The package will also provide a jobs guarantee for Indigenous students from Northern Territory Growth Towns.

### **Remote Engagement and Coordination**

The Australian Government is providing \$427.4 million over ten years to:

- increase the numbers of Indigenous Engagement Officers in communities from 30 to 54 over the next two years, creating full and part-time job opportunities for up to another 60 local Aboriginal people;
- continue staff working and living in communities to support Indigenous Engagement Officers and become more involved in engaging with local people, including working in a more joined-up way at the regional level;
- continue support for the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service, so local community members can get equitable access to the services they need; and
- involve communities in planning and measuring what is happening in their communities under the Stronger Futures package.

### **Housing**

The Australian Government has now built over 600 new houses in the Northern Territory and rebuilt and refurbished some 2,100 more. The Australian Government is working with communities to agree voluntary leases over social housing and Commonwealth assets to ensure major reforms to property and tenancy management continue in remote communities. This Budget provides a further \$283.5 million for two crucial elements to continue this work.

#### Improving existing housing and accelerating the construction of new houses

The Australian Government is investing an additional \$230.4 million to improve existing housing in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. This commitment is on top of the \$1.7 billion the Australian Government is already providing for housing over ten years, some of which has been brought forward so houses can be built sooner.

## Healthy Homes

The Australian Government is investing a further \$53.1 million on Healthy Homes in the Northern Territory. Many buildings in remote Northern Territory communities contain asbestos. The Government is providing funding to remove asbestos containing material, including in houses scheduled for demolition so that new housing can be built.

## Continue investment in the Alice Springs Transformation Plan

The Australian Government has invested over \$150.0 million in the Alice Springs Transformation Plan (ASTP) since 2009 and is working in partnership with the Northern Territory Government to make the town camps a better place to live.

The Australian Government is providing an additional \$13.7 million to continue important family, community and intensive tenancy support projects under the ASTP for a further two years. These projects:

- tackle the devastating and harmful effects of alcohol abuse on Aboriginal people, children and families;
- improve school enrolment and attendance rates for Indigenous children;
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of women and children escaping domestic violence remains a high priority for action;
- deliver preventative measures that will overcome child neglect through strengthening parenting skills, education and support; and
- continue the Intensive Sustainable Tenancy Enabling Program to provide intensive services to people with complex social housing needs in Alice Springs town camps.

## Municipal and Essential Services Program

Beyond the Northern Territory, the Government is providing \$43.4 million in the Budget to support the continuation of municipal and essential services to approximately 38,000 people in around 350 remote Indigenous communities. This funding will supplement State and local governments in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania to deliver basic services including power, water and sewerage services, garbage collection and disposal, internal road maintenance, landscaping and dust control, animal and environmental health and organisational governance.

The Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments recently agreed to work together to progress genuine reform in this critical area.

## **Helping Indigenous families to own their own home**

The Australian Government supports Indigenous people to have access to the same housing options available to other Australians, including owning a home.

The Australian Government will assist up to an additional 545 Indigenous Australians to buy their own home in established housing markets over the next four years by merging the existing funding from the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land Program – which provides home loans and additional assistance in remote areas – and the Home Ownership Program – which provides home loans mainly in urban and regional areas, into a single Indigenous Home Ownership program.

The new program, to be managed by Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), will continue the existing range of support for people who cannot obtain finance from mainstream lenders.

The new program will make best use of the significant investment the Australian Government provides for home loans to help meet home ownership demand across Australia, while prioritising access for people seeking to move into home ownership on Indigenous land. This will help to ensure demand for home ownership in remote Indigenous communities is met while the States and the Northern Territory address issues such as lack of appropriate land tenure and individually surveyed and titled housing lots.

This initiative will assist approximately 490 people who are currently on the waiting list for a home loan with IBA and cannot obtain finance from mainstream lenders.

To date the Australian Government has supported over 15,000 Indigenous households to move into home ownership through concessional home loans and support provided by IBA.

The Australian Government also provides significant support to help Indigenous people build financial literacy skills. These services are available to people wishing to move into home ownership.

## **Remote Jobs and Communities Program**

The Australian Government is providing \$1.5 billion over five years to introduce a new Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) on 1 July 2013. The new arrangements will provide better and more integrated services, with:

- a single provider of employment, participation and community development services in each of the 65 remote servicing regions – providing better services on the ground;
- services that will be delivered in partnership with the community, underpinned by an action plan agreed with the community;

- all communities and job seekers will be engaged in meaningful participation activities; and
- jobseekers receiving personalised support from the single provider, so their skill development, participation activities and training meet their needs and better match local job opportunities.

A new Remote Youth Development and Leadership Corps for people aged under 25 will provide 12,000 places over five years to support young people on a clear pathway to employment. Building on the success of the Indigenous Rangers program, the Remote Youth Development and Leadership Corps will provide a nine-month program geared towards real employment opportunities for young people.

A new flexible \$508.0 million Participation Account will provide funding for participation activities that help people get ready for work and also benefit their community.

A Community Development Fund (\$240.0 million over five years) will also underpin larger community-development activities and community capacity building.

About 4,000 people who are currently receiving Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) wages will continue to be eligible to receive wages from July 2012 until 30 June 2017 while participating in the Remote Jobs and Communities Program. These people have been participating in CDEP for a long period of time, since before 2009, and many face significant barriers to employment.

This initiative is being implemented by the Departments of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

### **Cape York Welfare Reform Transition – Extension of Funding**

The Australian Government is providing \$11.8 million to continue the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial in partnership with the Queensland Government, Cape York Regional organisations and four Indigenous communities in Cape York (Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge). It trials an Indigenous-led approach to rebuild social norms, help participants into the real economy and support small business.

The 12 months bridging funding to 31 December 2013 will continue the income management model and other elements of the trial, including the Family Responsibilities Commission.



## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Helping Children with Autism Package**

The Helping Children with Autism Package commenced in 2008 and aims to address the need for services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, their families and carers. Eligible children under seven years of age have access to up to \$12,000 for early intervention services. The package includes an additional \$2,000 one-off payment, available to families with eligible children living in outer-regional, rural and remote areas to help meet some of the costs of accessing services.

The package also provides access to Medicare items for allied health services, and information services to support parents, families, carers and teachers.

### **Better Start for Children with Disability**

The Better Start for Children with Disability initiative commenced on 1 July 2011 and aims to provide access to intensive early intervention services to children with eligible disabilities (sight and hearing impairments, including deaf-blindness, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and Fragile X syndrome). Like the Helping Children with Autism Package, families living in outer-regional, rural and remote areas can access an additional \$2,000 payment to help meet some of the costs of accessing services.

### **Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund**

The Australian Government is investing \$60.0 million over three years from 2011 to 2014 to build innovative, community-based supported accommodation places for people with disability. The funding will provide 150 new supported accommodation or respite places. Of the 27 projects funded, 16 are located in regional areas.

### **Additional funding for community mental health**

The 2011-12 Budget included \$269.3 million of new funding over five years in community based mental health support services to assist more than 35,000 Australians with mental illness and their families and carers. This funding will establish:

- 425 additional Personal Helpers and Mentors services;
- new and expanded Mental Health Respite: Carer Support services; and
- an additional 40 Family Mental Health Support Services.

This funding is in addition to over \$150.0 million the Australian Government already provided in 2011-12 for community mental health services, with 41 per cent of funding directed to regional areas.

Locations of sites for new and expanded services for 2012-13 and beyond are currently being finalised. The Department anticipates that the proportion of funding to regional and remote areas will be maintained in future investment into community mental health services.

### **Family Support Program**

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. There are currently family support services in more than 2,700 locations, just under half of these are in regional, rural or remote areas.

### **A new model of income management in the Northern Territory**

The new income management scheme has been implemented across all of the Northern Territory from 1 July 2010 at a cost of \$350.0 million over four years.

Income management is a key tool in protecting vulnerable people, especially children. There are around 17,500 people currently participating in the income management scheme in the Northern Territory. Income management helps ensure that more welfare payments are spent in the interests of children on life essentials, including food, clothes and housing costs, and less welfare goes to problem behaviours like gambling and alcohol abuse.

### **Breaking the Cycle of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Indigenous Communities**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Use in Indigenous Communities Initiative funds culturally appropriate substance-use prevention, early intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare. In addition, the Breaking the Cycle initiative provides \$20.0 million over three years from 2011-12 to 2013-14 to support new community solutions for fighting alcohol and substance abuse in Indigenous communities, including development of alcohol and substance abuse management plans.

### **Improved Service Delivery for Indigenous People Living in Remote Communities**

In remote areas, the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement is delivering a placed-based approach to service design and delivery in 29 priority locations. With funding of up to \$291.2 million over five years from 2009-10 to 2013-14, the agreement involves cooperation between and across multiple government agencies and six jurisdictions to work in partnership with communities to deliver on local priorities. The Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement aims to improve access to services, raise the level of services, improve governance and leadership and increase economic and social participation.

## **Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program**

The Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACAP) is a joint initiative between the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Australian Army. Each year the AACAP delivers a \$6.0 million project to remote communities in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, or the Northern Territory. The AACAP site for 2012-13 is Fregon in Western Australia.

Each project has a construction component, a health component and a training component. The construction component focuses on the provision of environmental health infrastructure such as housing, water, sewerage and electrical services as well as improving access to primary health care facilities by constructing or upgrading roads and airfields. The health component focuses on augmenting existing community medical, dental and veterinary programs. The training component focuses on specific skills required within the community and includes courses such as construction and building maintenance, vehicle and small engine maintenance, welding, concreting and cooking.

## **National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing**

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing is providing \$5.5 billion over ten years from 2008-09 to 2017-18 to tackle the very poor housing conditions in many remote areas.

## **Remote Indigenous Energy Program**

The Remote Indigenous Energy Program (RIEP), announced in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, is a \$40.0 million initiative and part of the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future Package.

RIEP will support smaller remote Indigenous communities reliant on diesel generators for power to transition to a Clean Energy Future by installing renewable energy systems. From July 2011 to June 2016, RIEP will install renewable energy systems in up to 50 smaller remote communities across South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. To complement the installation of renewable energy systems, service providers will provide community members with energy efficiency education and training in basic system maintenance. RIEP will provide employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

## **Homelessness**

The White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home*, released on 21 December 2008, sets out the Government's plan for addressing homelessness with a strong effort directed at improving services, turning off the tap by intervening early to prevent homelessness and supporting people with accommodation to break the cycle of homelessness.

To support this strategy, the Australian Government has committed almost \$5.0 billion in new funding since 2008 to provide support services and programs to assist people

who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), the Australian Government together with the States and Territories has committed \$1.1 billion to provide new and better integrated accommodation and support services right across Australia. This Agreement will deliver over 180 new or expanded homelessness services across Australia, including our regions, as well as 600 dwellings under A Place to Call Home initiative.

Of the 180 services funded under the NPAH, 46 are in regional areas and 12 are in remote areas. There are also 82 state-wide initiatives which also provide services in regional and remote areas.

One of these initiatives funded under the NPAH is the rural interagency homelessness project for people with complex needs, operating in the Riverina Murray and New England regions of New South Wales. At each site, the project provides case management and access to supportive housing for people who are homeless or at risk.

In Western Australia, the NPAH funds an initiative which ensures Child Support Workers in rural and remote domestic violence accommodation services are supported and provided with training to improve the outcomes for children.

### **Building Better Regional Cities**

The Australian Government has committed \$100.0 million until 2014 to help build more affordable homes in regional cities to relieve pressure on our major capital cities so that Australia can grow sustainably. This program will assist participating local 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 be given to cities that produce robust evidence of future jobs growth projects, and can show that extra affordable homes will be created as a result of these upfront development costs being borne by the Government. Across Australia, 47 regional cities were invited to participate in the program.

### **Housing Affordability Fund**

Through the Housing Affordability Fund, the Australian Government is investing up to \$450.0 million over five years to 2012-13 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. Priority is 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, for example the Mackay Regional Council has received \$8.5 million to reduce the price of 1,000 new housing lots and the Western Australian Land Authority has received \$4.5 million for the Broome North Project that will bring forward 242 subsidised dwellings.

### **National Rental Affordability Scheme**

The National Rental Affordability Scheme is part of the Australian Government's long-term commitment 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 at a below market rate, providing affordable private rental properties for Australians and their families.

Further information about this and other initiatives relating to rural and regional Australia is available at [www.fahcsia.gov.au/nras](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/nras).

### **Financial Management Program**

The Australian Government's Financial Management Program help people who are struggling to balance their household budgets or in financial crisis. The program includes emergency relief, financial counselling, money management services and financial literacy programs. Around 65 per cent of the 837 financial management program services are in regional areas.

### **Community Investment Program**

The Community Investment Program aims to strengthen communities and promote social inclusion and participation of vulnerable people in community life. The Community Investment Program is committed to delivering a fairer share of funding to regional cities and country communities with 60 per cent of funding in 2012-13 supporting regional Australia.

### **Volunteer Grants**

Volunteer Grants 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 2011, 3,369 organisations in regional Australia shared in \$11.0 million of \$16.0 million in total volunteer grants funding. This represented 71.5 per cent of the funding provided through Volunteer Grants in 2011. Funding is available to not-for-profit organisations to purchase small equipment items, and to contribute to the reimbursement of volunteers' fuel costs and to assist with the cost of volunteers training courses and background checks.

## **Broadband for seniors**

The Australian Government has committed \$25.4 million to the Broadband for Seniors initiative since 2008. Free training is provided by community volunteers to help develop the skills and confidence of older learners and first-time computer users. At a kiosk, senior Australians can learn how to send emails and search the internet in a friendly and supportive environment.

The Broadband for Seniors initiative provides free access to computers and the internet for Australian seniors from around 2,000 kiosk sites at community centres, retirement villages, libraries and community clubs. More than half of the kiosks are located in regional Australia.

## **National Women's Alliances**

In March 2010 the Australian Government announced funding of \$3.6 million over three years for six National Women's Alliances. Each alliance will receive \$600,000 in core funding until 2013.

The two alliances representing women in regional Australia are the National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA). NRWC represents over 250,000 regional and remote women, their families, communities and associated networks. NATSIWA enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from rural, regional and urban areas to share information, identify issues from their own communities and raise concerns, in their own words, with their own solutions, and bring these to government.

## **National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children**

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 seeks to ensure Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities. Women in rural and regional areas have specific issues in relation to access to services and support. Under the National Plan a number of national initiatives have been introduced which seek to prevent violence against women and to improve service responses including in regional, rural and remote parts of Australia.

The creation of the 24 hour national telephone and online counselling service for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, 1800RESPECT, provides access to professional counselling for all Australians, irrespective of where they live. Assistance is also available to family and friends and people working in services who are working with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Support for frontline workers will be expanded during 2012-13.

Training on domestic violence issues for health and allied health workers is delivered through the national DVAlert program. In addition to online courses, priority is given to holding courses in rural and regional locations. Work is underway to enhance the

training available to aboriginal health workers. Financial assistance with travel costs is also available for workers from rural and remote locations.

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

The Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio, through the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade), provides support to regional Australia through a number of existing trade development programs.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

### 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 \$10,000, provided the total of such expenses incurred amounts to at least \$20,000. Eligible Australian businesses can claim up to a total of seven grants of up to a maximum of \$150,000 each.

The 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 types of businesses receiving grants from year to year have been reasonably consistent.

Of the total number of EMDG grants paid in 2010-11 (relating to eligible export promotion expenditure incurred in 2009-10), 24.9 per cent were awarded to recipients from rural and regional Australia. These grants supported 1,029 rural and regional grant recipients with grants valued at \$25.0 million. These recipients reported exports of \$853.0 million in 2009-10 and employed 19,900 people.

Of particular relevance to regional Australia is the grant support for rural and regional industry bodies, regional not-for-profit economic development bodies and tourism bodies to promote Australian exports internationally. In 2011-12, 26 such regional bodies, three such State bodies and 21 such national bodies were registered as 'Approved Bodies' eligible to apply for EMDG grants.

### 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.



In the 2010-11 Budget, the Government announced funding of \$14.4 million to continue the TradeStart program over four years to 30 June 2014. Of the 31 TradeStart locations, 21 are in regional locations.

Under the current program, TradeStart advisers have assisted approximately 3,000 companies throughout Australia, many of whom also receive assistance from Austrade's international network.

# HEALTH AND AGEING

The Australian Government provides substantial assistance to Australians living in regional Australia, both through general health and ageing programs and through a range of programs targeted specifically at regional Australia.

In 2012-13, it is estimated that over \$50.0 billion will be administered by the Department of Health and Ageing to support Australians with their health and ageing needs. Of this total, it is estimated that over \$14.0 billion will be spent in regional Australia, around 29 per cent of the total spend. In addition, around two thirds of spending through the Health and Hospitals Fund (HHF) is directed to regional Australia.

Through a range of targeted rural health and aged care programs, the Government is investing over \$2.0 billion in 2012-13 to address the factors that impact on the health and wellbeing of people living in rural, regional and remote communities.

In recognition of the issues that specifically affect people living in regional, rural and remote Australia, the Australian Government aims to improve access to health services by delivering a range of targeted rural health and aged care programs, as well as through the Government's ongoing health reform agenda.

## SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 6 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Health and Ageing portfolio.

**Table 6: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Health and Ageing**

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Pharmaceuticals and Benefits (Programs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)	Regional	3,326	3,559	3,805	4,054
	Non-regional	6,860	7,340	7,848	8,362
	Non-specific	208	222	238	253
Medical Services and Benefits (Program 3.1)	Regional	5,355	5,607	6,007	6,400
	Non-regional	12,138	12,709	13,616	14,507
	Non-specific	357	374	401	427
Residential Aged Care (Program 4.6)	Regional	2,589	2,713	2,889	3,037
	Non-regional	5,683	5,954	6,342	6,665
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Private Health Insurance (Program 9.1)	Regional	1,177	1,180	1,186	1,195
	Non-regional	3,260	3,268	3,284	3,309
	Non-specific	91	91	91	92
Targeted Rural Expenditure (various program numbers)	Regional	2,159	1,921	1,750	1,846
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Other Programs (various program numbers)	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	7,087	7,871	8,350	8,963
Portfolio Total <sup>(1)</sup>	Regional	14,606	14,979	15,637	16,532
	Non-regional	27,940	29,271	31,090	32,843
	Non-specific	7,742	8,558	9,080	9,735

<sup>(1)</sup> Small errors may occur due to rounding.

- nil

Table 6 shows that total expenditure (grants, subsidies and personal benefits) for the Health and Ageing portfolio is estimated to be over \$50.0 billion in 2012-13. Over \$14.0 billion in expenditure is allocated in regional areas, almost \$28.0 billion in non-regional areas and approximately \$7.7 billion is non-specific. The proportion of total identifiable expenditure in regional areas is around 29 per cent and this identifiable proportion remains broadly constant over the forward estimate years.

The top five program groups listed in the above table represent around 81 per cent of the total estimated expenditure for the portfolio in 2012-13. 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 as relevant data is not available. Estimated expenditure for these programs is classified as 'Non-specific'. However, based on the proportion of identifiable spending directed to regional Australia, there is no reason to believe that the same proportion cannot be applied to those 'Other' payments.

Table 6 indicates the following:

- around 32 per cent of expenditure on Pharmaceuticals and Benefits is spent in regional Australia;

- around 30 per cent of Medical Services and Benefits is spent in regional Australia;
- around 31 per cent of Residential Aged Care is spent in regional Australia, although this amount is supplemented by expenditure on multi-purpose facilities that are included under Targeted Rural Expenditure; and
- around 26 per cent of Private Health Insurance is spent in regional Australia, which is lower than the population in regional Australia but does not include direct taxation deductions and may also reflect the lower number of private inpatient facilities in regional areas.

Programs specifically targeting regional Australia are described in the second part of this section.

### **Caveats, Regional Projections 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 estimated proportion of Commonwealth funds being spent in regional Australia reduces over the forward estimates from 2012-13, which may also be a result of policy changes.

The regional distribution of pharmaceuticals and benefits, medical services and benefits, residential aged care and private health insurance are projected on the basis of historical outcomes.

The programs shown in Table 6 have been determined as being material for spatial accounting purposes, based on their contributions to total spending on health programs managed by the Department.

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 spatial reporting.

### **Health and Hospitals Fund**

The HHF is funded through a special account administered by the Department of Finance and Deregulation. HHF grants to State and Territory Government recipients are paid via the National Partnership Agreement on Health Infrastructure, while grants to non-government recipients are paid directly via individual funding agreements.

The objectives of the HHF, while not replacing State and Territory, effort is to:

- invest in major health infrastructure programs that will make significant progress towards achieving the Commonwealth's reform targets; and

- make strategic investments in the health system that will underpin major improvements in efficiency, access and outcomes of health care.

The HHF funds the building of new infrastructure for clinical care, training and research in the health sector, as well as related needs such as patient and carer accommodation. Of the total \$5.0 billion that has been allocated under the program, around \$1.8 billion is directed to meeting the needs of regional Australia.

To date there have been three funding rounds totalling \$4.5 billion, with \$475.0 million in funding for a fourth funding round to be available from 2012-13.

Table 7 provides details on projected expenditure under the HHF over the forward estimates.

**Table 7: Health and Hospitals Fund**<sup>1</sup>

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Round 1 <sup>(2)</sup>	Regional	233	82	-	-
	Non-regional	186	176	117	51
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Round 2 (Regional Cancer Centre Initiative)	Regional	200	72	5	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Round 3 (Regional Priority Round)	Regional	104	145	197	400
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Round 4 (Regional Priority Round)	Regional	32	128	152	90
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total	Regional	569	427	354	490
	Non-regional	186	176	117	51
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

<sup>1</sup> A small number of the grants under the HHF will fund projects serving both regional and non-regional areas.

