

**REGIONAL AUSTRALIA:
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES**

**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE ANTHONY ALBANESE MP**
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT

THE HONOURABLE CATHERINE KING MP
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL SERVICES, LOCAL COMMUNITIES
AND TERRITORIES

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FOREWORD

Australia is riding a wave of great change. We are an island nation blessed with natural advantages sitting on the doorstep of the Asia-Pacific region. Soon this region will become not just the largest consumer of goods and services on the planet, but also its largest producer. Australia's place within this region offers enormous opportunities and regional Australia, the source of almost three-quarters of export earnings, is key to ensuring our success during this Asian Century.

The Australian Government has backed the regions to take advantage of all that the Asian Century offers. We have made big investments in nation-building infrastructure, creating faster, smoother transport links that are critical in helping us reach national and international markets. We also continue to fund the roll-out of the National Broadband Network (NBN), which will provide high speed broadband to 100 per cent of Australian premises. NBN construction and planning will continue to focus on regional Australia, offering unprecedented access to health and educational opportunities as well as the global marketplace.

We have addressed regional liveability via the Education Investment Fund and the Health and Hospitals Fund. This has been backed by our flagship Regional Development Australia Fund, worth almost \$1 billion. We have supported projects that attract investment, create jobs and meet community needs with the help of Regional Development Australia Committees that are functioning right across the country. The 2013-14 Budget builds on these investments, through carefully targeted expenditure on infrastructure, environmental sustainability, employment, education and drought assistance for Australia's farmers. All these initiatives support a forward looking Australia, with a skilled, healthy and connected population equipped for the future.

We are targeting regional roads and rail through the second phase of the Nation Building Program. The overarching objective of the program is to lift Australia's productivity and it will do this by focussing on four cornerstone themes: Moving Freight; Connecting People; Safety; and Innovation. We are continuing our historic investment in interstate freight rail and regional roads, improving connectivity between key growth areas and markets. We are continuing our Roads to Recovery and Black Spot programs, making our roads safer for everyone and making it easier for drivers in regional areas to get around.

The 2013-14 Budget will include initiatives that address region-specific circumstances. For example, the Australian Government will allocate \$99.4 million over four years in new farm household support payments under reforms to the National Drought Program to help farmers better manage risk and prepare for future challenges, including drought. The 2013-14 Budget also provides \$9.9 million over the next two years to upgrade airstrips in remote Australia under the Regional Aviation Access Program, improving safety and accessibility for remote communities. A total of

\$3.5 million will be available to connect job seekers and workers affected by structural change to jobs in growth industries and regional areas experiencing labour and skill shortages. A further \$15.7 million will allow Local Employment Coordinators in Australia's most vulnerable regions, 13 of which are outside capital cities, to continue their valuable work connecting people to jobs.

The 2013-14 Budget follows an honourable Labor tradition of providing opportunity for all Australians, no matter what their circumstances or where they live. It targets productivity growth, so essential to lay the foundations for Australia to capitalise on the opportunities of the Asian Century.

Anthony Albanese

Minister for Regional Development and Local Government

Catherine King

Minister for Regional Services, Local Communities and Territories

KEY AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA BY PORTFOLIO

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio provides service and benefit to regional Australia. The majority of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food industries are located in regional Australia, and their employees and related businesses underpin many local economies. The portfolio's industries are worth \$53 billion to the Australian economy, employ 335,000 people domestically and feed 60 million people globally.

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 2013-14 the portfolio will continue important work to improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of these critical industries and help goods and people to move 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 (the Department) has a strong presence in regional Australia, with more than 15 per cent of the Department's employees based in regional areas. These officers undertake a range of functions including quarantine services, and plant and animal pest and disease monitoring and surveillance. The Department also maintains a biosecurity service delivery network with over 2,500 quarantine-approved premises located throughout Australia. Australia's biosecurity system lies at the heart of our position as a trading nation. It directly underpins 334,000 jobs and \$40 billion per annum worth of agriculture, fisheries and forestry exports; primarily from regional Australia.

The Department and its portfolio agencies will continue to support regional Australia by delivering services directly to those who need it. For example, in 2013-14, the Department will commence the implementation of National Drought Program Reform, which will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of farm families and viability of farm businesses. The National Drought Program Reform will be complemented by Farm Finance, which will provide eligible farm businesses in financial hardship with immediate, short-term assistance.

SPATIAL REPORTING

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 activity in this portfolio directly benefits regional Australia.

Table 1: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio

Program	Category	Forward	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
1.1 Tackling Climate Change	Regional	110	87	76	64
Australia's Farming Future	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
Climate Change	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.2 Sustainable Management	Regional	107	90	93	88
Natural Resources	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.3 Forestry Industry	Regional	12	12	12	12
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.4 Fishing Industry	Regional	11	11	13	13
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.5 Horticulture Industry	Regional	86	86	86	86
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.6 Wool Industry	Regional	58	55	57	57
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.7 Grains Industry	Regional	1	1	1	1
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.8 Dairy Industry	Regional	55	55	57	58
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.9 Meat and Livestock Industry	Regional	182	184	184	186
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.10 Agricultural Resources	Regional	83	81	82	83
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.11 Drought programs	Regional	5	15	25	38
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.12 Rural Programs	Regional	52	50	16	17
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.13 International Market Access	Regional	40	40	42	42
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
2.1 Quarantine and Export Services	Regional	497	489	499	497
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
2.2 Plant and Animal Health	Regional	52	46	47	48
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Regional	1,350	1,302	1,290	1,287
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

Table 1: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry portfolio

Program	Category	Forward	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Cotton Research and Development Corporation	Regional	20	21	18	13
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	Regional	27	27	28	28
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation	Regional	23	23	23	23
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Grains Research and Development Corporation	Regional	190	191	194	176
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation	Regional	23	22	22	22
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sugar Research and Development Corporation	Regional	10	9	9	9
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Wine Australian Corporation	Regional	13	11	11	11
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Australian Fisheries Management Authority	Regional	46	46	47	48
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority	Regional	34	33	33	34
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
	Regional	1,738	1,685	1,675	1,652
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
Portfolio Grand Total	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

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

National Drought Program Reform

Through the National Drought Program Reform, the Australian Government is moving away from crisis-framed drought assistance programs to programs that help

farmers better manage risk and prepare for future challenges, including drought. Regional Australia will benefit from the reform through a more productive and resilient agriculture sector.

In the 2013–14 Budget, the Australian Government delivers on its commitment to National Drought Program Reform through a new package of drought-related programs, comprising:

- a Farm Household Allowance;
- continued access to Farm Management Deposits and taxation measures that support risk management;
- a national approach to farm business training;
- a coordinated, collaborative approach to the provision of social support services; and
- tools and technologies to inform farmer decision-making.

As the centrepiece of the reform package, the Australian Government is investing \$99.4 million in the Farm Household Allowance over four years. The allowance will commence from 1 July 2014, replacing the Transitional Farm Family Payment and the Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment.

The Australian Government recognises that farmers may experience significant financial hardship at any time for a range of reasons. Through the Farm Household Allowance, eligible farm families Australia-wide will be able to apply for household income support, paid at the same rate as Newstart Allowance. A network of regionally-based case managers will also provide support to payment recipients.

Farm Finance

The 2013-14 Budget includes Farm Finance, a package to assist farmers struggling with high levels of debt. Farm Finance will help farm businesses in financial hardship by providing eligible farmers with immediate, short-term assistance.

The package includes four elements:

- concessional loans for productivity enhancement projects or debt refinancing;
- increased funding for up to 17 full-time equivalent counsellors with the Rural Financial Counselling Service;
- increasing the non-primary production income threshold for Farm Management Deposits (FMD) from \$65,000 to \$100,000 and allowing the consolidation of existing eligible FMD accounts held for at least 12 months; and
- establishing a nationally consistent approach to farm debt mediation.

Caring for our Country – Reef Rescue Program

A further \$200.0 million will be invested over five years in the next phase of the Reef Rescue program under Caring for our Country.

Commencing in 2013-14, Reef Rescue will assist land managers across the reef catchment to adopt improved agricultural and urban management practices that will reduce the discharge of nutrients, sediments and pesticides in the Reef lagoon and thereby improve the Great Barrier Reef's resilience to climate change.

National Monitoring System for Agricultural Chemicals Residues in Food

The Australian Government is investing \$25.4 million over five years to establish a national monitoring system for agricultural chemicals residues in food, including \$5.0 million in 2013-14.

The national monitoring system will:

- provide a nationally consistent base level of produce monitoring to maintain confidence in the agricultural and veterinary chemicals system, appropriately identify risks and respond to adverse events;
- be risk-based, targeted and responsive to contribute to the protection necessary for the safe use of chemicals, including allowable variations of chemical use;
- provide support mechanisms, including suitable data management and access protocols, for effective traceback and emergency response;
- link directly with existing compliance and enforcement processes in the jurisdictions and the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, informing their risk management policies and creating a nationally consistent monitoring framework;
- be flexible enough to allow individual jurisdictions to monitor targets of local importance (whether environmental or produce related); and
- build on existing industry and government-run schemes (including potential data sharing and reward/compliance arrangements), thus avoiding duplication of testing of particular commodities.

Queensland Floods Support Package – Rural Financial Counselling Service

The 2013-14 Budget includes a one-off boost of \$750,000 for the Rural Financial Counselling Service to manage increased demand for counsellors in areas affected by flooding in Queensland.

Tasmanian Forest Agreement – Developing a National Certification Standard

The 2013–14 Budget includes \$500,000 for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to progress the development of a national certification standard for the forestry industry, through the provision of a grant to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Forest certification recognises good practice and responsible forest management. A move to FSC certification will provide social benefits to local communities and workers, and environmental benefits through the promotion of forward conservation objectives and better forest management.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

National Food Plan

Through the development of the National Food Plan, the Australian Government aims to ensure a sustainable, globally competitive, resilient food supply, supporting access to nutritious and affordable food. The National Food Plan will position Australia to meet the emerging challenges and opportunities set to influence our food system, including:

- 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 significant benefits to regional Australia in the form of employment and income generation.

The National Food Plan has been developed through a consultative process, including the release of a green paper as the basis for public consultation in the second half of 2012.

The Australian Government is currently considering the National Food Plan.

Filling the Research Gap Program

The Filling the Research Gap Program supports research into new technologies and practices to deliver practical options for land managers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the land sector and store carbon in the landscape.

Through competitive grants, this program is investing \$201.3 million over six years to 2016-17, building on research undertaken through the Climate Change Research Program (2008-09 to 2011-12).

Outcomes from approved research projects will continue to support the development of offset methodologies that land managers in regional Australia can use to participate in the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI), a carbon offset scheme.

Action on the Ground Program

The Action on the Ground Program is investing \$99.3 million in competitive grants from 2011-12 to 2016-17. This program assists farmers and land managers to undertake on-farm trials of abatement technologies and improved management practices that can potentially reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions or store carbon in soil while maintaining farm productivity.

Under round one of this program, \$25.2 million has been invested in 59 projects involving more than 400 land managers in trials across Australia.

Program outcomes will help farmers and land managers identify ways to reduce on-farm greenhouse gas emissions and opportunities to participate in the CFI.

Extension and Outreach Program

The Australian Government is investing \$64.4 million in regional Australia over six years through the Extension and Outreach Program to:

- provide technical information and support about integrating carbon management into whole farm planning and farm performance; and
- share new research and farming techniques, including those generated through the CFI.

Extension and outreach projects will support sector-specific projects, including in the livestock, dairy, horticulture, cotton and grains industries, as well as projects targeting specific audiences, including fertiliser users and young farmers.

The Australian Government has announced the first 24 projects that will share in \$21.3 million under this program. These grants will be used to provide clear and credible information to farmers and land managers about how they can reduce emissions on farms and participate in the CFI.

Outcomes from this program will assist farmers and land managers to integrate carbon-farming activities into their whole-of-business planning and operations.

Carbon Farming Initiative Communications Program

The Carbon Farming Initiative Communications Program is investing \$4.0 million over four years (2010-11 to 2013-14) to provide information and tools to:

- improve farmers' and land managers' understanding of the CFI;
- present opportunities arising from reducing on-farm greenhouse gas emissions or sequestering carbon and creating land-based carbon credits; and

- increase participation of farmers and land managers in the CFI.

This program has delivered around 340 communication activities reaching approximately 16,600 farmers, land managers and community members.

Outcomes from this program assist people in rural, regional and remote Australia to make informed decisions about the CFI.

Biochar Capacity Building Program

The Biochar Capacity Building Program is a component of the CFI and is investing \$2.0 million from 2011-12 to 2013-14 in competitive grants funding.

This program is helping to develop practical emissions management options for farmers and land managers by investigating how biochar mitigates greenhouse gas emissions and demonstrating the use of integrated biochar systems on-farm.

This program is funding five projects, with demonstration sites across the country.

Outcomes from this program will assist the development of biochar offset methodologies under the CFI.

Supporting Australian Farmers

Recognising that farmers often face difficult conditions such as the impact of variable weather, the Australian Government has a number of programs in place to help farm businesses experiencing financial hardship.

Farm Management Deposits Scheme

The Farm Management Deposits (FMD) Scheme assists farmers deal more effectively with fluctuations in cash flow. It is designed to increase the self-reliance of Australian farmers by helping them better manage fluctuations in their income due to climate variability and market changes. The scheme allows eligible farmers to set aside pre-tax income from primary production in years of high income, which they can draw on in years of low income. Income deposited in an FMD account is tax deductible in the year in which the deposit is made. It becomes taxable income in the year in which it is withdrawn.

Farm Finance includes two enhancements to the FMD Scheme. These enhancements will allow primary producers to earn up to \$100,000 in non-primary production income and allow the consolidation of existing eligible FMD accounts held for at least 12 months.

Increasing the non-primary production income threshold (up from \$65,000 currently) will allow a greater number of farmers to participate in the FMD Scheme, which will assist them to plan and prepare for future business challenges. It will also provide

primary producers with greater flexibility in managing their finances, while still retaining access to this risk management tool.

Allowing primary producers to consolidate existing eligible FMD accounts, where they have been held for at least 12 months, will reduce the administrative burden on primary producers, financial advisors and financial institutions.

Rural Financial Counselling Service Program

The Australian Government, together with State governments, funds the Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) Program, through which free financial counselling is provided to primary producers, fishers, and small rural businesses in financial difficulty. There are currently approximately 112 full-time equivalent financial counselling positions throughout regional Australia.

The Australian Government will provide \$17.5 million to the program in 2013-14, which provides grants to 14 not-for-profit organisations to deliver the service. The RFCS also supports delivery of the Australian Government's Transitional Farm Family Payment.

Farm Finance includes increased funding for up to 17 full-time equivalent counsellors with the RFCS.

The 2013-14 Budget includes a one-off boost of \$750,000 for the RFCS to manage increased demand for counsellors in areas affected by flooding in Queensland.

Further information, including the location of rural financial counsellors, is available from www.rfcs.gov.au, 1800 686 175 or rfcs@daff.gov.au.

Transitional Farm Family Payment

The Australian Government continues to provide household support for farm families in hardship under the Transitional Farm Family Payment.

The Transitional Farm Family Payment provides up to 12 months of household income support regardless of location or reason for hardship and is paid at the same rate as the Newstart Allowance. It is combined with individualised case management to help families improve their financial security. The Rural Financial Counselling Service will continue its central role in this process, helping farmers to consider their business and financial options.

As part of National Drought Program Reform, from 1 July 2014, the Farm Household Allowance will commence, replacing the Transitional Farm Family Payment. The allowance will provide up to three years of household support with dedicated, regionally based case management assistance, providing farm families with a greater opportunity to assess and improve their financial situation.

Wheat Export Marketing Reforms

As part of the Australian Government's reforms to wheat export marketing arrangements, the Wheat Industry Advisory Taskforce was established on 1 February 2013. The taskforce will play an important role in examining specific issues across the supply chain and contribute to maintaining and increasing the competitiveness of the Australian export wheat industry.

As part of the transition to a less regulated environment, the Australian Government is also working with industry to develop a mandatory code of conduct for port access arrangements to replace access undertakings. The mandatory code will require that port terminal operators provide fair and equitable access to facilities to provide security of access for other exporters, and will help ensure operators are able to attract the level of return on investment required to keep the port terminals viable.

The Australian Government's reforms to wheat export marketing arrangements provide producers in regional Australia with a wheat marketing system that rewards innovation and increases competition.

A new Post-Entry Quarantine Facility

The 2012-13 Budget included a \$379.9 million investment over seven years in the construction and operation of a new Australian Government-owned and operated post-entry quarantine facility for high risk animal and plant imports.

The funding will deliver a state-of-the-art facility that consolidates existing animal and plant services to a single location.

Land for the new facility was acquired at Mickleham in Victoria in 2012 and construction is expected to commence in early 2014.

The new site will begin operation from late 2015, when the existing facility at Eastern Creek in New South Wales is scheduled to close. Operations at other facilities will be transferred progressively to the new station with the process scheduled to be completed by 2018.

Reforming Australia's Biosecurity System

The task of protecting Australia from exotic pests and diseases is becoming more challenging with the globalisation of trade and increased passenger and cargo movements.

The Australian Government recognises that an efficient and effective biosecurity system is critical to regional Australia and its economy. It underpins 334,000 jobs and \$40.0 billion per annum worth of agriculture, fisheries and forestry exports, primarily from regional Australia.

As announced in previous Budgets, the Australian Government will invest \$117.9 million in 2013-14 in reforms to Australia's biosecurity system to ensure the continued delivery of a modern system that is responsive and targeted. 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; and strengthening stakeholder relationships.

Biosecurity Legislation

The Australian Government has developed new legislation to replace the century-old *Quarantine Act 1908*. The Bills will improve national and regional capability to manage biosecurity risks, facilitate inter-jurisdictional activities and provide consistent responses to biosecurity risks and threats.

The Bills were introduced into Parliament on 28 November 2012. Both Bills were referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee for inquiry. The Committee is due to table its report on 24 June 2013.

Pest and Disease Eradication

The Australian Government, in partnership with the States, Territories and industry, contributes to the effective control of pest and disease outbreaks if and when they occur. The Australian Government provides 50 per cent of the costs 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 and chestnut blight. The collaborative approach taken by governments and industry ensures pest and disease outbreaks are brought under control as quickly as possible.

Caring for our Country

The Australian Government renews its commitment to the ongoing Caring for our Country initiative with \$2.1 billion (from 2013-14 to 2017-18) to invest in projects across Australia, including regional and remote areas, to improve biodiversity and promote the adoption of sustainable farm practices. The Australian Government will continue working with regional natural resource management organisations to effectively manage Australia's unique natural resources. Caring for our Country remains focused on achieving an environment that is healthier, better protected, well managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

Live Exports Subsidised Interest Rate Scheme

On 30 June 2011, as part of the Live Exports Assistance Package, the Australian Government announced the Subsidised Interest Rate Scheme to help businesses affected by the temporary suspension of the live cattle export trade to

Indonesia. The scheme offers subsidies on the interest on new and extended borrowings for up to two years. Payments for the Subsidised Interest Rate Scheme will continue until 30 June 2014.

Australian Animal Welfare Strategy

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy has been developed to provide both national and international communities with an appreciation of animal welfare arrangements in Australia. It also outlines the future direction and improvements to animal welfare in Australia.

The strategy supports sustainable livestock production and to meet marketing and community expectations. It covers all key animal use sectors; livestock, companion animals, aquatic animals, native and introduced wildlife, animals in research and teaching, and animals used for work, entertainment, recreation and display.

The Australian Government is providing \$1.0 million in 2013-14 to the strategy to support the further development of national animal welfare standards and guidelines and consistent regulation across jurisdictions.

Better Regulation of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals

The Australian 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;
- consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of the regulator, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority;
- the ability of the regulator to enforce compliance with its regulatory decisions by providing the regulator with a graduated range of compliance enforcement powers; and
- transparency of agvet chemical approvals, registrations and reconsiderations through development, publication and implementation of a risk framework.

In addition, the Council of Australian Governments is progressing reforms for the control of use of agvet chemicals. This process complements the Australian Government's Better Regulation reforms and aims to improve consistency of agvet chemical regulation across Australia.

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation

The Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 was introduced to the Parliament on 28 November 2012. The Bill will amend the suite of agvet chemical legislation to improve the effectiveness of the current system. It will provide better protection for human health and the environment, thus maintaining community confidence in our food and fibre production.

The Bill will increase community confidence in the regulation of agvet chemicals, while reducing the unnecessary impost on business. The reforms to agvet chemicals legislation in the Bill will ensure that agricultural productivity can continue to improve and keep Australia at the forefront of innovative food and fibre production.

Council of Australian Governments Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Reforms

As part of a broad suite of chemicals and plastics reforms, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) requested the Standing Council on Primary Industries to develop a single national framework for agricultural and veterinary (agvet) chemicals including a detailed regulatory model, funding model and inter-governmental agreement.

This reform is particularly complex and requires extensive commitment from the Commonwealth, and State and Territory governments. Governments and stakeholders share the view that this reform will have widespread positive effects, particularly for businesses that are subject to the variable regulatory requirements of the current system.

In 2012 jurisdictions agreed on a regulatory model that outlines minimum harmonisation requirements for regulatory elements in all States and Territories. In December 2012, these reforms were delivered to COAG, which noted that the regulatory model, funding model and inter-governmental agreement would be finalised by primary industries ministers.

As part of the COAG reform arrangements, the Australian Government agreed to fund a five-year nationally coordinated monitoring pilot project for chemical residues in Australian grown produce. The produce monitoring project and other elements of the reforms will be implemented in 2013-14. As part of this implementation, the States, Territories and the Australian Government will consult on further details of the new arrangements.

Wine Industry Support Program

In the 2012–13 Budget, the Australian Government announced funding of \$2.1 million to Wine Australia for new marketing activities in 2012–13 and in 2013–14. The additional funds will assist Wine Australia to develop, and jointly deliver with industry, new programs that will drive demand and lead to increased sales of Australian wine. The funds will allow Wine Australia to develop and jointly deliver with industry new programs that will lead to increased sales of Australian wine and increased profitability of the Australian wine industry, particularly in regional Australia.

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*. The gross value of production from Commonwealth fisheries was around \$320 million in 2010-11, which was around 14 per cent of total production from Australian fisheries.

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 2013–14 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.

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. The main way that the Australian Government invests in rural research and development (R&D) is through the 15 Research and Development Corporations (RDCs). These investments are complemented by funding to Cooperative Research Centres, universities and other programs such as Filling the Research Gap under the Carbon Farming Futures program.

With the release of the Rural Research and Development Policy Statement in July 2012, the Australian Government committed to maintaining the funding it provides to the RDCs. The policy statement includes significant improvements to rural R&D that will see greater collaboration on research, efforts to increase investment and a drive to improve the adoption of innovation across the sector. It outlines measures to increase transparency and accountability in the RDC model. The Australian Government is implementing the policy statement in consultation with the RDCs and industry bodies.

The work of the RDCs will significantly contribute to the strengthening of the economic diversity of regional Australia. Each RDC has developed five-year strategic plans and, during 2013–14, each RDC will continue to advance these important goals. The strategic directions of the RDCs are outlined in the table below.

Figure 1: Strategic directions of RDCs

R&D Corporation	Strategic Directions
Cotton Research and Development Corporation	Promote sustainable competitive advantage, paying particular attention to the issues of water, salinity and biodiversity and integrating the management of cotton farms with increased effort to maintain the environmental health of catchments.
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	Increased knowledge that fosters sustainable environmental benefits, including biosecurity, ecosystem protection and climate change; industry development, including productivity growth, resource allocation and market access; resilient and supportive communities; people development; and, extension and adoption.
Grains Research and Development Corporation	Create value by driving the discovery, development and delivery of world-class innovation in the Australian grains industry through meeting market requirements; improving crop yield; protecting the crop; advancing profitable farming systems; improving the farm resource base; and, building skills and capacity.
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation	Promote leadership and innovation in the rural sector; increase profit and portability in rural industries; and, enhance sustainability across the rural sector.