<sup>2</sup> Round 1 was not a regional specific funding round.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

### **Aged Care Reform**

The Australian Government has announced substantial reform measures to aged care worth \$3.7 billion over five years from 2012-13. A key measure is the continued expansion of the viability supplement for residential aged care places, providing support for services to remain financially viable in regional and rural locations. The viability supplement is provided to services located in regional and remote locations that face higher employment costs, including training costs. Older facilities may also struggle to attract residents, and the small size of many rural services means that economies of scale are not as readily achievable by these facilities as compared to larger services.

In addition to the viability supplement, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Flexible Aged Care Program will be expanded with more aged care places; thereby allowing significantly more older ATSI people with complex high care needs to stay close to their home and country in culturally appropriate care. In addition, funding levels for all existing ATSI flexible aged care places will also be adjusted annually for frailty levels, in addition to indexation adjustments, to ensure funding reflects the cost of providing care.

Other areas in which funding will be expanded include a substantial increase to the current accommodation supplement, restricted to new or substantially refurbished facilities, which is expected to ease pressures on capital funding for care provision across Australia, as well as providing an added incentive to construct additional places. These benefits are likely to be more significant in regional Australia than in capital cities, as overall levels of wealth and income are lower, resulting in providers in rural areas being more reliant on government accommodation supplement than providers in urban areas.

A key aspect of reform is support for the construction of aged care homes where mainstream funding is not available or not sufficient. The two existing capital grants funds will be combined to form the new Rural, Regional and Other Special Needs Building Fund. Combining the two capital grants programs will enable funding to be more flexibly targeted to deliver services in priority areas identified by the Government, and therefore enable improved access to residential aged care. Approximately \$45.0 million (indexed) will be available annually for allocation from 1 July 2012. In addition, the remaining \$150.0 million in zero real interest loans will be refocused to support building activity in priority areas.

Workforce pressure in aged care is particularly problematic in regional areas. To address this, reform initiatives will include a strong focus on addressing these pressures in regional, rural and remote areas including action to improve the recruitment and retention of aged care workers through the Workforce Compact.

Future workforce initiatives will be informed by an evaluation of workforce measures in regional locations.

Addressing the needs of vulnerable older Australians in regional areas is a strong focus of the reform measures. Financially disadvantaged older people are over-represented in regional, rural and remote locations. To assist in addressing gaps in service provision for these financially disadvantaged older people, a review of aged care supported resident ratios will be undertaken. These ratios are in place to ensure people who cannot afford to pay for aged care and accommodation will continue to be supported. In addition, increased funding will be provided through the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged Program, supporting those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in regional areas.

A consistent theme throughout the reform is recognising diversity among older Australians. The Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants Fund will help improve access to information and aged care services for diverse communities in regional areas.

Innovation is another area in which significant change will improve the quality of care and the care experience of older Australians in regional areas. Services will be encouraged to adopt innovative processes, especially further expanding and integrating with the broader health care sector. New research into clinical and non-clinical aspects of service delivery will be funded for services to translate into standard daily operations. Funding is also being provided for State-wide telephone advisory services to provide advice on palliative care and advance care planning to aged care providers and General Practitioners (GPs) in regional areas. Those people in regional Australia with symptoms of dementia will be further supported with funding for improved timing and diagnosis, targeting barriers to diagnosis in regional areas.

### **Stronger Futures in the NT through Health**

The Government is investing \$713.5 million over ten years for the continued delivery of specialist and allied health services to Indigenous Australians in the Northern Territory.

This funding provides for the following health care activities:

- primary health care service delivery;
- primary health care reform;
- Remote Area Health Corps - a program that helps meet workforce shortages in remote locations by providing short-term professional placements; and
- specialist and allied health services for conditions of very high disease burden, such as oral health, hearing health and therapeutic services for children.

## **Dental Relocation and Infrastructure Support Scheme**

The \$77.7 million Dental Relocation and Infrastructure Support Scheme measure aims to encourage and support dentists to practise in regional, rural and remote communities and to increase workforce and service delivery capacity in these communities. The measure provides scaled relocation grants and infrastructure grants to dentists who elect to move to areas more remote than where they have practised in the previous 12 months, based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) categories 2 to 5.

## **General Practice Rural Incentives Program**

The General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) commenced on 1 July 2010 and was funded in the 2009-10 Budget as part of the Rural Health Workforce Strategy. The GPRIP aims to encourage medical practitioners to practice in rural and remote communities and to promote careers in rural medicine. It combines two previously separate retention incentive programs available to GPs and GP Registrars, and provides a new relocation grant.

Since the commencement of GPRIP, participation in the program has exceeded expectation. The number of GPs working in regional, rural and remote areas has increased by more than four per cent and the increase in the number of GP Registrars is more than five percent. Consequently, funding of \$34.9 million will be provided during 2012-13.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

The Australian Government continues to see improvements in the health and ageing outcomes of Australians living in regional, rural and remote locations. These improvements include, but are not limited to:

- tailored services that meet needs of local communities;
- increased accessibility to services, including a 30 per cent increase in access to specialist services in the most remote locations; and
- improvements to workforce coverage and distribution, including an increase of 11.9 per cent in the number of employed medical practitioners in outer regional areas.

Australians in regional areas can face barriers in accessing health and aged care information. In addition to a range of targeted programs to assist with overcoming this information barrier, the Government announced Rural and Regional Health Australia in November 2011 and established a website and free call 1800 number with information about Commonwealth programs. In 2012-13, Rural and Regional Health Australia will continue to provide accessible information to the public about Commonwealth health and aged care programs in rural and remote Australia, engage



with stakeholders, perform advocacy functions across Government and provide a strong leadership role in developing initiatives targeted at improving health and aged care outcomes in rural and regional Australia.

## **Population Health**

### **Healthy Communities Initiative**

The Healthy Communities Initiative (HCI) is a Commonwealth funded (\$71.8 million over four years from 2009-10) initiative under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health. This initiative includes funding for 92 local government councils to implement a range of community-based healthy lifestyle programs, and funding of six National Program Grants to assist organisations that have demonstrated success in delivering community-based healthy lifestyle programs to expand nationally. In addition, the HCI provides funding for the development of a Healthy Communities Quality Framework, against which programs and service providers will be registered and promoted on a web-based registration portal.

### **Quality Assurance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Medical Services**

Since 1999, the Australian Government has provided funding to the Quality Assurance for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Services (QAAMS) Pathology Program, which will continue in 2012-13 (\$1.1 million). QAAMS supports the provision of culturally appropriate and clinically effective diabetes management through the use of 'point of care' pathology tests at predominantly rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services across Australia. QAAMS also includes training, technical support, quality assurance and a consultation program for community leaders to support program management.

### **The Rollout of Low Aromatic Opal Fuel**

The Australian Government is committed to tackling substance use issues that impact negatively on social and emotional wellbeing and general health. The Government funding commitment to support the rollout of low aromatic Opal fuel is \$91.0 million over four years commencing from 2011-12.

Petrol sniffing has been reduced by as much as 94 per cent in some communities where Opal fuel has been introduced.

There are currently 119 sites receiving Opal fuel. The funding is also being used to address storage and distribution issues that have prevented the rollout of the fuel to some locations in northern Australia. Storage facilities are being established in Darwin and north Queensland, enabling low aromatic Opal fuel to be distributed to at least 39 new sites in the Top End of the Northern Territory, the East Kimberley and Gulf Region of Queensland. This expanded rollout of low aromatic Opal fuel will help reduce the incidence and impact of petrol sniffing in at least eleven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

## **Substance Use Activities, Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grants Fund**

Following the review of administrative arrangements in the Health and Ageing portfolio, substance use treatment activities are now part of the newly established Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grants Fund. The Fund consolidates activities from a number of existing programs, and provides a flexible funding pool for organisations supporting service delivery.

This funding is provided for culturally appropriate substance use prevention, early intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and aftercare services for Indigenous people across Australia. In 2011-12, \$75.0 million is being provided to support a range of services and major new initiatives including:

- establishing and enhancing drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services in regional and remote areas;
- continuing substance use initiatives in the Northern Territory commenced under the Northern Territory Emergency Response and continued under Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory; and
- providing funding for the delivery and support of Indigenous substance use treatment and rehabilitation services across the country.

In 2012-13 a similar amount of funding will be provided for these services in regional Australia.

## **Access to Pharmaceutical Benefits**

### **Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance**

The Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance is a monthly payment provided to eligible rural or remote section 90 pharmacies, in recognition of the additional burden of maintaining a pharmacy in rural and remote areas of Australia. In 2012-13, \$13.9 million has been allocated for this program.

### **Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program**

The Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program aims to maintain and improve access to quality community pharmacy services in rural and remote communities, and strengthen and support the rural and remote pharmacy workforce in Australia. It comprises various initiatives designed to recruit, train and retain pharmacists for rural and remote areas, including undergraduate scholarships, intern support, professional development support, and an emergency locum scheme.

### **Section 100 Pharmacy Support Allowance Program**

The Section 100 (S100) Pharmacy Support Allowance Program aims to improve health outcomes for clients of remote area Aboriginal Health Services by supporting quality

use of medicines at those services through pharmacist visits and advice. The S100 Program services Aboriginal Health Services in selected remote areas.

### **Home Medicines Review Program**

The Home Medicines Review (HMR) Program aims to enhance the quality use of medicines, and reduce the number of adverse medicines events through a medication review conducted by an accredited pharmacist in the patient's home. A HMR service is a structured and collaborative health care service provided to an eligible patient in a community setting. HMR service providers are able to claim for travel expenses where services are provided in eligible remote areas. Rural travel reimbursement is expected to be a small component of the total expenditure on the broader HMR Program in 2012-2013.

### **Quality Use of Medicines Maximised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Health**

The Quality Use of Medicines Maximised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Health (QUMAX) Program aims to help improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in both regional and metropolitan of Australia, by improving access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines, and supporting medication compliance and quality use of medicines. The QUMAX Program services community controlled Aboriginal Health Services in selected rural and remote areas.

### **Closing the Gap co-payment measure**

This Program, that targets both rural and urban areas, aims to reduce the cost of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicines for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with or at risk of chronic disease.

### **Section 100 Remote Area Aboriginal Health Service Program**

The S100 Remote Area Aboriginal Health Service (RAAHS) Program is administered under section 100 of the *National Health Act 1953*, for the supply of pharmaceutical benefits to patients of remote area Aboriginal Health Services (AHSs). It aims to improve access to essential medicines for clients of remote area AHSs through addressing geographic, financial and cultural barriers by removing the need for a PBS co-payment and PBS script. RAAHS is a demand-driven Program.

### **Access to Medical Services**

#### **Medicare Benefits Schedule**

The Australian Government makes rebates available to Australians for private medical treatments through the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS). Under this arrangement, patients are entitled to a rebate equivalent to 100 per cent of the MBS item fee for a visit to a GP. The MBS provides further incentives to GPs who bulk bill Commonwealth Concession Card holders and children under 16 years of age. These payments are currently \$5.90 for GPs providing services in metropolitan areas, and \$8.90 in regional, rural and remote areas, as well as Tasmania and selected metropolitan areas.

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

In 2012-13, the new Medical Benefits Schedule items and financial incentives for specialist video consultations which became available on 1 July 2011 will continue to help people in remote, regional and outer-metropolitan Australia to overcome the barriers to accessing specialist medical care, caused by distance. The use of video 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.

### **Diagnostic Imaging**

The Australian Government announced in the 2011-12 Budget that it will provide \$104.4 million over four years to implement the Diagnostic Imaging (DI) Review Reform Package. The DI Review Reform Package will ensure ongoing, affordable and convenient DI services for patients, with a key focus on the staged expansion of patient access to Medicare-eligible Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) services. From 1 November 2012, access to Medicare eligibility for existing Medicare-ineligible MRI units operating in non-major cities will be extended.

### **Visiting Optometrists Scheme**

The Visiting Optometrist Scheme (VOS) aims to improve access to optometry services for people living and working in rural and remote communities. To achieve this, the VOS 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 location;
- external locum support at the home practice; and
- lease and transport of equipment.

There are two elements to VOS - Core VOS and the VOS Expansion for Indigenous Australians.

### **Aged Care and Population Ageing**

Presently, over one third of all aged care places are in regional Australia. This corresponds broadly to Australia's population distribution, with just under one-third of Australians living outside major cities. There are a number of initiatives within the existing aged care system that contribute to the accessibility and delivery of aged care services in regional Australia. These include: aged care planning ratios; subsidy supplements, including accommodation and viability supplements; flexible funding for Multi-purpose Services (MPS) and ATSI Flexible Aged Care Services; targeted capital funding; and access to Zero Real Interest Loans. MPS, in particular, are services

that specifically cater for small rural and remote communities. For Indigenous aged care services, the current policy over-supplies rural and regional locations in recognition of the greater presence of Indigenous Australians who can suffer from age-related illnesses at an earlier age than other Australians.

### **Residential Aged Care Viability Supplement**

The Residential Aged Care Viability Supplement is paid to eligible providers operating in rural and remote areas, providers with small numbers of residents and providers that specialise in the care of homeless older people. The aim of this supplement is to assist providers of aged care homes to operate viable businesses particularly in areas where it is difficult to do so. The amount of viability supplement paid to an aged care home depends on where the service is located, the number of places in the service, and the proportion of care recipients with special needs.

### **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program**

The National ATSI Flexible Aged Care Program provides recurrent funding to services to deliver quality, culturally appropriate aged care that meets the changing needs of older Indigenous people specifically in rural and remote areas. Under the proposals, these services will be further supported by continuing the expansion of the viability supplement. In addition, ATSI residential care funding will be grown at the same rate as the Aged Care Funding Instrument for mainstream residential places.

### **Community Aged Care Viability Supplement**

The Community Aged Care Viability Supplement is paid to eligible community care providers operating in regional areas. This supplement provides support for the higher operating costs (including wages, fuel and training) associated with providing care in regional locations.

### **Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants Fund**

The Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants Fund has a specific priority to support services providing aged care to Indigenous people. It aims to improve the long-term quality of aged care in remote communities and for Indigenous people by providing access to capital funding to improve the infrastructure of aged care services.

### **Rural, Regional and Other Special Needs Building Fund**

The Rural, Regional and Other Special Needs Building Fund provides capital grants to assist providers, including those in rural, regional and remote areas, with the cost of capital works, including: land acquisition; building new, altered or extended premises; and acquiring furniture and fittings. Grants are only available where the provider has demonstrated a lack of capacity to meet the full cost of capital works through other funding sources.

## **Zero Real Interest Loans**

Zero real interest loans are available to assist aged care providers in targeted areas, including in regional Australia. The loans are a lower cost alternative to normal commercial funding arrangements, as the interest rate is set at the Consumer Price Index only.

## **Indigenous Aged Care Workforce – Employment**

The Indigenous Aged Care Workforce initiatives funded under the National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation provide funding for salary units that enable aged care services, mainly in rural and remote areas, to employ permanent, part-time staff from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

## **Aged Care Workforce Fund – Training and Traineeships**

Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Traineeships delivered through the Aged Care Workforce Fund provide funding for trainees' wages and on-costs, and covers accommodation and travel expenses associated with their training. Further, funding for training and development of workforce supports (for example training resources, service delivery manuals and mentoring workshops) is aimed at improving recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers employed to provide aged care services.

## **Primary Care**

### **Practice Incentives Program**

The Practice Incentives Program (PIP) has two components:

- Procedural GP Payment - The PIP Procedural GP Payment aims to encourage GPs in rural and remote areas to maintain local access to surgical, anaesthetic and obstetric services; and
- Rural Loading - A rural loading ranging from 15 per cent to 50 per cent (depending on the remoteness of the practice location) is applied to the incentive payments of rural and remote practices in Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas 3 to 7 Classification areas. The rural loading is paid in recognition of the difficulties of providing care, often with little professional support, in rural and remote areas.

### **Rural Primary Health Services Program**

The Rural Primary Health Services (RPHS) program funds a range of organisations – State health entities, local government, Indigenous health services, divisions of GP and other non-government organisations, to provide additional primary and allied health care services in rural and remote communities. The services delivered depend on the identified needs of the communities covered. From 2012-13, RPHS funding previously provided to Divisions of General Practice will be managed through rural-based Medicare Locals.

## **Rural Health**

### **Rural Health Outreach Fund**

The Rural Health Outreach Fund was one of 18 new Flexible Funds announced in the 2011-12 Budget. It has been established by bringing together the Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program and its Maternity Services and Ophthalmology expansions, with the Rural Women's General Practice Service and the National Rural and Remote Health Program. The Fund Guidelines will be released shortly and it is anticipated that a competitive funding round will be announced early in 2012-13, with services to commence operations in July 2013. The existing component programs continue to be delivered in their current format until 30 June 2013.

### **Rural Women's GP Service**

The Rural Women's GP Service (RWGPS) aims to improve access to primary health care services for women in rural and remote Australia, who currently have little or no access to a female GP, by facilitating the travel of female GPs to these communities. The RWGPS is open to all members of the community, including men and children. The RWGPS is facilitated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The RWGPS will be operated under the Rural Health Outreach Fund from 2013-14.

### **Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program**

The Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program (MSOAP) was established in the 2000-01 Budget to provide outreach specialist services to regional, rural and remote locations by removing the barriers that can stop specialists providing services. The program has been highly successful in providing a wide range of specialist services since its inception. MSOAP will be operated under the Rural Health Outreach Fund from 2013-14.

### **Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program – Maternity Services**

The MSOAP Maternity Services is an expansion of MSOAP that has increased access to a range of maternity services for women and their families in regional, rural and remote Australia for the duration of pregnancy, confinement and the post natal stage. Services commenced in 2011. MSOAP Maternity Services will be operated under the Rural Health Outreach Fund from 2013-14.

### **Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program – Ophthalmology**

MSOAP Ophthalmology is an expansion of MSOAP that has increased the number of ophthalmology services delivered to people in regional, rural and remote Australia from 1 July 2010. The allocation for this measure includes funding to the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists to support administration and coordination of elements of the program. MSOAP Ophthalmology will be operated under the Rural Health Outreach Fund from 2013-14.

## **National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program**

The National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program (NRRHIP) was announced as part of the 2008-09 Budget. The NRRHIP is a competitive grant program that improves access to health services by funding projects in rural and remote communities where a lack of infrastructure is a barrier to both the establishment of new health services and the enhancement of existing health services. In 2012-13, Round Seven will be announced.

## **Royal Flying Doctor Service**

The Australian Government funds the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) to provide 'traditional' services (health care clinics, primary aero-medical evacuations, medical chests and remote consultations) in rural and remote Australia throughout New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and in the Northern Territory from Tennant Creek to the South Australia border. In Tasmania, the RFDS provides several medical chests.

## **Indigenous Health**

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chronic Disease Fund**

#### **Indigenous Chronic Disease Package**

In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments committed up to \$1.6 billion over four years to close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation. Under this partnership, the Australian Government committed \$805.5 million over four years through the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package (ICDP) to improve the prevention, detection and management of chronic disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Components of the ICDP are implemented in regional, rural and remote areas.

#### **Indigenous Chronic Disease Package – Expanding the outreach and service capacity of Indigenous health organisations**

This component of the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package provides funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Workers, Practice Managers and additional health professionals. The additional health professionals component is specifically targeted for rural and remote areas.

#### **Health@Home Plus Package – Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program**

The Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program (ANFPP) is a nurse-led intensive home visiting program delivered in three sites across Australia as part of the Health at Home Plus Package. The ANFPP aims to improve pregnancy outcomes by helping women engage in good preventive health practices and support parents to improve Indigenous child health and development. Of the three sites one is remote and two are defined as outer regional.



### **New Directions: An Equal start in Life for Indigenous Children**

The New Directions program is the Commonwealth's contribution to the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement. The program is designed to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families' access to antenatal care; provide standard information about baby care; provide practical advice and assistance with breastfeeding, nutrition and parenting; assist with monitoring developmental milestones, immunisation status and infections; and to undertake health checks for Indigenous children before starting school. By the end of March 2012, 82 organisations had been approved for funding with 76 operational sites distributed across Australia in urban, regional, rural and remote locations.

### **Closing the Gap – Northern Territory – Dental Program**

The Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory Dental program provides funding to the Northern Territory Government and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations for the delivery of follow-up dental health services for children under 16 years living in prescribed communities and town camps in the Northern Territory. This program will continue under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory through Health initiative.

### **Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative – incorporating the Remote Area Health Corps**

The Expanding Health Service Delivery 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 Indigenous health workforce. Funding for this initiative expires on 30 June 2012. The Program will continue in 2012-13 under the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory through Health initiative.

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

The Indigenous Health Outcome (Outcome 8) component of this measure has a significant focus on the eradication of trachoma, an infectious eye disease endemic in a range of rural and remote regions of Australia, as well as increasing access to specialist eye health services in Central Australia. Ear health activities administered under Outcome 8 include the purchase of ear health equipment for primary health care services and additional surgical services and clinical leadership positions.

### **Establishing Quality Health Services – Continuation Budget Measure**

The 2011-12 Establishing Quality Health Services-Continuation (EQHS-C) Budget measure provides \$35.0 million over four years to support eligible Indigenous health organisations to attain accreditation against mainstream Australian clinical and organisational accreditation standards. The EQHS-C measure continues the work undertaken through the original 2007-08 Budget EQHS measure (\$36.9 million over

four years) and is a national initiative with funding available to eligible Indigenous health organisations in urban, rural and remote areas.

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

This measure consolidates existing counselling, family tracing and reunion support in a flexible package of service delivery supplemented by national coordination and support. The measure aims to enhance existing service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, prioritising members of the Stolen Generations, through more flexible models of service delivery and increased capacity to meet demand for services. The program delivers:

- counselling, family tracing and reunion services to members of the Stolen Generations, through the existing network of eight Link Up Services across Australia;
- social and emotional wellbeing services, particularly counselling services, to Indigenous Australians, through existing mental health and counselling staff based in over 90 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations across Australia; and
- national coordination support to services and staff, through initiatives that include workforce support units, innovative practice, research and governance support, national coordination and communication forums, electronic client records and data collection, support for peak bodies, program support and program development and evaluation.

National support will address key program limitations identified in the 2007 program evaluation including the challenges faced by services operating in rural and remote areas, such as workforce recruitment and retention issues. The Australian Government will invest a total of around \$43.0 million in 2012-13.

### **Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program – Indigenous Chronic Disease**

The MSOAP Indigenous Chronic Disease provides for multidisciplinary teams, comprising specialists, GPs and allied health professionals, to better manage complex and chronic health conditions in rural and remote Indigenous communities. Services commenced in 2009-10.

### **Health System Capacity and Quality**

#### **McGrath Specialist Breast Care Nurses**

The Australian Government has provided \$12.6 million to the McGrath Foundation to recruit, train and place breast care nurses across Australia for a period of four years. Government-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, their families and carers. Breast Care Nurses are in place in 44 communities across Australia, 89 per cent of which are located in rural and remote areas.

### **The National Rural and Remote Health Stakeholder Support Scheme**

The National Rural and Remote Health Stakeholder Support Scheme (NRRHSSS) Program was implemented on 1 July 2010 and provides a consistent approach to the funding provided to six peak rural and remote health stakeholder organisations to assist in supporting their core secretariat functions, and enabling their contribution to develop better policy and programs to address rural and remote health issues.

The organisations funded under the NRRHSSS initiative are:

- National Rural Health Alliance;
- Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH);
- Rural Doctors Association of Australia;
- Health Consumers of Rural and Remote Australia;
- Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia (CRANA); and
- National Rural Health Students Network.

From 2012-13, these funds have been consolidated into the Health System Capacity Development Fund.

### **Health and Hospitals Fund – Round 1**

As part of the 2009-10 Budget, a \$3.2 billion nation-building package of HHF projects covering three critical areas was announced. These included:

- \$1.3 billion towards building a world class cancer care system;
- \$1.5 billion towards building a hospital system for the future and to undertake other projects of national significance; and
- \$430.3 million towards medical research and workforce infrastructure to improve the transfer of research outcomes into patient care.

Included as part of these three initiatives is \$418.0 million allocated over three years for 42 regional, rural and remote projects.

## **Health and Hospitals Fund – Round 2 Regional Cancer Centres**

As part of the \$1.3 billion provided to build a world class cancer care system, \$560.0 million was allocated in the 2009-10 Budget to establish a network of best practice Regional Cancer Centres and associated accommodation facilities.

The aim of the Regional Cancer Centres initiative is to help improve access and support for cancer patients in rural, regional and remote Australia, and to help close the gap in cancer outcomes between the city and the country.

These projects will enable people with cancer to access the right care at the right time, as close as possible to their home and family, irrespective of where they live or their social circumstances.

The nationwide network now consists of 24 Regional Cancer Centres - 21 funded under HHF Round 2, two from the HHF Regional Priority Round and the Alan Walker Cancer Centre in Darwin.

When these Centres are operational, they will cover a catchment area of well over seven million people and provide world-class treatment for over 7,600 additional radiotherapy patients annually and over 127,000 additional chemotherapy treatments each year, along with 180 accommodation beds.

## **Health and Hospitals Fund – Round 3 Regional Priority Round**

The 2011-12 Budget provided funding for 63 projects from the 2010 HHF Regional Priority Round valued at \$1.3 billion. The primary focus of the HHF Regional Priority Round is to provide capital funding to projects in regional communities in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Areas 2 to 5 to support upgrades to regional health infrastructure, expansions to regional hospitals and to help support the clinical training capacity of regional hospitals.

## **Health and Hospitals Fund – Round 4 Regional Priority Round**

The Government has allocated funding for 76 projects from the 2011 HHF Regional Priority Round 4 valued at \$475.0 million. The primary focus of the HHF Regional Priority Round is to provide capital funding to projects in regional communities in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Areas 2 to 5 to support upgrades to regional health infrastructure, expansions to regional hospitals and to help support the clinical training capacity of regional hospitals.

## **Mental Health**

### **Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Areas Program**

The Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Areas Program funds Medicare Locals, Aboriginal Medical Services and the RFDS to deliver mental health services by appropriately trained mental health care workers, 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 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 \$82.6 million will be provided from 2011-12 to 2015-16 under the Program.

### **Access to Allied Psychological Services**

The Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Program provides access to short-term focused psychological services for people with a diagnosed mental illness, with referral through their GP. 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 MBS-subsidised mental health services due to cost and workforce limitations in some locations. In 2010-11 over 44,000 referrals were received services through ATAPS and 40 per cent of services were provided in rural areas.

As part of the 2011-12 Budget's Delivering National Mental Health Reform package the Government allocated \$205.9 million over five years to provide additional services under the program.

### **National Suicide Prevention Program**

The Australian Government's National Suicide Prevention Program (NSPP) allocated funding to 24 projects in 2011-12 and 2012-13 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, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and men in rural and remote areas.

While suicide is ranked as the 15th leading cause of deaths registered in Australia and accounts for only a relatively small proportion (1.6 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 2011-12 was \$24.2 million. \$7.3 million, or 30.2 per cent of total funding, was allocated to national and local community-based suicide prevention projects targeting rural and remote areas.

Approximately \$5.1 million has been provided to Indigenous projects across the country through the NSPP in 2011-12.

### **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 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, particularly in the treatment of anxiety and depression disorders.

Key measures funded under this initiative include telephone crisis support services such as those provided by Lifeline and Kids Helpline. This initiative commenced in 2006 and is ongoing.

### **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 be available from mid-2012 and 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. 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.

The portal will also improve access for consumers to the existing investments and resources, and will also ensure that people are able to be matched to those services that best meet their particular needs.

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

Funding of \$14.4 million over the five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16 has been provided for these projects as part of the 2011-12 Budget's Delivering National Mental Health Reform package. This measure forms part of the Government's broader investment in e-mental health services which totals \$136.9 million from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

## **headspace**

One in four young Australians aged 16 to 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.

“*headspace*” provides a national, coordinated focus on youth mental health and related drug and alcohol problems, aims to improve access for young people aged 12 to 25 years to appropriate services and ensure better coordination between services. 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.

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

The Government provided an additional \$197.3 million over five years as part of the 2011-12 Budget’s Delivering National Mental Health Reform package. This initiative will boost funding to achieve sustainability across the current sites and bring on additional sites in a phased way. A total of 90 *headspace* sites will be available across Australia by 2015-16. Once all 90 sites are fully established, *headspace* will help up to 72,000 young people each year.

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.

## **Health Workforce Capacity**

### **Australian General Practice Training Program**

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

### **Remote Vocational Training Scheme**

The Remote Vocational Training Scheme is a vocational general practice training program supporting doctors practicing 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.

### **Prevocational General Practice Placement Program**

The Prevocational General Practice Placements Program (PGPPP) 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. As of 2012, at least 50 per cent of PGPPP places must occur in regional and remote Australia. Evidence shows that exposure to practice in regional Australia increases the likelihood of a person returning to the bush to practice later in their career.

### **Specialist Training Program**

The Specialist Training Program (STP) 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. Approximately 50 per cent of STP training positions are located in regional areas.

### **Rural locum scheme for nurses**

This rural locum scheme measure provides around 3,000 possible nursing locums over the four year funding period to enable rural based nurses to take leave 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.

### **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 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.

### **Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship**

Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarships (RAMUS) 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 RAMUS scheme provides 580 ongoing scholarships valued at \$10,000 per annum for medical students during their completion of a standard medical degree.



### **Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme**

The allied health component of the Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme (NAHSSS) provides scholarships to support undergraduate and postgraduate study, continuing professional development activities and rural clinical placements for allied health students and professionals. Scholarships under the NAHSSS have a rural element in the selection or eligibility criteria, in recognition of the need to improve access to health professionals in these areas.

As part of Health reform, an additional 100 scholarships will be provided each year under the NAHSSS to support allied health students undertaking a rural or remote clinical placement during their degree. This aims to improve the future recruitment of allied health professionals to rural areas by introducing increased numbers of students to rural clinical practice during their university training.

### **GP Procedural Training Support Program**

The GP Procedural Training Support Program 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.

The Program targets existing GPs in rural and remote areas. For the 2012 training year, 25 obstetrics scholarships and 15 anaesthetics scholarships have been awarded to rural and remote doctors. Scholarship recipients commenced training from 1 January 2012.

### **Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program**

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.

The Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program includes sub-programs which support undergraduate clinical training of the medical, nursing and allied health students in rural and remote Australia and support existing rural health professionals, therefore alleviating the shortage of adequate health care services in rural areas.

The sub-programs are:

- The Rural Clinical Training and Support Program;
- The University Departments of Rural Health Program;
- The Dental Training Expanding Rural Placements Program; and
- The John Flynn Placement Program.

## **Rural Health Continuing Education Sub-Program**

The Rural Health Continuing Education (RHCE) Sub-Program, 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 RHCE Sub-Program is helping to address this by providing funding for support, education and training activities for rural medical specialists, and allied health professionals, nurses, GPs and Indigenous health workers. This investment will provide valuable benefits for the sustainability of the rural health workforce, particularly in terms of workforce retention.

The Rural Health Education Foundation (RHEF) is also funded separately under the RHCE Sub-Program. RHEF 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.

## **National Rural and Remote Health (Stakeholder Support)**

This measure supports the rural and remote health workforce through programs such as the Bush Services Support (Bush Crisis Line) which averages around 65 to 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 SARRAH and CRANA.

## **Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship Scheme**

The Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship (MRBS) Scheme aims to increase the number of doctors practicing in rural and remote areas of Australia. The MRBS 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.

## **Bonded Medical Places Scheme**

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

This Scheme is funded through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

### **Diagnostic Imaging – Enhancing the Rural and Remote Workforce Scheme**

This Scheme aims to support the rural allied diagnostic imaging workforce. It comprises of a minimum of ten postgraduate scholarships annually valued at up to \$15,000 per year, a minimum of ten Professional Development Year scholarships valued at up to \$10,000 per year and Rural and Remote Support Grants valued at \$5,000 to \$10,000 to assist rural practices to increase the capacity of their services.

### **Telehealth Support Program**

The aim of the Telehealth Support Program is to ensure that existing health professionals, as well as those newly entering the workforce, have training and supports available in the use of online technologies to deliver health services.

The Program is a component of the larger Connecting Health Services with the Future: Modernising Medicare by Providing Rebates for Online Consultations initiative, which supports new MBS items to enable the delivery of video consultations between rural health professionals, their patients and metropolitan specialists.

Funding has been made available to non-government organisations that provide education, continuing professional development training, and other support services to the health professions eligible for Medicare rebates under the larger initiative.

In 2011-12 and 2012-13 the Government will support 30 different projects targeted towards different sectors of the health profession. This will include enabling key organisations to employ around 50 telehealth support officers across the country to assist practitioners to learn how to conduct best-practice telehealth consultations. Over this two year period the program will also invest in the development of updated professional standards and educational tools to ensure doctors and nurses have the training they need to use telehealth in the future. The Telehealth Support Program will conclude in July 2013.

### **Overseas Trained Doctors Recruitment**

The International Recruitment Strategy (IRS) aims to increase the supply of appropriately qualified overseas trained doctors (OTD) to districts of workforce shortages throughout Australia. The IRS package comprises of four programs:

- the IRS;
- the Five Year OTD Scheme;
- Additional Assistance Scheme; and
- Rural Locum Relief Program.

### **Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) Reimbursement Scheme**

The HECS Reimbursement Scheme encourages medical graduates to pursue a career in rural medicine and aims to increase the number of doctors working in rural and regional areas. Under the Scheme, eligible medical graduates will have a portion of their HECS fees reimbursed for each year of training undertaken or service provided in regional and remote areas of Australia.

### **Specialist Obstetrician Locum Scheme**

The Specialist Obstetrician Locum Scheme maintains and enhances the access of rural women to quality local obstetric care by providing the regional and remote obstetric workforce with subsidised locum support.

### **Rural Locum Education Assistance Program**

The Rural Locum Education Assistance Program allows urban GPs practicing in selected regional locations to access a grant to undertake emergency medicine training in return for a commitment to undertake a four week locum placement in a rural location.

### **Rural Procedural Grants Program**

The Rural Procedural Grants Program (RPGP) enables procedural GPs in rural and remote areas to access a grant to attend relevant training and up skilling. The RPGP provides grants for emergency medicine training and procedural medicine training.

### **GP Anaesthetist Locum Scheme**

The GP Anaesthetist Locum Scheme maintains and enhances the access of rural communities to quality local GP anaesthetist care by providing the rural and remote GP anaesthetist workforce with subsidised locum support.

### **Rural and Remote General Practice Program**

The Rural and Remote General Practice Program provides a range of activities and support to improve the recruitment and retention of GPs to rural and remote areas.

### **Scaling Rural Workforce Communications – Rural Health Champions Program**

The aim of the Rural Health Champions Program is to provide credible, first-hand accounts of rural practice and the benefits of Government rural health incentives. The Rural Health Champions consist of doctors and medical students located in each State and Territory to provide students, GP registrars and GPs with information about their rural experiences.

### **Rural Other Medical Practitioners Program**

The Rural Other Medical Practitioners (ROMPs) Program recognises the value of services provided by non-Vocationally Registered (non-VR) medical practitioners in rural and remote areas and provides higher financial benefits for patients. The ROMPs

Program also provides an incentive to encourage non-VR medical practitioners (both Australian and overseas trained) to provide general practice services in eligible rural and remote locations.

### Scaling for Overseas Trained Doctors

The scaling incentive for OTD and foreign graduates of an accredited medical school (FGAMS) commenced on 1 July 2010. Scaling is an initiative under the Rural Health Workforce Strategy, which applies to a range of existing programs. The effect of scaling is to ensure that benefits derived will be significantly greater for doctors choosing to live and work in more remote areas of Australia, as determined by the ASGC-RA system.

Scaling is a non-cash incentive offering OTD and FGAMS opportunities to reduce the ten year moratorium restriction period. Time reductions are significantly greater for doctors who choose to work in more remote areas (see Figure 3 below).

**Figure 3: Australian Standard Geographic Classification – Remoteness Areas**

RA Classification	RA Category	Scaling discount	Restriction period reduced to
RA 1	Major Cities	Nil	10 years
RA 2	Inner Regional	10%	9 years
RA 3	Outer Regional	30%	7 years
RA 4	Remote	40%	6 years
RA 5	Very Remote	50%	5 years

In order to attract a discount to the ten year moratorium, an OTD or FGAMS is required to achieve a monthly threshold of \$5,000 within an eligible regional, rural or remote location. The Department of Human Services (Medicare) is responsible for providing Medicare rebates to doctors, and therefore is able to determine if the minimum monthly threshold has been met to attract a scaling discount.

### The Innovative Clinical Teaching and Training Grants Program

The Innovative Clinical Teaching and Training Grants Program is a one-off program, established in 2009-10, which provides funding to eligible organisations for infrastructure projects that increase capacity and improve distribution of clinical teaching and training across the training continuum. A total of 35 projects were approved for funding over four years to 2012-13.

## **Acute Care**

### **COAG Improving Access to Primary Care in Rural Areas Initiative**

The COAG Improving Access to Primary Care in Rural Areas Initiative provides funding through the MBS to approved rural and remote public hospitals which, due to workforce shortage, were often employing salaried medical officers to make traditional GP services available.

### **Mersey Community Hospital – continued management, operation and funding**

This three year agreement with Tasmania provides for the continued management and operation of the Commonwealth-owned Mersey Community Hospital in northwest Tasmania. The agreement commenced 1 July 2011 and expires 30 June 2014. It requires Tasmania to provide a specified range of core services at the Hospital in return for total funding of \$197.6 million over three years. This arrangement follows on from an earlier three year agreement that concluded 30 June 2011.

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

This Program was announced in the 2009-10 Budget and provides \$11.0 million over four years to implement and evaluate pilot projects for mobile dental services for Indigenous communities in rural and regional Australia.

# HUMAN SERVICES

The Human Services portfolio supports self-sufficiency for individuals and families through access to personalised assistance and co-ordinated delivery of payments and services, government health and other information services.

The portfolio continues to co-locate Medicare, Centrelink, Child Support and other services in a number of shopfronts across Australia to extend the range of services available in each place.

People living in regional, rural and remote areas can access government services through the Department of Human Services (DHS) Service Centres (including Remote Service Centres), Agents and Access Points and visiting services such as Remote Servicing Teams and mobile offices.

Two mobile offices travel to rural and remote communities to provide access to services for people where there is no permanent service delivery presence. Mobile offices travel to communities on pre-determined itineraries and provide tailored services to meet specific needs of each community. Services provided include Centrelink and Medicare services and also specialist services such as those provided by Australian Hearing and the Child Support program. Mobile offices also respond to natural disasters to areas such as the 2012 floods in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

The portfolio also provides customers with access via nationally networked call centres which include specific services for rural and Indigenous customers. Self Service (phone and online) is also available to customers to conveniently claim a payment or concession, update personal details and advise changes in circumstance.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

### Mobile and Outreach services

The Mobile and Outreach services provide information and services for up to 500,000 people who live in rural, regional and remote locations and who are more than 50 kilometres from a DHS Service Centre. These mobile services enable the Department to reach people in locations near where they live. Outreach servicing of rural and regional Australia has provided unique opportunities for the Government to work closely with hard to reach and disadvantaged people, in particular customers whose needs are not met via the phone or online channels for reasons including language, culture and physical abilities.

Mobile offices delivered essential services to people during the 2012 New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland floods and are expected to travel a combined total of 60,000 kilometres to 350 regional communities in 2012-13.

## **Co-location**

The Government continues to co-locate services across Australia to create one-stop shops. These service centres deliver Medicare and Centrelink services in varying forms, with some also offering Child Support services. This has also provided a platform for the co-location of other Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies, such as the Australian Taxation Office and State housing agencies. The co-location program has increased the number of places people in regional Australia can access the Department's and other government services. As of 31 March 2012 the number of places Medicare services are available has increased from 240 to 384, while the number of places Centrelink services are available has increased from 313 to 372. Additionally, an increase in the number of places providing a range of services from one service centre means that travel to a number of centres to access different services will not be necessary for many people.

## **Local Connections to Work**

Local Connections to Work is a sustainable place-based approach from which disadvantaged job seekers and their families can benefit from better access to existing high quality support services. The initiative involves local service providers delivering their services on a rostered basis from a DHS Service Centre, helping job seekers get the services they need and building stronger relationships between community services at the local level.

There are currently nine sites where this program is being delivered to job seekers, four of which are in regional areas. A further five sites will be implemented between April and June 2012, three of which will be in regional areas. The initiative has serviced over 5,500 disadvantaged customers. Of these, over 1,400 customers have had a job placement and over 1,000 have had an education or training placement.

## **Case Coordination**

Case Coordination is designed to assist customers to identify their needs, goals and aspirations and to establish a plan of action that can involve linking them to a range of internal and external services. The initiative has been implemented in 19 locations in 2011-12, several of which are located in regional communities. The number of sites will increase to 34 locations in 2012-13 and 44 locations in 2013-14.

The outcome of the trials will be used to better support people living in regional communities connect to the appropriate services and supports in their communities and achieve improved levels of social and economic participation.

## **Co-design work**

The Government continued to engage with regional and remote communities, including Indigenous communities in these areas, through extensive co-design activity during 2012-13 aimed at enhancing current service offers and delivery methods. These co-design approaches ensure regional and remote perspectives are adequately



represented during relevant customer research activity. During 2012-13, the Government will also continue to design and trial more effective service offers that ensure customers receive information support and assistance that meets their needs.

### **Community Engagement Prototype Activity**

As part of the broader service delivery reform initiative, the Government in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria tested new ways of engaging and collaborating with the community and stakeholders. The Co-design Community Engagement Prototype Activity was trialled across regional and urban sites in Victoria and aimed to provide the Government with an opportunity to better understand and work with communities through identifying local solutions for local issues. The information gained gave great insight into the way small communities operate, and intelligence collected during this activity will be adapted to future enhancements to service delivery in regional, remote and Indigenous communities.

### **Single portfolio website and telephone number**

Customers in regional, remote and Indigenous communities are already benefiting from enhancements made to the online channel and one phone number. The single portfolio website and telephone number (SPTN) means that people in rural and regional Australia only have to access a single point for information and assistance. The online capability will continue to undergo enhancement during 2012-13, allowing customers to undertake transactions in a secure online environment. In addition, there will be further trials of the website that aim to facilitate increased interactive functionality such as a Virtual Concierge, Click-to-Chat and advanced search capabilities. Complemented by the rollout of the NBN, the website will be able to provide more intuitive, tailored and responsive results to customers, regardless of their location.

In 2011, the SPTN was expanded to include Emergency Enhancement capability which provides the Government with the capacity to quickly configure and activate high quality service delivery to meet the needs of communities during an emergency. This capability was activated in early 2012 during flood events in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, ensuring affected customers in regional and remote areas were equipped with vital information and support.

### **National Broadband Network**

The Government, through a collaborative effort, will pilot an initiative—Digital Productivity – leveraging the NBN infrastructure—to enhance service delivery through video conferencing. The pilot aims to increase equitable access to specialist face-to-face services via high-definition videoconferencing, for people in regional Australia who connect to the NBN from their residential homes, or connect to the NBN via a regional video access point. A budget of \$6.2 million has been allocated to the Department for the pilot over the four financial years to 2014-15. The pilot will be

designed collaboratively with citizens, service providers and other third party organisations such as community, education and healthcare providers.

### **Electronic Claiming – claiming Medicare benefits online**

Electronic claiming options reflect the Government's commitment to offer choices based on community needs. These options make it convenient for customers to lodge claims for Medicare Benefits because they do not need to travel to a DHS Service Centre. This is done through four electronic claiming channels:

- Medicare Online allows practices to lodge Medicare claims via the internet;
- Medicare Easyclaim allows practices to lodge claims using a secure EFTPOS network provided by institutions specifically accredited by Medicare;
- ECLIPSE is an electronic system that can be used for claiming services provided in hospitals; and
- claiming Medicare benefits online enables customers to claim the most common GP consultations over the internet through [australia.gov.au](http://australia.gov.au).