R&D Corporation	Strategic Directions
Sugar Research and Development Corporation	Growing the Crop - A profitable and market-driven industry underpinned by advanced technology producing a reliable and increasing supply of sugarcane; Milling the Crop - A profitable milling sector utilising new and improved technologies processes; Sustaining the Environment - Coordinate, facilitate and extend, as appropriate, existing environmental stewardship programs; Skills and Capabilities - An industry committed to supporting a culture of education, learning and innovation.
Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation	Invest in and direct research, development and extension, focusing on: environment and sustainability; consumers and markets; improving products and processes; and extension and adoption working across the value chain.
Australian Egg Corporation Limited	To develop and drive integrated on-farm solutions and through chain and market services that maximise benefits and revenue for the Australian egg industry and the community while minimising barriers and costs for Australian egg producers.
Meat and Livestock Australia Limited	Improving market access; growing demand; increasing productivity across the supply chain; promoting industry integrity and sustainability; and, increasing industry and people capability in Australia's livestock industries.
Australian Meat Processors Corporation Limited	Promote Australian meat in the domestic and international market, improve red meat quality and foster the economic, environmental, health, safety and social well-being of the meat processing industry.
Australian Livestock Export Corporation Limited	The ongoing improvement in animal welfare outcomes, improve industry efficiencies and capabilities through the supply chain, foster support for the industry through increased knowledge and awareness, improve market access conditions and build demand for Australian livestock, increase stakeholder confidence through strong governance, planning and evaluation.
Australian Pork Limited	To build consumer demand, viable productive farms, efficient value chains, leadership, preparedness, stewardship and industry cohesion and responsiveness for the Australian pork industry.

Figure 1: Strategic directions of RDCs

R&D Corporation	Strategic Directions
Australian Wool Innovation Limited	Research and development, marketing and promotion that enhances the profitability, international competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian wool industry and increase demand and market access for Australian wool.
Dairy Australia Limited	Enhance the adaptive capability of the supply chain to improve farm margins and growth opportunities; proactively promote and protect dairy's value and integrity; coordinate an integrated supply chain response to climate change and natural resource management; and, grow capability and skills.
Forest and Wood Products Australia Limited	Promote the benefits and usage of forests and wood products in accordance with changing community attitudes, environmental awareness and market trends; invest in and coordinate research and development to improve the industry's competitiveness, inform its climate change response, enhance investment, increase usage and ensure the sustainability of forests, wood products and services; grow the industry's capacity and capability in knowledge generation, adoption and promotion to facilitate expansion and increase their capacity and scope to provide services for the industry's benefit.
Horticulture Australia Limited	Deliver new information and knowledge; build consumer demand (domestically and internationally); enhance industry skills and capability; deliver operational excellence for horticultural industries.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S

The Attorney-General's portfolio is committed to supporting rural and regional Australia. The Regional Family Dispute Resolution and Post Separation Cooperative Parenting services under the Family Support Program are located in regional Australia and in 2013-14 these two service types will receive \$12.0 million.

Forty-two 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 spatial reporting table below as non-regional, there are a number of CLCs that provide state-wide services including outreach services to rural, regional and remote areas. Up to 60 per cent of the Attorney-General's portfolio grants for legal assistance are used to support people 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 majority of the Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program are targeted at regional Australia.

SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 2: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Attorney-General's portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
Program 1.3: Justice Services					
Financial Assistance Towards					
Legal Costs and Related Expenses	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Payments for the Provision of Legal Aid - Legal Aid Commissions					
	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	11.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Payments for the Provision of Community Legal Services					
	Regional	11.0	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Non-regional	21.0	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Non-specific	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Program 1.4: Family Relationships					
Family Support Program - Family Law Services					
	Regional	69.0	71.0	72.0	74.0
	Non-regional	83.0	85.0	87.0	88.0
	Non-specific	18.0	18.0	18.0	19.0

Table 2: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Attorney-General's portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
Program 1.5: Indigenous Law and Justice					
Payments for the provision of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services for Indigenous Australia	Regional	20.0	20.0	21.0	21.0
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Indigenous Legal Aid and Policy Reform Program	Regional	54.0	55.0	57.0	59.0
	Non-regional	14.0	14.0	14.0	15.0
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Payments under the Indigenous Justice Program	Regional	8.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Non-regional	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Non-specific	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory - Community Safety and Justice	Regional	29.0	30.0	30.0	31.0
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Interpreter Services in the Northern Territory	Regional	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Native Title System	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total	Regional	193	198	203	207
	Non-regional	121	124	126	128
	Non-specific	41	34	34	35

The Attorney-General's portfolio makes an important contribution to ensuring access to justice and legal services for people living in regional Australia, through a mix of nationally focussed and regional specific programs. 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 Australian 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 that are not included in the spatial reporting in this statement.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements

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

NDRRA expenditure is driven by the frequency and extent of natural disaster events and generally supports States and Territories through the reimbursement of costs associated with delivery specific natural disaster relief and recovery activities.

NDRRA assistance does not distinguish State or Territory costs by regional or metropolitan locations. Rather, assistance is specific to an event, which may impact both regional and metropolitan Australia.

The Attorney-General's Department is responsible for administering the NDRRA and the Department of the Treasury is responsible for facilitating the payments made to States and Territories.

Improving Access to Justice – Legal Assistance Priorities

The Australian Government is committed to enhancing access to justice for all Australians, including Australians who live in rural and regional areas. The Australian Government's total investment in Commonwealth legal assistance services for 2013-14 is \$341 million. Funding is provided to the legal aid commissions, Community Legal Centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services and Indigenous family violence prevention legal services.

Legal aid commissions

Commonwealth legal aid funding in 2013-14 is \$212.2 million, which includes \$10.8 million for the Expensive Commonwealth Criminal Cases Fund. There are approximately 79 legal aid commission offices across Australia, and around 46 (approximately 58 per cent) are located in regional areas. In 2011-12, approximately 47 per cent of grants of legal assistance, were provided to people who live in non-metropolitan areas.

The National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Legal Assistance Services between the Commonwealth Government and the States and Territories came into effect from 1 July 2010. One of the aims of the NPA 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 NPA is expected to lead to more outreach services to areas which lack services.

Community Legal Centres

There are 138 Community Legal Centres (CLCs) funded under the Commonwealth Community Legal Services Program. Forty-two (30 per cent) of these services are located in regional Australia. In addition to these 42 regional CLCs, there are other organisations located in metropolitan areas that receive Commonwealth funding to provide targeted specialist assistance in both metropolitan and regional 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) provides helpful information for people experiencing difficulties or in dispute to locate relevant services that can provide assistance. The Access to Justice website can identify services by geographical location which is particularly helpful for people needing to locate state-wide services that provide outreach to regional areas. The Australian Government is currently expanding and enhancing the Access to Justice website to improve accessibility and functionality, and to provide more information on dispute types and alternative dispute resolution options.

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. Announced in the 2011-12 Budget, the program provides \$4.0 million in funding over four years to 30 June 2015.

Regional Legal Assistance Services and Initiatives

The Australian Government is committed to working collaboratively with legal assistance services and the private legal sector to raise awareness of the challenges facing lawyers and communities in regional Australia.

The Attorney-General's Department has contributed one-off funding towards a number of projects and initiatives that aim to address workforce challenges in regional Australia and encourage long term solutions. These include:

- a Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales research project which is investigating recruitment and retention of public legal service lawyers in regional areas of New South Wales and factors likely to affect recruitment and retention;
- a Professional Legal Training Program in New South Wales intended to encourage law graduates to work in regional legal centres for their professional legal training work experience placement;
- the Country Lawyers Project administered through Legal Aid Western Australia and which is aimed at improving the recruitment and retention of lawyers in regional and remote areas by recruiting, developing and rotating junior solicitors throughout regional Western Australia; and
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and CLCs to help these organisations deliver family law services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients areas across Australia.

Family Support Program – family law service stream

The Attorney-General's 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. The Regional Family Dispute Resolution and Post Separation Cooperative Parenting services are located in regional Australia and in 2013-14 these two service types will receive \$12.0 million.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services Program

Australian Government funding for Indigenous legal aid will be \$68.0 million in 2013-14. 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 was added in July 2012. An additional \$2.3 million will be made available in 2013-14 under the Stronger Futures initiative in the Northern Territory.

Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program

Fourteen service providers are funded under the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program to provide services out of 30 identified high-need rural, regional and remote areas. Organisations provide free legal assistance, court support, casework and counselling services to victim-survivors of family violence or sexual assault who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, or whose partner or children are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

Indigenous Justice Program

The Attorney-General's 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 \$12.0 million in 2013-14, of which approximately \$8 million will be allocated to projects in regional Australia.

Northern Territory Community Night Patrols

The Australian Government is continuing to fund community night patrols across 80 communities in the Northern Territory in both remote and regional areas for the next 10 years, as part of the Stronger Futures initiative. A total of \$25.8 million will be provided in 2013-14 for this program.

Community night patrols play a key role in improving community safety outcomes for Indigenous people living in remote areas of the Northern Territory. 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 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.

Improved Native Title Outcomes

The Australian Government is committed to improving the native title system, and promoting leading practice and strong governance in native title agreements. In the 2009-10 Budget, the Australian Government provided a further \$50.1 million in new funding to the native title system. Included in this funding is approximately \$575,000 for the Native Title Anthropologist Grants Program in 2013-14. The program supports projects to attract a new generation of junior anthropologists to native title work and encourage senior anthropologists to remain within the system.

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 progress has been 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. It is also providing better access to health, education and a range of other services throughout the regions.

Many regional communities across Australia are benefiting from a number of digital productivity initiatives the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (the Department) is implementing. This includes the Digital Local Government; Digital Hubs and the Digital Enterprise programs currently being delivered across many NBN release sites.

The Department also 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 200,000 Australian households to switch across to digital television. Switchover has already occurred in regional Australia (Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland), Tasmania and the metropolitan areas of Adelaide and Perth.

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 remote communities. In addition, the Indigenous Broadcasting Program (IBP) 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. Importantly, it helps maintain Indigenous languages, keeps Indigenous culture strong and provides entertainment and training.

SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 3: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio

Program	Category	Budget	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy					
Program 1.1: Broadband and Communications Infrastructure	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	30	28	29	29
	Non-specific	5,119	6,336	5,305	4,709
Program 1.2: Digital Economy and Postal Services	Regional	10	6	4	4
	Non-regional	70	68	50	51
	Non-specific	14	15	9	7
Program 1.3: Broadcasting and Digital Television	Regional	47	25	26	26
	Non-regional	68	24	17	18
	Non-specific	96	70	26	17
Total - Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy	Regional	58	31	30	30
	Non-regional	167	120	96	98
	Non-specific	5,229	6,421	5,339	4,733
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	1,216	1,234	1,263	1,251
Australian Communications and Media Authority	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	104	98	96	98
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Broadcasting Service	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	377	372	373	370
Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	5	5	5	5
	Non-specific	341	338	328	328
Portfolio Grand Total	Regional	58	31	30	30
	Non-regional	276	223	197	201
	Non-specific	7,164	8,366	7,303	6,682

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 \$21.4 billion in equity funding to the NBN Co over the Budget and forward years, including capital expenditure on fibre-to-the-premises technology and next-generation fixed wireless and satellite;

- \$89.3 million in funding to continue programs to support the switchover to digital television from 2013-14 to 2016-17, including to support the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service, the Satellite Subsidy Scheme and the Household Assistance Scheme. Up to \$57.3 million of this funding will be provided to support services in regional Australia.
 - \$65.1 million over four years from 2013-14 for the ongoing Indigenous Broadcasting Program (IBP) which provides assistance to Indigenous community radio stations, Remote Indigenous Media Organisations (RIMOS) and Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS). Over 80 per cent of the IBP is spent in regional and remote areas;
 - \$17.9 million over the period 2013-14 to 2016-17 for the Regional Telecommunications Review Response including the Satellite Phone Subsidy Scheme and the ongoing Indigenous Communications Program, which provides and maintains community phones in remote Indigenous communities; and
 - \$6.0 million in funding for the Digital Productivity program over the period 2013-14 to 2015-16, to maximise opportunities provided by NBN to deliver more services online.
- The Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Special Broadcasting Service Corporation, Australia's national broadcasters, provide a diverse range of television, radio and online services.
 - The Australian Communications and Media Authority, which is responsible for regulating broadcasting, radio communications, telecommunications and online content.
 - The Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA), which is responsible for managing contracts and grants to ensure that all Australians have reasonable access to standard telephone and payphones services. TUSMA manages the Extended Zones arrangements to ensure cost parity of phone services in regional Australia.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

National Broadband Network

The NBN will provide access to high speed broadband to 100 per cent of Australian premises. It will connect 93 per cent of premises to a high speed fibre network capable of providing broadband speeds of up to one gigabit per second. Seven per cent of premises will be served by a combination of next generation fixed wireless and satellite technologies providing peak speeds of up to 25 megabits per second (Mbps).

The majority of NBN construction and planning so far has been in non-metropolitan areas. Fibre will be built in regional areas as a priority and NBN Co has brought forward the introduction of wireless and satellite services to serve regional Australia.

The NBN will ensure that every community in regional Australia gets fair access to fast, affordable and reliable broadband, creating a platform to deliver economic benefits to rural and regional Australia.

Figure 2: Progress on the delivery of the NBN in non-metro premises throughout Australia

Progress	Number of premises
New developments under construction	19,762
New developments construction completed	14,335
Brownfields under construction	522,700
Brownfields construction completed	54,257
Total	611,054

Digital Switchover

The switchover to digital television has already occurred in the regional switchover areas of Mildura/Sunraysia, South Australia and Broken Hill, Victoria, Queensland switchover areas, southern and central New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and regional northern New South Wales. Switchover has also occurred in Tasmania and the metropolitan areas of Adelaide and Perth. Switchover in all parts of Australia will be completed by the end of 2013. To date over 8 million out of a total 8.7 million households are watching digital television, including all regional and most of 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 households 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 Indigenous Broadcasting Program is aimed at assisting the operations of Indigenous broadcasters and building a sustainable Indigenous broadcasting sector. Support is provided to 23 regional and remote radio stations, seven RIMOS and 91 RIBS situated in regional and remote communities. The program also supports the operations of Imparja Television, Indigenous Community Television and helps provide training and underwrite content production. A funding round for the program

has been conducted each year since 1987, with applications assessed against published program guidelines and assessment criteria.

Digital Local Government

The \$17.1 million Digital Local Government Program provides funding to local governments in communities that are among the first to benefit from the NBN to improve their online services, particularly to homes and businesses.

Seventeen of the funded councils provide local government services to regional Australians. A total of \$6.0 million is currently allocated to councils representing regional Australians. Additional regional councils are likely to be selected under the next round of the program, which is a competitive process.

Councils that have received funding are now implementing their projects and are progressively making their new NBN enabled services available to their residents. These projects fall into four main service types:

- live customer support which people can access from their home or business using videoconferencing;
- live community consultation and engagement services which people can access from their home or business using videoconferencing;
- planning and development application services which enables people to lodge and track applications online; and
- an emergency management system which enables emergency service personnel to communicate and share data in real time using videoconferencing.

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 videoconferencing;
- 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 Hubs Program

The Digital Hubs program assists local communities, including regional communities, to gain the skills needed to maximise the benefits provided by the NBN. The Australian Government is providing \$13.6 million in grant funding over four years from 2011-12 to establish Digital Hubs in 40 communities that benefit from the NBN where work on the rollout has already commenced.

Digital Hubs provide local residents with free digital literacy training and the opportunity to experience NBN-enabled applications and technology. Training

provided at Digital Hubs includes basic computer operations, performing everyday online activities, online safety and security, connectivity options to the internet and benefits of the NBN to households. This program is designed to contribute towards the Digital Economy goal that by 2020 Australia will rank in the top five nations in the OECD in the percentage of households that connect to broadband at home. Over 17,300 participants across Australia have attended digital literacy training provided by Digital Hubs since the commencement of the program. It is anticipated that up to 124,500 participants will benefit from the Digital Hubs program by its conclusion.

Over the life of the program a total of \$7.8 million is being made available to establish Digital Hubs in 23 regional areas.

Digital Enterprise Program

The Digital Enterprise program assists small-to-medium enterprises and not-for-profit organisations to maximise the online opportunities enabled by the NBN. The Australian Government is providing \$10 million in grant funding over four years from 2011-12 to establish Digital Enterprise services in 49 communities that benefit from the NBN where work on the rollout has already commenced. Up to 70 communities will benefit from Digital Enterprise services following the \$7.2 million extension of the program from 2013-14.

Services offered by Digital Enterprise providers assist small-to-medium enterprises and not-for-profit organisations to better understand how to use online opportunities to drive productivity improvements, expand their customer bases and enable jobs growth. The program was established to contribute to the government's vision for Australia as a leading global digital economy by 2020. Over 4,900 small and medium enterprise and not-for-profit participants have benefitted from Digital Enterprise services since the commencement of the program. It is anticipated that up to 49,000 participants will benefit from the Digital Enterprise services following the extension of the program.

Currently, \$4.6 million is being made available to establish Digital Enterprise services in 27 regional areas. A portion of the \$7.2 million extension of the program from 2013-14 will include up to another eight regional areas.

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 2013-14, up to 545 phones in remote Indigenous communities will be monitored and maintained. Sixty-three satellite mobile phones have also been provided to eligible remote Indigenous communities.

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. Since commencement of the program in July 2009, more than 4000 Indigenous Australians in remote communities have received basic internet and computer training.

Satellite Phone Subsidy Scheme

The Satellite Phone Subsidy Scheme continues to improve 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.

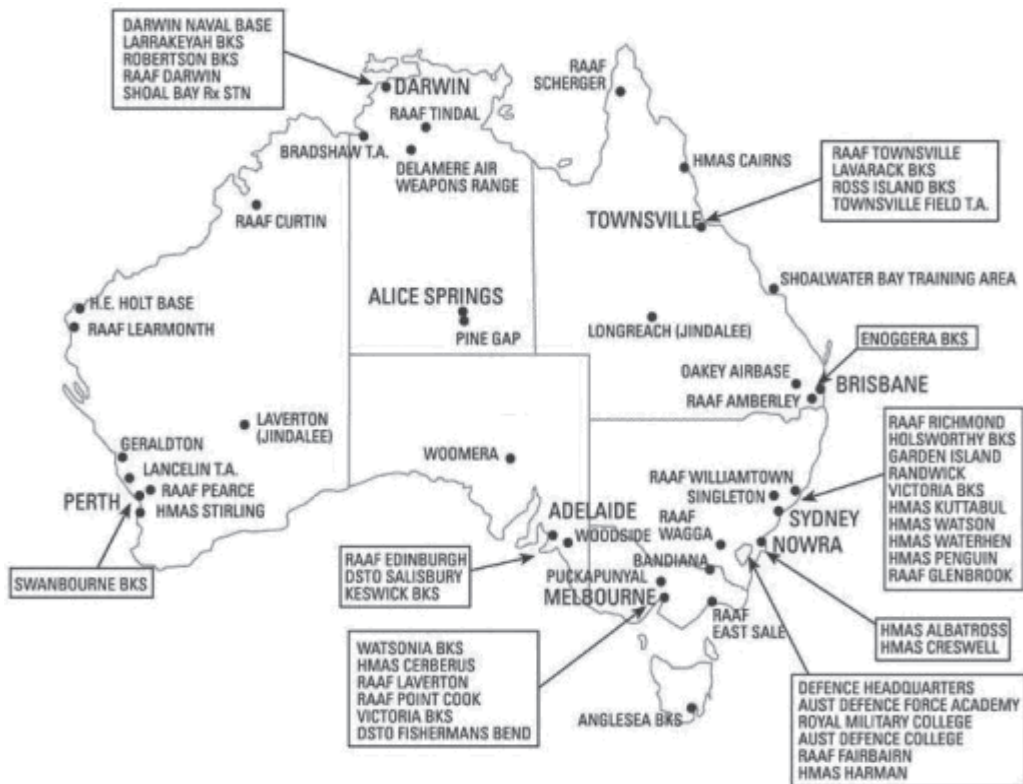
Those eligible to apply include individuals, small businesses, community groups, not-for-profit organisations, Indigenous corporations, emergency service organisations, health organisations and educational institutions.

Since the Scheme's inception in June 2002, approximately 25,000 subsidies have been provided. The scheme is being extend for another year until 30 June 2014.

DEFENCE

The Department of Defence and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) make a significant contribution to the development of regional Australia through defence facilities, operations and activities, 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. The Figure below depicts the location of major Defence facilities across Australia.

Figure 3: 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. Construction is scheduled to commence in late 2013, with completion expected in mid 2016.
- RAAF Base East Sale Redevelopment – This project will replace ageing facilities and infrastructure and upgrade major engineering services to support operational, training and enabling functions. Construction commenced in early 2013, with completion expected in late 2015.
- 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 commenced in early 2012, with completion expected 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 Australian 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), by bushfires in Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania and by storms in Townsville (Queensland). Tasks performed by the ADF included aero medical and land evacuation of residents, search and recovery operations, reinforcement of levees, supply of fuel and other support, airlift of heavy equipment and supplies airlift and land movement of emergency supplies, clearance of debris and filling sandbags.

Defence Community Organisation Program

Defence, through the Defence Community Organisation (DCO), 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, the 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. In 2013-14 significant upgrades and replacement of Defence-owned housing at Larrakeyah Barracks and RAAF Base Tindal in Darwin will continue.

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 plays a key role maintaining and supporting the ADF's equipment. An extensive maintenance capability exists in regional Australia. 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 at Darwin and Rockingham for naval vessels.

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 improving the skills in Australian industry, encouraging 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. To ensure the best possible support to the ADF the DMO will continue to support defence industry through targeted industry programs.

The Defence 2013 White Paper and the 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 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 on enhanced cooperation activities in Australia.

The final report of the review was released by the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence on 3 May 2012, and the review's findings were an important input to the 2013 Defence White Paper. Defence has begun implementing recommendations in accordance with the Review's implementation strategy outlined in the 2013 Defence White Paper (released on 3 May 2013). In the context of facilities, the 2013 White Paper emphasised the Australian Government's commitment to: enhancing and increasing visibility of the Australian Defence Force's presence in the north and north-west of Australia; improving stakeholder engagement and communication with regard to regional defence activity; and enhancements to increase the capacity of particular facilities, bases and airfields to support operations in the north and north-west and to support the operation of new major capabilities entering service in coming years.

The vast majority of the review's recommendations will be implemented, with the exception at this time of an additional east coast fleet base and major ADF coastal training area. No decisions have been made in relation to the future of particular ADF bases and facilities; the 2013 White Paper stated the Australian Government's commitment to a consolidated and more strategically aligned defence estate over time, with individual proposals to be brought forward for Australian Government consideration, involving full consultation with stakeholders. Defence will continue to remediate its ageing estate, prioritising works based on safety of personnel and support to ADF capability.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

Through the development and implementation of its policies and programs, the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio advances the Australian Government's productivity and inclusive agendas and supports the Australian Government's efforts to improve and enhance the economic and social wellbeing of all Australians.

A number of portfolio programs specifically target regional, rural and remote Australia, while those with a national focus also provide considerable support to regional Australia.

The portfolio focuses on ensuring all Australians have access to early childhood care and development, quality early childhood and school education, increased employment and participation, safe, fair and productive workplaces and an inclusive society. There is also a continual focus on meeting the targets for closing the gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage.

SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 4: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
EEWR Transfer/Subsidy Payments					
Program 1.1 Support for the Child Care System					
Sub-program Jobs Education and Training (JET) Child Care Fee Assistance					
	Regional	18	24	30	31
	Non-regional	65	86	106	109
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.2 Child Care Fee Assistance					
Sub-program: Child Care Benefit					
	Regional	738	760	782	805
	Non-regional	1,898	1,953	2,010	2,070
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: Child Care Rebate					
	Regional	507	559	605	652
	Non-regional	1,906	2,101	2,276	2,454
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 2.12 Student Assistance					
Sub-program: ABSTUDY - Secondary					
	Regional	93	96	98	98
	Non-regional	42	43	44	44
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: ABSTUDY - Tertiary					
	Regional	44	46	47	48
	Non-regional	43	45	45	46
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Sub-program: Assistance to Isolated Children					
	Regional	65	66	68	69
	Non-regional	6	6	6	6
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
Program 3.1 Employment Services					
Sub-program: Job Services Australia					
	Regional	414	407	417	403
	Non-regional	617	606	620	600
	Non-specific	316	310	317	307
Program 3.2 Indigenous Employment					
	Regional	69	70	71	72
	Non-regional	75	76	77	78
	Non-specific	11	11	11	11

Table 4: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate
		2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m	2015-16 \$m	2016-17 \$m
Program 3.3 Disability Employment Services					
Sub-program: Disability Employment Services					
	Regional	229	243	256	258
	Non-regional	447	473	500	503
	Non-specific	65	68	72	73
Program 3.4 Remote Jobs and Communities Program					
Sub-program: Remote Participation and Employment Services					
	Regional	207	193	240	239
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 3.5 Working Age Payments					
Sub-program: Mobility Allowance					
	Regional	51	52	53	53
	Non-regional	99	100	102	102
	Non-specific	0	0	0	0
Sub-program: Parenting Payment Single					
	Regional	1,670	1,685	1,748	1,796
	Non-regional	2,568	2,591	2,688	2,761
	Non-specific	8	8	8	9
Sub-program: Parenting Payment Partnered					
	Regional	348	352	365	368
	Non-regional	630	638	660	665
	Non-specific	3	3	3	3
Sub-program: Pensioner Education Supplement					
	Regional	29	30	28	27
	Non-regional	51	53	50	48
	Non-specific	0	0	0	0
Sub-program: Widow Allowance					
	Regional	111	100	93	80
	Non-regional	239	215	200	172
	Non-specific	2	2	2	1
Sub-program: Partner Allowance Pension					
	Regional	28	5	-	-
	Non-regional	40	7	-	-
	Non-specific	0	0	-	-
Sub-program: Newstart Allowance					
	Regional	3,087	3,443	3,183	3,216
	Non-regional	5,279	5,888	5,445	5,500
	Non-specific	19	22	20	20
Sub-program: Sickness Allowance					
	Regional	36	37	38	39
	Non-regional	63	64	66	68
	Non-specific	0	0	0	0

Table 4: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
Sub-program: Youth Allowance - Other					
	Regional	469	488	476	449
	Non-regional	602	626	611	576
	Non-specific	3	3	3	3
Comcare - includes workers compensation payments					
	Regional	25	26	26	26
	Non-regional	41	42	42	41
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total Transfer/Subsidy Payments					
	Regional	8,240	8,681	8,623	8,728
	Non-regional	14,710	15,613	15,547	15,843
	Non-specific	429	429	439	430
EEWR Reportable Grants Programs					
Program 1.1 Support for the Child Care System					
Sub-program: Child Care Services Support					
	Regional	139	150	146	149
	Non-regional	132	142	139	142
	Non-specific	73	78	76	78
Program 2.2 Non Government Schools National Support					
	Regional	74	61	56	65
	Non-regional	35	29	26	30
	Non-specific	13	10	10	11
Program 2.3 Schools Support					
	Regional	76	51	49	45
	Non-regional	36	24	23	21
	Non-specific	97	64	62	57
Program 2.11 Youth Support					
	Regional	38	21	1	1
	Non-regional	5	3	0	0
	Non-specific	84	45	3	3
Total Reportable Grants Programs					
	Regional	328	282	252	261
	Non-regional	208	197	188	194
	Non-specific	266	198	150	149
Portfolio Grand Total					
	Regional	8,568	8,963	8,875	8,989
	Non-regional	14,918	15,810	15,735	16,037
	Non-specific	695	627	589	579

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 2013-14 Budget and forward estimates years based on the location of 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 2013. 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 2013-14 to 2016-17 as set out in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

NEW INITIATIVES

Early Years Quality Fund

The Australian Government is supporting early childhood services by establishing a \$300.0 million Early Years Quality Fund (the Fund) to attract and retain qualified professionals.

Funding will be provided to eligible services over the next two years, 2013-14 to 2014-15, to improve quality outcomes for children by supplementing wage for qualified educators. All Child Care Benefit approved long day care centres will be able to apply for funding. The number of services that will be assisted under the Fund will be dependent on the size and the number of qualified educators services have employed.

The Australian Government is establishing an Early Years Quality Fund Advisory Board to assist with the implementation of the Fund. It is also establishing a Pay Equity Unit to assist the Fair Work Commission with research collection and specialist pay equity information. The total financial commitment including departmental expenses for the Fund, the Advisory Board and the Pay Equity Unit will be \$314.2 million over two years.

National Plan for School Improvement

During 2013-14 the overarching policy framework for the Australian Government's schooling agenda will transition from reforms delivered under the National Education Agreement (NEA) and National Partnerships to a new National Plan for School Improvement (the National Plan).

The National Plan will deliver the Australian Government's response to the independent Review of Funding for Schooling (the Review), led by Mr David Gonski AC. The National Plan will provide funding to every Australian school based on the needs of their students irrespective of whether the school is in the government, Catholic or independent sector.

Consistent with the central recommendation of the Review, from 2014, Commonwealth funding for all schools will be based on a new Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), comprising a base amount for every primary and secondary school student and loadings for school and student need.

School-based loadings will be provided to reflect school size and location. Student loadings will be provided for low socio-economic and Indigenous students and students with limited English skills. A loading for students with disability will be introduced when more accurate data is available from 2015, with interim arrangements in place for 2014. In the meantime, the Australian Government will extend current funding for students with disability to continue the More Support for Students with Disability National Partnership in 2014.

Through the National Plan, the Australian Government, in partnership with States and Territories and the non-government school sector, will also deliver education reforms in five core areas that evidence shows will lead to better outcomes:

- Quality teaching
- Quality learning
- Empowered school leadership
- Meeting student need
- Greater transparency and accountability.

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

The Improving School Enrolment and Attendance through Welfare Reform Measure (SEAM) supports parents and carers with the aim of keeping their children enrolled in and attending school regularly. As part of the extension of the Cape York Welfare Reform measures in Queensland, a new model of SEAM will be rolled out in four Cape York Welfare Reform communities. The extension of the Cape York Welfare Reforms is over two years commencing on 1 January 2014 and ending on 31 December 2015.

Australian Indigenous Education Foundation

An additional \$10.0 million will be provided to the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation in 2012-13 to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote, regional, and metropolitan areas to access scholarships to complete Year 12.

Indigenous Youth Leadership Program

An additional \$12.0 million over the period 2013-14 to 2016-17 will be provided to the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from mainly very remote and remote areas to complete Year 12 and/or an undergraduate degree while developing leadership skills.

Youth Attainment and Transition

New Funding has been provided to extend the Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers programs for 12 months. Over two thirds of this funding will be directed to regional areas 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 well-being through the Youth Connections program; and
- harness resources and build local infrastructure to support communities to share responsibility for young people's learning and development through the Partnership Brokers program.

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

The Australian Government is providing \$15.7 million in the 2013-14 financial year for 20 Local Employment Coordinators, 10 Jobs and Skills Expos and a \$4.0 million Flexible Funding Pool to support activities in 20 of Australia's most vulnerable regions until 30 June 2014.

Local Employment Coordinators will continue to drive local solutions to local labour market problems, by working closely with employers, employment service providers, training organisations, local communities and all levels of government. Ten Jobs and Skills Expos will also be held, building on the success of the Jobs and Skills Expos over the last four years, where tens of thousands of job seekers have been connected to employment and training opportunities as result of attending an Expo.

Labour Mobility and Relocation Assistance for Job Seekers

The Australian Government has committed \$3.5 million for a 12 month program that will connect up to 600 job seekers and workers impacted by structural change in the economy with employment opportunities in growth industries and regional areas that have labour and skills shortages. Up to \$6,500 will be available to assist eligible job seekers with dependents if they relocate to take up an ongoing employment opportunity or an apprenticeship. Other eligible job seekers will receive up to \$4,500 in assistance. These rates apply regardless of where an eligible job seeker relocated to or from. The program will run from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

Extend Pensioner Education Supplement to Principal Carer Parents on Newstart Allowance

The Australian Government will provide \$39.7 million over four years from 2013-14 to extend eligibility for the Pensioner Education Supplement to single Principal Carer Parents who are in receipt of Newstart Allowance.

This measure is part of a range of new and existing measures by the Australian Government to help overcome unemployment in single parent families, including those in regional areas, and will commence on 1 January 2014.

Extend Pensioner Concession Card Eligibility for Single Parents

The Australian Government will provide \$2.2 million over four years from 2013-14 to extend eligibility for the Pensioner Concession Card for 12 weeks for single parents who are no longer qualified for the Parenting Payment Single because their youngest child has turned 8 years of age and who do not qualify for another income support payment due to earnings from employment.

By providing a period of transition by extending the eligibility for the Pensioner Concession Cards, this measure will provide better support single parents, including Australians in regional areas, as they transition off income support and into the workforce. The measure will commence on 1 January 2014.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Child Care Services Support Program

The Child Care Services Support Program (CCSSP) is funded by the Australian Government to support and promote access to quality early learning and child care for children, families and communities. The CCSSP includes the Community Support Program (CSP) which provides a range of payments directly to child care service providers with the aim of improving access to child care, especially in areas where the market or services might otherwise be unviable, such as in regional, remote locations and areas of disadvantage.

In recognition of the possible higher costs associated with service delivery outside major cities, services in regional and remote locations are eligible for greater support through a higher payment rate than those in major cities.

The CSP comprises three sub-programs:

- Mainstream Establishment sub-program – support payments designed to help operators meet the costs associated with establishing a new mainstream child care service;
- Mainstream Sustainability sub-program – support payments to help operators maintain the delivery of mainstream child care services in circumstances where it may be otherwise not viable; and

- Non-mainstream sub-program—support payments for non-mainstream services through Budget Based Funding.

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

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance assists parents on eligible income support payments, predominantly sole parents (including those in rural and remote areas), to enhance their skills by undertaking 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.

The Australian Government is providing an additional \$468.0 million over the 2013-14 to 2016-17 financial years to help more parents receive the training and skills they need to enter or return to the workforce.

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

Ongoing support has been provided for nine crèches in very remote Indigenous communities through a \$30.2 million allocation over ten years, 2012 to 2022. 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 size would not support a larger service model, for example, a long day care centre. The crèches provide an opportunity for Indigenous children in the relevant communities to access early childhood education and care.

Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters

The Australian Government committed \$55.7 million from the 2012-13 Budget to continue the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) in the existing 50 locations and expand the program to an additional 50 locations (of which 22 are outside capital cities) with an emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This commitment will target around 4,000 additional children (aged four years). The 50 existing locations will continue program delivery from 2013. Under a phased implementation, 25 new locations will commence in 2014 with the remaining 25 new locations commencing in 2015.

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.

Early Childhood Education and Care – Workforce Initiatives

The Australian Government has a number of initiatives in place that are designed to assist early childhood educators to obtain qualifications. These include:

Removal of TAFE Fees

This initiative aims to increase the supply of qualified early childhood educators by supporting over 12,000 people per year, including existing early childhood educators, to gain a vocational education and training qualification in early childhood. The funding is used to remove regulated course fees for Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas in Children's Services, delivered by a TAFE institute or other government training provider. Funding for this initiative is estimated at \$95.0 million over the period 2008-09 to 2014-15.

HECS-HELP Benefits

The Australian Government has provided funding to reduce by about half the HELP debt of early childhood teachers who work in regional and remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and areas of high disadvantage based on postcode location. A funding commitment of \$12.4 million was announced in the 2008-09 Budget. The initiative is demand driven and ongoing.

The Australian Government has also allocated funding to reduce the HELP debt repayments of education graduates including early childhood education teaching graduates. Early childhood teachers working in areas of high need may be eligible for both benefits. This would give a maximum benefit of around \$16,000 over five years.

Recognition of Prior Learning

The Australian Government has committed \$9.2 million over four years (2011-12 to 2014-15) for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) initiative to provide additional assistance to existing early childhood educators in regional and remote locations who wish to obtain or upgrade their qualification through an RPL assessment process.

In 2012-13 the Australian Government announced an increase in the funding for RPL assessment grants from \$1,125 to up to \$3,500 for eligible early childhood educators in regional and remote locations, as a contribution to the costs associated with undertaking an RPL assessment for Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Children's Services.

Budget Based Funded 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 is targeted at improving the existing infrastructure of centre-based BBF services, increasing the qualifications of staff in all such child care services and improving their governance and administrative capacity. Ongoing funding for repairs and maintenance of infrastructure as well as the increased costs for qualified staff is also being 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.

National Quality Framework Implementation

The National Quality Framework (NQF) commenced on 1 January 2012 and is working to lift the quality of early childhood education and care to give all Australian children the best start in life. Many requirements of the NQF have been successfully implemented, including:

- the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority has formally commenced operations;
- a new ratings system so parents can better understand the quality of care on offer and can make informed choices;
- a national educator to child ratio of 1:4 for children aged birth to 24 months so that each child gets the individual time and attention they need; and
- the phasing in of improved educator qualifications so educators are better able to lead activities that inspire children and help them learn and develop.

The NQF is working to reduce the regulatory burden so services only have to deal with one regulator. In the 2010-11 Budget, the Australian Government allocated \$273.7 million over four years to deliver the NQF. This included funding to support jurisdictions' transitional and ongoing costs and funding for the establishment of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NP ECE), the Australian Government has allocated \$955.0 million to States and Territories over five years to June 2013 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 full-time schooling.

Bilateral agreements between the Australian 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.

On 19 April 2013, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to a new National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NPA ECE). The new NPA ECE will contribute \$655.6 million in Commonwealth funding over 18 months and will ensure uninterrupted service delivery in 2013 and 2014, consistent with all governments' ongoing commitment to Universal Access to early childhood education, including for vulnerable, disadvantaged and Indigenous children.

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. State and Territory governments are leading the establishment of the centres, which 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.

Twelve Children and Family Centres have now been completed (West Belconnen, Whittlesea, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Bridgewater, Pukatja, Mornington Island, Doomadgee, Palm Island, Mareeba, Logan and Christies Beach/Noarlunga) and nine of these are operating from their permanent premises. Palm Island, Logan and Christies Beach/Noarlunga are transitioning to their permanent location so services are still being provided from an alternate location. A further 21 are delivering services from interim sites while their permanent premises are being constructed.

Government Schools National Support

Up to 31 December 2013 payments for government schools will be delivered under the funding framework associated with the National Education Agreement through the National Schools Specific Purpose Payments to state and territory governments.

From 1 January 2014 it is anticipated that funding for government schools will be appropriated through the Australian Education Act to support government schools to meet the policy and reform objectives of the National Education Reform Agreement (NERA).

Non-government Schools National Support

The Australian Government is the primary source of public funding for non-government schools. Under the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*, which is expected to be operating until the end of 2013, the Australian 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.

During 2013-14, the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* will be replaced by the *Australian Education Act*. The *Australian Education Act*, which will come into effect from 1 January 2014, will provide the legislative framework underpinning the National Plan for School Improvement (the National Plan). The Australian Government will continue to support a limited number of programs at a national level, including programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, to complement schools education delivered by States, Territories and non-government sectors.

The *Schools Assistance Act 2008*, provides for:

- recurrent funding for non-government schools (including Indigenous supplementary assistance);
- capital funding for non-government schools;
- indexation arrangements; and
- specific targeted funding for:
 - Country Areas Program
 - English as a Second Language – New Arrivals Program
 - Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Program
 - School Languages Program
 - Short Term Emergency Assistance.

From 1 January 2014, it is expected that funding (shared between the Australian Government and States and Territories) for all schools (both government and non-government) will be based on a new Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), comprising a base amount for every primary and secondary school student and loadings for school and student need, including school size and location.

The policy objectives and associated funding for some targeted programs provided under the *Schools Assistance Act 2008* will be incorporated into the new school funding and education reform arrangements.

Youth Attainment and Transitions

The Youth Attainment and Transitions programs provide 67.6 per cent of its annual funding (GST exclusive) to non-major city regions through:

- the Youth Connections Program 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 well-being;
- the School Business Community Partnership Broker program to harness resources and build local infrastructure to support communities to share responsibility for young people's learning and development; and
- funding for Career Development initiatives as administered by the Australian Government which include the Job Guide and My Future Website.

Additional Commonwealth Support for school students in regions

Improving Literacy and Numeracy

The National Partnership for Improving Literacy and Numeracy aims to improve the outcomes of students who are falling behind in literacy and numeracy, including

students from disadvantaged background and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in many participating regional schools across Australia in 2013.

From January 2014, funding will be redirected to the National Plan for School Improvement.

National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program – Disaster Relief

As part of its response to the 2012 flood and bushfire disasters in Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria, the Australian Government is providing additional funding for Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Worker support services to assist in recovery programs in disaster affected schools and communities. Grants are being provided to 77 schools – 50 in Queensland, 19 in New South Wales, and eight in Tasmania - all of which are located in regional communities. Work is continuing to identify affected schools in Victoria.

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement

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. It includes funding for education initiatives to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 Australian Government will continue to support an extra 200 teachers and engagement officers in remote Northern Territory schools

Quality Teaching

The Australian Government is also providing better support for those teachers so they are ready to teach in remote communities and is continuing funding to build career paths and improve qualifications so local people can become teachers and educational workers in their communities.

Teacher Housing

The Australian Government is providing funding for up to 103 houses for teachers and engagement officers in remote communities to assist sustain the retention of the remote education workforce in hard to staff locations.

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.

Teach Remote

The Teach Remote program is aimed at building a high status, high quality, committed and competent teaching workforce in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.

School Enrolment and Attendance Measure

A new model of SEAM, applying to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parents, is being introduced in four phases over two years and will operate in the Northern Territory until June 2022. Over this period, it will be rolled out to 23 communities in the Northern Territory.

Sporting Chance Program

The Sporting Chance Program uses sport and recreation as a vehicle to increase the level of engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their schooling. Projects are being delivered across Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales with 87 per cent of projects in regional and remote locations.

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme

The Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme helps isolated families of primary, secondary and certain tertiary students with additional support to access schooling because they are unable to attend an appropriate government school on a daily basis primarily due to geographical isolation.

National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program

This measure provides funding to extend and expand the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program from 2012 to 2014 to support school communities that wish to access the services of a school chaplain or secular pastoral care worker. There is a focus on disadvantaged regional and remote schools in the expansion of the program with 52 per cent of funding being directed to regional and remote schools.

More Support for Students with Disabilities

This initiative provides education authorities with the flexibility to implement a range of activities that 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.

Smarter Schools National Partnerships

Funding to the States and Territories under the three Smarter Schools National Partnerships is provided to address key areas of disadvantage, raising literacy and numeracy outcomes and improving teacher quality.

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.

National Broadband Network Enabled Education and Skills Services Program

The National Broadband Network (NBN) Enabled Education and Skills Services program is supporting innovative projects that encourage the development of education, training and skills which take advantage of the high-speed broadband connectivity available through the National Broadband Network.

The program is focused on projects conducting trials within, connecting to, or between NBN early release sites, including both regional and metropolitan areas. Program funding is targeted at communities to first benefit from the NBN, impacting education and skills development in regional and remote areas.

Heywire

Heywire is an annual competition designed to encourage young people aged 16 to 22 living in rural or regional Australia to submit short stories about life outside the major cities. Each year the winning stories are published throughout the ABC's platforms and winners are flown to Canberra to develop leadership and policy development skills at the annual Regional Youth Summit.

As the program is specifically targeted at young people from rural and regional areas, it provides a valuable opportunity for government to engage with this key demographic. The program also provides young people from rural and regional areas with a platform to share their unique stories, and for the winners, an opportunity to develop a range of skills at the Regional Youth Summit.

Transition to Independent Living Allowance

The Transition to Independent Living Allowance provides a one-off allowance for young people aged 15 to 25 years who are about to, or have exited, formal state-based care and/or informal care such as juvenile justice, out-of-home care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship care arrangements and who are at risk of not making a successful transition to independent living.

Indigenous Youth Mobility Program

The Indigenous Youth Mobility Program supports young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 16-24 years, primarily from remote areas, who need to move away from home to gain the qualifications they need to have a greater chance of obtaining sustainable employment.

Indigenous Youth Leadership Program

The Indigenous Youth Leadership Program provides secondary and tertiary scholarships to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from mainly very remote and remote areas to complete Year 12 and/or an undergraduate degree while developing leadership skills.

Teach Next

The Teach Next program has established an employment-based pathway into teaching for skilled and experienced professionals who are seeking a career change into the profession.

Teach for Australia

The Teach for Australia program was established to introduce employment-based pathways into the profession and attract high-calibre graduates who may otherwise not have considered a career in teaching. On completion of their two year placement, participants are awarded a Postgraduate Diploma of Teaching. Teach for Australia is now funded for a fifth cohort.

Trade Training Centres in Schools Program

The Trade Training Centres in Schools Program aims to help secondary students access training opportunities and to help address skill shortages in traditional trades and other eligible occupations.

More than 60 per cent (over 670) of schools receiving funding 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.

Community Youth Centres

The Australian Government is committed to helping young Australians to participate in employment and training and play an active role in their communities, especially in regional Australia. To assist with this, the Australian Government established two programs: the Arts, Business and Community Centres for Young Australians Initiative under the Jobs Fund and Economic Stimulus Package; and the Community Infrastructure Grants - Youth Commitments program which was established to facilitate 2010 election commitments.

Through these initiatives the Australian Government has provided approximately \$19 million which has been invested in the construction and upgrade of community infrastructure, for ten youth focussed centres. Each centre is located in an Australian Government Priority Employment Area and has been specifically designed in response to the needs of young people in the area.

The aim of both programs is to improve education, skills, employment and engagement opportunities for young people in areas associated with higher than average youth unemployment levels.

Grants were available to fund infrastructure through the development of new centres and the refurbishment of existing premises in communities facing heightened levels of disadvantage.

During the design and construction phase, the centres provide young people with design experience, training and jobs. Once completed the Centres provide a safe and supportive place for young people to make important connections through a variety of services such as:

- Counselling, mentoring, health and medical outreach services;
- Creative arts, music workshops and Indigenous culture;
- Linking to education and skills training and employment opportunities; and
- Assistance for young people disconnected from education and family.

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 connections; attendance; literacy and numeracy; leadership, quality teaching and workforce development; and pathways to real post-school options.

Under the Action Plan, around 950 Focus Schools have been nominated. Focus Schools have high populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and are likely to be underperforming in national testing. Focus Schools were included in the Action Plan to provide a barometer of the impact of actions by schools and education authorities under the plan to make a positive difference in the outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Around 65 per cent of Focus Schools are located in provincial, remote, or very remote locations and include enrolments of around 45,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Focus School Next Steps Initiative

As part of its commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan, the Government is supporting 102 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.

Building Australia's Future Workforce – Indigenous Ranger Cadetship Pilot

To assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to complete school, this pilot program is providing culturally relevant training in a school setting linked to natural resource management, heritage-related activities and cultural studies. Students in regional and remote communities are 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.

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 59 Remote Areas where the Remote Jobs and Communities Program operates.

Parental and Community Engagement Program

The Parental and Community Engagement Program assists families and communities to 'reach-in' to schools and other educational settings to engage in their children's education through participation in educational decision making, developing partnerships with education providers and supporting and reinforcing their children's

learning at home, with the aim of improving the educational outcomes of their children.

Indigenous Education Ambassadors Program

The Indigenous Education Ambassadors Program provides for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to act as role models to promote the importance of education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Remote Jobs and Communities Program

Over the five years from 1 July 2013, the Australian Government will invest \$1.5 billion through the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP), building on the strengths of existing services: Job Services Australia, Disability Employment Services, the Indigenous Employment Program and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).

There will be a single service provider with a permanent presence in each of 59 remote regions, giving job seekers, communities, employers and others a single, local point of contact for employment and participation services.

There will be a 'jobs-first' focus, which reflects the Australian Government's view that everyone who can work should work. Remote job seekers, including those on CDEP wages, will be given the personalised support they need to take up opportunities. Those who cannot get a job will participate in meaningful activities that will contribute to their communities as well as making them more work ready. More intensive assistance will be available to young people selected to participate in the Remote Youth Leadership and Development Corps.

Providers will also work with local communities to develop a Community Action Plan for their region to capture community priorities for longer term development, and engage with local businesses to develop Workforce Development Strategies identifying existing and potential jobs and other opportunities.

Funding of \$237.5 million over five years is being provided as a Community Development Fund (CDF). The fund will support social and economic participation in the 59 remote regions through a wide variety of activities and services that will support community development and social and economic participation for RJCP participants. The CDF will also help remote job seekers by creating employment opportunities and innovative approaches to recruiting, employing and retaining job seekers, particularly Indigenous people, women, young people and people with a disability.

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

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 Australian 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 service 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 \$20 million flexible funding pool to support their work and activities.

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

The Australian Government is providing funding of \$19.1 million over three years, to 30 June 2014, for 34 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators in regional communities across the country. These Coordinators, in consultation with community stakeholders, including Regional Development Australia Committees, have developed Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans that include strategies to improve participation and outcomes in education, training and employment in their region. Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators are implementing the strategies outlined in the Plans.

The Coordinators will ensure regions can access and gain maximum benefit from suitable Australian Government initiatives; and look for opportunities to solve local problems in education, skills and jobs development through better connections with 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 Local Employment Coordinators (where these align).

Income Support Bonus

Parents, students and jobseekers who live in regional Australia continue to benefit from more than \$1.1 billion the Australian Government committed in the 2012-13 Budget, for the next four years for the Income Support Bonus. This payment is designed to assist people who receive income support payments to better manage the cost of unexpected living expenses.

The Income Support Bonus commenced on 20 March 2013 and is paid to recipients of Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment Partnered, Parenting Payment Single, Sickness Allowance, Special Benefit, ABSTUDY Living Allowance, Austudy, Transitional Farm Family Payment and Exceptional Circumstances Payment.

Recipients receive a tax-free Income Support Bonus of \$210 for single people (paid in two instalments of \$105) and \$175 for a person who is a member of a couple (paid in two instalments of \$87.50). The Income Support Bonus is not means-tested.

The Income Support Bonus will be paid around late March and late September each year.

Improved income testing for single principal carer parents on Newstart

As announced in the Building Australia's Future Workforce package in the 2011-12 Budget, a new income test for single principal carer parents was introduced from 1 January 2013, changing the taper rate from 50 or 60 cents in the dollar to 40 cents in the dollar, and allowing them to earn around \$400 more per fortnight before they lose eligibility for Newstart Allowance. Single principal carer parents living in regional Australia will benefit from this measure.

Increase to the Liquid Assets Waiting Period threshold

This measure was announced in the 2012-13 Budget, to provide additional support for income support payment recipients to help them manage unanticipated financial pressures. From 1 July 2013, newly unemployed Australians and new students will be able to retain more of their savings while looking for a new job or studying as a result of the doubling of the Liquid Assets Waiting Period threshold from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for single people and from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for people who are partnered or have dependent children.

New claimants of Newstart Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Youth Allowance and Austudy in regional Australia who have modest savings will benefit from the change by not having a waiting period, or having a reduced waiting period, before receiving government assistance.

Indigenous Employment Program

The Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) offers funding for a range of activities focused on employment, training 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 people. 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.

Supply Nation (formerly Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council)

Supply Nation 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 Australian Government support, Supply Nation 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. Supply Nation certifies Indigenous businesses from across the country, including regional Australia.

Due to the initiative's success, the Australian Government is providing additional funding of up to \$7.5 million from 2012-13 over three years through the Indigenous Employment Program to support the ongoing work of Supply Nation.

Job Services Australia

Representing an investment of \$5.3 billion over four years to 2016-17, Job Services Australia provides flexible and tailored assistance 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 other 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 Australian 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 46 NEIS Panel Members nationally. These 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 40 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 commenced from 1 July 2012. The measure is piloting additional dedicated mentoring support for Indigenous job seekers in areas with significant Indigenous job seeker populations and high employer demand and is 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.

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

The Australian Government is investing \$47.3 million over four years to trial a new approach to supporting young parents. The Helping Young Parents measure 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 measure commenced on 1 January 2012 in ten identified Local Government Areas (LGAs) – 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 measure aims to ensure that parents 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. Parents aged 19 or under on Parenting Payment, with a child under six years of age and residing in one of the LGAs are eligible for the measure.

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

The Australian Government is investing \$71.0 million over four years to trial a new approach to supporting jobless families. The measure provides new services, opportunities and responsibilities to boost the job readiness, child wellbeing and functioning of families with young children in some of the most disadvantaged locations in the country.

The measure commenced on 1 July 2012 in 10 identified LGAs – 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 measure aims to increase the ability of parents to find work when their youngest child turns six by encouraging their participation in education and employment related activities and providing access to early childhood development opportunities for their children. Parents on Parenting Payment; with a child under six; who are not working or studying and reside in one of the LGAs are eligible for the measure.

Seasonal Worker Program

The \$21.7 million Seasonal Worker Program began on 1 July 2012. This initiative builds on the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme and aims to contribute to the economic development of participating countries.

The program is available in the horticulture sector and the Australian Government is also undertaking a small-scale, three-year trial with cotton and cane growers, aquaculture ventures and accommodation providers in the tourism industry in selected regions. 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.

Seasonal workers from Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are eligible to participate in the program.

The program is open to employers in the horticulture sector and eligible businesses in trial sectors that can demonstrate to the Australian Government they have an unmet seasonal demand for low-skilled labour. The program also aims to contribute to the development of participating countries through the gaining of skills by workers and the remittances workers send home to their families and communities.

This includes \$5.0 million over four years from 1 July 2012 for the Add-on Skills Training component of the Seasonal Worker Program.

The Add-on Skills Training component provides seasonal workers with the opportunity to receive training during their time in Australia. The type of training available to workers is dependent on whether or not they are undertaking their first placement in Australia under the Seasonal Worker Program, or are a returning worker.

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.

There are two separate programs within DES. These are, Disability Management Service (DMS) and Employment Support Service (ESS):

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

Employment Assistance and Other Services are targeted to support employers employ people with disability and are comprised of the Employer Incentives Scheme incorporation Wage Subsidy Scheme, Supported Wage System, Employment Assistance Fund and National Disability Recruitment Coordinator.

For four years, from the 2013-14 Budget, the Australian Government will invest more than \$3.2 billion in DES.

Protection for Unpaid Employee Entitlements

The Australian Government is committed to protecting unpaid employee entitlements for employees who lose their job as a result of the liquidation or bankruptcy of their employer. Protection is provided to employees in these circumstances under the Fair Entitlements Guarantee (FEG) if their employer went bankrupt or entered liquidation on or after 5 December 2012 or through the General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy Scheme (GEERS) where liquidation or bankruptcy occurred before this date. Under FEG or GEERS 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 2011-12, the Australian Government assisted 13,929 employees under GEERS and provided \$195.5 million in assistance.

Social Enterprise Development and Investment Funds

The Australian 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 Foresters Community Finance, Social Enterprise Finance Australia and Social Ventures Australia. They 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.

Through the SEDIF, the Australian Government is also seeking to stimulate the emerging impact investment market in Australia. SEDIF fund managers were required to match, at a minimum, the Australian Government's grant funding with private investment to create a total investment pool of more than \$40.0 million.

The SEDIF fund managers are committed to making loans and equity investments into social enterprises 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 of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs' (the Department) 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: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Program	Category	Budget	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate 2013-14	estimate 2014-15	estimate 2015-16	estimate 2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
1.1 - Family Support					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	69	114	116	112
	Non-regional	88	146	150	144
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
1.2 - Family Tax Benefit					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	4	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	7,093	7,189	7,261	7,344
	Non-regional	13,137	13,316	13,450	13,604
	Non-specific	34	34	34	35
1.3 - Parent and Baby Payments					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	3	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	709	677	704	735
	Non-regional	1,365	1,249	1,298	1,355
	Non-specific	3	3	3	4
2.1 - Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	12	11	11	11
	Non-regional	23	20	21	21
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

Table 5: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Program	Category	Budget	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
2.2 - Affordable Housing					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	17	19	22	28
	Non-regional	107	119	140	178
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.1 - Financial Management					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	64	60	41	37
	Non-regional	83	77	52	47
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.2 - Community Investment					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	27	29	31	33
	Non-regional	15	16	17	18
	Non-specific	2	2	2	2
3.3 - Income Support for Vulnerable People					
Special Appropriations	Regional	6	7	7	8
	Non-regional	71	77	83	89
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
3.4 - Support for People in Special Circumstances					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
Special Appropriations	Regional	2	2	3	3
	Non-regional	3	3	4	4
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
3.5 - Supplementary Payments and Support for Income Support Recipients					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	9	9	9	9
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	5	6	6	6
	Non-regional	10	10	10	11
	Non-specific	13	14	14	14
3.6 - Social and Community Services					
Special Account	Regional	53	73	93	114
	Non-regional	92	126	160	196
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
4.1 - Income Support for Seniors					
Special Appropriations	Regional	13,822	14,739	15,782	16,972
	Non-regional	24,265	25,876	27,706	29,795
	Non-specific	1,366	1,455	1,558	1,675

Table 5: 2013-14 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 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
4.2 - Allowances, Concessions and Services for Seniors					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	2	1	-	-
	Non-regional	2	1	-	-
	Non-specific	5	3	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	106	115	122	131
	Non-regional	187	201	215	230
	Non-specific	10	11	12	13
5.1 - Targeted Community Care					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	89	95	93	94
	Non-regional	123	131	128	129
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
5.2 - Income Support for People with Disability					
Special Appropriations	Regional	6,104	6,389	6,673	7,009
	Non-regional	9,294	9,728	10,161	10,671
	Non-specific	162	169	177	186
5.3 - Income Support For Carers					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	1	1	1	1
	Non-regional	2	2	2	2
	Non-specific	0	0	0	0
Special Appropriations	Regional	2,454	2,722	2,978	3,286
	Non-regional	4,412	4,896	5,361	5,914
	Non-specific	13	13	13	14
5.4 - Services and Support for People with Disability					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	102	97	98	99
	Non-regional	230	218	220	224
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
5.5 - Support for Carers					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	4	4	4	4
	Non-regional	8	8	8	8
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
5.6 - National Disability Insurance Scheme ¹					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	94	164	355	1,166
5.7 - Early Intervention Services for Children with Disability					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	18	17	17	17
	Non-regional	71	68	67	67
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

Table 5: 2013-14 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 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
6.1 - Gender Equality for Women					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	32	30	30	31
7.1 - Economic Development and Participation					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	80	89	90	84
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.2 - Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	76	36	34	23
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.3 - Native Title and Land Rights					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	78	79	80	82
	Non-regional	11	11	11	11
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.4 - Indigenous Capability and Development					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	27	26	25	24
	Non-regional	39	37	36	35
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Special Appropriations	Regional	1	1	1	1
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
7.5 - Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory					
Annual Appropriations	Regional	8	9	9	9
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
	Regional	31,029	32,605	34,302	36,266
	Non-regional	53,650	56,343	59,309	62,763
Total	Non-specific	1,735	1,900	2,201	3,140

Table 5: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Portfolio Bodies

Portfolio Body	Category	Budget estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Regional	3	3	3	3
	Non-regional	1	1	1	1
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Indigenous Business Australia	Regional	89	88	94	97
	Non-regional	48	49	50	51
	Non-specific	46	50	51	51
Indigenous Land Corporation	Regional	57	22	19	9
	Non-regional	18	18	19	19
	Non-specific	18	36	35	38
Torres Strait Regional Authority	Regional	56	56	54	51
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
	Regional	31,235	32,774	34,473	36,426
	Non-regional	53,717	56,411	59,379	62,834
Portfolio Grand Total	Non-specific	1,799	1,986	2,287	3,229

¹Funding for DisabilityCare Australia does not include contributions from States and Territories.

NEW INITIATIVES

DisabilityCare Australia – the national disability insurance scheme

The Australian Government will provide \$14.3 billion in additional funding over seven years from 2012-13 to roll out DisabilityCare Australia (the national disability insurance scheme) across the country by 1 July 2019. This includes the launch funding of \$2.4 billion up to 1 July 2019, new funding of \$1.9 billion for transition to the full scheme over the first five years, \$3.8 billion in 2017-18 and \$6.2 billion in 2018-19. This is the cost to the Commonwealth of all States and Territories accepting the funding offer based on the agreement reached with New South Wales on 6 December 2012.

The Australian Government will provide a total of \$19.3 billion to DisabilityCare Australia over seven years from 2012-13, inclusive of the redirection of existing disability funding.

DisabilityCare Australia will give people with significant and permanent disability the care and support they need over their lifetimes, and give them more choice and control over the supports they receive. DisabilityCare Australia will end the cruel lottery that

currently exists, where the care and support a person receives depends on where they live and how they acquired their disability.

DisabilityCare Australia will provide full coverage in New South Wales, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory by 1 July 2018 and in Victoria, Queensland, the Northern Territory and Tasmania from 1 July 2019. The Australian Government is committed to ongoing negotiations regarding full implementation of DisabilityCare Australia across the country. These agreements are based on a consistent funding and governance framework, with the Commonwealth contributing a majority of the costs of the scheme once it is fully rolled out.

Transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

The Australian Government, States and Territories have committed almost \$320.0 million for a transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) to continue vital services to tackle homelessness in 2013-14. It replaces the current five year NPAH, which ends on 30 June 2013. The transitional NPAH provides funding continuity to States and Territories to continue delivering homelessness services while all parties continue to work towards an integrated and holistic response to homelessness for beyond 2014.

Of around 180 services funded under the current five year NPAH, totalling \$1.1 billion, 63 are in regional areas and 18 are in remote areas. There are 69 state-wide initiatives which also provide services in regional and remote areas. Under the transitional NPAH, funding to service providers, including any future tender processes and continuation of existing services, remains the responsibility of the State and Territory governments.

Municipal and Essential Services Program – extension

A \$44.1 million investment from the Australian Government in 2013-14 will ensure that about 340 remote communities continue to receive municipal and essential services.

The funding, delivered under the Municipal and Essential Services Program, will supplement the efforts of State and Local Governments in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria to deliver basic services to remote communities.

Services include power, water, sewerage, garbage collection and road maintenance.

While the provision of municipal services is generally the responsibility of State and local governments, the Australian Government is making this additional investment in remote communities to ensure Indigenous families do not miss out.

This investment is in addition to the Australia Government's continued support for municipal and essential services in the Northern Territory as part of the Stronger Futures package.

Access to efficient and reliable essential services is critical to the Australian Government's commitment to Closing the Gap. Services such as reliable power and functioning water support healthy homes and underpin opportunities for economic development in remote communities.

Cape York Welfare Reform – Embedding and Building

The Australian Government is providing \$26.3 million to continue Cape York Welfare Reform measures in partnership with the Queensland Government, Cape York Regional organisations and the four Cape York Indigenous communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge.

These important reforms were trialled from 2008-2013. They include the Family Responsibilities Commission, the central plank of the reforms, where local Commissioners hold conferences with community members, refer people to support services and when necessary recommend income management assistance.

The Cape York Welfare Reform package will continue to address Indigenous disadvantage in Cape York including continuing to assist individuals, families and their communities to restore local indigenous authority and social norms, improve engagement with parents about their children's schooling, increase economic opportunity, help participants into the real economy, support small business and reduce welfare dependency. In addition, two new initiatives will be introduced to improve school attendance and to support disengaged youth.

The package aims to build on gains already made in those communities taking part in the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial.

National Congress of Australia's First Peoples – Extension

The Australian Government's continued support for the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples is further assisting Indigenous Australians in regional areas.

The Australian Government is providing the Congress with \$15.0 million over three years from 2014-15. This builds on the \$29.2 million provided for the establishment of the Congress, which includes funding for 2013-14. The Congress represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and contributes to government processes including engagement, policy development and the evaluation and review of program performance. It provides Indigenous Australians, including in regional areas, with a national voice and a focal point for engaging with government.

Aboriginal Hostels Limited – Capital Upgrades

The Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) provides Indigenous Australians with safe, comfortable, affordable and culturally appropriate accommodation across urban, regional and remote Australia. The Australian Government is providing AHL with \$6.2 million over two years to undertake capital upgrades to nine of its hostels in regional and remote Australia. Eight of the hostels are located in the Northern Territory, with the other located in Queensland.

AHL hostels enable Indigenous people to access a range of services such as education, health, legal advice, training and employment.

Income Management continuation and expansion in Western Australia

The Australian Government is providing \$11.8 million to continue income management in Western Australia in Perth and the Kimberley region for a further year.

Services are being expanded from 15 April 2013 to the Laverton and Ngaanyatjarraku Shires of Western Australia, including Kiwirrkurra. Expansion to these shires means that more vulnerable Australians will be assisted by income management.

Income management is part of the Australian Government's commitment to reforming the welfare system so that income support payments are spent in the best interests of children and families. The program ensures that money is available for life's essentials such as food, clothing and housing, and provides a tool to help people budget. Income management is designed to help people stabilise their lives, so they can care for their children, and join or return to the workforce.

Community Development Financial Institutions Pilot – extension

The Australian Government is providing \$3.0 million to continue the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) pilot for a further year until June 2014. Two of the four organisations funded under this program specifically focus on improving financial inclusion in remote and regional communities. Approximately 2,000 Australians are expected to directly benefit through the pilot initiative – around half of these in regional areas.

The CDFIs fill a gap for vulnerable Australians who are able to repay a loan but who cannot access finance from mainstream institutions because of low incomes or poor credit history. This measure will assist disadvantaged Australians by providing access to safe and affordable credit that reflects their means and their ability to repay.

Keeping Seniors Connected

The Australian Government is investing \$9.9 million over four years to improve senior Australians' skills and confidence in using computers and the internet.

From 1 July 2013, organisations hosting a Broadband for Seniors kiosk will be able to apply for new technology and a \$2,000 training grant. Through the kiosks, with more than half located in regional Australia, senior Australians will have free access to a new computer terminal with updated hardware and software, and to training that will educate seniors on issues of particular concern to them, such as cyber security and cyber safety. Improving confidence and skills in using of computers and the internet will prepare senior Australians to remain connected with family and friends and enjoy the benefits offered by the National Broadband Network. From July 2015, training grants will be available to community organisations to help educate senior Australians on the benefits of the internet.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

DisabilityCare Australia

The Australian Government will invest up to \$2.4 billion from 2012-13 to 1 July 2019 for the launch of DisabilityCare Australia in six locations across Australia. More than 26,000 people with disability, their families and carers, including around 4,800 from regional and remote areas, will benefit from the launch of the scheme.

DisabilityCare Australia will commence in Tasmania for young adults, South Australia for young children, the Barwon area of Victoria, and the Hunter in New South Wales from July 2013, and the Australian Capital Territory and the Barkly region of the Northern Territory from July 2014.

DisabilityCare Australia staff will work closely with local people, including families, carers and State, Territory and local governments to make sure the transition to the new arrangements is responsive to local needs.

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory

Stronger Futures is the Australian Government's \$3.4 billion commitment to work with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory to tackle the unacceptable levels of disadvantage too many people still experience. The package includes:

Tackling Alcohol Abuse

The Australian Government has committed \$75.6 million over 10 years to tackle alcohol abuse in the Northern Territory. The Tackling Alcohol Abuse measure is focused on reducing the devastating impact caused by alcohol-related harm and on improving community safety, particularly for vulnerable women and children. Assistance will be provided for communities that choose to develop and implement Alcohol Management Plans to support local strategies and activities to reduce alcohol-related harm in their communities. Further funding is also being provided to employ additional alcohol and other drug workers where they are needed most. These initiatives will give communities greater ownership over solutions to reducing alcohol-related harm.

Funding for Homelands and Outstations

The Australian Government is investing \$206.4 million over ten years to support the continued provision of basic municipal and essential services, including access to power, water, sewerage and road maintenance, to homelands and outstations in the Northern Territory.

A further \$4.4 million is being invested in the Utopia Homelands to fix homes and to implement energy efficiency and water management practices.

Food Security: Strengthening Remote Stores

The Australian Government is providing \$40.8 million over ten years to continue the licensing of stores in the Northern Territory. Stores are an important source of food, drink and groceries for remote Aboriginal communities. This investment will expand the scheme to include more stores and provide more support to help stores stay open to service local people.

In addition, the Aboriginal Benefits Account has allocated \$55.8 million to upgrade and construct new stores and store manager housing in 18 communities throughout the Northern Territory. Works commenced in 2012 and are expected to continue through to 2015.

Community Safety and Justice

The Australian Government is providing \$619.3 million over 10 years to improve community safety in the Northern Territory, including through:

More Police

The Australian Government funding will ensure the Northern Territory Government can continue to employ 60 full-time Northern Territory police officers in 18 remote communities, and build an additional four permanent remote area police complexes, in addition to the completion of the five complexes we have already funded.

The Australian Government will also support the continued operations of the successful Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks which have played a key part in disrupting commercial drug distribution networks from other States into Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

The Australian Federal Police will also continue to support the multi-agency Northern Territory Child Abuse Taskforce, and the Australian Crime Commission will continue its work with the National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Taskforce.

Night Patrols

In response to strong community support for night patrols, the Australian Government will continue to fund this important community safety measure across 81

communities. Night Patrols provide an important safety service as well as delivering important employment opportunities for more than 350 local Aboriginal people in remote communities.

Legal Support

The Australian Government is providing 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.

Remote Engagement and Coordination

The Australian Government is providing \$427.4 million over ten years to establish Remote Engagement Teams in the Northern Territory. These teams comprise around 32 Government Engagement Coordinators and up to 90 full and part-time Indigenous Engagement Officers. The teams will improve government engagement at the local level by working and living in communities. The number of communities with Indigenous Engagement Officers will increase from 30 to 54 by June 2014.

The funds will also continue support for the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service so local community members have equitable access to services.

Alice Springs Transformation Plan

The Australian Government has invested over \$150.0 million in the Alice Springs Transformation Plan since 2009. The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Northern Territory Government to improve the life outcomes for Aboriginal residents and visitors in Alice Springs, particularly in town camps.

Through the Stronger Futures package, an additional \$13.7 million is being provided to continue the funding of important family, community and intensive tenancy support projects that are part of the Alice Springs Transformation Plan. These projects:

- tackle the devastating effects of alcohol abuse;
- increase school enrolment and attendance rates for Indigenous children;
- improve the safety and wellbeing of women and children;
- strengthen parenting skills to help overcome child neglect; and
- support people with complex housing needs.

Improved Health Services

The Australian Government is investing \$713.5 million over ten years to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. Specific initiatives within this measure are outlined in more detail in the Health and Ageing section of this statement.

Remote Indigenous Housing

In addition to the \$1.7 billion investment over ten years (2008-2018) under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing in the Northern Territory, the 2012-13 Budget provided a further \$283.5 million for two crucial elements to build on this work, through Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory.

Within this commitment the Australian Government will invest an additional \$230.4 million in the Northern Territory to improve existing housing in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

A further \$53.1 million has been provided for Healthy Homes in the Northern Territory by providing funds to remove asbestos containing material, including in houses scheduled for demolition so that new housing can be built.

Child, Youth, Family and Community Wellbeing Package

The Australian Government is committing more than \$442.4 million over ten years to the Child, Youth, Family and Community Wellbeing package. This is also part of the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory initiative.

The package provides 15 new Communities for Children sites in remote communities. They will be implemented in three phases starting in 2013-14. The Northern Territory Government will be supported to expand the Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers program, and to continue two Mobile Child Protection Teams and the Women's Safe Houses at 16 existing sites. Intensive Family Support Services will continue to be funded and new services will be established in up to 15 additional communities. Eight playgroups will also continue to be funded.

This funding includes \$30.2 million to support nine crèches in very remote communities.

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory – Jobs Package

Aboriginal people in remote communities across the Northern Territory will have greater employment and economic opportunities under the jobs package, including through the following programs.

Working on Country Indigenous Rangers Program

The Australian Government is providing \$19.1 million to create 50 new Indigenous ranger positions in the Northern Territory under the Caring for our Country initiative. The program is on track to have these new jobs in place by June 2015. The program delivers environmental outcomes in the national interest and 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 is outlined in more detail in the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities section of this statement.

Local Jobs for Local People initiative

The Australian Government is also providing employment-based traineeships to assist up to 100 Aboriginal people fill service delivery related jobs in major remote townships in the Northern Territory. Beginning in July 2012, this initiative provides opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians to access job specific training and on-the-job experience to maximise their chance of securing a sustainable, ongoing position with an employer in their community.