The Government is actively working with medical practitioners, software vendors, financial institutions, health insurers and members of the public to increase the availability and use of electronic claiming of Medicare benefits.

### **Services accessed by Health Professionals**

The Health Professional Online Services (HPOS) is a service offered by the Government which provides access to the online services for health professionals through a single entry point.

HPOS also provides access to information on eligibility for Medicare services and information necessary for the processing and payment of claims.

### **Early Release of Superannuation Benefits on compassionate grounds program**

The Early Release of Superannuation Benefits on compassionate grounds program supports many members of the Australian public in obtaining an early release of superannuation benefits due to financial difficulties that fall within specified compassionate grounds under law. The compassionate grounds support an early release to eligible Australians, including eligible people who require transport to medical treatments for life threatening illnesses, acute or chronic pain or acute or chronic mental illnesses. In a number of circumstances these early releases are for families and individuals who are required to travel long distances from regional areas for treatment. The compassionate grounds also support early releases for mortgage assistance, medical treatment and modifications to a home or car to accommodate a disability and Funeral and Palliative care.

The Early Release of Superannuation Benefits program works closely with social workers in supporting customers in regional areas who are in difficulty, as well as developing relationships with regional Financial Counsellor Associations and networks which further support regional areas in applying and potentially obtaining a release where a member of the public is eligible.

### **Small Business Superannuation Clearing House**

The Small Business Superannuation Clearing House (the Clearing House) is an optional free government service to help small businesses with less than 20 employees meet their superannuation guarantee obligations and cut red tape. Under superannuation guarantee requirements, small businesses must make compulsory superannuation payments at every quarter. Employers could be faced with having to make payments to multiple superannuation funds, each with their own set of rules or processes for accepting contributions and accompanying information.

The Clearing House simplifies the process into a single, electronic payment for all employees and sends the nominated contributions to the correct superannuation funds – avoiding the need for small business to deal with multiple funds. As at the end of April 2012, over \$250.0 million in contributions has been received from small business employers and transmitted to superannuation funds. As an Australia-wide online service the Clearing House supports small business in regional areas to meet their superannuation obligations.

# IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The Immigration and Citizenship portfolio is committed to supporting rural and regional communities in Australia. A number of Immigration and Citizenship programs specifically target regional Australia, encouraging migrants and humanitarian entrants to settle in regional areas.

## SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 8 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Immigration and Citizenship portfolio.

**Table 8: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2012-13	Forward estimate 2013-14	Forward estimate 2014-15	Forward estimate 2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
<b>Grants for Community Settlement</b>					
Services (part of Program 5.1	Regional	2	1	-	-
Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees)	Non-regional	26	15	-	-
	Non-specific	27	36	41	43
<b>Other programs</b>					
	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	27	24	16	16
	Non-specific	3	3	3	3
<b>Total</b>					
	Regional	2	1	-	-
	Non-regional	53	39	16	16
	Non-specific	30	39	44	46

- nil

The Grants for Community Settlement Services Program (SGP) is an ongoing grants program with funding provided through a grants application round each year for services 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 the Budget. The analysis for 2012-13 and 2013-14 is based on second and/or third year funding for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 SGP rounds.

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 service 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 that are available in metropolitan areas.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

### **Focus on Regional Migration**

The Government will continue to focus on using Australia's Migration Program to benefit regional Australia. It will continue to encourage migrants to settle in the regional areas where their skills and expertise are greatly needed.

Skilled migrants who settle in regional Australia help support and grow regional economic activity. They help sustain and strengthen regional communities by filling critical skills shortages. They add vitality, diversity and innovation to our regional economies. The Government will continue to build on its suite of packages to encourage beneficial migration outcomes for regional Australia.

The following elements form part of the Government's commitment to continuing to build and strengthen our strong regional migration arrangements:

- applicants for permanent regional migration visas continue to be afforded the highest level of processing priority, ensuring their applications are processed and finalised as quickly as possible;
- the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) is expected to deliver 16,000 skilled migrants to regional areas in 2012-13, filling vacancies which employers cannot fill from the local labour force; and
- the Government will deliver a streamlined RSMS, which will enable existing temporary regional skilled workers to transition more easily to permanent residence with an employer sponsored skilled position. Their employers and local communities will find it simpler to retain their skills in the region.

### **Strengthening the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme**

The Government will allocate up to 16,000 places to the RSMS in 2012-13 to help fill regional vacancies that cannot be met domestically.

This allocation recognises the significant demand regional communities have for skilled migrants. The RSMS is a demand-driven and employer sponsored scheme which ensures that regional Australia gets the skills it needs when it needs them.

From 1 July 2012, the Government will also introduce reforms to fast-track the pathway from a temporary subclass 457 visa, Australia's principal temporary work visa, to a permanent visa under the RSMS. A broader range of skilled occupations will be accessible under the RSMS. The upper age limit will be raised from 45 to less than 50 years and market salaries will be introduced to better respond to regional variations in salaries within industries. Semi-skilled occupations will also be available to regional areas where there are genuine unmet vacancies through the negotiation of a Labour Agreement or a Regional Migration Agreement.

In addition, existing 457 visa holders seeking RSMS or other permanent regional migration visas will continue to be afforded the highest level of processing priority, ensuring their applications are processed and finalised as quickly as possible. This makes migrating to Australia faster for applicants who have skills and qualifications that are in demand in regional Australia – ensuring they can make a timely contribution to regional areas.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **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 RSMS 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 worker. Employers in all areas of Australia, except for Melbourne, Wollongong, Newcastle, Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast, can access the RSMS.

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.

### **Regional Migration Agreements**

The Government has been working to introduce Regional Migration Agreements (RMAs). The agreements bring together employers, local, State and Territory governments and unions to cooperate on addressing local labour needs.

RMAs recognise the unique circumstances of some localities and tailors migration solutions accordingly. In particular, RMAs are 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 are able to gain streamlined access to temporary overseas workers where there is a genuine need.

RMAs are custom-designed, geographically-based migration arrangements that set out the occupations and numbers of overseas workers needed in the regional area. Individual local employers can then directly sponsor workers under the terms of the RMA. RMAs are another vital tool in helping deliver strong, highly-targeted and supportive migration arrangements for 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 and snow sports 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 State and Territory Governments under State Migration Plans.

There are concessions under the points test for the Skilled – Regional Sponsored visas. The Government introduced a revised General Skilled Migration points test on 1 July 2011. The revised points test maintains regional sponsorship points for the Skilled - Regional Sponsored visa.

## **Diversity and Social Cohesion Program**

The Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (DSCP) evolved from the 'Living in Harmony' program, which was established in 1998. 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.

Under the program, grants of up to \$50,000 are available for eligible not-for-profit organisations to develop projects that help build stronger community relations. Multicultural Arts and Festivals Grants of up to \$5,000 are also available for eligible not-for-profit organisations to stage events that encourage social cohesion and mutual understanding.

## **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. Up to 13,750 new humanitarian entrants are settled in Australia each year, 15 to 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 SGP) are available to clients in regional, as well as metropolitan, locations.

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



# INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

The Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education works with a range of industry stakeholders to help shape the future economy through discovery, skills, and innovation. The Department, and the wider portfolio, are working to accelerate productivity growth and secure Australia's prosperity in a competitive global economy.

Recognising that collaboration, education and a strong science and research base are keys to success, the Department brings together business, research bodies, the tertiary education sector, government and the broader community to discover, embrace and drive new ways of achieving economic and social benefits and deliver those benefits to Australia.

The Department is focused on promoting technological, social and environmental innovation and shaping businesses, industries and the workforce to turn these opportunities into action.

The Department's approach is driven by its seven key strategic priorities: investing in scientific engagement and awareness; strengthening and focusing Australia's research efforts, developing a highly skilled, educated and productive workforce, driving productive, competitive and innovative business; developing industries for the future; increasing participation and building capability; and fostering a culture of collaboration.

Funding assistance is provided to firms, research organisations and tertiary education institutions whether they are in metropolitan, regional, rural or remote areas. The portfolio has an extensive regional presence with services delivered through:

- AusIndustry;
- Enterprise Connect network; and
- Portfolio agencies, such as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the National Measurement Institute (NMI).

## NEW INITIATIVES

### Small Business Advisory Services

The 2012-13 Budget will provide \$27.5 million over four years to continue the Small Business Advisory Services (SBAS) program. Eligible service providers, such as Business Enterprise Centres and Registered Business Organisations, will be able to apply for funding under the re-focused program to help existing small business operators and those starting out with low-cost planning and management advice and

assistance with applications for finance. The program will be funded on an on-going basis.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **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. The Network is also helping to increase collaboration within regional communities, facilitating inter-business networks and relationships - a key factor in encouraging innovation.

### **Assistance to Upgrade Simplot's Processing Plants in Tasmania**

During the 2010 election, the Government committed \$3.0 million to Simplot Australia Pty Ltd to assist in the \$15.6 million capital cost of replacing the three existing coal fired boilers at the company's Tasmanian Ulverstone Plant with an eight megawatt gas fired co-generation system that produces both electricity and steam.

Simplot is the last remaining nationally distributed frozen vegetable processor in Australia. The company operates plants at Devonport and Ulverstone in northern Tasmania. The Ulverstone plant processes approximately 250,000 tonnes of raw potatoes annually and employs some 250 staff with up to 80 casuals.

The investment assists in securing employment in the region and materially reduces the Ulverstone plant's carbon emissions by an estimated 48 per cent or 39,000 tonnes per annum.

### **Clean Technology Program**

The Government's \$1.2 billion Clean Technology Program is a landmark initiative which provides industry with incentives to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the challenges of climate change. The program, which is delivered by AusIndustry, comprises three elements.

#### **Clean Technology Investment Program**

The Clean Technology Investment Program is a \$800.0 million program over seven years that will provide grants to existing Australian manufacturing businesses to invest in energy efficient capital equipment and low emissions technologies, processes and products. The grants, to be delivered by AusIndustry, will provide practical transitional assistance to Australian manufacturing businesses. The program opened for applications on 16 February 2012.

### **Clean Technology Food and Foundries Investment Program**

The Clean Technology Food and Foundries Investment Program is a \$200.0 million program over six years that provides grants to existing Australian food and foundry manufacturing businesses to invest in energy efficient capital equipment and low emissions technologies, processes and products. The grants, to be delivered by AusIndustry, will provide practical transitional assistance to Australian manufacturing businesses. The program opened for applications on 16 February 2012.

### **Clean Technology Innovation Program**

The Clean Technology Innovation Program is a \$200.0 million program to support research and development, proof of concept and early stage commercialisation activities that lead to the development of new clean technologies and associated services including low emission and energy efficient solutions that reduce greenhouse emissions. It will support Australian companies, including small businesses and individuals, and applications involving collaboration with research institutions or other companies (domestic and/or international) will be highly encouraged. The program is scheduled to open in the second half of 2012.

### **Commercialisation Australia**

Commercialisation Australia is a competitive, merit-based assistance program offering funding and resources to accelerate the business building process for Australian companies, entrepreneurs, researchers and inventors.

The program has funding of \$269.2 million over the five years to 2014, with ongoing funding of \$82.0 million per year thereafter.

Commercialisation Australia recognises that researchers and early stage businesses need more than capital to succeed. It provides not only a range of funding products, but access to highly skilled business builders who are available to work with successful applicants and guide them through the various stages of commercialisation. Where needed, Commercialisation Australia also links its participants with volunteer business mentors. These are people with significant business, commercialisation, domain and investment expertise.

Commercialisation Australia is available to companies, entrepreneurs and researchers throughout Australia. The program is currently supporting 53 firms in regional areas with total funding in excess of \$17.5 million.

### **Enterprise Connect**

Enterprise Connect is a national network of 12 Centres that help Australian firms develop the skills, tools and knowledge needed to improve their competitiveness and productivity and to maximise their growth potential. The network employs around 100 experienced Business Advisers and Facilitators, including 29 located in regional Australia. Since its establishment, Enterprise Connect has provided Business Reviews

to more than 5,700 small firms of which around 1,800 were located in regional Australia.

Enterprise Connect has a Remote Enterprise Centre that provides services to firms in remote areas of Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Northern Territory. Recognising the particular challenges for remote businesses, the program provides concessional eligibility criteria. To date, more than 300 remote businesses have been assisted through the Enterprise Connect Business Review service.

Since its inception in 2008, Enterprise Connect has worked to support regional Australia through a range of activities including:

- assisting Ballarat University and the City of Ballarat to develop the Strategic Management for Profitable Growth Program to support Ballarat manufacturing;
- coordinating Federal Government responses to SMEs affected by major structural change;
- developing the Central Queensland Innovation Accord, a regional level agreement backed by over 100 regional leaders to work collaboratively; and
- partnering with the University of South Australia to deliver 'Innovate from Good to Great' program, taking high potential businesses through dedicated training and coaching.

### **Green Building Fund**

The Green Building Fund was established in 2008 as part of the Government's Clean Business Australia initiative. Its aim was to reduce the impact of Australia's built environment on greenhouse gas emissions, by reducing the energy consumed in the operation of commercial office buildings. In 2010, the program expanded to include hotels and shopping centres covered by the National Australian Built Environment Rating System. Grants of between \$50,000 and \$500,000 were available, for up to 50 per cent of the total project cost.

Examples of projects include:

- upgrades to heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems;
- improvements to common area lighting;
- building control management systems to better monitor and manage energy used in the building; and
- implementation of renewable energy, or co-generation systems.

The program is now closed to new applications. Management of existing grant agreements will continue until 30 June 2014.

### **Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund**

The Illawarra Region Innovation and Investment Fund (IRIIF) was jointly announced by the Prime Minister and the Premier of New South Wales on 22 August 2011 in response to BlueScope Steel's decision to restructure its manufacturing operations at Port Kembla in the Illawarra resulting in the loss of more than 800 jobs. The IRIIF is a \$30.0 million joint initiative comprising \$20.0 million from the Australian Government, \$5.0 million from the New South Wales Government and \$5.0 million from BlueScope Steel over three years to 30 June 2014. The Fund is expected to generate around 1,000 new sustainable jobs in the Illawarra.

The Fund will strengthen the Illawarra region by stimulating investment and diversifying the economic and employment base. The package supports new investment that will create high quality, skilled and sustainable job opportunities in the Illawarra region.

The IRIIF will have up to three competitive funding rounds. Round one opened on 18 October 2011 and closed on 16 December 2011. A total of 13 projects will be offered funding of \$16.2 million (GST inclusive), leveraging an additional \$30.3 million in business investment and creating approximately 470 jobs.

### **Re-tooling For Climate Change**

The Re-tooling for Climate Change program aimed to help SME Australian manufacturers to reduce their environmental footprint, by improving the energy and/or water efficiency of their production processes. The program was part of the Government's Clean Business Australia initiative. A significant proportion of funded projects were in regional Australia. The program is now closed to new applications.

Under the program, Australian SME manufacturers were able to apply for grants from \$10,000 to \$500,000 to fund up to 50 per cent of project costs. Project examples included:

- the application of water capture, recycling and filtration technologies;
- investment in co-generation or renewable energy technology; and
- process re-engineering to reduce energy consumption/waste and/or water consumption/waste.

### **Research and Development Tax Incentive**

The Research and Development (R&D) Tax Incentive is the Australian Government's flagship program for encouraging business investment in R&D. It is a broad-based, market-driven entitlement program designed to support R&D activities conducted by

companies across Australia, including those in regional Australia. The program replaces the R&D Tax Concession and applies to income years commencing on or after 1 July 2011.

The R&D Tax Incentive provides more generous and predictable support to businesses undertaking R&D activities than the previous R&D Tax Concession program.

The two components of the R&D Tax Incentive are: a 45 per cent refundable tax offset for SMEs with an aggregated turnover of under \$20.0 million; and a 40 per cent non-refundable tax offset for all other firms. An SME can receive a cash refund if it is in tax loss. There is no cap for eligible R&D expenditures that can be claimed under the R&D Tax Incentive.

The Tax Incentive has made it more attractive for multinational companies to invest in R&D in Australia, by removing the previous requirements for the resulting intellectual property to be held in Australia. The program provides greater access for companies controlled by universities and other tax-exempt entities. It also supports businesses undertaking R&D in collaboration with other entities including Research Service Providers and Cooperative Research Centres. These elements help encourage collaborative R&D activities between private sector companies and public sector research organisations, including regional universities.

### **Small Business Support Line**

The Small Business Support Line provides small business owners across Australia, including those located in regional Australia, with a single point of contact to help them access information and referral services. The support line links into existing small business support mechanisms, including business licensing information and referrals, Business Enterprise Centres (BECs), and State and Territory Government small business programs and services. The Small Business Support Line also incorporates the Small Business Credit Complaints clearing house, which provides an avenue for small businesses to complain about access to, and the cost of, bank finance. The Small Business Support Line has been funded to continue to 30 June 2015.

### **Small Business Advisory Services – Natural Disaster Assistance**

The SBAS – Natural Disaster Assistance (NDA) program provides funding for small business support groups to help them deliver additional services to assist small businesses that have been directly and/or indirectly affected by the natural disasters that have occurred in Australia since October 2010. The Australian Government has provided \$2.5 million to fund 25 BECs and Registered Business Organisations across Australia. Twenty-two of these are located in regional Australia.

### **South East South Australia Innovation and Investment Fund**

The \$12.0 million South East South Australia Innovation and Investment Fund is part of a \$17.0 million assistance package announced by the South Australian 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.

### **Tasmanian Innovation and Investment Fund**

The \$8.0 million Tasmanian Innovation and Investment Fund (TIIF) forms part of the Economic Diversification stream (Stream 3) of the \$276.0 million Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). The TIIF was announced by the Prime Minister on 3 October 2011 and applications closed on 14 December 2011. A total of 26 projects were awarded funding of \$8.3 million (GST inclusive), leveraging an additional \$12.2 million in business investment and creating 261 new jobs. The TIIF provides support for investment in new activities that broaden the Tasmanian economy.

### **Textile, Clothing and Footwear Small Business Program**

The Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Small Business Program provides grants of up to \$50,000 for projects to improve the business enterprise culture of established TCF small businesses that have not received grants or qualify for assistance from other TCF programs. TCF small businesses must manufacture an eligible TCF product in Australia, or design an eligible TCF product for manufacture in Australia. They must also: have fewer than 20 employees; have a minimum turnover of \$100,000; and provide a minimum cash contribution to the project of 25 per cent of eligible expenditure. The program is competitive and applications are assessed on merit. Funding of \$2.5 million is available per year over a ten year program period, which commenced in 2006-07.

### **Textile, Clothing and Footwear Strategic Capability Program**

The Textile, Clothing and Footwear Strategic Capability Program (TCF SCP) is a five year (July 2010 to June 2015) \$35.0 million, competitive grant program. It funds large projects that will build innovative capability at the enterprise and workplace level. The program supports strategic projects that increase innovative capability across the Australian TCF industry. By supporting the development of innovative capability, the program aims to assist the growth and development of a highly creative, sustainable and internationally competitive TCF sector. The minimum grant size is \$250,000 and funding must be matched on a dollar for dollar basis. The program is a competitive, merit-based grants program. All eligible TCF businesses can apply. Consortium applications are also available which can include any non-TCF business provided that the consortium includes an eligible TCF business.

Examples of TCF SCP projects in regional areas include:

- the repositioning of Creswick Woollen Mills (Creswick, Victoria) from a fine yarn spinning business to a carpet yarn spinner through an upgrade of the mill. The project aims to provide SME carpet manufacturers with access to lower volume,

customised yarn production. This new source of yarn will allow these manufacturers to develop new and innovative carpet designs and products; and

- the research and development of a portfolio of lightweight, highly technical fabrics at Bruck Textiles (Wangaratta, Victoria) to provide protection against ballistic, stab and needle stick threats. The project will be undertaken in conjunction with the CSIRO, which will carry out small-scale weaving and experiment with various raw materials and compositions to achieve optimum ballistic protection. The project is also directed at establishing new markets for the products developed.

## **Science & Research**

### **Australian Astronomical Observatory**

The Australian Astronomical Observatory (AAO) 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 United Kingdom Schmidt Telescope, and through its outreach activities and community engagement.

The AAO employs 29 staff at its Siding Spring Observatory site. Additionally, the AAO offers local contracts for services at the AAO and for the supply of goods and services to support the operations of the Observatory. The AAO is a major drawcard for tourists to the region, with approximately 17,500 visitors each year.

The AAO is collaborating with the local community, regional councils, the Coonabarabran District Chamber of Commerce, the Coonabarabran Local Aboriginal Land Council, and the New South Wales Department of Planning to develop a new State Environmental Planning Policy, a Regulation under the New South Wales *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (and subsequent amendments such as the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 2008 No 36*). The policy will ensure new developments in the region maintain the dark skies that are crucial to the Observatory.

### **Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics**

The Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics (ACPGF) 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.



### **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 of 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.

The 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 which it has entered into Research Action Partnerships through its PBC project. AIATSIS holds an annual national Native Title Conference that brings together the largest number of regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants of any policy-focussed conference in the country.

### **Australian Institute of Marine Science**

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) 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, AIMS 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 AIMS 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 which represented a growth of six percent from the previous year. This was largely driven by offshore oil and gas exploration and tourism which are major industries in northern Australia.

The Government recognises the importance of northern Australia and the increasing demand for marine research. In 2011-12 it allocated \$31.3 million to AIMS to help support important research in the region and has invested \$55.0 million in Tropical Marine Research Facilities at AIMS 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.

### **Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation**

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) is Australia's national nuclear science and technology research and development organisation. Its expertise is applied to medical radiopharmaceutical production and research; climate

change research; water resource management; materials engineering; neutron scattering and a range of other scientific disciplines.