The Australian Government is also working with the Northern Territory Government to guarantee jobs for Aboriginal students completing Year 12 in the larger communities.

Employment targets

Service providers delivering services funded under the Stronger Futures package will be expected to employ local Aboriginal people wherever possible. The Australian Government will be setting job targets to help ensure this happens.

Remote Jobs and Communities Program

The \$1.5 billion Remote Jobs and Communities Program starts on 1 July 2013 in 59 identified remote regions across Australia. Job seekers will receive personalised support from a single provider in each region and remote communities will have a strong say in how providers develop and deliver services.

This will provide a more streamlined and flexible employment and participation service, building on the strengths of the services that are transitioning into the new program: Job Services Australia, Disability Employment Services, Community Development Employment Projects and the Indigenous Employment Program.

Other measures

Australian Disability Enterprises

The Australian Government will provide over \$200 million in 2013-14 to the Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) to continue supporting more than 20,000 workers with disability across Australia.

ADEs are commercial enterprises that enable people with disability, who need substantial ongoing support to maintain their employment, to engage in a wide variety of work with the same working conditions as the general workforce. This funding will assist 312 outlets operated by 194 organisations. Fifty-six per cent, or 174 of these ADEs are in regional areas.

Helping Children with Autism and Better Start for Children with Disability

The Helping Children with Autism package and Better Start for Children with Disability initiative provide up to \$12,000 to children with eligible disabilities for intensive early intervention services. Under these programs, families living in outer-regional, rural and remote areas can apply for an additional \$2,000 to help meet some of the costs of accessing services. Each year around 1,050 children in regional areas receive this extra assistance under these programs.

Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund

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

National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) is providing \$5.5 billion over ten years from 2008-09 to reform the provision of housing and to address overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing condition and severe housing shortages in remote Indigenous communities. The NPARIH funds all States and the Northern Territory to construct 4,200 new houses by 2018, refurbish over 4,876 houses by 2014, and provide property and tenancy management services to remote Indigenous communities. Through NPARIH more than 1,600 new homes have been built and over 5,300 refurbishments or rebuilds completed.

Remote Indigenous Energy Program

The Remote Indigenous Energy Program (RIEP) is a \$40.0 million initiative which is part of the Australian Government's Clean Energy Future package.

The RIEP supports smaller remote Indigenous communities to transition to a clean energy future. Provision of a reliable power source will improve community health. Under, the RIEP, fit-for-purpose renewable energy systems will be designed, constructed and installed in up to 50 smaller remote Indigenous communities across South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland from 1 July 2013. The Program will also maintain over 240 existing systems in approximately 208 communities and provide employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

Breaking the Cycle of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Indigenous Communities

The Australian Government has committed \$20.0 million over three years from 2011-12 to the Breaking the Cycle initiative to assist Indigenous communities to develop and implement Community Alcohol and Substance Abuse Management Plans. These plans aim to address alcohol and substance related harm, keeping the community safe and helping to protect vulnerable people, particularly women, children and families. The

Breaking the Cycle initiative is currently being run in Ceduna and surrounding areas in South Australia, in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, East Pilbara, and the Goldfields in Western Australia, in Mornington Island and Doomadgee in Queensland and in Bourke, Brewarrina and Condobolin in New South Wales.

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. The Australian Government provides approximately \$6.0 million to improve environmental health in remote Indigenous communities with the Army's on-the-ground support. Each project includes:

- a construction component providing infrastructure such as housing, water, sewerage and electrical service;
- a health component for services such as health promotion and treatment programs, including veterinary, dental and primary health; and
- a training component with training in specific skills such as construction and building maintenance.

The 2013 project is being delivered in Fregon in South Australia and the 2014 project will be delivered in Wutunugurra and Canteen Creek in the Northern Territory.

Torres Strait Major Infrastructure Program Stage Five

The Australian Government is providing \$21.2 million over four years from 2012-13 on stage five of the Major Infrastructure Program. Under the program the Torres Strait Regional Authority will work with the Queensland Government on a range of environmental health infrastructure projects in the Torres Strait region. These relate to water supply, reticulation, sanitation, wastewater, community roads and drainage.

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

The Australian Government has also allocated \$12 million for urgent coastal protection works, including repair and construction of seawalls.

Helping Indigenous families to own their own home

The Indigenous Home Ownership program will assist approximately 2,200 Indigenous Australians to buy their own homes in major cities, regional and remote areas over four years from July 2013.

The program offers a concessional interest rate home loan to Indigenous households and provides priority of access and extra assistance for applicants purchasing homes on Indigenous land.

The Home Ownership Structured Education Program will also provide financial literacy training to assist Indigenous people to purchase or build their own home on Indigenous land.

Household Organisation Management Expenses Advice Program

The Household Organisational Management Expenses (HOME) Advice Program assists families who face difficulty in maintaining tenancies or home ownership due to personal or financial circumstances. The program uses a range of approaches such as brokerage, practical support, financial counselling and advocacy to assist families to stabilise their housing situation.

The HOME Advice Program is in eight locations throughout Australia - one in each State and Territory.

Of the eight HOME Advice providers, seven deliver the program in regional areas. These services were funded a total \$1.3 million in 2012-13.

Youth Homelessness Program – Reconnect

The Australian Government will provide more than \$73.0 million over three years for the Reconnect program from 2013-14. This funding will support the continuation of key support services delivered by over 100 Reconnect service providers throughout Australia.

The Reconnect program is a community based early intervention which supports young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and their families. A range of tools such as brokerage, practical support, mediation, counselling and mentoring assist the young person stabilise their living situation, achieve family reconciliation, and improve their engagement with work, education, training and the community.

Thirty-four service providers deliver the Reconnect program in regional areas and nine in remote areas. These services include the Waitja Reconnect service in Alice Springs, the Nambucca Bellingen Reconnect service, and Colony 47 which is in North Hobart. A total of \$9.5 million was provided to regional and remote Reconnect services in 2012-13.

National Rental Affordability Scheme

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) is a \$6.0 billion initiative delivered in partnership with States and Territories (\$4.5 billion from the Australian Government and \$1.5 billion from the States and Territories) to increase the supply of more affordable private rental housing across the country, including in regional communities. NRAS offers financial incentives to the business sector and community organisations to build and rent dwellings to low and moderate income households at a rate at least 20 per cent below market rates. This provides more affordable private rental properties for Australians and their families.

NRAS properties are available, or are under development, in a number of regional areas. Further information about NRAS is available at www.fahcsia.gov.au/nras.

Building Better Regional Cities

The Australian Government has committed over \$100 million until 2014 to help build more affordable homes in regional cities. This program will assist participating local councils invest in local infrastructure projects such as connecting roads, sewage and community infrastructure like parks and community centres that support new housing developments. Funding was provided to regional cities demonstrating evidence of future jobs growth and an increase in supply of affordable homes.

Across Australia, 47 regional cities were invited to participate in the program. A total of 16 projects were assessed as suitable and provided with funding for their infrastructure projects. These regional cities are spread across the nation. They include cities like Geraldton in Western Australia and Hervey Bay in Queensland. A list of the regional cities provided with the funding is available at www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/housing-support/programs-services/building-better-regional-cities-program.

Funding for Community Mental Health

In 2012-13 the Australian Government provided over \$180.0 million for community mental health services, with around 40 per cent of funding directed to regional areas. Additional services are being rolled out over the next two years. Australian Government funding for community mental health services will have risen to around \$230 million per annum by 2015-16.

National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

Under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022, initiatives have been introduced to prevent violence against women and to improve access to services for women in regional, rural and remote areas. The Australian Government has committed over \$86.0 million to initiatives under the National Plan since 2009. The 24 hour national telephone and online professional counselling service for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, 1800RESPECT, provides access to essential support and counselling and includes access to professional counselling for Australians in regional, rural and remote areas.

Training on domestic violence issues for health and allied health workers is delivered through the national DV-alert program with priority given to holding courses in rural and remote locations. This includes training for Indigenous professionals. These initiatives increase access to support for women in regional, rural and remote locations especially where there are no local, specialist services.

Community Investment Program

The Community Investment Program strengthens communities and promotes social inclusion and participation of vulnerable people in community life. The Australian Government is committed to ensuring a fairer share of funding is delivered to regional cities and country communities. In 2013-14 at least 60 per cent (approximately \$26.6 million) of \$43.3 million total funding will go to supporting regional Australia.

Indigenous Community Links

Indigenous Community Links supports Indigenous Australians and their families by connecting them to a range of local Indigenous and other community services and programs that provide lasting improvements in their social, health and financial wellbeing. Of the 88 Indigenous Community Links locations, 73 are in regional Australia.

Volunteer Grants

Volunteer Grants recognises the valuable work of Australia's volunteers and are part of the Australian Government's ongoing commitment to supporting volunteers and encouraging volunteering in local communities.

In 2012, 2,930 organisations in regional Australia shared in \$9.5 million of \$16 million in total volunteer grants funding. This represented 60 per cent of the funding through Volunteer Grants in 2012. Funding is available to not-for-profit organisations to purchase small equipment items, and to contribute to the reimbursement of volunteers' fuel costs and assist with the cost of volunteers training courses and background checks.

National Women's Alliances

In February 2013 the Australian Government announced funding of almost \$4.8 million until June 2016 for six National Women's Alliances.

The two Alliances representing women in regional Australia in particular 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 women from rural, regional and urban areas to share information, identify issues from their own communities and bring these to government.

Income Management – various locations across Australia

Income management helps families on income support balance their household budgets and ensure their welfare payments are spent in the best interests of their children. This ensures that money is available for life's essentials, and provides a tool to help stabilise people's circumstances and ease immediate financial stress.

As at 22 February 2013, there were 16,994 people participating in income management in the following regional locations across the country:

- regional areas in the Northern Territory;
- the Kimberley region in Western Australia;
- the APY lands South Australia;
- Cape York and Rockhampton in Queensland; and
- Greater Shepparton in Victoria.

From 15 April 2013 people living in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and Laverton (including Kiwirrkurra) will also have income management available.

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 3,546 locations, a third of these are in regional, rural or remote areas.

Financial Management Program

The Australian Government's Financial Management Program helps people who are struggling to balance their household budgets or are in financial crisis. The program includes emergency relief, financial counselling, money management services and financial literacy programs. Around 44 per cent of the 794 organisations providing financial management program services were provided in regional areas.

Broadband for seniors

The Australian Government has committed \$25.4 million to the Broadband for Seniors initiative since 2008.

Broadband for Seniors provides free access to computers, the internet and training for senior Australians. There are around 2,000 kiosks, located in sites that seniors often visit such as at community centres, retirement villages, libraries and community clubs. More than half of the kiosks are located in regional Australia.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

The Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio, through the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade), assists Australian companies to grow their international business, attracts productive foreign direct investment into Australia and promotes Australia's education sector internationally.

Austrade is committed to assisting Australian businesses interested in pursuing export and investment opportunities, including businesses based in regional locations. In addition to Austrade's network of 12 offices around Australia, export advisory services are provided to regional businesses through partner organisations delivering the TradeStart program in 31 locations around Australia.

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.

Administered by Austrade, the EMDG scheme encourages Australian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to develop export markets by reimbursing up to half of eligible export promotion activities above \$10,000, provided the total of such expenses incurred amounts to at least \$20,000.

While not specially targeted at regional firms, each year the EMDG scheme helps many regional firms to market their products overseas. Of the 2,874 EMDG grants paid in 2011-12 (relating to eligible export promotion expenditure incurred in 2010-11), 22 per cent were awarded to recipients from regional Australia. These grants provided \$20.8 million in financial support to 631 regional grant recipients. These recipients reported exports of \$621.5 million and employed 11,400 people in 2010-11.

The EMDG scheme also supports a variety of industry bodies, regional not-for-profit economic development bodies and tourism bodies to promote Australian exports internationally on behalf of regional SMEs in specific sectors. There are currently 17 regional bodies, seven state bodies and 35 national bodies registered as 'approved bodies' eligible to apply for EMDG grants.

Recognising the strategic export opportunities for Australian SMEs in Asian, emerging and frontier markets, the Australian Government announced proposed changes to re-target the EMDG scheme in October 2012. Refocussing the EMDG program allows the Australian Government to more efficiently allocate resources to assisting exporters in world markets where Government assistance would be more important.

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 SMEs in their international business endeavours.

In the 2010-11 Budget, the Australian 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 4,500 companies throughout Australia, many of whom also receive assistance from Austrade's international network.

HEALTH AND AGEING

The Australian Government recognises that people living outside the major Australian cities may experience poorer health outcomes than those living in urban areas. Consequently, the Australian Government directs significant assistance to improve access to and the quality of health services.

Assistance is provided through both general health and ageing programs and programs targeted specifically at regional Australia, as well as through the on-going health reform agenda. In addition, substantial Commonwealth assistance in the order of \$2.2 billion in 2013-14 is being provided to states and territories through various Specific Purpose Payments which are directed significantly to people living in regional Australia.

In 2013-14, it is estimated that over \$54 billion will be directly administered by the Department of Health and Ageing to support Australians with their health and ageing needs. Of this, it is estimated that more than \$15 billion will be spent in regional Australia, representing more than 28 per cent of the total spending on health.

This amount includes targeted rural health and aged care programs, where the Australian Government is directly investing more than \$2.2 billion in 2013-14 to address factors that specifically impact on the health and wellbeing of people living in rural and remote communities.

The Australian Government continues to see improvements in the health outcomes of those people living in regional Australia. These improvements arise from the delivery of services tailored to meet the needs of local communities and improvements in the coverage of the health workforce. Additionally, the Australian Government has established Rural and Regional Health Australia which provides easily accessible information about health and ageing programs in regional Australia through its website and freecall 1800 telephone line.

SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 6 is a summary of expenditure by major program separated between regional Australia, non-regional and non-specific locations for the Budget year and forward estimates for the Department of Health and Ageing, and includes targeted regional programs.

Table 6: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Health and Ageing

Program	Category	Budget	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Pharmaceuticals and Benefits (Programs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)	Regional	3,283	3,447	3,581	3,726
	Non-regional	7,095	7,451	7,741	8,053
	Non-specific	212	222	231	240
Medical Services and Benefits (Program 3.1)	Regional	5,537	6,047	6,430	6,868
	Non-regional	13,174	14,387	15,300	16,340
	Non-specific	382	417	443	474
Residential and Flexible Care (Program 4.4)	Regional	2,852	2,996	3,200	3,383
	Non-regional	6,060	6,367	6,800	7,190
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Private Health Insurance (Program 9.1)	Regional	1,377	1,422	1,466	1,508
	Non-regional	3,914	4,044	4,167	4,287
	Non-specific	108	112	115	118
Targeted Rural Expenditure (various program numbers)	Regional	2,223	2,038	2,106	1,538
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Other Programs (various program numbers)	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	7,842	8,203	8,752	9,675
Portfolio Grand Total (1)	Regional	15,271	15,951	16,784	17,022
	Non-regional	30,244	32,249	34,008	35,869
	Non-specific	8,544	8,953	9,542	10,507

[†] Small errors may occur due to rounding

Table 6 shows that total expenditure (grants, subsidies and personal benefits) for the Department of Health and Ageing is estimated to be over \$54 billion in 2013-14. Expenditure is divided between over \$15 billion in regional areas, approximately \$30 billion in non-regional areas and over \$8.5 billion that is non-specific. The proportion of total identifiable expenditure in regional areas is around 28 per cent with the identifiable proportion remaining broadly constant over the forward estimate years.

The top five program groups listed in the table above represent around 85 per cent of the total estimated expenditure for the Department of Health and Ageing in 2013-14. 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 Programs" payments.

Table 6 indicates the following:

- around 31 per cent of expenditure on Pharmaceuticals and Benefits is spent in regional Australia;
- around 29 per cent of Medical Services and Benefits is spent in regional Australia;
- around 32 per cent of Residential Aged Care is spent in regional Australia, although this amount is supplemented by expenditure on multi-purpose facilities which is included under Targeted Rural Expenditure; and
- more than 25 per cent of Private Health Insurance is spent in regional Australia. This is lower than the proportion of people living in regional Australia but does not include direct taxation deductions. It may also reflect the lower number of private inpatient facilities in regional areas.

Caveats, Regional Projections and Program Materiality

The non-specific category in the above table 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 Australian Government funds being spent in regional Australia reduces further forward in time from 2013-14, as a result of potential policy changes.

The regional distribution of Pharmaceuticals and Benefits, Medical Services and Benefits, Residential Aged Care and Private Health Insurance is 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 of Health and Ageing.

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 Health and Hospitals Fund (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, are 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 provides 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. Of the total \$5 billion that has been allocated under the program, around two thirds is directed to meeting the needs of regional Australia.

To date there have been four funding rounds totalling \$5 billion. Table 7 below provides details on projected expenditure under the HHF over the Forward Estimates.

Table 7: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Health and Hospitals Fund

Program	Category	Budget	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Round 1 ⁽¹⁾	Regional	65	-	-	-
	Non-regional	173	118	51	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Round 2 (Regional Cancer Centre Initiative)	Regional	69	5	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
Round 3	Regional	142	191	391	215
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Round 4	Regional	131	156	92	43
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total	Regional	407	352	483	258
	Non-regional	173	118	51	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-

¹ Round 1 was not a regional specific funding round

Note: This table provides HHF funding over the forward estimates. Total HHF funding is \$5 billion from 2008-09 to 2017-18. A small number of grants under HHF will fund projects serving both regional and non-regional areas

NEW INITIATIVES

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan

The Australian Government is currently developing a new National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan (the Health Plan) in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their representatives, including the National Congress of First Peoples and its National Health Leadership Forum. It will target areas of health that are in most need of improvement, including the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in regional, rural and

remote locations. The implementation of the Health Plan will involve building links with current initiatives and strategies, identifying gaps for further action and expanding existing initiatives where appropriate.

Indigenous Chronic Disease Package

In 2013-14, the Australian Government will work with States and Territories through a renewed National Partnership Agreement (NPA) to consolidate and embed the reforms implemented under the current NPA on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes, including continuing implementation of the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package. This commitment will provide a continued framework for working collaboratively to close the gap in life expectancy within a generation.

Improving Trachoma Control Services for Indigenous Australians

Under a National Partnership (Project) Agreement to be extended in 2013-14, the eye component of the Closing the Gap - Improving Eye and Ear Health Services for Indigenous Australians measure will have a significant focus on the eradication of trachoma, an infectious eye disease endemic in some rural and remote regions of Australia.

Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program

The Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP) provides incentive payments to community based general practices, private psychiatric practices and other eligible organisations who engage mental health nurses to assist in the provision of coordinated clinical care for people with severe and persistent mental disorders.

MHNIP provides patients with support during periods of significant disability and assists in maintaining long term health protective behaviours and resilience.

Approximately 11 per cent of all MHNIP services are provided in rural and remote areas and services in these areas receive a 25 per cent loading to reflect a higher cost of service delivery.

The 2013-14 Budget provides additional funding of \$23.7 million to the MHNIP to allow services to be maintained at existing levels while the program is redesigned in response to the 2012 program evaluation.

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; and
- improvements to workforce coverage and distribution that includes an increase of 9.7 per cent in the number of full-time workload equivalent general practitioners in rural and remote areas since 2009-10.

Australians in rural and 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 Australian Government established Rural and Regional Health Australia in November 2011 to provide information about Australian Government health and aged care programs. In 2013-14, Rural and Regional Health Australia will continue to provide accessible information to the public about Australian Government health and aged care programs in rural and remote Australia. It will 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 (\$72 million over four years from 2009-10) initiative under the NPA 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 has developed a Healthy Communities Quality Framework, against which programs and service providers are assessed and then registered and promoted on a web-based registration portal.

Quality Assurance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Medical Services

The Quality Assurance for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Services (QAAMS) Pathology Program supports the better management of diabetes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by enabling participating health services to provide culturally appropriate and clinically effective point-of-care diabetes related pathology testing on site. The Australian Government has funded the QAAMS Program since 1999, including \$1.06 million in 2012-13. In December 2012, a total of 168 sites participated in QAAMS with 80 per cent of these located in rural and remote areas. QAAMS also includes training, technical support, quality assurance and a consultation program for community leaders to support program management.

The Rollout of Low Aromatic Fuel

The Australian Government is committed to tackling substance misuse issues that impact negatively on social and emotional wellbeing and general health. The

Australian Government funding commitment to support the rollout of low aromatic fuel is \$115.86 million over five years (2011-12 to 2015-16), including \$38.5 million provided in the 2010-11 Budget to expand the rollout of low aromatic fuel to additional sites in northern Australia. Currently 129 sites receive low aromatic 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 which will enable low aromatic 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 fuel will help reduce the incidence and impact of petrol sniffing in at least 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in northern Australia.

Petrol sniffing has been reduced by as much as 94 per cent in some communities where low aromatic fuel has been introduced.

Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grants Fund

The Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grants Fund provides a flexible funding pool to support organisations to deliver drug and alcohol treatment services across Australia. In 2012-13, over \$50 million is being provided to support a range of treatment services in non-metropolitan areas including:

- Establishing and enhancing drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services in non-metro areas;
- Providing funding for the delivery and support of Indigenous substance use treatment and rehabilitation services in non-metro areas; and
- Continuing substance use initiatives in the Northern Territory commenced under the Northern Territory Emergency Response.

In 2013-14 and 2014-15, a similar level of funding will be provided for these services.

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.

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.

Medication Management Review Programs

A range of medication management services are funded under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement. They aim to improve the quality use of medicine and reduce the risk of medication misadventure, including in rural and remote areas. These services include Home Medicines Review (HMR), which is a review conducted by an accredited pharmacist in the consumer's home upon referral from a general practitioner. Other services available include the Residential Medication Management Review (RMMR), which is a review conducted by an accredited pharmacist for a permanent resident of an Australian Government funded aged care facility, upon referral from a general practitioner. The MedsCheck and Diabetes MedsCheck services are the newest medication review services and aim to improve the use of medicine by providing an in-pharmacy review of a patient's medicines by a registered pharmacist.

Section 100 Remote Area Aboriginal Health Service Program

The Remote Area Aboriginal Health Service (RAAHS) Program is administered under section 100 (s100) of the *National Health Act 1953* and allows for the supply of Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme (PBS) medicines to clients of eligible remote area Aboriginal Health Services (AHS) at the time of medical consultation, without the need for a normal prescription form, and without charge. The program aims to address geographic, financial and cultural barriers experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote areas of Australia in accessing essential medicines through the PBS. In 2013-14, \$52.3 million has been allocated for this program.

Section 100 Pharmacy Support Allowance

The Section 100 Pharmacy Support Allowance Program, through providing an annual allowance, financially supports visits by pharmacists to provide targeted quality use of medicines (QUM) and medication management support services to remote area AHS which participate in the s100 RAAHS Program. The program aims to assist in improving health outcomes for clients of remote area AHS by supporting QUM at those services through pharmacist visits and advice.

Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-Payment Measure

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-Payment Measure is one of 14 measures under the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package. In urban and rural (not remote) settings, the Closing the Gap (CTG) improves access to PBS medicines for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with, or at risk of, chronic disease. The CTG lowers or removes the patient co-payment for PBS medicines. Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients are registered through a general practice participating in the Indigenous Health Incentive under the Practice Incentives Program or Indigenous Health Services in urban and rural (not remote) settings.

Quality Use of Medicines Maximised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Program

The Quality Use of Medicines Maximised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (QUMAX) Program is a QUM support initiative that aims to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The focus of the QUMAX Program is to improve QUM through a range of support services provided to Indigenous patients through participating Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and community pharmacies in rural and urban Australia. The QUM support services include Dose Administration Aids, QUM devices (e.g. asthma spacers), and QUM education to clients and staff of ACCHS.

Access to Medical Services

Medicare Benefits Schedule

The Australian Government makes rebates available to Australians for private medical treatments through the 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 general practitioner, 75 per cent for in-hospital services and 85 per cent for all other services. The MBS provides further incentives to general practitioners who bulk bill Commonwealth Concession Card holders and children under 16 years of age. These payments are currently \$6.00 for general practitioners providing services in metropolitan areas, and \$9.10 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

Since 1 July 2011, the Australian Government has expanded the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) to include 40 new MBS items for specialist video consultations and has provided financial incentives to practitioners to encourage the uptake of these services. In 2013-14, this initiative will continue to help people in rural, regional and remote 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.

Under the DI Review Reform Package 2011-12 - Better Access to MRI services, the Australian Government has recently undertaken the most significant expansion of MRI

Medicare eligibility since MRIs first became publicly funded in 1998. These expansions have increased access to Medicare rebateable MRI services in a number of regions based on population and area of need.

Additionally, the Australian Government granted eligibility to 12 MRI units in areas of need that previously did not receive any assistance.

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. In addition to the Core VOS program, which commenced in 1975, the VOS Expansion for Indigenous Australians was introduced in 2009 in recognition that the prevalence of eye disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is ten times that of the general community. This expansion provides funding for new and increased numbers of optometrist visits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Ageing and Aged Care

Presently, more than 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 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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

Aged Care Reforms

The aged care reforms announced in April 2012 continue to improve the services provided and benefits for older people across Australia, including regional Australia. A key measure of the reforms was 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.

In addition to the viability supplement, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (the Program) is expanding with more aged care places in rural and remote locations becoming available. This allows significantly more older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with complex high care needs to stay close to their home and country in culturally appropriate care. Services funded under the program will also be further assisted with linkages to Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) growth rates, as part of a review of subsidies ensuring funding reflects cost of providing care.

The aged care reforms also included a substantial increase to the current accommodation supplement for new or substantially refurbished facilities. This is expected to ease pressures on capital funding for care provision across Australia, as well as providing an added incentive to build additional residential aged care places.

Another key aspect of the reforms is support to build aged care homes where mainstream funding is not available or not sufficient. Two previous capital grants programs were combined to form the new Rural, Regional and Other Special Needs Building Fund. This enables 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 \$60 million will be available annually in 2013-14. In addition, the remaining \$150 million in zero real interest loans, for which applications closed in December 2012, will be refocused to support building activity in priority areas.

Workforce pressure in aged care is particularly problematic in regional and rural areas. To address this, the reforms include a strong focus on 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 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 is being provided through the Assistance with Care and Housing for Aged Program, supporting those who are homeless, or are at risk of homelessness in regional areas.

A consistent theme throughout the reforms was recognising diversity among older Australians. The Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants flexible fund helps improve access to information and aged care services with a focus on diverse communities in regional areas.

Specific Aged Care Programs that Target Regional Australia

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.

Community Aged Care Viability Supplement

The Community Aged Care Viability Supplement is paid to eligible community care providers operating in rural and remote areas. This supplement provides support for the higher operating costs (such as wages, fuel and training) associated with providing care in rural and regional locations.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program funds organisations to provide culturally appropriate aged care to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people close to home and community. Flexible aged care services funded under the program can deliver a mix of residential and community services in accordance with the needs of the community. These services are mainly in rural and remote areas.

Multi-purpose Services program – Aged Care Subsidies

The Multipurpose Service Program is a joint initiative of the Australian Government and State and Territory governments, which aims to deliver flexible and integrated health and aged care services for small rural and remote communities. Multipurpose services receive Australian Government funding for aged care and State and Territory Government funding for a range of health services. As at 30 June 2012, there were 137 MPS providing 3,337 aged care places in rural and remote areas Australia-wide.

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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The aim is to improve the long-term quality of aged care in remote communities and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by providing access to capital funding to improve the infrastructure of aged care services.

Rural, Regional and Other Special Needs Building Fund

Capital grants 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 and do not have to be repaid.

Zero Real Interest Loans

Zero real interest loans are available to assist providers in targeted areas, including rural, regional and remote areas. These loans are a lower cost alternative to normal commercial funding arrangements (as the interest rate is set at the CPI only). 2012-13 is the last funding round for this initiative.

Indigenous Aged Care Workforce – Employment

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. It also covers funding for training and development of workforce supports (e.g. training resources, service delivery manuals and mentoring workshops) which 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 regional specific components:

- Procedural General Practitioner (GP) Payment – The PIP Procedural GP Payment aims to encourage GPs in rural and remote areas to maintain local access to surgical, anesthetic and obstetric services. In 2013-14, the expenditure on the PIP Procedural GP Payment is expected to be around \$9.3 million; 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 practices in rural and remote areas. The rural loading is paid in recognition of the difficulties of providing care, often with little professional support, in rural and remote areas. In 2013-14, expenditure on the PIP Rural Loading is expected to be around \$19.4 million.

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 and other non-government organisations, to provide additional primary and allied healthcare 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.

From 2013-14, the RPHS will be subsumed into the Regionally Tailored Primary Health Care Initiatives through Medicare Locals Fund, with funding for rural services to form part of the needs assessment undertaken by the Medicare Locals.

Rural Health

Rural Health Outreach Fund

The 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. A competitive funding round for new fund holders closed on 25 January 2013, with services to commence operations in July 2013. The majority of existing programs will 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 Australian communities, who currently have little or no access to a female GP. The RWGPS facilitates 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 auspiced by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). The RWGPS will be operated under the Rural Health Outreach Fund from 2013-14 and will continue to be managed by the RFDS in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

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

MSOAP Maternity Services (MS) is an expansion of MSOAP that aims to increase 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 aims to increase the number of ophthalmology services delivered to people in regional, rural and remote Australia since 1 July 2010. The funding allocation for this includes funds provided to the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists (ASO) 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 Federal 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 the establishment of new health services, or the enhancement of existing health services.

NRRHIP directs funding of up to \$500,000 per project to provide essential health infrastructure (capital works and/or purchase of equipment), which supports the development of innovative models of health service delivery for rural and remote communities. Funding is also provided to small rural private hospitals for strategic service planning.

Six rounds have been conducted under the NRRHIP, 267 projects have been funded at a value of approximately \$52.6 million.

Funding available through the NRRHIP from 2013-14, will be prioritised to ensure future grant rounds include a greater emphasis on remote areas or facilities targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Royal Flying Doctor Service

The Australian Government funds the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) to provide 'traditional' services including health care clinics, primary aero-medical evacuations, medical chests and remote consultations in rural and remote Australia (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory from Tennant Creek to the South Australian border). In Tasmania, the RFDS also provides several medical chests containing a range of pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical items which enable emergency and non-emergency treatment to be given to people living and working in remote areas.

Indigenous Health

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory – Health

The Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory – Health (SFNT-Health) program addresses the health needs of Indigenous Australia in the Northern Territory by providing ongoing funding 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;
- Specialist and allied health services for conditions of very high disease burden – oral health, hearing health;
- Alcohol treatment services; and
- Mobile Outreach Service plus counselling and support for children and their families and communities in remote NT experiencing trauma related to child abuse or neglect.

SFNT-Health is being implemented under the National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory, which extends to 30 June 2022.

Renal Services

The Australian Government is providing \$5.0 million over three years from 2012-13 to support the Project Agreement for the Delivery of Renal Services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Central Region of the Northern Territory. Through the Project Agreement, the Northern Territory manages funding to the Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation to deliver renal dialysis services to Aboriginal people in the Central region of the Northern Territory.

Indigenous Chronic Disease Package

In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 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 the NPA on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes, 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. The ICDP has ongoing funding with a large component now consolidated into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chronic Disease Fund.

In 2013-14, the Department will work with States and Territories to implement activities through a renewed NPA to improve chronic disease outcomes, focusing on improving the prevention, detection and management of chronic disease to assist

Indigenous Australians who have developed, or are at risk of developing, preventable chronic disease.

Indigenous Chronic Disease Package – Expanding the outreach and service capacity of Indigenous health organisations

This component of the ICDP 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 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. The program 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 with funding delivered through Commonwealth Own Purpose Expenditure. The Program is designed to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families' access to antenatal care; standard information about baby care; practical advice and assistance with breastfeeding, nutrition and parenting; monitoring developmental milestones, immunisation status and infections; and to undertake health checks for Indigenous children before starting school. By the end of March 2013, 85 organisations had been approved for funding with 80 operational sites distributed across Australia in urban, regional, rural and remote locations.

National Partnership on Indigenous Early Childhood Development – antenatal and reproductive health

The Australian Government is providing funding to all jurisdictions through Specific Purpose Payments to improve antenatal care, teenage sexual and reproductive health, and pre-pregnancy care as well as building linkages with existing child and maternal health programs to increase uptake of these services. This program will deliver services until 30 June 2014.

Strong Fathers Strong Families

The Strong Fathers Strong Families initiative aims to promote the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fathers and partners, grandfathers and uncles, and encourage them to actively participate in their children's and families' lives, particularly in the antenatal period and early childhood development years. Thirteen organisations receive funding to implement this program, of which four are in regional areas and four in remote areas.

Closing the Gap – Improving Eye and Ear Health Services for Indigenous Australians

This measure seeks to provide improved eye and ear health outcomes for Indigenous Australians. The eye component has a significant focus on the eradication of trachoma, an infectious eye disease endemic in some rural and remote regions of Australia, and provides increased access to specialist cataract surgeries in the Northern Territory and New South Wales. Ear health activities administered under Outcome 8 include the purchase of ear health equipment for primary health care services, workforce training, clinical leadership positions and provision of specialist outreach hearing, ear, nose and throat and surgical services.

Establishing Quality Health Services –Continuation

The 2011-12 Establishing Quality Health Services-Continuation (EQHS-C) Program provides \$35.0 million over four years from 2011-12 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 EQHS measure (\$36.9 million over four years from 2007-08) and is a national initiative with funding available to eligible Indigenous health organisations in urban, rural and remote areas.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program

The Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program provides counselling, family tracing and reunion support in a flexible package of service delivery supplemented by national coordination and support. The program aims to enhance existing service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including in rural and remote areas, 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 development and support, electronic client records and data collection, support for Stolen Generations peak bodies, program support and program development and evaluation.

The Australian Government will invest a total of around \$46 million in 2013-14.

Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program – Indigenous Chronic Disease Program

The MSOAP Indigenous Chronic Disease (MSOAP-ICD) program 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. From 2013-14, the MSOAP-ICD and the Urban Specialist Outreach Assistance Program will be consolidated to form the Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program.

Health System Capacity and Quality

McGrath Specialist Breast Care Nurses

In the 2008-09 Budget, the Australian Government committed \$12.6 million to the McGrath Foundation to recruit, train and place specialist breast care nurses across Australia for a period of four years. McGrath Breast Care Nurses are specially trained, Registered Nurses who provide information, care, and practical and emotional support to women diagnosed with breast cancer, their families and carers.

Commonwealth-supported Breast Care Nurses are currently in place in 44 communities around Australia, more than 89 per cent of which are located in rural and remote areas. Since the inception of the program, more than 12,700 women diagnosed with breast cancer and their families have been supported by an Australian Government funded McGrath Breast Care Nurse.

On 5 January 2013, the Prime Minister announced further funding to continue and expand the McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurse initiative. The Government will provide \$19.5 million over four years from 2013-14 to 2016-17 funding approximately 13 new positions, bringing the total number of McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurses to 57. The additional nurses will support new Regional Cancer Centres and also provide services in outer metropolitan areas.

The National Rural and Remote Health Stakeholder Support Scheme

The National Rural and Remote Health Stakeholder Support Scheme (NRRHSSS) became effective 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;
- Rural Doctors Association of Australia;

- Health Consumers of Rural and Remote Australia;
- CRAN*Aplus* (remote area health professionals); and
- National Rural Health Students Network.

From 2012-13, these funds were consolidated into the Health System Capacity Development Fund (HSCDF). A targeted funding round for rural and remote stakeholders under the HSCDF is being conducted for funding to commence in 2013-14.

Health and Hospitals Fund

Health and Hospitals Fund – Round 1

As part of the 2009-10 Federal Budget, a \$3.2 billion nation-building package of Health and Hospitals Fund (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 health workforce infrastructure to improve the transfer of research outcomes into patient care.

Included as part of these three initiatives is \$558 million allocated over four years for 34 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 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 urban and rural areas.

These projects will enable people with cancer to access the right care at the right time, as close as possible to home and family, irrespective of where they live or their social circumstances.

The nationwide network now consists of 25 Regional Cancer Centres: 21 funded under HHF Round 2, three from the HHF Regional Priority Rounds and the Alan Walker Cancer Centre in Darwin.

When these centres are operational, they will cover a catchment area of well over 7 million people and provide world-class treatment for over 7,600 additional

radiotherapy patients annually, over 127,000 additional chemotherapy treatments each year, and around 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 3, valued at \$1.33 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 2012-13 Budget provided funding for 76 projects from the 2011 HHF Regional Priority Round valued at \$475 million. Round 4 fulfils the Australian Government's commitment to the Independents to commit HHF funding of \$1.8 billion to regional Australia. Round 4 continues to assist regional communities in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Areas 2 to 5 by providing further upgrades to regional health infrastructure, expansions to regional hospitals and support for clinical training capacity.

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 Royal Flying Doctor Service 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 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 over \$108 million will be provided from 2006-07 to 2013-14 under the program, including \$48 million over three years from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2014.

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 general practitioner. This program is particularly effective at targeting hard to reach groups and people who would otherwise miss out on mental health services.

Many specific populations, such as low income earners and those in rural and remote areas have difficulty accessing MBS-subsidised mental health services due to cost and workforce limitations in some locations.

In 2011-12, more than 58,500 referrals were received for services through ATAPS and approximately 41 per cent of services were provided in rural areas.

The 2011-12 Budget mental health reform package is providing increased funding of \$205.9 million over five years, progressively flowing from 1 July 2011 to target hard to reach groups.

National Suicide Prevention Program

Suicide accounts for a greater proportion of deaths in some groups of people, including those in regional Australia and remote and very remote areas. The Australian Government's National Suicide Prevention Program (NSPP) allocated funding to 23 projects between 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.

The total allocation to the NSPP in 2012-13 was \$25.4 million. A total of \$8.3 million, or 32.7 per cent of total funding, was allocated to national and local community-based suicide prevention projects targeting rural and remote areas.

NSPP projects will be extended for a further 12 months until 30 June 2014 to allow time for the Australian Government to consider the recommendations of the NSPP evaluation, to be completed in June 2013.

e-Mental Health

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 not accessing support or treatment. Online mental health therapies have a sound evidence base and have benefited from a significant Australian Government investment in their development and application, particularly in the treatment of anxiety and depression disorders.

The Australian Government will invest \$116 million from 2012-13 to 2015-16 in building a high quality and accessible e-mental health service sector through the following initiatives:

- Expansion of the Telephone Counselling, Self Help and Web-Based Support Programs. Key services funded under this measure include telephone crisis support services such as those provided by Lifeline and Kids Helpline and several automated online self-help programs, such as Moodgym and Anxiety Online. This measure commenced in 2006 and is ongoing.

An expansion of the Telephone Counselling, Self Help and Web-Based Support Programs in 2012 has resulted in seven new online and telephone mental health support projects, in addition to the 7 existing services. These services will be available through the mindhealthconnect portal as they begin operating in 2013.

- Establishment of a Single Mental Health Online Portal. The online mental health portal, mindhealthconnect.org.au, was launched in July 2012 and provides people with a single gateway to trusted, high quality online information, self-help and clinician assisted mental health therapies. The portal includes a guided search tool which can assist people find information and services that may be helpful to their individual needs.
- Establishment of a Virtual Clinic. The virtual clinic, MindSpot.org.au, began operating in December 2012 and provides access to real-time telephone and online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with qualified counsellors, without charge and without needing to see a doctor. The service can also be accessed through the mindhealthconnect portal or, for people in areas with limited internet access, by phone on 1800 614 434.

headspace

One in four young Australians aged 16-24 years will experience a mental health disorder (including substance use disorder) in any given 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 and aims to improve access for young people aged 12-25 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.

Through the 2011-12 Budget, \$197.3 million was allocated over five years to expand the headspace program to 90 sites across Australia.

Of the 70 headspace sites already announced, 35 will be located in rural and regional areas across Australia. Outpost/satellite activities are also provided in approximately 12 additional locations around the country.

Partners in Recovery

The Partners in Recovery (PIR): Coordinated Support and Flexible Funding for People with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness with Complex Needs initiative aims to better support people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs, and their carers and families. It does this by getting the services and supports from multiple sectors they may come into contact with (and could benefit from) to work in a more collaborative, coordinated and integrated way. This initiative will facilitate coordination and more streamlined access to clinical and other service and support needs of people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness, with complex needs requiring a multi-agency response.

Funding of up to \$519 million over four years from 2012-13 to 2015-16 will be provided to non-government organisations in 61 Medicare Local geographic regions of which 24 are predominately rural and regional. From May 2013, organisations will be progressively engaged to rollout PIR activities following an initial establishment phase.

Health Workforce Capacity

A review of Australian Government health workforce programs is currently being finalised. The review was announced as part of the 2012-13 Budget process. Minister Plibersek appointed Ms Jennifer Mason as the independent Chair to lead the review.

The review analyses the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of programs in terms of meeting key health workforce objectives and priorities, including existing rural health programs to ensure optimal service delivery, as well as emerging issues. Broader health workforce challenges, including those identified in Health Workforce Australia's Health Workforce 2025: Doctors, Nurses and Midwives report are also being considered by the Review.

Stakeholders have had the opportunity to contribute to the review as Ms Mason has undertaken an extensive consultation process. Approximately 80 key stakeholders participated in the consultations, through a series of themed round-table meetings, working groups and one-on-one consultations; 24 written submissions were also received. The Australian Government will consider policy responses to the recommendations of the Mason review once the final report has been considered.

Australian General Practice Training Program

General Practice Education and Training Limited (GPET), the Commonwealth Company responsible for the management of the Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT), is required to ensure at least 50 per cent of registrars are training in rural and regional areas. The Australian Government has doubled the AGPT training places from 600 in 2007 to about 1,200 ongoing from 2014. In 2013-14, \$85.8 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

Remote Vocational Training Scheme

The Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS) 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. In 2013-14, \$4.1 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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 and remote Australia increases the likelihood of a person returning to the bush to practice later in their career. In 2013-14, \$26.2 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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 Australian Government-funded specialist training places in private, public, community and rural settings from 360 to 900 by 2014. In 2013-14, \$49.7 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program. In 2013, 750 training places are being funded and the final 150 will be in place in 2014. Approximately 50 per cent of STP training positions are located in regional areas.

Rural Locum Scheme for Nurses

This measure provides around 3,000 possible nursing locums over the four year funding period to enable rural-based nurses to take leave 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. In 2013-14, \$6.1 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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. In 2013-14, \$1.1 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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, 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. In 2013-14, \$6.8 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme

The Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme (NAHSSS) provides scholarships for nurses, midwives and a range of allied health professionals 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.

An additional 100 scholarships are being 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. In 2012, 250 new NAHSSS scholarships were established, for the next four years, for nurses and allied health professionals in Tasmania. In 2013-14, \$24.9 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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 2013 training year, 35 obstetrics scholarships and 15 anaesthetics scholarships have been awarded to rural and remote doctors. In 2013-14, \$2.2 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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. In 2013-14, \$127.0 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program

The Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program includes sub-programs which support undergraduate clinical training of medical, nursing and allied health students in rural and remote Australia and support existing rural health professionals, 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health workers. This investment will provide valuable benefits for the sustainability of the rural health workforce, particularly in terms of workforce retention.

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 *_pod casts*'. In 2013-14, \$3.3 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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 provides access to trained counsellors for remote health workers and their families. This measure also encourages health service providers in remote areas of Australia to network and engage in professional development.

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. In 2013-14, \$13.4 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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 more than 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

The scheme aims to support the rural allied diagnostic imaging workforce. It comprises a minimum of 10 postgraduate scholarships annually valued at up to \$15,000 per year, a minimum of 10 Professional Development Year (PDY) 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.

Overseas Trained Doctors Recruitment

The International Recruitment Strategy (IRS) aims to increase the supply of appropriately qualified overseas trained doctors to districts of workforce shortages throughout Australia. The IRS package comprises four programs:

- The IRS;
- The Five Year Overseas Trained Doctors Scheme;
- Additional Assistance Scheme; and
- Rural Locum Relief Program.

In 2013-14, \$4.8 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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. In 2013-14, \$12.0 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

Rural Obstetrician and Anaesthetist Locum Scheme

The Rural Obstetrician & Anaesthetist Locum Scheme maintains and enhances the access of rural communities to quality local health care by providing the regional and remote obstetric and anaesthetic workforce with subsidised locum support. In 2013-14, \$2.1 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

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 enables procedural GPs in rural and remote areas to access a grant to attend relevant training and up skilling. The program provides grants for emergency medicine training and procedural medicine training. In 2013-14, \$16.9 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

General Practice Rural Incentives Program

The General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) commenced on 1 July 2010 and 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 Registrars, and provides a new relocation grant.

Since the start of GPRIP, participation in the program has exceeded expectation. The number of full-time workload equivalent GPs working in regional, rural and remote areas has increased by more than nine per cent and the increase in the number of GP Registrars is more than 20 percent. Consequently, additional funding of \$20 million will be provided during 2013-14 to support the program, making the total funding for regional activities under this program \$121.9 million.

Rural and Remote General Practice Program

The Rural and Remote General Practice Program (RRGPP) provides activities and support to improve the recruitment and retention of GPs to rural and remote areas.

Rural Workforce Agencies (RWAs), located in each State and the Northern Territory receive core funding under the RRGPP to deliver a range of services which includes helping communities to recruit GPs, finding appropriate placements for GPs who want to relocate to rural Australia, assisting with the costs of relocation, supporting their families with fitting into a new community and helping GPs to access the necessary infrastructure, support and training. In 2013-14, \$19.6 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

Scaling Rural Workforce Communications – Rural Health Champions Program

The aim of the Rural Health Champions Program is to provide credible, first-hand accounts of work in rural areas. The Rural Health Champions are located in each State and Territory and provide students, GP registrars and GPs with information about their own rural experiences.

Rural Other Medical Practitioners

The Rural Other Medical Practitioners Program (ROMPs) 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 their 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 Overseas Trained Doctors (OTDs) 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.

Scaling is a non-cash incentive offering OTDs and FGAMS opportunities to reduce the 10 year moratorium restriction period. Time reductions are significantly greater for doctors who choose to work in more remote areas. (See the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) figure below.)

Figure 4: Australian Standard Geographical 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

Dental Relocation and Infrastructure Support Scheme

The Dental Relocation and Infrastructure Support Scheme measure aims to encourage and support dentists to practice 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 practiced in the previous 12 months, based on the Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) categories 2-5. In 2013-14, \$22.2 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

Improving Australia’s Emergency Department Workforce Project

The aim of the project is to improve the supply of suitably qualified staff in the Australian emergency medical workforce, including developing and support emergency medicine specialist training capacity in rural and regional training sites. One component of the project is Emergency Medicine Education and Training (EMET), with 33 hub hospitals, particularly in regional and rural areas, participating. EMET delivers outreach training, supervision and educational support to non-specialist doctors and other staff working in emergency departments. It is providing positive results; many of the participating emergency physicians are extending their teaching capability to smaller hospitals as well as within their own hospitals. In 2013-14, \$8.8 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

Northern Territory Medical Program

The Northern Territory Medical Program addresses severe medical workforce shortages and retention issues in the Northern Territory by providing a full four year graduate entry medical course in the Northern Territory. The NTMP supports medical education for up to 24 students (in each year of study) based at the Flinders University’s Darwin campus. The program delivered in partnership with the Northern Territory Government is aimed at recruiting Northern Territory residents with a particular focus on recruiting and retraining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

NTMP trains medical graduates capable of working in remote areas and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2013-14, \$2.3 million has been allocated for regional activities under this program.

Additional Medical Internships

Following an unprecedented increase in medical graduates, the Australian Government collaborated with the governments of New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, Northern Territory, and Australian Capital Territory under the Additional Medical Internships 2013 initiative to establish an additional 60 intern places to ensure that all Australian trained medical graduates were offered an intern position commencing in 2013. In return for an intern place, the 22 Australian Government funded internship doctors agreed to work for a period of at least 12 months in rural and regional areas and/or districts of workforce shortage, following completion of their intern training.

Acute Care

Improving Access to Primary Care Services in Rural and Remote Areas – s19(2) Exemptions Initiative (COAG)

The COAG s19(2) Exemptions Initiative provides additional funding through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) to approved rural and remote public hospital sites which, due to workforce shortage, may employ salaried medical officers to provide traditionally GP/primary care services.