ANSTO is the primary supplier of radiopharmaceuticals in Australia, distributing to 35 regional hospitals/nuclear medicine practices across Australia. The remainder of the regional areas are supplied from isotopes ANSTO supplies to radio pharmacies.

ANSTO conducts environmental-related research in regional areas across Australia, including the following projects:

- understanding past rainfall patterns in southwest Western Australia and the headwaters of the Murray River system;
- mapping water sources and availability in Riversleigh (Queensland), Cooper Creek (South Australia and Queensland), Wimmera region (Victoria), the Gngangara Mound (Western Australia) and Macquarie Marshes (New South Wales);
- research into aquatic ecosystems at Macquarie Marshes (New South Wales), Gwydir Wetlands (New South Wales) and Lowbidgee Wetlands (New South Wales); and
- dust and fine particle monitoring in the Hunter Valley, Newcastle, and Wollongong in New South Wales, and in Cape Grim in Tasmania.

ANSTO is a major employer in the Illawarra region of New South Wales. There are almost 400 ANSTO employees who live in Wollongong, making up one third of ANSTO's 1,100 strong workforce. ANSTO invested \$36.7 million in the Illawarra through wages and contracts with 150 local businesses and suppliers.

### **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 \$120.0 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 the 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. The 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.

### **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, which was announced as a special Budget appropriation in 2009.

### **Collaborative Research Networks**

Smaller and regional universities make an important contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of local communities. They bring great skills to regional communities and help inspire young people to make a contribution.

In May 2011, the Government announced that 12 higher education institutions would receive a total of \$61.5 million from 2011 to 2014 through the Collaborative Research Networks program, to assist less research intensive, smaller and regional universities develop their research capabilities by working in partnership with more research-intensive institutions.

### **Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation**

The 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:

- Digital Elevation Model - CSIRO, the Australian National University (ANU), the Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia and the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation completed the finest resolution national computer model of Australia's ground surface topography and river networks. This 30 metre resolution model will not only revolutionise land and water management applications, but will also enable improvements in many other areas – for example, calculating improved coverage of mobile phone towers or creating three-dimensional visualisations of the landscape for improved understanding of potential flood extents;
- Northern Australia Land and Water Science Review (the Science Review) - CSIRO coordinated a review in collaboration with over 80 of Australia's leading scientists working on northern land and water issues. The Science Review represents the most comprehensive and thorough review ever undertaken of conventional science and knowledge of issues relevant to the sustainable development of northern Australian land and water; and
- Remote Eye Care - CSIRO has developed a telemedicine system called Remote-I to bring specialist eye care to those living in underserved rural and remote locations. Remote-I provides clinical decision support for primary care providers and nurses

to make appropriate health assessments enabling referral to a specialist in a timely manner to avoid disease complications. The system is being validated and used in the Pilbara to manage patients remotely by an ophthalmologist in Perth.

### **Cooperative Research Centres Program**

The Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) program supports end-user driven research collaborations to solve major end-user challenges, many of which are global. CRC activities include research, education and training programs and engagement with SMEs.

The CRC program conducts annual selection rounds. The 15th CRC selection round is currently open and closes on 14 June 2012. The priorities for the 15th CRC selection round are social innovation, clean manufacturing and sustainable regional communities. The sustainable regional communities priority area will be interpreted broadly and will address economic, environmental and social challenges faced by Australia's regional communities. Proposals are expected to be focussed on securing future prosperity and maximising opportunities for regional communities through sectors with long-term competitive advantages, investment in climate and biosecurity resilience, infrastructure, health, jobs, education and increased participation. Proposals could also contribute to sustainable regional communities through investigation of trade opportunities and value-adding to raw products, digital applications, investment in clean energy, water and carbon efficient technologies as well as community leadership and resilience.

Currently there are 14 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 190 CRCs funded since 1991, there have been 64 rural-focused CRCs with some \$1.2 billion in Commonwealth funding being provided.

### **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.

## **National Measurement Institute**

The NMI interacts with customers and businesses nationwide to provide analytical chemistry testing, peak physical metrology and chemical and biological metrology services. Although much of the physical, chemical and biological services are delivered to metropolitan or urban based clients, the subsequent fan-out effects of benefits to regional areas are significant. NMI measurement services are available to regional business and research groups through laboratories based in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne.

The NMI also has national regulatory responsibility for trade measurement which ensures that all trade transactions based on measurement are accurate and faithfully represented. NMI's trade measurement network includes laboratories in seven major capital cities and 22 regionally based offices. Additionally, trade measurement staff, especially those in outer metropolitan areas, have regional responsibilities and travel to all parts of regional Australia. They also play an active part in disaster affected areas by helping businesses re-build their trade measurement capabilities.

## **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 is in its 27th year of operation. This world class outreach program has a significant impact on engaging regional Australia with science. In 2010-11 nearly 40,000 people experienced a Shell Questacon Science Circus show with 324 schools visited.

During 2010-11, there were nearly 140,000 visitors to outreach programs and 970 schools visited in regional and remote communities across Australia and in most States and Territories. Approximately ten per cent of all Australian schools were visited and 14 per cent of schools outside capital cities were visited by at least one of the Questacon outreach programs.

Questacon Outreach also presents interactive workshops via video conference to schools in regional areas. The Questacon Digital Studio is continuing to develop the use of digital and online activities to further enhance the ability to engage individuals and communities in regional Australia in science communication. The Questacon Digital Studio is set to expand in reach as more schools have the technology available to facilitate participation.

Inspiring Australia (IA) reaches close to two million people per annum. The IA program is responsible for key activities such as the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science and National Science Week. In 2011-12, the IA program funded a new \$5.0 million

grant round to further unlock Australia's potential, with regional Australia identified as a priority area.

### **Super Science Initiatives**

In the 2009-10 Budget, the Government made targeted investments totalling \$1.1 billion over five years to support the following three fields of scientific research: space and astronomy; marine and climate; and future industries.

This investment is ameliorating the impact of the global financial crisis on Australia by providing funds for critical research infrastructure needs across Australia, including in regional areas. These major research infrastructure developments will create highly skilled jobs and provide important research and information gathering capabilities on natural resource management, forestry, agriculture and health to benefit regional Australia.

### **Tertiary Education & Skills**

#### **Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program**

Under the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program, employers of eligible Australian Apprentices at the Certificate III or IV level may attract a commencement incentive of up to \$1,500 and a completion incentive of \$2,500. Australian Apprentices at the Certificate II level may attract a \$1,250 commencement incentive for their employer.

In addition to these incentives, the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program also contains a range of special and additional incentives. Many of these are targeted at those in traditional trades identified as experiencing a national skills shortage.

To boost training in rural and regional Australia, the Government provides a \$1,000 Rural and Regional Skills Shortage Incentive for rural or regional employers who employ an Australian Apprentice undertaking a Certificate III or IV level qualification that leads to an occupation on the National Skills Needs List.

In addition to employer incentives, the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program contains personal benefits payments for Australian Apprentices.

The Tools For Your Trade payment initiative is available to eligible Australian Apprentices undertaking a Certificate III or IV Australian Apprenticeship leading to an occupation listed on the National Skills Needs List, a Certificate II, III or IV Australian Apprenticeship in an agricultural occupation, and, if in rural and regional Australia, a horticultural occupation. This payment comprises five tax exempt cash payments paid over the life of the Australian Apprenticeship.

### **Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Program**

The Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Program was announced in the 2011-12 Budget as part of the \$101.0 million Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring package. The package forms part of the Australian Government's initial response to the recommendations of the Apprenticeships for the 21st Century Expert Panel.

The Mentoring Program seeks to improve Australian Apprenticeship retention rates through the provision of approximately \$79.9 million over four years to support targeted mentoring and assistance to Australian Apprentices. The Mentoring Program is targeted at industries and occupations with current or emerging skills needs and Australian Apprentices who may face barriers to participation (e.g. Indigenous Apprentices or Apprentices in remote locations). It is anticipated that Mentoring Projects will target support to the first year of training when Australian Apprentices are most at risk of withdrawing.

### **Australian Government Skills Connect**

Australian Government Skills Connect is an integrated approach designed to help link eligible Australian enterprises with a range of skills and workforce development programs and funding. It is an employers' gateway to information and support that will connect them with Australian Government funding that meets their unique business or industry training and workforce development needs, helping them to build productivity and improve the future of their business. Through Australian Government Skills Connect, industry will have access to a broad range of assistance no matter whether they are in metropolitan, regional, rural or remote areas. The network will help Australian enterprises and industry to make the right connections and get the right advice.

### **Commonwealth Grant Scheme**

The Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) provides funding to higher education providers for Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) in bachelor courses of study and some CSPs in sub-bachelor, non-research postgraduate, medicine and other courses of study specified by the Minister. From 1 January 2012, CGS funding became demand driven, with funding determined by the number of university enrolments. Previously, the number of funded places was capped by Government. Public universities are now able to determine the number of students they enrol in bachelor level courses (excluding medicine) and receive funding for these places. Universities can increase the number of CSPs they offer in particular disciplines in response to employer and student demand.

For non-research postgraduate courses and designated undergraduate courses (medicine, enabling courses and courses of study leading to a diploma, advanced diploma or associate degree), the Commonwealth will provide funding to public universities for an agreed number of CSPs in a given year. All other providers are funded for CSPs based on allocations by the Commonwealth.

In 2012 the Government provided \$5.9 billion through the CGS to fund more than 540,000 student places.

Regional loading provides additional funding under the CGS to providers with regional campuses to assist them to meet the higher costs associated with these campuses. Regional loading is provided to universities through a new formula that targets the campuses that need the most support, using a transparent process that responds to student demand. In 2012, the Government increased regional loading by \$109.9 million over four years bringing total funding to \$268.0 million.

### **Education Investment Fund**

The role of the Education Investment Fund (EIF) 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.

Over the four competitive rounds of the EIF that have been held to date, \$274.5 million (or 21 per cent) of allocated funds went to regional institutions or campuses for teaching and learning infrastructure and \$180.9 million for research infrastructure projects. Projects that have received funding include 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; and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources at the University of Newcastle.

Recognising the important role that regional tertiary institutions play for their students and for their local communities, the Prime Minister announced the EIF Regional Priorities Round in October 2011. This special round will provide \$500.0 million over 2011-12 to 2015-16 to higher education institutions and vocational education training providers across regional Australia.

The Regional Priorities Round has two components: \$480.0 million to be allocated to higher education institutions and VET providers via a competitive round; and \$20.0 million in seed funding for the development of a multi-partner campus on the mid-north coast of New South Wales.

Since January 2009, more than \$4.5 billion has been committed from the EIF for infrastructure projects in the higher education, vocational education and training and research sectors.

### **Education and Training Advisers**

Under the Education and Training Advisers (ETA) program the Government funds the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Industry Group and the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) to support a network of 24 Education and



Training Advisers (ETAs) across all States and Territories. The NFF has subcontracted Rural Skills Australia (RSA) to undertake this role.

The RSA advisers necessarily have a strong focus on rural and regional training issues. The key function of ETAs is to work through the peak industry associations to increase their members' understanding of and confidence in the national training system, in particular Australian Apprenticeships and training packages, with the ultimate goal of improving employer take-up of Australian Apprenticeships.

The Building Australia's Future Workforce package announced by the Australian Government in the 2011-12 Budget provides a \$3.0 billion investment for a new approach to deliver the skilled workers the economy needs and ensure more Australians have the opportunity to share in the nation's prosperity. The package includes a number of initiatives that will benefit regional Australia.

One such initiative is the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF). Through the NWDF the Government will provide \$550.1 million over four years from 2011-12 to support training and workforce development in areas of current and future skills need. Industry will be required to make a co-contribution to training costs. The Government has made a commitment to ensuring that a fair proportion of funding is provided to those living and working in regional areas.

### **Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program**

The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) was established in 2010 with the aim of achieving the Government's target for 20 per cent of higher education enrolments at the undergraduate level to be from people of a low socio-economic status (SES) background by 2020.

The HEPPP consists of two components: a participation component, with the objective of increasing the participation of domestic students from low SES backgrounds in accredited undergraduate qualifications, and supporting the retention and success of those students; and a partnership component, with the objective of raising the aspirations and building the capacity of people from low SES backgrounds to participate in higher education through collaborative activities with stakeholders, such as primary and secondary schools, vocational education and training (VET) providers, other universities, State and Territory Governments, and community organisations.

The Government is investing more than \$700.0 million from 2012 to 2015 through the HEPPP.

### **Industry and Indigenous Skill Centre Program**

The Industry and Indigenous Skill Centres Program (IISC) Program provides grant funding to eligible industry and/or Indigenous organisations to assist with the purchase, construction, fit-out or refurbishment of facilities intended for the delivery of VET. The IISC program helps to meet the emerging and ongoing skills needs of

industries and Indigenous communities. The Program is open to regional and remote communities and organisations. To date approximately \$11.0 million (36 per cent) of IISC funding has been provided to VET providers located outside metropolitan areas.

Arrangements for the next IISC Program funding round are currently being finalised. It is anticipated this funding round will open later in 2012.

### **Industry Skills Councils**

The Government funds a network of 11 Industry Skills Councils, and Auto Skills Australia, to work with stakeholders to identify and assist in developing appropriate solutions to address workforce development needs across small, medium and large enterprises and/or industry sectors and regional and remote Australia. These organisations also perform a crucial role in the national vocational education and training system by engaging industry in the development of training packages. Industry Skills Councils and Auto Skills Australia currently have funding agreements for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2014.

All industry skills councils engage in the regions through their work, but in particular with the resources, agricultural, food production, forestry and transport sectors.

### **Fly in Fly out Coordinator Pilot Project in Cairns, Queensland**

A pilot project has been established in the Cairns region of North Queensland to help connect suitable workers in the region with available mining and construction jobs in remote locations via Fly in Fly out (FIFO) arrangements. Skills DMC, the National Industry Skills Council for the Resources and Infrastructure Industry, was selected from a competitive grant application process to provide the FIFO Coordinator in Cairns for two years (until July 2013). It is working in conjunction with Advance Cairns to help connect job seekers in the region to resources and construction jobs at remote sites. The Australian Government is providing \$561,000 to support this project.

The FIFO Coordinator is developing training and employment pathways for local unemployed job seekers and skilled workers to move into remote jobs through FIFO. The FIFO Coordinator has been on the ground since November 2011.

### **The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Practitioner Scholarships Program**

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) Practitioner Scholarships Program provides scholarships of up to \$5,250 to support successful applicants in undertaking approved study towards an adult LLN practitioner qualification. Fifty scholarships are offered each year following an annual application round. In the current round more than 50 per cent of scholarships have been awarded to students located in regional or remote areas.

### **Promotion of Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education**

The Australian Government has provided \$50.1 million in program funding over four years towards the Promotion of Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PELTHE). PELTHE is administered by the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) in the Department. The OLT provides funding to universities for academics and professional staff to investigate, develop and implement innovations in learning and teaching.

Although not specifically targeted to regional universities, this program includes funding for projects that benefit regional and rural Australia. Recently completed projects include Renewing Rural and Regional Teacher Education Curriculum (RRRTEC). RRRTEC was a collaboration between Deakin University, Charles Sturt University, Edith Cowan University and Monash University. It aimed to better equip teacher educators to prepare teachers to work in rural and regional communities. The project has created resources including a website for all teacher educators, principals, mentors and others supporting new teachers in rural schools. Focusing on the classroom, the school and the community, the website provides a range of high quality materials, curriculum resources and pedagogical strategies.

### **Structural Adjustment Fund**

The Australian Government established the Structural Adjustment Fund (SAF) in the 2009-10 Budget to assist universities in transitioning to the new higher education landscape. A total of \$377.2 million has been approved for the 13 institutions identified as requiring assistance to prepare for the new demand driven funding system with new quality measures in place. Of this amount, nearly half (\$117.0 million) went to regional universities.

The SAF will assist universities, particularly in regional and outer metropolitan areas, to adapt to the reforms through:

- consolidation of higher education institutions or campuses; and/or
- significant collaboration with TAFE institutes and/or other universities; and/or
- significant changes in the focus, organisation or operation of institutions or campuses.

### **Student Income Support**

The Review of Student Income Support Reforms reported to the Government on 8 July 2011 and was tabled in Parliament on 14 September 2011. The Government's response provided additional support to young people from regional areas who need to move away from home to study, while maintaining an emphasis on assisting students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

## Relocation Scholarships

Recognising that students from regional areas experience higher costs to relocate for study, from 1 January 2012, the Government increased the value of Relocation Scholarships for eligible regional students to \$2,000 for each of the second and third years of study.

## **Workforce participation criteria for Inner Regional students**

The concessional workforce participation independence arrangements for ABSTUDY and Youth Allowance that applied to students from Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote areas were extended to Inner Regional students from 1 January 2012. This delivers on the Government's commitment to remove regional eligibility distinctions and recognises the need for greater assistance for young people from regional areas who need to live away from home to participate in study.

# INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

The Australian Government recognises the vital importance of Australia's regions to our national prosperity and the unique contribution rural and regional Australians make to our national character. The Infrastructure and Transport portfolio remains committed to supporting vibrant, productive and sustainable rural and regional communities, across the length and breadth of Australia.

Through the unprecedented investment of more than \$36.0 billion in the Nation Building Program, the Australian Government will continue to strengthen rural and regional road, rail, and port infrastructure. This includes significant investment to improve and renew our rural and regional roads, fix hundreds of black spots, upgrade our freight rail lines and continue the development of intermodal terminals. This investment will modernise and improve our national infrastructure and deliver concrete economic benefits. Almost two-thirds of the Nation Building Program funding will be allocated to projects in rural and regional Australia. The Australian Government's Regional Infrastructure Fund will support regional infrastructure projects by providing \$6.0 billion for much-needed regional infrastructure over 11 years to 2020.

The Australian Government is also preparing for our long-term future by delivering major reforms to the way we invest in, build and regulate our infrastructure. The Government has established an independent statutory body, Infrastructure Australia, to undertake detailed planning and consultation on infrastructure funding priorities. Infrastructure Australia is also leading the development of the National Ports Strategy and the National Land Freight Strategy, which will provide blueprints for better long term planning and future investment in the nation's port, road and rail infrastructure.

## SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 9 illustrates a summary of expenditure for selected grants programs in the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio. It does not include grants programs where payments are made to the States and Territories or for grants programs of less than \$50.0 million.

The Infrastructure and Transport portfolio is making a substantial contribution to regional Australia through various grant programs including, but not limited to, the programs outlined in the below table.

**Table 9: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Infrastructure and Transport**

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-15	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Component of Program 1.1	Regional	249	246	-	-
Nation Building Roads to Recovery	Non-regional	78	74	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	350	350
Component of Program 1.1	Regional	-	-	-	-
Nation Building Program Investment (ARTC , Rail and Research)	Non-regional	43	52	-	-
	Non-specific	11	21	-	-
Component of Program 2.2	Regional	102	104	106	108
Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total	Regional	350	350	106	108
	Non-regional	121	126	-	-
	Non-specific	11	21	350	350
- nil					

- 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 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 shippers do not have the option of transporting goods interstate by road or rail. The Government has committed approximately \$102.0 million in 2012-13 and \$317.0 million in the forward years to the Scheme.

## NEW INITIATIVES

### The Pacific Highway Duplication

Both the Australian and New South Wales Governments have had a long-standing commitment to complete the duplication of the Pacific Highway by 2016. By the end of the current Nation Building Program in 2013-14 (subject to the required New South Wales matching funding), it is expected that 63 per cent of the Pacific Highway will be duplicated, with a further seven per cent under construction.

Between 2012-13 and 2016-17, the Australian Government will make available an additional \$3.6 billion under the Nation Building Program. This funding could be made available to the New South Wales Government, contingent on a dollar for dollar matching commitment up to \$3.6 billion, to allow the completion of the Pacific Highway upgrade by 2016.

Completion will bring major improvements in freight efficiency, an expected reduction in road trauma and benefits to industries and regions made more accessible by the upgrade. Completion of the upgrade will fulfil an objective long held by the north coast community and governments at all levels.

### **Black Spot Program**

The Australian Government will provide \$300.0 million, \$60.0 million per annum, to continue the Black Spot Program from 2014-15 to 2018-19. The program provides funding for road safety works at places where there have been serious crashes or where serious crashes are likely.

### **Roads to Recovery Program**

The Australian Government will provide \$1.75 billion, \$350.0 million per annum, to continue the Roads to Recovery Program from 2014-15 to 2018-19. The 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.

### **Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program**

The Australian Government is committed to improving heavy vehicle road safety and productivity in rural and regional Australia. Driver rest areas play a vital role in ensuring safe and efficient road freight movements and decoupling bays provide improved facilities and safer areas for truck drivers to consolidate and deconsolidate consignments.

An additional \$140.0 million will be provided to extend the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program - \$10.0 million funded in 2012-13, \$30.0 million in 2013-14 and then \$20.0 million ongoing until 2018-19. This funding builds upon the \$70.0 million previously provided under this program over the four years 2008-09 to 2011-12.

The program directly targets the improved safety of heavy vehicles by providing funding for new and upgraded rest areas, parking and decoupling bays and other road enhancement projects. The majority of these projects are located in rural and regional Australia. To date, the program has funded 236 projects including 95 new or upgraded rest areas and 45 new or upgraded parking/decoupling bays. The introduction of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator will improve productivity by providing an enduring solution to the current situation where drivers must consolidate or deconsolidate consignments as a result of inconsistent load limits across States and Territories.

### **Seatbelts on Regional School Buses**

The Australian Government will provide \$4.0 million over four years from 2012-13 to 2015-16 to continue to improve the safety of school children in regional and rural areas through the Seatbelts on Regional School Buses program. The program aims to

increase the number of school buses equipped with seatbelts for students in rural and regional areas.