The initiative covers any non-admitted or non-referred treatment, including emergency care, outpatient and community clinics, and allows bulk-billing to the MBS so patients do not incur out-of-pocket costs.

Mersey Community Hospital – continued management, operation and funding

This three year Heads of 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 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 Department of Human Services (the Department) 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 Department has continued to co-locate Medicare, Centrelink and other services in a number of shopfronts across Australia and extend the range of services available in each place.

People living in regional, rural and remote areas can access government services through the Department's Service Centres (including Remote Service Centres), Agents and Access Points and visiting services such as Remote Servicing Teams and mobile offices.

The Department has two Mobile Service Centres that travel on pre-determined itineraries in rural and regional areas delivering services tailored to each community's needs. They operate as fully equipped offices with equivalent system functionality to a normal Service Centre. The Mobile Service Centres are also critical to the Australian Government's emergency response service delivery strategy and provide vital services to communities affected by disasters. Mobile Service Centres delivered essential services to people during the 2013 Queensland floods and the 2013 Tasmanian bushfires.

The Department also provides access to Australians through nationally networked call centres that include specific services for rural and Indigenous people. With the implementation of a new telecommunications contract in 2012, service users are able to call certain Centrelink numbers free of charge from a landline or Telstra mobile. Self Service (phone and online) is also available to claim a payment or concession, update personal details and to advise changes in circumstances conveniently.

The Australian Government has launched a range of mobile applications allowing people to do business with and complete some of their most common transactions with Centrelink via their smartphone or tablet device. This enables more users to interact at a time and place that suits them. These arrangements can be of particular benefit to Australians located in rural and remote areas. A range of Express Plus Apps for Android and Apple compatible devices is now available for many Centrelink transactions, including recording and reporting income, claiming an advance payment and updating address and contact details. Additional Apps for both Centrelink and Medicare transactions will be launched progressively throughout 2013-14.

NEW INITIATIVES

National Indigenous Coalition

In 2013-14, increased collaboration with the Department's National Indigenous Coalition will shape future service offers that enable the implementation of local solutions to local issues. The unique challenges of providing access and support for Indigenous Australians in regional and remote Australia will be considered in the development of the future service delivery approaches. In 2013-14, the Department will utilise co-design methods to rapidly prototype new, more innovative ways to capture the insight and input of Indigenous Australians in ways that will benefit regional Australia.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Mobile Service Centres

The Department has two Mobile Service Centres that travel on pre-determined itineraries in rural and regional areas delivering services tailored to each community's needs. They operate as fully equipped offices with equivalent system functionality as a normal Service Centre and are focused on reaching the estimated 500,000 people living in the 6,000 or more communities that are greater than 50 km from a current service centre.

The Mobile Service Centres are also critical to the Australian Government's emergency response service delivery strategy and provide vital services to communities affected by disasters. Mobile Service Centres delivered essential services to people during the 2013 Queensland floods and the 2013 Tasmanian bushfires.

Co-location

The Australian Government continues to co-locate services across Australia and create one-stop shops. These service centres deliver Medicare and Centrelink services in varying forms. 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 that can access the Department's and other government services. As at 31 March 2013, the number of places where Medicare services are available has increased from 240 to 369 since the beginning of the program in 2010, while the number of places Centrelink services are available has increased from 313 to 444 during the same period. 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 place-based approach to supporting disadvantaged job seekers in selected disadvantaged locations. Local community service providers deliver services from a departmental Service Centre, strengthening the connection between these service providers and the Department and helping job seekers access the services they need at one location.

As at 28 February 2013 there are 14 sites where this program is being delivered, seven of which are in regional areas. The initiative has helped over 11,000 disadvantaged people across the 14 sites. More than 3,400 people have had a job placement and over 2,700 an education or training placement.

Case Coordination

Case Coordination is designed to assist disadvantaged Australians 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.

As at 31 March 2013, the initiative has been implemented in 34 locations, 15 of which are located in regional communities.

Co-design

The Australian Government continues its engagement with Australians in rural, regional and remote communities through co-design activities aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of government service delivery. By working with key stakeholders through methods such as community engagement forums, regional and remote perspectives are represented in the design of future services. This initiative commenced in 2010 and continues to give Australians a greater say in shaping the services they access.

Leveraging the National Broadband Network to Enhance Service Delivery pilot

The 'Leveraging the National Broadband Network to Enhance Service Delivery' pilot contributes to the National Digital Economy Strategy goal for improved online government service delivery and engagement. The \$6.2 million budgeted to 2014-15 for a pilot utilises a high speed download to allow more flexible and tailored government services, including Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support programs.

The Department will conduct pilots with six cohorts utilising high speed video to enhance access and increase convenience. Pilots will be delivered through eight of the Department's service centres, connecting individuals in their homes and third party service providers. The Department will evaluate the pilot in 2013.

Electronic Claiming – Claiming Medicare Benefits Online

Electronic claiming options reflect the Australian Government's commitment to offer choices based on community needs. These options make it convenient for people to lodge claims for Medicare Benefits because they do not need to travel to a departmental Service Centre.

The Australian Government is working actively 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 Australian 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 on compassionate grounds program supports members of the Australian public to obtain a release of their superannuation due to financial difficulties or for specific purposes, such as treatment for a life threatening illness. The compassionate grounds also support releases for mortgage assistance and modifications to a home or car to accommodate a disability, as well as funeral and palliative care or for families and individuals who are required to travel long distances from regional areas for treatment. The Early Release of Superannuation Benefits program works closely with the Department's Social Workers in supporting people in regional areas who are in difficulty.

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 19 or fewer employees meet their superannuation guarantee obligations and 'cut red tape'.

The Clearing House simplifies the contribution process into a single, electronic payment for all employees by sending contributions to the nominated superannuation funds and avoiding the need for small businesses to deal with multiple funds. In 2011-12, \$318.5 million in contributions was transferred to superannuation funds. The Clearing House supports small businesses in regional areas to meet their superannuation obligations.

Medicare Consumer Online Services

Online services allow people to conduct their business at a time and place that suits them rather than having to visit a service centre. As at 30 June 2012, more than 2.5 million Australians had registered to use Medicare Consumer Online Services with an average of 1,100 new registrations every day.

The most popular services accessed online in 2011-12 were the Medicare benefit tax statement, Medicare claims history statement and Medicare Safety Net balance. In December 2012 the Medicare claims history statement was expanded from providing one year to up to three years' worth of information.

Community Innovation through Collaboration

As part of the Better Futures, Local Solutions initiative (under the Building Australia's Future Workforce package), the Department has implemented a place based approach in 10 Local Government Areas. This approach supports these communities to work together to address local participation challenges.

New community positions including a Government Action Leader, Community Action Leader and a Local Advisory Group have been introduced to identify local priorities and a strategic direction for their region. Regional Development Australia committees are represented on Local Advisory Groups along with other key community partners to link services, address service delivery gaps and build community capacity.

In 2013-14, the total amount of funding for the program, including community positions, will be \$11.3 million.

Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (eHealth Record) services

The eHealth record system was launched on 1 July 2012. The eHealth record is a secure online summary of a person's health information, with content and access controlled by the individual. It provides a secure way for health information to be stored and shared at a time and place that suits consumers and healthcare providers. The Department of Health and Ageing has responsibility for legislation, policy, strategic development, implementation and take-up of the eHealth record.

The Department provides registration and enquiry services to the Australian public and healthcare providers and administers consumer identity services for online registration. The Department also operates a repository for the eHealth record system, provisioning agreed data subsets, including information from the Medicare Benefits Scheme.

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: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship

Program	Category	Budget	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Grants for Community Settlement Services	Regional	3.0	1.8	-	-
	Non-regional	26.7	21.5	-	-
	Non-specific	16.0	21.2	46.5	49.1
Other programs	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	39.1	18.2	18.5	18.7
	Non-specific	11.5	2.6	2.6	2.6
Total	Regional	3.0	1.8	-	-
	Non-regional	65.8	39.8	18.5	18.7
	Non-specific	27.5	23.8	49.1	51.7

Table 8 provides a summary of expenditure relating to transfer payments (being personal benefits and subsidies), and grants paid by the Australian Government through the Immigration and Citizenship portfolio.

The Settlement Grants 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 Budget. The estimates for 2013-14 and 2014-15 are based on 2nd and/or 3rd year funding for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 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 needs-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.

The settlement of humanitarian entrants in regional locations can have benefits for both the entrants and the receiving communities. Examples include:

- a reduction in the load on services and resources in capital cities;
- capacity building in regional areas that are growing in population;
- humanitarian entrants from rural backgrounds or with employment skills suited to regional areas can provide a labour force; and
- an increase cultural diversity.

Key benefits of regional settlement include the importance of pathways to training and employment in the local area to ensure the retention of new settlers, the availability of permanent affordable housing and the availability of public transport.

Distribution of SGP funding to individual States and Territories is determined by a number of factors, including the percentage of humanitarian arrivals in each State or Territory, recency of arrival, regional spread and overall target group numbers.

Funding for services to new arrivals in regional areas supports the settlement of these groups thereby reducing secondary migration to metropolitan areas. A growing regional population can create more employment opportunities in regional areas. The availability of employment opportunities as well as community support makes regional areas attractive destinations for more new migrants.

Within each State and Territory, the annual assessment of needs identifies settlement patterns, needs and general information including:

- communities and/or groups that are most in need of SGP assistance; and
- capacity building in regional areas that are growing in population.

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 Australian Government is committed to supporting regional communities to address these issues, to find local, sustainable solutions that allow the flexibility for businesses to find the workers they need, while also protecting regional skilled workers' employment opportunities.

The Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (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.

On 1 July 2012, the Australian Government introduced 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 are accessible under the RSMS. The upper age limit was raised from 45 to 50 years and market salaries were introduced to better respond to regional variations. Semi-skilled occupations are now available to regional areas where there are genuine unmet vacancies through the negotiation of a Labour Agreement or a Regional Migration Agreement.

In addition, applicants for RSMS and other 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. 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.

Regional Migration Agreements

The Australian Government has introduced Regional Migration Agreements (RMAs) bringing together employers, local and State 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. A strong focus of the RMAs is the fostering of training initiatives for Australians.

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 could 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 Australian Government 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 Points Tested Skilled Migration program may be sponsored to regional Australia as the holder of a provisional Skilled – Regional Sponsored (Subclass 489) visa, leading to permanent migration after the holder has lived (for at least two years) and worked (for at least one year) in specified regional areas of Australia.

This visa requires either sponsorship by a family member or nomination by a State or Territory Government, and is accessed through making an expression of interest in SkillSelect. Through this visa, State and Territory governments are able to nominate a wider range of occupations, under State Migration Plans, in order to meet regional skills shortages that cannot be sourced domestically.

Provided that holders of Skilled – Regional Sponsored visas meet the criteria requiring them to live and work in regional Australia, they are subsequently able to apply for a Skilled – Regional (Residence) (Subclass 887) visa, allowing permanent residence in Australia.

The points test includes additional points for living and working in a specified regional area, to support migration to our regions.

Seasonal Worker Program

The Seasonal Worker Program, which commenced on 1 July 2012, builds on the success of the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme. The program is demand driven and assists employers in the horticulture sector in all areas of regional Australia where they are unable to source enough local Australian workers. The program also includes a three year trial in limited locations with accommodation providers in the tourism industry, where vacancies are often unable to be filled because of competition for labour from the resources sector. The sugar cane, cotton and aquaculture sectors are also included in this trial. In addition to meeting seasonal labour shortages, the program also contributes to participating countries' economic development objectives and provides valuable economic opportunities for workers through the income they earn, the employment experience they gain, and the skills that they develop. Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu all participate in the program.

The Second Working Holiday Visa Initiative

Conceived in 2004-05, and introduced on 1 November 2005, the second Working Holiday (subclass 417) visa initiative was established to provide a pool of short term seasonal labour for the horticulture sector in regional Australia, due to ongoing and persistent labour shortages. It was subsequently expanded in 2006 to include the agriculture sector more generally and, in 2008, to include the mining and construction sectors.

Under the initiative, participants can acquire eligibility for a second Working Holiday visa where they undertake three months (88 days) 'specified work' in regional Australia while on their first Working Holiday visa. Participants are otherwise limited to holding a single Working Holiday visa in their lifetime, so the initiative creates a direct yet optional incentive for participants to move through and work within regional Australia. Specified work includes employment in the agriculture, mining and construction industries. Regional Australia under the initiative comprises all of Australia other than metropolitan Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Newcastle, parts of the Hunter Valley, the Central Coast, Sydney, Wollongong, Melbourne, the Australian Capital Territory, Perth and some surrounding hinterland areas.

Since its commencement, the initiative has proven popular with participants. In 2011-12, there were 30,501 second Working Holiday visa grants, and the initiative is growing at a rate of 24.8 per cent to 31 March 2013.

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

Australian Government's Social Inclusion Agenda for new initiatives to address the particular needs of vulnerable migrants and refugees and build community cohesion in regional locations. The social aspects of regional settlement include the presence of family and friends, a welcoming and accepting community and the small city/town environment.

Sustainable Regional Settlement

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

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

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, CLIMATE CHANGE, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

The Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (the Department) works with stakeholders to help build a robust economy for the future, through supporting tertiary education, skills development, scientific and research collaboration, innovation and productivity and efficiency increases.

The high Australian dollar has placed pressure on our trade-exposed manufacturing and services industries, which along with other global challenges is creating uncertainty. However, the future also holds many opportunities for Australian firms, including from the rise of Asia. The department, and the wider portfolio, are working to realise these opportunities through measures to accelerate productivity growth and secure Australia's prosperity in a competitive global economy.

Tertiary education, skills and a strong science and research base are important elements to improving productivity and efficiency; particularly in the context of a changing climate. Consequently the department supports collaboration between business, research bodies, the tertiary education sectors (vocational education and training and higher education), government and the broader community to discover, embrace and drive new ways of achieving economic and social benefits, such as the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. This collaboration effort is intended to keep our economy and society strong for today and into the future.

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 a number of strategic priorities: strengthen and focus scientific research, engagement and awareness; develop a highly skilled, educated and productive workforce; drive the development of productive, competitive and innovative industries for the future; contribute to effective national and global responses to climate change, including the necessary transformation for the Australian economy; increase participation and build capability, and foster 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 a broad regional presence with services delivered through a number of networks and agencies:

- AusIndustry;
- Enterprise Connect network;
- National Measurement Institute (NMI); and

- Portfolio agencies, such as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Climate Change Authority.

NEW INITIATIVES

Australian Institute of Marine Science – further funding

The Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) is Australia's tropical marine science agency. The 2013-14 Budget will provide an additional \$30.9 million over four years to secure world-class research capability and research programs. Based near Townsville AIMS undertakes innovative, world class marine research that contributes to an improved 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 2009-10 the total measureable value of economic activity based in the marine environment in Australia was around \$42.3 billion.

Australian Maritime College

The Australian Government will provide additional funding of approximately \$11.9 million over four years for the Australian Maritime College (AMC) to deliver specialised training to over 500 maritime students. Located in Tasmania, the AMC is Australia's national institute for maritime and maritime-related education, training and research. This investment will support the AMC in its continued delivery of training to develop and maintain the skills base needed to keep Australia's maritime industry growing.

Clean Technology Food and Foundries Investment Program Grant - Fonterra Australia Pty Ltd

Dairy company Fonterra Australia Pty Ltd (Fonterra) will improve its business competitiveness and boost export opportunity with a \$659,100 grant provided through the Australian Government's Clean Technology Food and Foundries Investment Program. Dairy production is recognised as a key growth sector for North Western Tasmania and an important export opportunity for the region. Energy efficiency is a vital means of improving economic productivity and the grant will assist Fonterra to reduce energy costs, cut emissions and improve their competitiveness.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Industry and Innovation

A Plan for Australian Jobs

The Australian Government's Industry and Innovation Statement – A Plan for Australian Jobs, is a \$1 billion plan focused on securing Australian jobs, boosting productivity, supporting innovation, and ensuring that Australian businesses take advantage of the unique opportunities presented by the Asian Century.

Under the plan, the Australian Government will introduce new laws to help Australian business gain access to major domestic projects. The introduction of Australian industry participation plans for all projects worth \$500.0 million or more, coupled with changes to the Enhanced Project By-Law Scheme on projects worth \$2.0 billion or more, could bring in an extra \$1.6 billion of new work a year for domestic companies (including those that are regionally based).

The Australian Government will also invest over \$500.0 million in establishing up to 10 new Industry Innovation Precincts. The precincts will bring together Australia's best research and business minds to develop innovations needed to sustain jobs and industries. All areas of Australia, including regional areas, will benefit from the national network focus of the precincts supported by an online platform, the Industry Innovation Network. Two precincts have already been identified (manufacturing and food). The remaining precincts will be selected through a competitive process during 2013 and will be operational in 2014.

A new \$350.0 million round of the Innovation Investment Fund will stimulate private investment to help small businesses grow. Reforms will also be introduced to venture capital tax arrangements to improve clarity of tax treatment for private sector investors and to facilitate increased investment in venture capital. The Enterprise Solutions program will help small and medium businesses develop solutions to public sector needs. These measures should significantly improve investment and innovation opportunities for businesses, including those in regional areas.

AusIndustry Regional Managers Network

The AusIndustry Regional Managers Network (the 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.

Clean Technology Program

The Australian 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 detailed below.

- **Clean Technology Investment Program**

The Clean Technology Investment Program is a \$800.0 million program over seven years that provides grants to existing Australian manufacturing businesses to invest in energy efficient capital equipment and low emissions technologies, processes and products. The grants, delivered by AusIndustry, provide practical transitional assistance to Australian manufacturing businesses. The program opened for applications on 16 February 2012. Of the 94 successful grants announced, 22 are for projects within regional areas for a combined grant amount of \$17.9 million as at 9 May 2013.

- **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, delivered by AusIndustry, provide practical transitional assistance to Australian manufacturing businesses. The program opened for applications on 16 February 2012. Of the 129 successful grants announced, 78 are for projects within regional areas for a combined grant amount of \$55.6 million as at 9 May 2013.

The above two programs are now reported as one item in Budget documents under the name Clean Technology Investment Programs.

- **Clean Technology Innovation Program**

The Clean Technology Innovation program is a \$200.0 million competitive, merit-based, grants program supporting the development and commercialisation of innovative clean technology products, processes and services that reduce greenhouse emissions. It supports Australian companies, including small and regionally based businesses. Applications involving collaboration (domestic and/or international) with research institutions or other companies, are highly encouraged.

Since the program opened for applications on 6 July 2012, two grants worth a combined \$250,058 have been announced to recipients from regional areas as at 26 March 2013.

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 \$82.0 million in 2013-14, with ongoing funding of \$82.0 million per year thereafter.

Since it opened to applications in January 2010, 64 of the 375 of the organisations supported by Commercialisation Australia have been located in regional Australia (i.e. outside capital cities). These organisations have received grants totalling almost \$20 million. Case Managers make regular visits to regional Australia to assist participants and meet with potential applicants.

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 Small to Medium sized Enterprises (SME).

The CRC program conducts annual selection rounds. The 16th CRC selection round is currently open and closes on 13 June 2013. One of the priorities for the round is sustainable regional communities.

Currently there are 15 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 Indigenous communities and improving health outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Of the 196 CRCs funded since 1991, there have been 81 rural-focused CRCs with some \$1.59 billion in Australian Government funding being provided.

Enterprise Connect

Enterprise Connect is a national network of 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. A number of the Innovative Regions Centres are also focused on supporting regional Australia.

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 to stimulate investment and diversify the economic base of the Illawarra region. It is 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. Two competitive funding rounds were conducted. Some 32 projects are being supported generating 736 new, direct fulltime equivalent jobs and \$71.0 million in total project investment by 30 June 2014.

National Measurement Services

The Department, through the National Measurement Institute (NMI), interacts with customers and businesses nationwide including regional areas to provide analytical chemistry testing, peak physical metrology and chemical and biological metrology services. Regional sectors that benefit from NMI activities include health, environment, agriculture, manufacturing (including food), resources, energy, transport and communications.

NMI also has national regulatory responsibility for trade measurement which ensures trade transactions based on measurement are accurate and faithfully represented. NMI's trade measurement network includes laboratories in seven major capital cities and 19 regionally based offices. Trade measurement staff, especially those in outer metropolitan areas, travel to all parts of regional Australia.

Research and Development Tax Incentive

The Research and Development (R&D) Tax Incentive is a key element of the Australian Government's support for Australia's innovation system. The R&D Tax Incentive provides generous support to eligible businesses, including those in regional areas, undertaking R&D activities. The two key components of the R&D Tax Incentive are a 45 per cent refundable tax offset for SMEs with an aggregated turnover of under \$20 million; and a 40 per cent non-refundable tax offset for eligible larger firms. A 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.

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 has been funded to continue to 30 June 2016.

Small Business Advisory Services Program

The Small Business Advisory Services (SBAS) program has several elements detailed below.

- **Program Continuation**

On 8 May 2012, the Australian Government announced that \$27.5 million will be provided to extend the Small Business Advisory Services program for a further four years to enable the continued delivery of advisory and support services to small businesses. Under this budget announcement, the program is to be funded on an ongoing basis. Twenty-nine of the providers supported under this initiative are located in regional Australia.

- **StartUp Queensland**

On 15 November 2012, the Australian Government announced that Business Enterprise Centres Australia (BECA) had been granted \$200,000 under the national interest provision for the StartUp Queensland initiative. This initiative is for the provision of low cost business advisory services to small business affected by the recent redundancies of public servants in all areas of Queensland.

- **Queensland Natural Disaster Assistance**

The Australian Government has provided funding of \$2.0 million over two years, 2013-2014 to 2014-2015, to enable service providers to deliver low cost business advisory services to small businesses in Queensland impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald. It is expected that approximately 10 service providers will receive about \$100,000 per annum over two years. Contracts will be finalised by the end of June 2013 with services expected to commence in July 2013. The majority of the providers are likely to be located in regional areas.

- **Business Coaching and Mentoring**

On 13 March 2013, the Australian Government announced that the following three BEC's: Advance Cairns; Penrith and District; and Southern Success, had been awarded funding of \$200,000 each over two years. The BECs will provide business coaching and mentoring services to small businesses located in the regions of Cairns, Western Sydney and the City of Onkaparinga in southern Adelaide.

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, including those in regional areas, 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 competitive grant program running five years from July 2010 to June 2015 and contributing \$33.2 million. It has funded large projects that will build innovative capability at the enterprise and workplace level. An example of a TCF SCP project in a regional area is:

- 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.

Climate Change

The Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education 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. These include assistance to industry in regional areas as Australia moves toward a low carbon economy, as well as key programs to create opportunities in the land sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while maintaining productivity and improving sustainability and resilience.

Over \$1 billion of carbon price revenue is being invested in the land sector in regional Australia, through funding programs that help farmers and land managers reduce pollution and enhance biodiversity. Components of the land sector package are being delivered by the Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education portfolio, as well as the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

The carbon price does not apply to agricultural and land sector emissions. This means that farmers do not have carbon price liabilities for agricultural activities, or for the fuel they use for farm equipment.

The Jobs and Competitiveness Program

The Jobs and Competitiveness Program (JCP) supports local jobs and production, encourages industry to invest in cleaner technologies and assists with their restructure towards a low carbon Australian economy.

The JCP provides assistance, in the form of free carbon unit allocations, targeted at companies with significant emissions that are constrained in their capacity to pass through costs in the global markets. Of the \$2.02 billion worth of assistance provided to date, \$1.32 billion has been provided to facilities operating in regional Australia. Twenty-nine of the 48 industrial activities (including steel, aluminium, cement and zinc manufacturing) that have been assessed as being eligible for assistance are carried out in regional Australia across 85 sites.

Carbon Farming Initiative

The Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) offers farmers and landholders the opportunity to diversify farm income and increase productivity by generating carbon credits through storing carbon or reducing greenhouse gas emissions on their land. These credits can be sold to people and businesses wanting to offset their emissions. Participation in the CFI is voluntary.

Farmers and landholders can earn credits for activities such as reducing emissions from landfill, savanna burning, manure in piggeries and dairy farms; storing carbon through permanent environmental plantings, reforestation and afforestation; and regeneration of permanent even-aged native forest. A range of CFI projects are underway across the country and hundreds of thousands of credits have been issued.