Rural and regional school students often travel longer distances on bus routes and on roads with higher speed limits and which can present more hazards than those travelled by students in metropolitan areas. Many of the buses operating on these rural and regional routes are not equipped with seatbelts.

The Seatbelts on Regional School Buses program provides eligible school bus operators with funding of up to \$25,000 per bus to cover the cost of fitting seatbelts. Since the program commenced in 2007, the Australian Government has spent over \$4.4 million to increase the number of school buses equipped with seatbelts for students. Funding has been provided to fit seatbelts in over 280 school buses throughout regional Australia, helping to improve the safety of our rural and regional school students.

## **National Transport Planning**

The Australian Government will provide new funding of \$20.0 million over four years from 2012-13 to 2015-16 to strengthen its commitment to long term national transport planning and support vital work in areas such as high speed rail. Since 2007 the Australian Government has placed high priority on innovative, long term planning solutions on how we move people and goods within cities, between cities, between regions - and between Australia and the world.

This additional investment will progress high speed rail in Australia and help take critical research and analysis to the next level - ensuring all governments are best placed to take informed decisions on the future of transport systems and networks across the country.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Nation Building**

Funding of over \$36.0 billion will be provided under the current Nation Building Program, with \$4.7 billion to be provided in 2012-13 for road, rail and port initiatives across Australia, to support jobs, and to help drive Australia's long-term productivity and international competitiveness. By investing in transport infrastructure of national significance across Australia, the Government is 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.

This infrastructure investment is an important part of strengthening the national economy and enhancing rural and regional Australia's capacity. The Australian Government's investment in land transport infrastructure will benefit rural and regional Australia 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.

## **Regional Infrastructure Fund**

The Australian Government has established the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF), which will be funded from the proceeds of the Minerals Resource Rent Tax (MRRT), to address critical infrastructure needs in areas supporting the mining industry. In total, the RIF will invest around \$6.0 billion over 2010-11 to 2020-21 in much-needed infrastructure.

The RIF allows the Government to invest the proceeds of a resurgent resource boom to address urgent infrastructure needs, while supporting the mining industry, boosting export capacity and developing and growing regional economies.

There are three program streams under the RIF:

- Stream 1, administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, represents the implementation of commitments made in 2010 worth \$916.0 million;
- Stream 2 will be administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, and comprises two elements: Economic Infrastructure projects and Regional Infrastructure Planning projects – worth approximately \$4.5 billion; and
  - Projects eligible for consideration for funding are economic infrastructure projects including rail, road, ports, airports, energy, communications and water, as well as other critical economic infrastructure (such as planning, feasibility studies and development work).
- Stream 3, administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport, forms part of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF), worth approximately \$1.0 billion, with \$573.0 million of to be funded from the RIF.

The 2011-12 Budget provided funding for Stream 1 projects to get underway. Stream 1 project funding includes:

- up to \$54.0 million for the Blacksoil Interchange (Queensland) – planning for the project is being finalised, with construction expected to commence mid-2012;
- up to \$160.0 million for the Townsville Ring Road (Queensland) - planning work has commenced, with the location of interchanges identified and the majority of required land acquired;

- up to \$120.0 million for Peak Downs Highway (Queensland) - preliminary planning has been undertaken to identify priority areas for funding;
- up to \$40.0 million for the upgrade of the Intersection of the Bruce and Capricorn highways (Queensland) - planning is being finalised with construction expected to commence in mid-2012;
- up to \$50.0 million for the Gladstone Port Access Road (Queensland) - the project is currently in the planning stage. A Steering Committee comprising key stakeholders has been formed to oversee development of the project;
- up to \$10.0 million for the Mackay Ring Road Study (Queensland) - the study commenced in June 2011 and is expected to take around three years to complete;
- up to \$480.0 million for the Gateway WA project (Western Australia) - RIF funding will be used for construction of the project once planning has been completed. Construction is expected to commence in 2013, with a view to completing the full package of works in 2017; and
- up to \$2.0 million for the Scone Level Crossing Study (New South Wales) - a study is being undertaken which aims to display project options in mid-2012 for community comment prior to determining a preferred solution.

In regard to Stream 2 funding, Infrastructure Australia will work with State, Territory and local governments, Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees and the resources sector, in consultation with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism and other relevant departments, to identify long term economic infrastructure priorities in regions that are likely to meet the objectives and criteria of the RIF. The Australian Government will then make decisions on funding approval for projects, including the amount of funding to be offered, based on the advice of Infrastructure Australia and the Department of Infrastructure and Transport.

The Department will soon be releasing guidelines outlining eligibility criteria, and governance and financing arrangements under the RIF.

### **Black Spot Program**

The Black Spot Program provides funding for safety works such as roundabouts, crash barriers and street lights, in 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 \$59.5 million to be provided in 2012-13, is helping to make 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, local 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 areas are treated, and that rural and regional areas will receive the road safety enhancements they need.

### **Roads to Recovery Program**

The Australian Government is providing a record \$2.1 billion from 2008-09 to 2013-14, with \$350.0 million in 2012-13, to local councils through the Roads to Recovery Program. Of this, more than 70 per cent (\$248.5 million) will be provided to local councils in rural and 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.

### **Western Australian Grain Rail**

The Australian Government has allocated \$135.0 million in the current Nation Building Program towards the upgrade of Western Australia's Grain Rail Line, with the West Australian Government committing \$157.2 million.

This project is providing improvement works on the Western Australian grain freight network, in particular the upgrade of selected Tier 1 and 2 rail lines, selected rail sidings and some of the local road network where Tier 3 rail lines will cease operations. The upgrade of the Tier 1 and 2 rail lines is being delivered in three stages: the Avon to Albany line which is completed; and the Kwinana North and Albany zones, which are currently under construction.

### **Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link**

In October 2011, the Australian Government announced \$25.5 million for pre-construction work on the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link. Pre-construction activities will include the preparation of a detailed design to complete the partially constructed 35 kilometre rail link connecting the Main North-South Line near Picton to Port Kembla, New South Wales. The alignment for the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link is partially completed, including 70 per cent of the earthworks, tunnel portals and approach spans for the Nepean River Bridge. A Feasibility Study for the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link completed in September 2011 found that it is technically feasible

to build the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link along the partially completed alignment at an estimated cost of between \$624.0 million and \$667.0 million.

Arrangements for the Design Stage are currently being finalised, with design work expected to commence in 2012-13.

### **Intermodal Terminals**

The Australian Government has committed \$78.1 million from 2008-09 to 2013-14 for the development and/or enhancement of intermodal terminals in Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. When complete, these projects will provide benefits across the supply chain, including in rural and regional Australia, through more efficient connections to the interstate rail network and major ports. They will improve Australia's productivity and economic performance, and promote industry development and investment. The projects are intended to reduce heavy vehicle traffic, improve the competitiveness of rail freight, improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

These initiatives are complementary to the Australian Government's commitment to deliver the Moorebank Intermodal terminal in western Sydney, a state-of-the-art intermodal freight hub with both import-export and interstate terminal facilities.

### **Temporary Assistance for Tasmanian Exporters**

In March 2012, the Government announced the provision of \$20.0 million to assist Tasmanian exporters with access to international markets. This funding will assist in addressing the ports and shipping issues being encountered by Tasmania based exporters. The funds will be paid to the Tasmanian Government.

### **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 to keep the core of the Tasmanian network operational, whilst supporting the ongoing growth of freight movements to and from Tasmania's ports. In July 2011, the \$78.0 million Tasmanian Rail Rescue Package was completed. This package involved rehabilitation and re-sleepering over the core of the Tasmanian rail network. Major works underway in 2012-13 include upgrades of the Melba Flats to Burnie line and the Burnie to Hobart line. The investment also includes upgrade works on two off network lines, Fingal and Boyer, providing support for Tasmania's economically significant cement, paper and coal mining industries.

### **Investment in the Australian Rail Track Corporation**

The Australian Government is continuing its investment in the Government-owned Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) through its equity investments of \$2.2 billion to support the ARTC's extensive capital upgrade program across regional Australia. This investment will modernise and improve the capacity of the interstate

and Hunter Valley rail networks, helping to reduce heavy vehicle traffic on rural and regional roads. These projects will help create some 1,500 jobs, mostly in regional Australia.

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

Equity for these capital upgrades is being provided through two packages. The Australian Government is providing \$996.0 million under the Rail Productivity Improvements Package, having already made two equity injections in 2010-11 and 2011-12, totalling \$784.3 million towards this commitment. The remaining equity injection of \$211.7 million is due to be provided in July 2012.

Funding of \$79.2 from the productivity package has recently been allocated to the \$134.0 million Ballast Rehabilitation Program being undertaken by the ARTC to further enhance the interstate rail line between Sydney and Melbourne.

The Rail Productivity Improvements Package includes:

- \$99.2 million to straighten the line between Maitland and the Queensland border at 58 locations;
- \$24.0 million to build three double track passing loops near the New South Wales towns of Picton, Glenlee and Menagle Park;
- \$304.0 million to re-rail the lines between Whyalla and Broken Hill and between Parkes and Broken Hill;
- \$253.0 million to replace the existing old wooden sleepers on the line between Parkes and Broken Hill with one million new concrete sleepers;
- \$109.6 million to re-rail the line between Albury to Melbourne to Geelong;
- \$32.0 million to build four new passing loops between Gheringhap and Maroona in Victoria; and
- \$95.0 million to improve capacity of the East-West rail corridor between Koolyanobbing and Kalgoorlie.

In addition, the Government has provided a \$1.1 billion equity injection to the ARTC through the Economic Stimulus Plan to support 17 major rail projects, of which 13 have been completed. Completed projects include:

- the Wodonga Rail Bypass Duplication (\$50.0 million);

- the Western Victoria Track Upgrade (\$105.7 million);
- the Queensland Border – Acacia Ridge upgrade (\$55.8 million);
- the Melbourne to Junee Passing Loops (\$29.7 million); and
- the Adelaide – Kalgoorlie New and Extended Loops (\$23.0 million).

Work on the Hunter Valley Rail package (\$580.0 million provided through the Economic Stimulus Plan) is also progressing, with four of the six projects now complete.

The ARTC is also improving the reliability on the main North-South rail line connecting Sydney and Melbourne as a priority, by accelerating its ballast rehabilitation program through the reallocation of funds from the re-scoped North Coast Curve Easing Program and other project savings. The \$134.0 million ballast rehabilitation program is being implemented following the wet weather events that have affected this line since mid-2010, allowing the ARTC to capitalise on the substantial investment being made on the Melbourne - Sydney - Brisbane corridor.

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 is progressing on a \$20.0 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 study is being undertaken in two phases. The report of the first phase, released in August 2011, considered initial corridor and station options, patronage and indicative high-level costs.

The second phase, which builds on the first phase of the study, is scheduled for completion in late 2012. It will determine the recommended route alignment; refine capital cost estimates, passenger and revenue forecasts; assess financial and economic viability; and provide options for staging, financing and governance. It will also consider the environmental, social and regional development impacts of high speed rail.

The study will form the basis of Government considerations on the future of high speed rail in Australia.

## **Strengthening aviation security – regional and domestic aviation security**

Between 2010-11 and 2013-14 the Australian Government will invest \$32.1 million in initiatives to strengthen aviation security. Measures funded across these four years 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 kilograms; and
- extending the requirement for hardened cockpit doors to be fitted to all aircraft with a maximum takeoff weight greater than 10,750 kilograms.

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 travel experience with an enhanced security outcome for passengers passing through regional airports. 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 (RAAP) provides funding for regular subsidised passenger and freight services, remote aerodrome safety and access projects as well as remote aerodrome advisory services.

RAAP has a 2012-13 Budget allocation of \$24.6 million, including \$11.0 million for aerodrome upgrades at remote and isolated airstrips across Australia. This funding will be used for works at identified Indigenous community airstrips to improve safety and accessibility and to fund grants to a broad range of aerodrome owners for projects on a co-funding basis.

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.

Funding Components under RAAP include:

- the Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme (RASS);
- the Remote Aviation Infrastructure Fund (RAIF);

- the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Grants (RAUG); and
- the Remote Aerodrome Inspection (RAI) Program.

### **Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme**

The RASS subsidises regular (typically weekly) passenger and freight air transportation to communities which would otherwise have no regular access to transport. From January 2011 to December 2011, the RASS carried over 7,247 passengers and over 285,000 kilograms in freight and mail to 253 remote communities (including 83 Indigenous communities) in ten remote geographical locations across the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

### **Remote Aviation Infrastructure Fund**

The RAIF provides funding to upgrade airstrips at remote Indigenous communities that received a RASS service and were also identified as requiring priority works. These upgrades will make the airstrips 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.

### **Remote Airstrip Upgrade Funding Component**

Australian Government funded RAUGs are also available 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 Funding Component**

The Australian Government's RAI 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 RAI 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 many remote communities.

### **The Airservices Australia Enroute Charges Payment Scheme**

Under the Australian Government's Airservices Australia Enroute Charges Payment Scheme (the Enroute Scheme), eligible aeromedical service providers are reimbursed for enroute air navigation charges, as levied by Airservices Australia.



Funding of \$1.0 million per annum will continue to be available for the Enroute Scheme.

**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](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au).

# **REGIONAL AUSTRALIA, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ARTS AND SPORT**

The Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio supports the Government's commitment to improve the social, economic and environmental outcomes for Australia's regions and to provide oversight and management of the sport and recreation, and arts and culture functions.

The portfolio is strengthening communities and regions by improving local opportunities, creativity, productivity and wellbeing, and by supporting participation and excellence in cultural and sporting activities.

A key focus of the Department is to work with communities, industry stakeholders, State and local governments to better understand the needs and priorities of regional Australia, and to work across government to shape and influence policy outcomes to maximise the benefits for regional Australia. The Department also administers the delivery of almost \$1.0 billion in Australian Government funding for the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) for infrastructure projects that meet the identified priorities of regional communities.

## **SPATIAL REPORTING**

Table 10 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sports portfolio.

**Table 10: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport**

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport					
Program 1.1: Regional Development	Regional	121	109	34	37
	Non-regional	34	42	12	6
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	45	215	397	256
Program 1.2: Local Government	Regional	814	1,683	1,740	1,808
	Non-regional	320	658	677	703
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	-
Program 2.1: Services to Territories	Regional	99	95	96	98
	Non-regional	2	2	2	2
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	-
Program 3.1: Arts and Cultural Development	Regional	48	46	47	48
	Non-regional	29	28	27	28
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	46	47	48	52
Program 4.1: Sport and Recreation	Regional	15	15	17	16
	Non-regional	5	5	3	4
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	12	12	12	13
Total Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport	Regional	1,097	1,949	1,934	2,008
	Non-regional	390	736	721	742
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	103	274	457	321
Australia Council					
Investment in the Arts	Regional	14	14	14	14
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	154	155	158	159
Total Australia Council	Regional	14	14	14	14
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	154	155	158	159
Australian Sports Commission					
Other Departmental	Regional	10	4	-	-
	Non-regional	141	134	134	139
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	142	132	115	114
Total Australian Sports Commission	Regional	10	4	-	-
	Non-regional	141	134	134	139
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	142	132	115	114
Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport Portfolio Grand Total	Regional	1,121	1,967	1,948	2,021
	Non-regional	531	870	855	881
	Non-specific <sup>1</sup>	399	561	730	594

1. Represents funding that has not yet been allocated.

.. Not zero, but rounded to zero

- nil

In the 2012-13 Budget and over the forward estimates the Department will continue to focus on policy development and implementing the Australian Government's reform initiatives for regional Australia.

A number of portfolio agencies also deliver programs that benefit regional Australia, as outlined below.

- The Australia Council supports a number of programs in regional Australia to enrich our nation by supporting the practice and enjoyment of the arts.
- The Australian Sports Commission plays a central leadership role in the development and operation of the Australian sports system, administering and funding innovative sport programs and providing leadership, coordination and support for the sports sector, a number of these programs benefit regional Australia.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

### **Active After-School Communities Program – continuation**

An additional \$39.2 million will be provided from 2012-13 to 2013-14 to continue the Active After-School Communities (AASC) program. AASC is a nationally coordinated initiative that encourages primary school-aged children to participate in sport and other structured physical activity. The AASC program has three main outcomes:

- to engage traditionally inactive children in sport;
- to deliver a quality program which is safe fun and inclusive; and
- to provide pathway opportunities to promote transitions into community sport.

The program contributes to the Government's social inclusion agenda. It currently has 52 per cent of sites in regional and remote communities. In many of these communities there are no established community sporting clubs and the AASC program is the only co-ordinated vehicle to deliver a variety of sports to primary school children. The cornerstone of the AASC program is the involvement of the local regional community in the delivery of the program. This involvement will offer opportunities to support and strengthen community cohesion and development. In 2010, 64 per cent of coaches and 79 per cent of teachers were trained in the Community Coach Training Program in regional Australia.

### **Norfolk Island – further reforms**

During the 2010 election, the Government committed to "ensure the standards of living of residents of Norfolk Island are comparable with mainland Australia, without sacrificing the benefits to the community of self-government and continue to work with the Norfolk Island Government and local community to improve standards of accountability and transparency within the Government and associated enterprises."

The \$2.9 million second stage of the Norfolk Island Reform Package includes a rolling series of reforms to reduce the Norfolk Island community's dependency on

Commonwealth emergency funding, empower the community to lift services on the Island and provide a further step towards economic diversity. The reforms are focused on four key areas of economic development, public sector governance, community wellbeing and environmental management. The reforms will provide for capacity building within essential services, implementing recommendations from the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (completed in early 2012), revitalising the tourism industry and developing a strategic community plan for the Island.

This measure will foster a robust economy and promote good governance by the Norfolk Island Government. It will also ensure that the Commonwealth Capacity Building Team agreed in 2011 advances implementation planning and policy development for future reform proposals.

The costs of this measure will be met from within existing resources.

### **Community Street Soccer and RecLink**

Participating in sport and recreation activities promotes social inclusion and is good for people's health and wellbeing. Funding of \$2.6 million will be provided to use sport and recreation to help break the cycle of entrenched social disadvantage by providing financial support to eligible community sporting organisations that help people in need. This initiative will focus on two existing programs that are successfully achieving social inclusion outcomes through the use of sport and recreation activities:

- the Community Street Soccer program assists homeless, recently homeless and unemployed people to reconnect with the community and regain self esteem and independence through participating in sport; and
- the RecLink program is a national program that links more than 200 community agencies through a non profit organisation that runs sport and cultural programs to improve the lives of Australians suffering from drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, social disconnection and homelessness.

### **Jim Stynes Achievement Scholarships**

The Government has allocated \$3.0 million in the 2012-13 Budget as a one-off grant in 2011-12 to establish a sporting scholarships scheme in partnership with the Australian Football League. It is expected that under the scheme, scholarships of up to \$20,000 will be provided to around 37 recipients annually to provide both a pathway to employment and a pathway to develop skills and/or talents unique in youth (15 to 19 years of age) from multicultural backgrounds, indigenous communities and socially disadvantaged communities.

Nominees for the scholarship will come from community sporting clubs and not-for-profit community organisations across Australia. Successful applicants will be offered a minimum 12-month scholarship which will provide a range of opportunities

including education and travel grants, coaching and talent development, work experience and engagement in The Reach Foundation's inspiring youth-led programs and workshops.

### **National Disaster Recovery Task Force – extension**

An additional \$1.6 million has been allocated in the 2012-13 Budget to the Department to continue the work of the National Disaster Recovery Task Force until June 2013. The National Disaster Recovery Taskforce is continuing to assist Queensland and Victoria recover from an unprecedented level of damage following flooding and Tropical Cyclone Yasi in 2010-11.

The reconstruction task includes repairing over \$7.0 billion damage to State and local infrastructure, such as roads, government buildings, utilities and marine infrastructure.

In 2010-11, the Commonwealth advanced \$2.3 billion to the Queensland Government and \$500.0 million to the Victorian Government to ensure rebuilding could commence as soon as possible. A further \$1.9 billion was advanced to the Queensland Government in 2011-12.

As the task of rebuilding continues in communities around Queensland, the reconstruction program now exceeds \$5.7 billion in projects underway, being prepared for market or already completed. Similarly, in Victoria around half of the funding estimated for reconstruction work has been committed.

The Australian Government Reconstruction Inspectorate is examining reconstruction work in both Queensland and Victoria to ensure Commonwealth funding is achieving value-for-money. Inspectorate members have travelled to regional locations including Toowoomba, Cardwell and Mildura, to meet local authorities and review reconstruction projects first hand. Project reviews are expected to continue throughout 2012-13 as the remainder of reconstruction work gets underway.

### **Other new initiatives**

The Government has committed additional funding of \$61.9 million in 2011-12, announced in the 2012-13 Budget, for a number of smaller measures across the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio. Some of these measures have regional impacts, including:

- \$1.8 million for upgrades to the Wayne Richards Park Sports Complex, including resurfacing the Port Macquarie Hockey Field;
- a \$182,510 contribution to the Gunnedah Rural Museum in New South Wales;
- a \$50,000 contribution to Tamworth community facilities for children;

- \$1.0 million for Port Macquarie foreshore works;
- \$1.2 million for the development of the Taree foreshore;
- a \$30,000 contribution towards a statue to pay tribute to Slim Dusty and Joy McKean, to be placed in the centre of Tamworth;
- \$8.7 million for the King George V sports precinct in Glenorchy, Tasmania; and
- \$8.2 million to remove the wreckage of the MV Tycoon from Christmas Island and remediation work at the site.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Regional Development**

#### **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. Around \$78.9 million will be provided to support RDA committees over the forward estimates period.

#### **Regional Development Australia Fund**

The Australian Government has allocated almost \$1.0 billion, which includes \$573.0 million from the passage of the MRRT legislation, to the RDAF for projects intended to address the infrastructure needs of Australia's regions and promote economic and social development. The RDAF supports the economic, environmental and community needs of Australia's regions by providing funding for projects that

meet the identified priorities of regional communities, as articulated in RDA Regional Plans. It is designed to ensure that new investments build on strengths and reflect the characteristics, opportunities and challenges of our diverse regions.

A total of 553 applications were submitted for the \$150.0 million Round One of the RDAF. Grants of between \$500,000 and \$25.0 million were allocated to support 35 projects across the country.

#### New South Wales

- Ballina Byron Gateway Airport Apron Extension Project - Ballina
- Refurbishment of the Coast Community Centre - Gosford
- Four Winds: Building Nature's Concert Hall - Bega Valley
- Upgrade to Griffith Airport (Terminal and Main Apron) - Griffith
- Expanding the capacity of the Hunter Valley Research Foundation - Newcastle
- Lismore City Hall Upgrade - Lismore
- Newcastle Region Art Gallery Redevelopment - Newcastle
- Freeman House - Rebuild for Regional Health, Education and Communities Project - Armidale
- Youth Off The Streets - Project Cordeaux – Cordeaux Heights

#### Victoria

- Sandhurst (Bendigo) Community Theatre Complex - Bendigo
- The new Geelong Library and Heritage Centre - Geelong
- Skilled Stadium Redevelopment - Stage 3 (Southern Stand) - Geelong
- Lake Hamilton Regional All Abilities Playground and Foreshore Redevelopment - Hamilton
- Clunes Community and Interpretive Centre - Clunes

#### Queensland

- Bundaberg Recreational Precinct - Bundaberg
- Upper Coomera Community and Youth Hub – Upper Coomera



- Lifeline Youth, Community Counselling, Education and Training Facilities - Fraser Coast
- Maleny Community Centre Social Enterprise Capacity Building Renovation Stage 1B - Maleny
- Somerset Civic Centre - Esk
- Rockhampton Southside Memorial Pool Redevelopment - Rockhampton
- Magnetic Island Walkway Project - Nelly Bay to Arcadia - Magnetic Island

#### South Australia

- APY Art Centres 2030 - APY Lands
- The Tanunda to Gawler Shared Bicycle/Walking Path - Barossa Valley
- Energizing The Flinders - A green energy infrastructure project for The Flinders - Flinders Ranges
- Port Lincoln Airport Upgrade - Port Lincoln
- Development of the Streaky Bay Oval Precinct - Streaky Bay
- Port Pirie Men's Shed and Community Centre Complex Rebuild Project - Port Pirie

#### Western Australia

- Katanning Regional Sheep Saleyards - Katanning
- Kimberley Land Council Office Project - Broome
- Baldvis Library and Community Centre - Rockingham
- Karratha Leisure Complex - Karratha

#### Northern Territory

- Alice Springs Regional Waste Management Centre - Alice Springs
- HIA Multi Purpose Building Industry Training Centre - Darwin

#### Tasmania

- Glenorchy Art & Sculpture Park - Stage 2 - Glenorchy
- Meeting Regional Needs: Delivering a Paediatric Regional Centre of Excellence - Hobart

A further \$200.0 million in funding is available under Round Two of the RDAF for grants up to a maximum of \$15.0 million. An announcement on recipients of Round Two funding is expected in the near future.

### **Community Infrastructure Grants**

During the 2010 election, the Australian Government made a commitment to fund projects that were identified by local communities across regional Australia as 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. Funding of \$188.4 million over the forward estimates period (\$66.9 million in 2012-13) will be available to fund eligible community infrastructure projects.

### **Clean Energy Future – Regional Structural Adjustment Assistance - supporting communities and regions**

The Government has set aside \$200.0 million, if needed, to provide structural adjustment assistance to support workers, regions, and communities that remain strongly impacted by carbon pricing, after other forms of assistance have been provided. This assistance could include: support for displaced workers and their families; community development programs; and economic diversification projects. Where assistance may be required, the Government will work in close consultation with communities through a coordinated government approach to develop and deliver appropriate assistance. Funding for any region under this program will be determined on a case by case basis.

### **Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement**

As part of the Tasmanian Forests Intergovernmental Agreement, the Australian Government is providing funding to support the diversification of the Tasmanian economy. In 2011-12, the Government provided initial funding of \$20.0 million. Subject to the passage of legislation in the Tasmanian Parliament, a further \$100.0 million will support economic diversification across the following 14 years.

### **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 all levels of government, 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 timely and strategic advice to Government on a range of priority issues.

### **Northern Australia Sustainable Futures Program**

The Government provided \$6.0 million in funding over 2010-11 to 2012-13 for the delivery of the Northern Australia Sustainable Futures Program, a 2010 federal election commitment, developed to promote and encourage the sustainable development of northern Australia.

The Program is being led by the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum, chaired by the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Simon Crean MP, with membership including ministers responsible for regional development from the Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australian Governments.

The program addresses the need for:

- enhanced Indigenous and community engagement in policy and planning;
- development of sustainable careers and business opportunities for Indigenous people in northern and remote communities;
- improved understanding of regional infrastructure investment priorities;
- opportunities to improve service delivery;
- improved water management in remote communities; and
- improved understanding of opportunities and risks to sustainable development in the northern beef industry.

### **North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy**

The North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture Strategy will deliver a comprehensive assessment of sustainable water resource development and the potential for new irrigated agriculture in northern Australia.

The \$6.9 million Commonwealth investment, which includes a \$800,000 in-kind contribution from CSIRO, is a collaborative initiative with the Queensland Government that will examine surface water storage options in the Flinders and Gilbert River catchments; identify and demonstrate the viability of new irrigated agriculture opportunities; and thoroughly assess potential environmental, economic and cultural impacts and risks, to ensure development paths are genuinely sustainable.

Building on the work of the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum and the Northern Australia Beef Industry Strategy, the project will deepen the Australian Government's understanding of how new and sustainable irrigation industries might be developed in northern Australia and also inform a broader assessment of the potential for meat processing in northern Australia.

## **Regional Australia Institute**

A one-off Commonwealth grant of \$8.0 million has been provided to the Regional Australia Institute (RAI), formerly the Regional Development Policy Centre, to facilitate company establishment and deliver a forward research agenda. A key component of the Government's Commitment to Regional Australia, RAI operates independently of government and is expected to become a trusted source of independent advice for communities, industries and governments by undertaking rigorous research and debate that will inform approaches to regional economic development.

## **Local Government**

### **Local Government Financial Assistance Grants**

The Local Government Financial Assistance Grants, established under the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995*, provide financial assistance to Local Governments across Australia to enable them to meet local priorities. The funding is untied and consists of 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 shares.

### **Supplementary funding to South Australian councils for local roads**

The Australian Government will provide supplementary funding of \$16.9 million in 2012-13 and \$17.5 million in 2013-14 for South Australian local roads, to address anomalies in the distribution of the local road component of the Financial Assistance Grants.

## **Services to Territories**

The Department administers the Territories of the Ashmore and Cartier Islands, Christmas Island, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, the Coral Sea Islands and Jervis Bay; and manages national interests in the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and Norfolk Island.

The objective of the Department's work is to assist the Territories to establish and maintain good governance and manage their own futures by providing services and advice on ongoing administration. It also provides funding support and undertakes capital works with the objective of ensuring that Territory communities enjoy the same level of services as equivalent State communities.

## **Sport and Recreation**

The Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Program (ISARP) is administered by the Office for Sport as part of the Australian Government's whole-of-government approach to assisting Indigenous Australians. The ISARP is a new name for the merger of the following two former programs:

- Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program; and
- Jobs Creation Package – Sport and Recreation.

The ISARP supports community participation in sport and active recreation activities that help to improve the health and physical wellbeing of Indigenous Australians and those that contribute to broader social benefits for participants and their communities.

The ISARP provides funding to a whole range of activities from high participation sports such as; cricket, football, netball, basketball, athletics through to Traditional Indigenous Games and various sporting events. In addition, subsidies for employment are also provided for positions that directly support and or deliver ISARP funded activities.

## **Arts and Cultural Development**

The Australian Government supports a number of initiatives which assist the touring of performing artists and exhibitions to increase access to and participation in the arts by people living outside major metropolitan areas. This recognises that culturally vibrant regions are vitally important to our national cultural identity.

### **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. In 2012-13 the Government has allocated \$0.6 million to support its ongoing commitment to contemporary Australian visual arts and craft with the objective of encouraging wider audience access to Australian visual arts and craft through quality publications, education and public programs that are a part of touring exhibitions.

### **Regional Arts Fund**

The Government has allocated \$3.1 million for 2012-13 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 \$1.2 million for 2012-13 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 1995, the program has supported over 1,260 new arts and cultural projects with funding totalling over \$17.6 million. Projects funded include a range of disciplines such as dance, music, theatre, literature, comedy, circus, parades, instrument making, film and video, animation, puppetry, visual arts and crafts, and multimedia.

### **Playing Australia**

For 2012-13, the Australian Government has allocated \$6.8 million to the Playing Australia program, the Australian Government's national touring program for the performing arts. Since its inception in 1992, funding of \$92.0 million has assisted over 880 tours 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.

### **Contemporary Music Touring Program**

The Contemporary Music Touring Program assists emerging and established musicians take their music on tour to Australia's regional and remote areas. The program provides assistance with touring costs such as transport, accommodation, insurance, production and marketing and supports all types of genres including jazz, fusion, blues, hip hop, world, new classical, pop, funk, country, folk, electronic, alternative and rock.

### **Visions of Australia**

For 2012-13 the Australian Government has allocated \$2.3 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.

### **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 \$4.0 million over four years to assist the National Collecting Institutions in the development and touring of their collections both nationally and internationally. 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;
- promote Australia by supporting works from Australian national collections to tour overseas; and
- attract smaller international collections to tour to multiple venues, particularly in regional Australia.

### **Community Heritage Grants Program**

The Community Heritage Grants Program, administered by the National Library of Australia, 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.

### **Indigenous Arts and Culture Programs**

The Australian Government, through the Office for the Arts supports Indigenous culture, languages and visual arts through a number of initiatives.

#### **Indigenous Repatriation**

This program returns 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.

#### **Indigenous Languages Support Program**

The Indigenous Languages Support Program (formerly Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records) 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 Program**

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.

#### **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 \$2.8 million in 2012-13 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 \$17.0 million. This includes \$2.0 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 will provide funding of approximately \$5.4 million in 2012-13 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.

## **Australia Council Programs**

The Australia Council is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. It supports Australia's arts through:

- investing in artistic production and the development of artistic practice;
- supporting the presentation of distinctive Australian cultural work, nationally and internationally;
- promoting understanding, enjoyment, participation and appreciation of the Arts;
- developing the capacity of Australia's creative arts sector; and
- providing policy development, research, promotional and advisory services.

The Government will provide funding of \$179.0 million to the Australia Council in 2012-13 to continue to fund artistic endeavours across Australia. 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.



## **Australian National Maritime Museum**

### **Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme**

The Australian National Maritime Museum offers grants to regional not-for-profit museums and organisations to help preserve Australia's rich maritime heritage. The museum supports and encourages their efforts to conserve and display unique local objects for this and future generations. The grants are provided for managing the collection, conservation and presentation. Ninety per cent of beneficiaries are located in regional Australia.

## **Australian Sports Commission**

### **Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program**

The Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program (EITAPP) program supports Indigenous sports people who are involved in mainstream official national championships and international sporting competitions apply for financial assistance for travel and accommodation expenses. Grants are provided nationally on an applications basis. In 2011-12 around 60 per cent of EITAPP recipients were from regional areas.

### **Local Sporting Champions**

This program provides financial assistance for young people, on an application basis, towards the cost of attending an official national sporting organisation endorsed State, national or international sporting championships or a school sport Australia state or national championships. In 2011-12 it is estimated that 39 per cent of the recipients supported by the Local Sporting Champions initiative were young sportspeople in regional areas.

### **Sport Leadership Grants for Women**

This program provides grants on an application basis to applicants across Australia offering development opportunities and training for women to reach their leadership potential within the sports industry. In 2011-12 it is estimated that 18 per cent of recipients of the Sport Leadership Grants for Women initiative were from regional areas.

### **Northern Territory Australian Football League and Australian Netball League**

The Australian Government has agreed to support the involvement of a Northern Territory team in the North East Australian Football League, and provide support to assist a Northern Territory netball team to compete in the Australian Netball League.

# RESOURCES, ENERGY AND TOURISM

The Resources, Energy and Tourism portfolio is committed to supporting rural and regional communities in Australia. A number of Resources, Energy and Tourism programs specifically target regional Australia in the areas of enhancing tourism and facilitating progress and employment in the resources and energy sectors.

## SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 11 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Resources, Energy and Tourism portfolio.

**Table 11: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Energy, Resources and Tourism Portfolio**

Program	Category	Budget	Forw ard	Forw ard	Forw ard
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program 1: Resources Related					
Initiatives and Management					
1.1 Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships	Regional	65	102	279	450
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.2 Ethanol Production Grants	Regional	171	174	200	200
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.3 National Low Emissions Coal Initiative	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	10	10	5	-
	Non-specific	42	41	95	-
1.4 Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	35	20	20	3
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.5 National CO2 Infrastructure Project	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	20	15	6	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Other programs	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	16	16	17	17
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

**Table 11: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Energy, Resources and Tourism Portfolio**

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
<b>Program 2: Energy Related Initiatives and Management</b>					
2.1 Coal Sector Jobs Package	Regional	-	230	242	276
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Other programs	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	20	35	54	114
	Non-specific	-	25	50	55
<b>Program 3: Tourism Related Initiatives and Management</b>					
3.1 TQUAL Grants	Regional	2	-	-	-
	Non-regional	1	-	-	-
	Non-specific	5	8	10	-
Other programs	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	9	15	18	21
<b>Total Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism</b>	Regional	238	506	721	926
	Non-regional	102	96	102	134
	Non-specific	56	89	173	76
<b>Australia Renewable Energy Agency</b>	Regional	69	67	106	41
<b>Arena Departmental</b>	Non-regional	21	8	-	-
	Non-specific	195	262	323	251
	Regional	307	573	827	967
	Non-regional	123	104	102	134
<b>Portfolio Grand Total</b>	Non-specific	251	351	496	327

In 2012-13, 45 per cent of the portfolio's grant expenditure will be made to regional Australia. This expenditure is set to increase over the forward estimates to over two-thirds.

A number of programs and related contracts are still being finalised and are not able to determine whether expenditure will occur in regional Australia and as such these funds have been identified as 'non-specific'.

The following sub-programs reported in the 2011-12 Regional Ministerial Statement will be transferring to the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) on 1 July 2012:

- Solar Flagships;
- Australian Centre for Renewable Energy;
- Connecting Renewables Initiative; and

- Australian Solar Institute (from 1 January 2013).

The objectives of the ARENA are to improve the competitiveness of renewable energy technologies and increasing the supply of renewable energy.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **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.

### **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 (EPG) 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 be reviewed after 30 June 2021.

Current recipients - 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 supports and encourages 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 Tourism 2020**

Tourism is a significant industry for Australia. It generates \$94.0 billion in spending and contributes nearly \$34.0 billion to Australia's GDP, directly employs over 500,000 people and earns nearly ten per cent of our total export earnings, making it Australia's largest service export industry. Tourism helps to fund critical economic infrastructure like airports, roads and hotels, and also plays an important role in the economic development of regional Australia, with 46 cents in every tourist dollar spent in regional Australia.

Tourism 2020 was developed to respond to ongoing challenges and emerging opportunities for the Australian tourism industry. Providing a framework for growth, Tourism 2020 will assist tourism businesses remain competitive into the future in a dynamic global environment. The key areas of focus are China (already Australia's most valuable in-bound market), facilitating investment in tourism infrastructure, sourcing and improving labour and skills, service quality accreditation and improvement, and online capabilities.

Additional funding of \$61.0 million over four years will be provided to promote Australia in the Asia Market through the Asia Marketing Fund.

## **T-QUAL Grants Program**

In 2010, the Government allocated \$40.0 million over four years for Tourism Quality Project (T-QUAL) Grants to stimulate sustainable economic growth in the Australian tourism industry. By providing matched funding to large and small-scale tourism projects, the program aims to increase Australia's supply of quality tourism products and experiences. T-QUAL Grants was officially launched on 11 March 2011 and is assisting tourism in regional areas.

T-QUAL grants of up to \$100,000 are available for smaller scale projects to support tourism industry development, particularly those with community benefits. In July 2011, the Minister for Tourism, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, announced

117 successful applicants for first round of Tourism Quality Projects grants, with a total project value of approximately \$8.5 million. Applications for the second round of Tourism Quality Projects grants have closed, with announcements of successful projects expected by mid-2012.

Strategic Tourism Investment grants of up to \$1.0 million are also available to fund a small number of nationally significant, larger scale projects to support Indigenous tourism, economic development and tourism employment. In March 2012, the William Angliss Institute was awarded a \$1.0 million grant to deliver the Indigenous Tourism Business Quality and Skills Project. This project will fund the development of a tailored business skills curriculum at the National Indigenous Training Academy located at Ayers Rock Resort, and will stimulate Indigenous tourism enterprise and product development. Further projects are under development. 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.

### **National Tourism Accreditation Framework**

The Government is providing \$5.5 million dollars over four years from 2010-11 to support the implementation of the T-QUAL Accreditation Framework.

T-QUAL Accreditation is the Australian Government's quality benchmark for the tourism industry. The T-QUAL Tick identifies the tourism businesses and operators in Australia that have been endorsed as meeting the quality standards of T-QUAL Accreditation and provides one national symbol for consumers to be able to recognise quality products and services easily. The Minister for Tourism officially launched the T-QUAL Accreditation Framework in April 2011.

To date, nine quality assurance schemes have received T-QUAL accreditation, representing around 13,000 businesses. An extensive marketing campaign is underway to increase sales for T-QUAL endorsed products and services by encouraging consumers to look for the T-QUAL Tick when planning their Australian holidays. T-QUAL endorsed business and operators, including those in regional areas, will also benefit from increased online exposure on State and national tourism websites.

### **Tourism Research**

Tourism Research Australia (TRA) continues to provide statistics, research, forecasts 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.

Through the Destination Visitor Surveys program, TRA provides destinations with high quality tourism research at the local or regional level to support their information needs and business decision-making. Projects are determined in collaboration with State tourism organisations. Visitor Profile and Satisfaction reports profile visitors to

individual regional tourism destinations and report on their satisfaction with their visit. Strategic Regional Research reports focus on broader strategic issues that are affecting regional destinations. TRA also publishes annual regional data reports which provide reliable, independent visitor information to support the development of regional tourism and growth of regional economies, as well as an annual State of the Industry report.

## **Engagement with China**

The Government provided \$4.1 million in the 2010–11 Budget to extend the highly successful China Approved Destination Status (ADS) Scheme for a further four years to 30 June 2014, directly assisting the tourism industry across Australia, including in regional areas.

Australia's China ADS Scheme allows Australia to host group leisure tour groups from China and permits the Australian Government, through Tourism Australia, to promote Australia as a leisure travel destination in China. Since the inception of the ADS Scheme in 1999, Australia has hosted over 732,000 Chinese tourists undertaking leisure travel in tour groups. The China ADS Scheme underpins the growing Chinese inbound tourism market. In 2011, Australia welcomed over half a million Chinese visitors for the first time. The Tourism Forecasting Committee forecasts that arrivals from China will grow by 7.8 per cent per year on average, to reach 958,000 arrivals in 2020.

During her visit to China in April 2011, the Prime Minister witnessed the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding on strengthening tourism cooperation with China. This agreement builds on the Approved Destination Status Scheme by encouraging further cooperation for travel between Australia and China for individuals, companies and students.

## **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 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.

Domestic tourism remains the largest segment of the Australian tourism industry. 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 first two seasons of the 'No Leave, No Life' TV series were

highly successful. Season two aired from December 2010 to January 2011 and averaged over 912,000 viewers per week. A third season ran from 3 December 2011 to 14 January 2012, achieving an average of 830,000 viewers per week or 5.83 million viewers over the entire series. Research conducted in September 2011 estimated the number of annual leave days stockpiled by Australian workers at 129.6 million days.

## **The Australian Renewable Energy Agency**

On 1 July 2012, a number of renewable energy programs will be transferring to the ARENA. The objectives of the ARENA are to improve the competitiveness of renewable energy technologies and increasing the supply of renewable energy.

ARENA responsibilities will include providing financial assistance for:

- the research, development, demonstration, deployment and commercialisation of renewable energy and related technologies; and
- the storage and sharing of knowledge and information about renewable energy technologies.

ARENA will also collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information and knowledge relating to renewable energy and related technologies and provide advice to the Minister for Resources and Energy, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, about these technologies and the renewable energy industry.

## **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](http://www.ret.gov.au) and [www.tourism.australia.com](http://www.tourism.australia.com).



# SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES

The Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio continues to support environment and sustainability programs in rural and regional communities across Australia. New initiatives in the 2012-13 Budget and ongoing programs seek to achieve a variety of environmental and economic objectives to support sustainable regional communities.

## SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 12 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio.

**Table 12: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities**

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate	Forw ard estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program 1.1: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment <sup>1, 2</sup>	Regional	215	308	311	368
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	39	46	46	47
Program 1.3: Carbon Pollution Reduction - Land Sector Initiatives	Regional	34	259	242	189
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 4.1: Water Reform <sup>3</sup>	Regional	520	545	839	1,341
	Non-regional	63	17	11	-
	Non-specific	36	35	39	39
Other programs	Regional	37	42	36	32
	Non-regional	35	35	25	16
	Non-specific	20	38	51	71
Total	Regional	806	1,154	1,428	1,930
	Non-regional	98	52	36	16
	Non-specific	95	119	136	157

<sup>1</sup> Includes Caring for our Country, Working on Country and Environmental Stewardship Program

<sup>2</sup> Does not include the Landcare component of Caring for our Country which is a program of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

<sup>3</sup> The Water Reform estimates include the expenditure estimates for water entitlement purchases - nil

The Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio contributes to the development of regional Australia primarily through three larger programs: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment;

Carbon Pollution Reduction – Land Sector Initiatives; and Water Reform. These programs represent over 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 activities is delivered in regional and rural areas across Australia.

Carbon Pollution Reduction – Land Sector Initiatives includes the Biodiversity Fund, the Regional Natural Resource Planning for Climate Change Fund, the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund and the Land Sector Carbon and Biodiversity Board. These initiatives will support landholders to undertake projects that establish, restore, protect or manage biodiverse stores. The Biodiversity Fund will improve the resilience of Australia’s unique species to the impacts of climate change, enhance their environmental outcomes or carbon farming projects, and help landholders protect carbon and biodiversity values on their land. The funding of these projects is subject to competitive grants processes which are still being undertaken and has therefore been defined as non-specific.

Water Reform, incorporating the Water for the Future program, is a long-term Australian 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 irrigation modernisation and recycling in regional areas.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

### **Expansion of On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program**

Expansion of the Commonwealth-led On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency Program (OFIEP) (part of Water for the Future Program) will allow the Government to continue to provide grants to irrigators to modernise their on-farm irrigation infrastructure while returning water savings to the environment. The expanded program will provide a further \$150.0 million over six years from 2012-13 and will be funded using existing Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program funding.

In the longer term, the program will allow irrigation and related industries to maintain or expand production levels while at the same time returning water to the environment to help ‘bridge the gap’ to the sustainable diversion limits under the Basin Plan.

### **Strategic Sub-System Reconfiguration Program**

As part of the Australian Government’s commitment to ‘bridge the gap’, the Government will fund a new Strategic Sub-System Reconfiguration program. The goal of this program is to integrate water purchasing with strategic opportunities for

decommissioning or reconfiguring underutilised off-farm water delivery infrastructure. This will assist in maintaining the delivery efficiency of shared irrigation networks in regional irrigation communities. The Government has committed \$200.0 million over four years to this program to be funded from within the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure program and the Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin program.

This program complements other activities that are underway to recover water access entitlements from regions where the draft Basin Plan indicates there is further water required for the environment. This program will also encourage irrigation water providers to position themselves to better service their irrigation industries.

### **Ensuring the Resilience of the Great Barrier Reef**

A number of measures in the 2012-13 Budget will provide benefits to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP) and surrounding communities. The Great Barrier Reef (the Reef) is an Australian environmental and cultural icon. The Reef supports important marine and tourism industries and is critical to the economic and social wellbeing of over one million Australians from diverse industries and communities.

Funding of \$8.0 million over two years under the Caring for our Country program will ensure the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) can continue its management of the GBRMP and community-based Reef Guardian programs effectively. This initiative will have a positive impact on regional communities, engaging them in actions to ensure the long term sustainability of the Reef.

A temporary reduction in the standard tourism program charge applied by the GBRMPA will provide a positive benefit to the tourism industry and the North Queensland community. Commencing from April 2012 until 31 March 2015, the amount paid by a tourist on a full day trip to the GBRMP with a commercial operator has been reduced from \$6.00 to \$3.50 for full day trips, and from \$3.00 to \$1.75 for part day trips. Tourism is a fundamental part of the north-eastern Australian economy. The Reef supports around 54,000 full time jobs and generates approximately \$5.4 billion annually through tourism and important marine industries.

### **Bureau of Meteorology – Forecasting Services**

One measure relating to the Bureau of Meteorology will improve the Bureau's capacity to respond to future extreme weather and natural disaster events which affect regional communities. Funding of \$4.8 million in 2012-13 will enable the retention of up to 20 internationally-recruited meteorologists and the training of up to an additional ten meteorologists sourced from within Australia. This will support 24 hour, seven days per week forecast and warning services and an increase in response capacity during the 2012-13 summer season. Flood forecaster numbers will also be boosted, enabling an increased response capacity to any severe flood events in the 2012-13 summer season.

This measure is an interim response to a review of the Bureau's capacity to respond to future extreme weather and natural disaster events and to provide seasonal forecasting services.

### **Australian Antarctic Program**

Three measures in the 2012-13 Budget will continue the Australian Government's commitment to Australia's engagement in the Antarctic. Two measures will continue Australian research and expedition activities through providing shipping (\$6.7 million over two years) and aviation support (\$23.1 million over two years). In addition, funding of \$11.2 million will ensure that all four existing Australian Antarctic stations can be fully operational in 2012-13. These measures will have a positive effect on the Tasmanian economy as a significant portion of Antarctic program expenditure is paid to Tasmanian staff and suppliers.

### **Remediation of Land Affected by the Tiwi Islands Plantation Project**

Funding of \$1.0 million over four years from 2012-13 will be provided to the Tiwi Land Council to contribute to the implementation of the Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP) for lands adversely affected by the Tiwi Islands Plantation project in the Northern Territory. This initiative will be funded using the return of an unconditional bank guarantee of \$1.0 million held as security for the implementation of the RMP. The implementation of the RMP is likely to provide economic benefits to the community living in and around the Tiwi Islands.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Clean Energy Future – Land Sector Package**

The Land Sector Package announced in 2011 includes seven initiatives to assist regional land managers to reduce carbon pollution and increase the amount of carbon stored on land. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities administers four of those initiatives.

The ongoing Biodiversity Fund will provide \$946.0 million over six years to support land managers to restore, manage and better protect biodiversity on public and private land. It will also support land managers who wish to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the new carbon market. The Biodiversity Fund will provide support to establish new carbon stores or better manage carbon stores of existing native habitat.

The \$22.3 million Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund provides assistance to Indigenous Australians to participate in the carbon market. Funding for this program, commencing in 2012-13, is provided for specialists to work with Indigenous communities on Carbon Farming Initiative projects, through providing training, legal support and advice on engagement in the carbon market.

The five year \$44.0 million Regional NRM Planning for Climate Change Fund will support the 56 regional NRM organisations across Australia to update existing regional NRM plans to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation components, and help to guide the location of biodiversity and carbon farming projects in the landscape.

Funding of \$4.4 million to support the establishment and operation of the Land Sector Carbon and Biodiversity Board will provide advice to the Government on the implementation of land sector measures.

### **Extractive Industry Activities – Independent Expert Scientific Committee**

The Australian Government has committed \$150.0 million over five years to establish a new Independent Expert Scientific Committee that will provide scientific advice to Governments about relevant coal seam gas and large coal mining approvals where they have significant impacts on water resources; oversee research on impacts on water resources from coal seam gas and large coal mining projects; and commission and fund water resource assessments for priority regions. This initiative, which commenced in 2011-12, will provide regional Australians with additional assurance that projects will be subject to rigorous and objective scientific assessment. Independent assessment will help build trust and community confidence in coal seam gas and coal mining development in sensitive areas.

### **Water for the Future**

Water for the Future is a long-term Australian Government initiative that provides national leadership in water reform for all Australians. Launched in 2008, the initiative is built on four key priorities including: taking action on climate change; using water wisely; securing water supplies; and supporting healthy rivers. These priorities will be delivered through investment in strategic programs, improved water management arrangements, and a renewed commitment to deliver a range of water policy reforms in both rural and urban areas.

A key priority of Water for the Future is to underpin reform in the Murray-Darling Basin through programs to improve the efficiency and productivity of irrigation water use, to purchase water entitlements and to return water to the environment. The Government is committed to delivering a healthy river system, strong regional communities and sustainable food production.

### **Caring for our Country**

The Australian Government has committed to a new phase of the ongoing Caring for our Country initiative. The next stage of the initiative from 2013-14 to 2017-18 will provide funding of \$2.2 billion to continue investment in projects across regional Australia, including remote and very remote areas, to improve biodiversity and promote the adoption of sustainable farm practices. The Government will continue working with NRM regional bodies to effectively manage natural resources

throughout Australia. The initiative remains committed to achieving an environment that is healthier, better protected, well managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

### **Environmental Stewardship Program**

The ongoing Environmental Stewardship Program is a part of the Caring for our Country initiative and 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*.

The program contracts successful eligible private land managers for up to 15 years to provide agreed management activities to protect, rehabilitate and improve specific matters of national environmental significance.

The program provides Australian farmers and Indigenous communities with market-based opportunities to be involved in long-term conservation on their land and recognises the vital role they play in biodiversity conservation and stewardship of our natural environment.

### **Working on Country Indigenous Rangers Program**

Working on Country is an ongoing program forming part of the Caring for our Country initiative, and provides funds to Indigenous ranger groups to deliver environmental services. Building on Indigenous people's tradition of caring for country, the Australian Government established this program recognising shared responsibilities to protect and manage Australia's environment. The program provides real employment and training for Indigenous people, many of whom live in very remote parts of regional Australia. Currently, more than 680 Indigenous rangers are employed in 85 ranger teams across Australia.

On 14 November 2011, the Government announced an expansion of the Working on Country Indigenous Ranger Program in the Northern Territory. The four year \$19.1 million expansion, commencing in 2012-13, will deliver 50 more Indigenous ranger jobs and was one of several measures linked to the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package.

### **Sustainable Australia – Sustainable Regional Development**

As part of the Australian Government's Sustainable Population Strategy, the four year \$29.2 million Sustainable Regional Development program supports better sustainability planning and strategic assessments in regions around Australia. Through the program, up to seven additional strategic assessments of sustainability plans developed by State and Local Governments for priority high growth areas will be conducted by the Commonwealth under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The plans 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.

### **Sustainable Australia – Measuring Sustainability**

The Measuring Sustainability program provides \$10.1 million over four years to improve the availability of information and data relating to sustainability. The program supports the development of a set of Sustainability Indicators for Australia, covering economic, social and environmental issues that are relevant to communities. It will also oversee the establishment of a Directory of Sustainability Measurement to support access to sustainability information at a national and regional scale. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is delivering this program in collaboration with key data agencies, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This program is part of the Government's Sustainable Population Strategy.

### **National Wildlife Corridors Plan**

The Australian Government is supporting the development of a national framework for wildlife corridor planning, to guide future investments in conservation management through an investment of \$10.0 million over three years which commenced in 2011-12. The strategy to develop the National Wildlife Corridors Plan is based around working with the community to plan a system of national wildlife corridors which is a critical element of preparing our native plants and animals as well as our agricultural sector for climate change.

This process involves 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 is linked with other regional activities to minimise the burden on volunteers and other community resources.

Public consultation on the draft plan (developed by the National Wildlife Corridors Plan Advisory Group) has recently closed and preparation of the final plan is underway. On completion, the plan will be actioned under relevant Australian Government programs, including the Biodiversity Fund and the next phase of the Caring for our Country initiative. The plan will provide new land management and planning opportunities for many land managers in regional and peri-urban Australia.

### **Yellow Crazy Ants Control on Christmas Island**

The Australian Government is 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 as demonstrated by the 2011-12 commitment of \$4.0 million over four years.



# TREASURY

The Treasury portfolio, through the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), administers a range of subsidies and personal benefits. 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.

Several of these programs deliver other government agencies' outcomes, with the ATO acting as a service delivery agency.

## **SPATIAL ACCOUNTING**

Table 13 illustrates a summary of expenditure by program disaggregated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates for the Treasury portfolio.

**Table 13: 2012-13 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Australian Taxation Office**

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program 1.6 Product Stewardship for Oil	Regional	15	16	16	17
	Non-regional	29	31	32	34
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.7 Cleaner Fuels Scheme	Regional	2	2	3	3
	Non-regional	31	33	34	36
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.8 Australian Screen Production Incentive	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	221	159	159	159
Program 1.9 Research and Development Tax Incentive	Regional	113	120	126	134
	Non-regional	1,085	1,146	1,210	1,278
	Non-specific	2	3	3	3
Program 1.10 Private Health Insurance Rebate	Regional	69	72	76	80
	Non-regional	151	158	166	175
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
Program 1.11 Superannuation Co-Contribution	Regional	52	53	54	55
	Non-regional	93	94	96	99
	Non-specific	..	..	..	..
Program 1.13 Fuel Tax Credit Scheme <sup>1</sup>	Regional	3,940	4,347	4,137	4,164
	Non-regional	1,659	1,830	1,742	1,753
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
Program 1.16 National Rental Affordability Scheme	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	87	131	150	170
Program 1.17 First Home Saver Accounts	Regional	3	3	2	3
	Non-regional	18	18	18	19
	Non-specific	..	..	..	..
Program 1.21 Low Income Superannuation Contribution	Regional	299	305	298	301
	Non-regional	653	667	652	659
	Non-specific	4	4	4	4
Program 1.22 Other programs <sup>2</sup>	Regional	29	35	32	24
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total <sup>3</sup>	Regional	4,522	4,953	4,745	4,781
	Non-regional	3,719	3,977	3,949	4,052
	Non-specific	317	299	318	338

<sup>1</sup> Fuel Tax Credit claims for the mining and agricultural industries have been classified as regional.

<sup>2</sup> Includes the Seafarer Tax Offset and the Conservation Tillage Tax Offset

<sup>3</sup> The amounts in Table 13 and the amounts reported in the Portfolio Budget Statement may differ due to rounding

.. Not zero, but rounded to zero

- nil

Table 13 provides a summary of expenditure relating to personal benefits and subsidies paid by the Australian Government through the ATO.

The regional split of funding has been based on the current location of personal benefit and subsidy recipients. The location of the recipients has been determined using the residential or business address as reported to the ATO. It should be noted that in relation to some 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/address issue might occur if for instance, a head office lodged a claim on behalf of a company which had offices all across Australia.

Total grant and transfer expenditure of \$4.5 billion, or 55 per cent of the amount that could be disaggregated between regional and non-regional, has been identified as being distributed to regional areas in the 2012-13 financial year. However, due to the location/address issue noted above and the inability to specifically identify some expenditure as regional or non-regional, it is possible that the actual amount differs.

Fuel Tax Credits of \$16.6 billion are expected to be paid for activities carried out in regional Australia over the next four years. Low income earners in regional areas are expected to benefit from \$1.2 billion being paid into super funds over the next four years through the Low Income Superannuation Contribution scheme.

The ATO will stop paying the Education Tax Refund for 2011-12 and later years. This will now be a Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs portfolio program.

Further details about the programs discussed above and included in Table 13 are set out in the Treasury Portfolio Budget Statement.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **Regional Tax Assistance Program**

The ATO has in place the Regional Tax Assistance Program which is an initiative committed to improving compliance within Australia's regional communities, and works with small businesses, individuals and intermediaries to build and sustain willing participation in the tax and superannuation systems. The program has around 80 staff based in regional centres around Australia who work to build and maintain strong relationships in their communities.

Working collaboratively with other government agencies, the program has also contributed to Australian Government Mobile Service visits, and created opportunities for taxpayers in regional areas to meet with service providers face-to-face. They also support regional and remote centres to provide ATO products and publications for their local communities.

# VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Department of Veterans' Affairs provides support to veterans, war widows/ers, serving members, former defence force members and their families, and eligible members of the Australian Federal Police who have served overseas. The Department's client base is located across regional and metropolitan areas in Australia, as well as overseas.

The Department has a comprehensive network of State and Territory offices for clients in locations across Australia. Clients can also receive services at certain Service Centres delivering Centrelink services in regional centres and through outreach visits, further expanding the Department's regional footprint. Booked Car with Driver, Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing services in particular assist veterans to access vital healthcare services and help to overcome difficulties accessing services in regional locations.

The Department strives to be efficient and responsive to the needs of the changing veteran community. Priorities for the Department include a focus on aged care for veterans and war widow/ers, as well as the continually evolving needs of younger veterans and serving members.

In 2012-13 the Department will continue to prepare for the Centenary of Anzac commemorations that will occur from 2014 to 2018. During this time the nation will remember not only the Anzacs who served at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, but all Australians who have served in uniform across a century of service. This will be a national commemoration and will encompass domestic, including regional areas, and international activities.

## NEW INITIATIVES

### **Support Development of the Anzac Interpretive Centre at Albany, WA**

The Government has allocated an additional \$5.6 million over three years to further support development of the Anzac Interpretive Centre at Albany, Western Australia as an important component of the Anzac Centenary Program 2014-2018. Albany was the gathering point for the first convoys carrying the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and New Zealand Expeditionary Force (later to be known collectively as the Anzacs), which departed from Albany in November and December 1914.

Funding will contribute to construction of the building and interpretive, educational and curatorial components.

The physical Centre will be glass-fronted and built on the contours of Mount Adelaide, overlooking King George Sound where the convoys gathered. It will provide an all-weather facility and offer 240-degree panoramic views of the sound. The Centre will house innovative, interactive technology with a capacity for visitors to locate ships in

the convoys, as well as following an individual soldier's or nurse's journey from Albany to the conclusion of their military service, either through death or return to Australia.

The Anzac Interpretive Centre at Albany places regional Australia at the forefront of a program of national importance. The Centre will leave a lasting legacy in regional Australia through which Australians will continue to both physically and virtually explore and interpret our military history.

### **Scoping Study for a restaging of the first convoys that left from Albany and carried soldiers to Egypt and Gallipoli**

Albany was the gathering point for the first convoys carrying the AIF and New Zealand Expeditionary Force (later to be known collectively as the Anzacs), which departed from Albany in November and December 1914. Thirty-six ships carrying thousands of troops converged at Albany before their final departure from Australia.

A number of ideas have been put forward to commemorate this event, as part of the Anzac Centenary Program 2014 -2018, including an assembly of vessels in King George Sound on the morning of 1 November 2014 – the centenary of the first convoy that carried Australian and New Zealand soldiers to Egypt and Gallipoli.

The Government has allocated \$272,000 for a scoping study to develop options for a restaging of the convoy that left from Albany in November 1914, and to develop effective governance arrangements for undertaking a restaging.

A restaging would help improve national recognition of the role Albany played in Australia's First World War history.

### **Honouring War Dead**

The Government has allocated \$8.1 million over two years to support the refurbishment of Australian official commemorations for war dead and other eligible veterans' memorials in Australia and overseas.

As part of this measure, funding will be provided to refurbish official graves and plaques in cemeteries, crematoria and Gardens of Remembrance; undertake structural works to war cemeteries; and repair associated infrastructure. The funding will allow the Office of Australian War Graves to ensure that these places of commemoration, including the additional official commemorations, are maintained to a high standard.

Many of the individual graves and plaques to be refurbished within this proposal are located in rural and regional Australia. Official commemorations are located in approximately 2,000 cemeteries around Australia.

## **Local Grants Program**

The Government has allocated \$9.5 million over four years to establish a Local Grants Program to help communities across Australia conduct their own Anzac Centenary commemoration projects. It will provide grants totalling \$7.5 million, spread over 2012-2013 to 2015-2016. Funding will be available from January 2013.

Projects that may be eligible for funding under the Local Grants Program include local memorials restorations, commemorative publications and cultural or sporting events.

The program will operate under public guidelines that will ensure the scheme is run effectively, efficiently and equitably. Once the guidelines have been developed, information about the program, including how to apply, will be widely disseminated.

The grants program will ensure that communities in regional Australia will be able to access funding to help implement eligible projects in their own areas, ahead of the Centenary of Anzac commemorations.

## **Arts and Culture Fund**

The Government has allocated \$4.7 million over five years to support artistic and creative works, displays and events during the Centenary of Anzac commemorations. Individuals, artists and cultural institutions will be able to apply for funding.

The Australian Government will be developing guidelines for the fund and these will be released during 2013-2014. Artistic and cultural organisations in regional Australia will be strongly encouraged to apply for funding.

## **Scoping Study for a Community Outreach Program**

The Centenary of Anzac is an event of national significance and it is important that people from all areas of Australia, including regional areas, have the opportunity to participate in, learn from and commemorate this significant occasion.

This \$245,000 initiative supports a scoping study for a community outreach program that will enable important memorabilia from the First World War and subsequent conflicts to be displayed in communities across Australia, including in regional areas.

## **Online, Multimedia, Community Awareness and Education Program**

The Government has allocated \$3.4 million over four years to support the development of an Online, Multimedia, Community Awareness and Education Program as a component of the Anzac Centenary Program 2014-2018.

The initiative will build on existing resources and introduce a strong community focus by encouraging communities to create and share heritage stories and memorabilia on the internet.

Funding will enable the use of smart phone applications, social media tools and websites to improve information about Australia's military history and increase community understanding.

This initiative provides opportunities for communities across Australia – metropolitan, rural and regional – to engage in the Anzac Centenary.

## **APPENDIX A: SPATIAL REPORTING**

The Government agreed to deliver a stronger governance and accountability framework for regional Australia in its agreement with the independent Members of Parliament (the Agreement). In the 2011-12 Budget, the Government provided the first instalment of enhanced information on government spending in regional Australia.

In the 2012-13 Budget, the Government will implement further improvements to the reporting of regional expenditure through the introduction of a refined spatial reporting framework that builds on the foundations of the first year of spatial reporting.

In particular, this year's report is based on a common classification of regional Australia for spatial reporting purposes. That classification is all of Australia except for areas classified as Major Cities under the established Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC) Remoteness Structure available at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/remoteness+structure>.

### **INTERPRETING SPATIAL REPORTING INFORMATION**

Under the refined spatial reporting framework for the 2012-13 Budget, expenditure is disaggregated by material program between Major Cities and Regional Australia for the Budget Year (2012-13) and forward estimates (2013-14 to 2015-16). Information is presented for selected portfolios that deliver major services across Australia who incur expenditure in regional Australia or have a presence in regional Australia.

A category of non-specific location has been used in cases where expenditure cannot be analysed for various reasons including expenditure of a discretionary nature subject to future competitive processes or where geographical data is not available for particular expenditure programs. The allocation for some programs may be based on signed agreements, or historical patterns presumed to continue into the future.

Each portfolio has prepared its information based on existing systems, a common classification and available data. There may be limitations to the accuracy of the data being prepared as reliable data of expenditure by geographical location is not readily available for all portfolios. For example, the billing address has been used in some cases rather than the location of activity.

Further information on each portfolio is available in the respective section of this document and in their respective Portfolio Budget Statements.