The Australian Government has allocated \$45.6 million between 2010-11 and 2013-14 to support the implementation of the CFI. This includes funding 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.

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, is converting research – including outcomes from other research programs funded by the Australian Government – into 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 eligibility criteria and use an approved methodology. This program is expanding abatement opportunities under the CFI by facilitating the development of methodologies that comply with CFI requirements and meet the needs of agricultural industries and rural communities.

Regional Natural Resource Management Planning for Climate Change

Fund

The Australian Government is supporting improved regional planning for climate change through the Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Planning for Climate Change Fund. The fund is divided into two streams:

- Stream 1, delivered by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, has been allocated \$29.0 million over five years from 2011-12 and will support the regional NRM organisations revise existing regional NRM plans to help identify where in the landscape climate change adaptation and mitigation activities should be undertaken; and
- Stream 2, delivered by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, provides \$15.0 million over four years from 2012-13 to support information delivery, research and analysis to develop scenarios on regional climate change impacts which can be used for NRM and land use planning.

Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund

The Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund supports Indigenous Australians to participate in the CFI. The fund comprises two streams:

- A research and development stream (\$5.2 million over five years from 2012-13, delivered by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education) is supporting development of CFI 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 support Indigenous people to establish and participate in CFI projects.

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. These benefits are derived through the operations of the Anglo-Australian Telescope and the Schmidt Telescope, and through its outreach activities and community engagement.

The AAO employs 28 staff at its Siding Spring observatory site. The AAO is a major drawcard for tourists to the region, with approximately 17,500 visitors each year, noting this will be impacted by the bushfire in 2013.

The AAO is collaborating with the local community, regional councils, the Coonabarabran District Chamber of Commerce and the New South Wales Department of Planning and Infrastructure to develop a template Local Environmental Plan. 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 (ACPFPG) based in Adelaide, SA, assists the agriculture industries in regional Australia to remain environmentally sustainable and economically competitive. ACPFG 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. Total Australian Government funding commitment to the ACPFG from 2002 to 2013 is approximately \$45.7 million. This comprises funding commitments from the Australian Research Council and the Grains Research and Development Corporation.

Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) is one of Australia's largest public research organisations and the centre of Australia's nuclear expertise. ANSTO is also a major employer in the Illawarra region of New South Wales. This expertise is applied to nuclear medicine production and health 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, producing approximately 550,000 patient doses of life-saving nuclear medicines each year. These medicines are distributed right across Australia, including to 35 regional hospitals and medical practices. The remainder of regional areas are supplied from isotopes ANSTO supplies to radio pharmacies.

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. AIATSIS has been conducting intensive community access programs in places such as Brewarrina, Fitzroy Crossing, Palm Island, Taree, Cherbourg and Barunga communities.

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 Research Council

The Australian Research Council (ARC) manages the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) and the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative.

The NCGP supports research across a wide range of disciplines including areas relevant to regional and rural issues. Recipients of funding under the NCGP include universities in regional areas. In addition, the ARC encourages partnerships between researchers and industry, government, community organisations and the international community.

- **Excellence in Research for Australia**

The ERA initiative measures the quality of research at Australian universities, by discipline. ERA collects comprehensive data from universities regarding research quality, research volume and activity, research application, and research recognition. This rich data is then set against international benchmarks and evaluated by eight broad discipline-based committees, comprised of internationally recognised researchers with extensive disciplinary expertise. The ERA methodology has been recognised by the OECD as world leading.

ERA outcomes assist government, industry, universities, academics and students to make informed decisions about research paths, research opportunities and ongoing research collaboration, including collaboration between regional universities and other institutions.

- **Australian Research Council Centres of Excellence**

The ARC Centres of Excellence scheme aims to enhance and develop Australia's research excellence through highly innovative and collaborative research, as well as build Australia's human capacity in a range of research areas. Funding for thirteen new ARC Centres of Excellence commenced in

2011, including \$11.9 million over seven years for the ARC Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions. This centre will generate the fundamental knowledge and tools needed to make the best use of available resources for conservation.

The next round of funding for the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme is due to commence in 2014, with a call for proposals expected in 2013.

- **Industrial Transformation Research Program**

Through the ARC Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP), the Australian Government will invest \$236.0 million over five years in quality research and development partnerships that will help transform Australia's industries. The ITRP will fund research hubs and training centres. Eligible organisations for funding under the ITRP include universities in regional areas. The eligible organisations are expected to partner with innovative national and international industries.

- **Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' Network**

The ARC Special Research Initiative for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers' network funds a new research network which builds the capacity and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers. The National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network will receive \$3.2 million in funding over four years to build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers of all career stages to undertake high quality research and lead research projects. The Network includes universities from regional areas.

Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder and Square Kilometre Array Radio Telescopes

The Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) is being built by CSIRO in Western Australia's Mid West. Once operational in 2015, the \$188.0 million ASKAP will help answer fundamental questions about the universe.

ASKAP is a pre-cursor to the international multi-billion dollar Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio-telescope. The SKA will also be co-located in Murchison and will be the world's largest and most sensitive radio-telescope. Local communities and businesses are expected to benefit from the construction and operational phases of these two projects.

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. Total Australian Government funding commitment to the institute from 2010 to 2013 is approximately \$19.5 million.

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.

To assist regional universities develop their research capabilities the Australian Government introduced the Collaborative Research Networks program (CRN) to support them to work in partnership with more research intensive institutions. An additional \$19.6 million for three more projects was announced in July 2012 (Stage 2), bringing total announced CRN funding to \$81.1 million for fifteen projects. The CRN projects also aim to address regional issues like the future of the Murray Darling Basin, mental health, environmental management and regional development; and Indigenous health and wellbeing.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) has 25 sites across regional Australia, delivering scientific expertise and research capability and linking with the local innovation infrastructure. Some key CSIRO achievements which have regional applications include the following:

- 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 underserviced 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.

National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training

The National Centre for Groundwater Research and Training located in Adelaide, South Australia, 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 hydro-geologists, groundwater engineers and groundwater managers. This will ensure that Australia will have the skills and

knowledge regarding this most important water resource. In turn groundwater will become 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.

Questacon

Questacon is Australia's award-winning National Science and Technology Centre located in the Parliamentary Zone of the national capital. Questacon attracts some 450,000 visitors, including those from regional Australia, annually. Apart from the in-centre activities Questacon also offers a number of outreach and travelling exhibition programs and administers the national Inspiring Australia program.

- **Questacon National Outreach Programs**

Questacon runs a suite of outreach programs including travelling exhibitions to make science and technology programs accessible to communities throughout Australia, with a focus on regional areas. In 2011-12, there were over 118,000 visitors to the outreach programs from 890 schools and other venues in regional and remote communities. These programs include:

Shell Questacon Science Circus is in its 28th year of operation. This world class outreach program has a significant impact on engaging regional Australia with science. In 2011-12 over 60,000 people experienced the Shell Questacon Science Circus show with 340 schools visited.

Questacon ScienceLines – Indigenous Outreach program develops appropriate programs for Indigenous audiences. In 2011-12 specially designed programs were delivered to 2,539 people in 59 venues in the Murray Basin regions of Victoria and New South Wales and coastal New South Wales Indigenous communities.

Questacon Digital program presents interactive workshops via video conference to schools in regional areas. The Questacon Digital Studio is developing the use of digital and online activities to further engage individuals and communities in regional Australia in science communication. In 2011-12, 4,824 visitors from 118 venues took part in digitally-facilitated activities.

The Questacon Travelling Exhibitions program delivers engaging interactive touring exhibitions to regional and metropolitan venues across Australia. These exhibitions range from portable, self-installing to larger more complex exhibitions. Questacon exhibitions encourage visitors to explore scientific concepts through interpretive and stimulating experiences accessible to audiences of all ages. In 2011-12, there were over 660,000 visitors to travelling exhibitions in ten venues. In June 2012, the four year Raising National Water Standards partnership between Questacon and the National Water

Commission, which included both travelling and static exhibitions, was successfully completed.

- **Inspiring Australia program**

Inspiring Australia (IA) is the national strategy for engagement with the sciences. This national program has several elements, including National Science Week, Prime Minister's Prizes for Science, Unlocking Australia's Potential grants round and the National Framework - Local Approach initiative.

In excess of 1.4 million people participated in over 1,000 National Science Week 2012 events across the country. The \$500,000 National Science Week grants round funded 37 science awareness and engagement events across the country during National Science Week in 2012.

The \$5.0 million Unlocking Australia's Potential competitive grants round is funding 63 science engagement projects with 52 having a regional component.

The Inspiring Australia program, through its National Framework - Local Action initiative and its State and Territory-based Inspiring Australia Officers, is establishing a number of regional hubs. These hubs, comprising institutions in a local area, facilitate science engagement activities which are relevant to local communities and advance the goals of the Inspiring Australia initiative.

National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy

The Australian Government is providing \$185.9 million to fund the operation of collaborative research infrastructure previously funded under the Super Science Initiative and the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy.

These major research infrastructure developments provide 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

The objective of the program is to contribute to the development of a highly skilled and relevant Australian workforce that supports economic sustainability and competitiveness by:

- providing genuine opportunities for skills-based training and development of employees by providing incentives to employers of eligible Australian apprentices; and
- encouraging people to enter into skills-based training through an Australian apprenticeship by providing personal benefits.

Payments under the program are available Australia wide and are targeted at specific areas, for example, the Rural and Regional Skills Shortage incentive aims to boost training in rural and regional Australia.

Further information is available at www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au.

Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Program

The Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Program was announced in the 2011-12 Budget as part of the \$101.4 million Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring package.

The program seeks to improve Australian apprenticeship retention rates through the provision of approximately \$79.4 million over four years to support targeted mentoring and assistance to Australian apprentices. It is targeted at industries and occupations with current or emerging skills needs and Australian apprentices who may face barriers to participation such as Indigenous apprentices or apprentices in remote locations. Mentoring projects will target support to the first year of training when Australian apprentices are most at risk of withdrawing.

Skills Connect

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 connects them with Australian Government funding to meet their unique business or industry training and workforce development needs, helping them to build productivity and improve the future of their business.

Through Skills Connect, industry has access to a broad range of assistance no matter whether they are in metropolitan, regional, rural or remote areas. Skills Connect draws upon a range of strategic regional and industry based service partnerships, whose core business is to assist and advise Australian enterprises with business and workforce planning. The network of service partners helps 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 all Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) in bachelor courses of study and some CSPs in sub-bachelor, non-research postgraduate, medicine and other courses of study. In 2012 the Australian Government provided \$5.8 billion through the CGS to fund more than 547,000 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 formula that targets

the campuses that need the most support, using a transparent process that responds to student demand.

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.

An EIF Regional Priorities round was announced in October 2011 to provide \$500.0 million to higher education institutions and vocational education training providers across regional Australia. The Regional Priorities Round has two components: \$480.0 million 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. Announcements of successful projects under the competitive component are ongoing.

Education and Training Advisers

Under the Education and Training Advisers (ETA) program the Australian Government funds the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Industry Group and the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) to support a network of 15 ETAs across all States and Territories. The NFF has subcontracted Rural Skills Australia (RSA) to undertake this role.

The RSA advisers have a strong focus on rural and regional training issues. The key function of ETAs is to work through the peak industry associations to provide high quality advice about Australian Government skills and training programs and other initiatives. The ultimate goal is to improve the take-up of nationally recognised training, increase participation in the workforce and increase productivity of enterprises.

National Workforce Development Fund

The National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) is an initiative under the Building Australia's Future Workforce package. The NWDF forms part of the Skills Connect Network. Through the NWDF the Australian Government will provide \$617.9 million over five 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 Australian Government has made a

commitment to ensuring that a fair proportion of funding is provided to those living and working in regional areas.

Recognising that the jobs of tomorrow will increasingly need higher level skills, in the 2012-13 Budget the Australian Government allocated \$35.0 million under the NWDF to support mature-age workers to re-skill or up-skill.

Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program

The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) was established in 2010 with the aim of achieving the Australian Government's ambition 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 provides funding to universities, including those in regional Australia, through two components: a participation component, with the objective of increasing the participation of domestic students from low SES backgrounds in accredited undergraduate qualifications; 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.

National Disability Coordination Officer Program

Through a national network of offices covering 31 service regions across the country, the National Disability Coordinator Officer (NDCO) program works with local stakeholders to reduce systemic barriers, facilitate smooth transitions, build links and coordinate services between the education, training and employment sectors to improve transitions and participation for people with a disability.

In the next round of program funding which is due to commence on 1 July 2013, providers in some non-metropolitan regions will receive a small, annual subsidy towards program related travel and accommodation costs. The total annual travel subsidy to be distributed among these regions is \$119,710.

The Australian Government is providing \$22.0 million over 2012-13 to 2016-17 under the NDCO.

Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance)

The Australian Government will provide some \$41.3 million in 2013 to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across the higher education and vocational education and training (VET) sectors under the following elements:

- Away from Base for 'mixed-mode' delivery is primarily focussed on assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from regional and remote areas. It provides funding to assist with the travel costs of students studying approved 'mixed mode' courses where that course requires the student to travel away from their permanent home for a short period of time. This

includes students required to attend short courses, field trips, occasional residential schools, practical placements or other approved activities. 'Mixed-mode' is a form of tertiary education where students undertake courses of study while based in their home community through a combination of distance and intensive face-to-face education.

- Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme provides funding for supplementary tuition to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying university award level courses and Australian Qualifications Framework accredited VET courses at eligible higher education and non-government VET institutions. The majority of funded institutions operate in regional and remote areas.
- Supplementary Recurrent Assistance provides supplementary per capita funding to eligible non-government VET institutions, to assist them to accelerate the educational outcomes of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, beyond those which could be reasonably achieved through mainstream and own source funding alone. The majority of funded institutions operate in regional and remote areas.

Commonwealth Scholarship Program

The Commonwealth Scholarship Program aims to improve access to and participation in higher education by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from low socio-economic status backgrounds and regional areas by assisting with the costs associated with undertaking higher education.

The Indigenous Support Program (ISP)

The Indigenous Support Program (ISP) provides funding to universities including those in regional Australia to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and further the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy. The ISP supports activities aimed at improving the access, participation, success and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education.

Industry Skills Councils

The Australian 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 Coordinators

The Australian Government is working with State governments to help connect suitable workers in one region with available mining and construction jobs in remote locations via Fly-In-Fly-Out (FIFO) arrangements. FIFO Coordinators are being supported in Cairns, Wide Bay and the Gold Coast in Queensland; Darwin in the Northern Territory to connect people in remote communities to work in Darwin; and in regional New South Wales to work with existing service providers to connect workers affected by structural adjustment to resources jobs.

Apprentice to Business Owner

The new Apprentice to Business Owner Program (AtoB Program) provides small business management training and mentoring support for tradespeople who are seeking to, or have recently, established a business. It is being delivered nationally by a panel of AtoB Program Brokers. Twenty-four brokers are covering regional and non-metropolitan Australia.

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) seeks to improve eligible job seekers' language, literacy and/or numeracy skills with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or employment. Over the 2010-2013 contract period, more than \$12 million in funding for LLN places was allocated to providers in regional and remote locations.

Promotion of Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

The Australian Government has provided 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, for example the Renewing Rural and Regional Teacher Education Curriculum (RRRTEC) project. 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.

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, \$291.6 million is going to regionally headquartered universities.

The SAF will assist universities, particularly in regional and outer metropolitan areas, to adapt to the demand driven funding system by providing support for significant changes in the focus, organisation or operation of, institutions and campuses, including collaboration with other institutions.

Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Partnership

Since 2010, the Australian Government has committed more than \$44.0 million from the Structural Adjustment Fund to enhance the quality of higher education services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Northern Territory, by supporting a partnership between Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and Charles Darwin University (CDU). Utilising the expertise of both institutions, a range of new courses have been developed, including subjects relevant to future practitioners of health and education who will be servicing regional and remote Indigenous clients. The Australian Centre of Indigenous Knowledge and Education (ACIKE) has been established within CDU, and BIITE academics now teach into CDU courses in their areas of expertise. A focus for 2013 is the expansion of online course elements for regional/remote students ongoing professional development.

Student Income Support

The Australian Government provides means tested assistance to students through Youth Allowance, Austudy and their related supplementary payments such as the relocation which provides additional assistance for higher education students. Comprehensive reforms to student payments since 2010 have prioritised assistance to low and middle income families, including regional families.

Relocation Scholarships

Recognising that students from regional areas experience higher costs to relocate for study, from 1 January 2012, the Australian Government increased the value of Relocation Scholarships for eligible regional students from \$1000 to \$2,000 for each of the second and third years of study. In 2013, for eligible regional students, this has increased to \$2024 in each of the second and third years that a student lives away from home to undertake higher education.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

The Australian Government recognises the vital importance of Australia's regions to our national prosperity and the unique contribution regional Australians make to our national character. The Infrastructure and Transport portfolio is committed to supporting vibrant, productive and sustainable rural and regional communities, throughout Australia.

Through the next phase of the Nation Building Program, the Australian Government will continue to strengthen road and rail infrastructure in our regions. The \$24 billion under the next phase of the Nation Building Program, together with the \$36 billion Nation Building Program (2008-09 to 2013-14) will make a significant difference to land transport infrastructure across Australia. Almost two thirds of this funding is being invested in rural and regional Australia. This includes significant investment to build and renew roads, fix thousands of black spots and upgrade the freight rail network. This investment is modernising Australia's national infrastructure and delivering economic benefits across the nation.

SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 9 illustrates a summary of expenditure for selected grants programs in the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio disaggregated between regional Australia and non-regional and non-specific location for the budget year and forward estimates. It does not include grants programs where payments are made to the States and Territories or for grants programs of less than \$50 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 Table 9.

Table 9: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for selected grants programs of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate
		2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m	2015-16 \$m	2016-17 \$m
Program 1.1: Infrastructure investment	Regional	287	-	-	-
Nation Building Roads to Recovery	Non-regional	73	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	350	350	350
Nation Building Program Investment	Regional	-	-	-	-
(ARTC and Road and Rail Research)	Non-regional	62	-	-	-
	Non-specific	23	-	-	-
Program 2.2: Surface transport	Regional	114	117	119	121
Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total	Regional	401	117	119	121
	Non-regional	135	-	-	-
	Non-specific	23	350	350	350

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 Australian Government has committed around \$114 million in 2013-14 and \$357 million in the forward years to the scheme.

NEW INITIATIVES

Nation Building Program

Through the next phase of the Nation Building Program, the Australian Government will build upon its current program of works, increasing its investment to \$24 billion (2014-15 to 2018-19) which builds upon the \$36 billion investment in road, rail and port infrastructure already being made under the Nation Building Program (2008-09 to 2013-14). This investment will be made in partnership with State, Territory and local governments, as well as with industry, to ensure that the right projects are delivered at the right time.

The overarching objective of the Nation Building Program is to ‘lift Australia’s productivity through nationally significant land transport infrastructure’. The next phase of the program will focus on four cornerstone themes to support this overarching objective: Moving Freight; Connecting People; Safety; and Innovation. In line with these themes, funding will be provided for projects that improve infrastructure on major interstate freight networks and local freight links, improve connectivity between regional centres and cities, and repair and upgrade local roads to improve safety and access to services and communities.

The next phase of the Nation Building Program provides funding of \$4.1 billion (over 10 years from 2012-13) for a package of projects to upgrade and maintain the Bruce Highway. As Queensland’s major north-south transport corridor the 1670 kilometre Bruce Highway links Brisbane and the regional centres to the north of the State. This takes the Australian Government’s funding commitment to Bruce Highway to \$5.7 billion since 2008.

It also provides \$500.0 million for a 10 year capital works program on the Midland Highway to improve safety and connectivity at targeted locations on this critical north-south road link in Tasmania. The Midland Highway is the main freight connection facilitating access from the southern region to the State’s northern ports.

The next phase also provides funding for a range of projects that specifically target road safety and productivity in regional areas including (but not limited to):

- Great Northern Highway (Western Australia): a package of works along the section of the Great Northern Highway between Muchea and Wubin, including realignment of sections of the highway, intersection upgrades, road widening and construction of additional overtaking lanes.
- Warrego Highway Upgrades (Queensland): a package of works between Toowoomba and Miles which will improve safety, capacity and regeneration of various sections on the Warrego Highway.
- Princes Highway West (Victoria): the construction of the next stage of the duplication of the Princes Highway West, between Winchelsea and Colac.
- North West Coastal Highway (Western Australia): a package of upgrades over 136 kilometres of the North West Coastal Highway between Minilya and Barradale, including widening and strengthening works, as well as the construction of two new bridges.
- Anangu Pitjanjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands (South Australia): upgrades to sections of the 210 kilometres of main access road between the Stuart Highway and Pukatja, and improving 21 kilometres of community roads. This package of work will provide all weather access to airstrips in Pukatja, Umuwa, Fregon, Mimili, Indulkana, and to the Umuwa and Fregon homelands.

- Tasmanian Freight Rail Revitalisation Package: the continuation of the improvements to the major lines on the freight rail network, including replacing approximately 290 track kilometres of old rail track.
- Northern Territory Regional Roads Productivity Package: the upgrade of six regional roads: strengthen and widen sections of the Roper Highway; seal sections of Port Keats Road and improve flood immunity; replace gravel on poor sections of the Santa Teresa Way; construct a new bridge over Rocky Bottom Creek on Central Arnhem Road; strengthen, widen and seal sections of the Buntine Highway; and replace gravel on poor sections of Arnhem Link Road.
- Bolivia Hill (New South Wales): the realignment of a section of the New England Highway at Bolivia Hill to improve safety.
- Scone Level Crossing (New South Wales): to fix congestion and safety issues around the level crossing along the New England Highway in Scone.

As part of the next phase of the Nation Building Program the Australian Government has also committed funding for the continuation of the Black Spot program (\$60.0 million per year), Roads to Recovery (\$350.0 million per year), Maintenance (\$350.0 million per year) and Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (\$40.0 million per year).

Regional Aviation Access Program

The Australian Government has committed a further \$9.9 million over two years to extend the Remote Aerodrome Upgrade Program (RAU), a funding component of the Regional Aviation Access Program.

The funding will provide assistance to the owners of remote airstrips for capital works projects to improve the safety and accessibility of airstrips and facilitate the provision of non-commercial essential community air services. These 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.

Already, more than \$50 million has been made available through this program to upgrade 237 remote airstrips ensuring some of the nation's most remote communities have access to these essential services.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Nation Building Program

The Nation Building Program will continue 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 we are boosting our economy's productivity. The \$36 billion first phase of the Nation Building Program

(2008-09 to 2013-14) is well underway with a number of large projects either complete or nearing completion, such as the full duplication of the Hume Highway which is expected to be complete mid-2013. The rollout of a range of projects will continue in 2013-14, including the duplication of the Pacific Highway in New South Wales, the construction of the Regional Rail Link in Victoria and the upgrade of the Bruce Highway in Queensland.

Over the next 12 months further substantial progress will be made on the full duplication of the Pacific Highway, which is the largest, most complex road construction project ever undertaken in this country. The Pacific Highway upgrade will provide continuous dual carriageway from Newcastle to the Queensland border, with significant safety and productivity benefits for users of this vital transport link for industries and regional communities along the stretch of the highway.

Construction of the Regional Rail Link which is currently the nation's biggest public transport infrastructure project will also continue over the next 12 months. In total the Australian Government is providing \$3.2 billion towards the project which is building 90 kilometres of new track to connect West Werribee to Southern Cross Station. Once complete, the Regional Rail Link will create capacity for an extra 10 regional services at peak travelling times and will significantly reduce travel times for commuters to the regional hubs of Bendigo and Ballarat.

The Australian Government will continue the roll out of the upgrade of the Interstate Rail Freight Network with an investment of \$3.8 billion from 2008-09 to 2013-14, with \$387.2 million to be provided in 2013-14. There are currently 19 projects underway including the construction of new passing loops, replacement of sleepers, rail and ballast, and other improvements that will improve the speed and reliability of the network. This investment under the Nation Building Program is upgrading more than one third of the Interstate Rail Freight Network.

In addition to funding nationally significant land transport infrastructure projects, the Nation Building Program includes several ongoing programs such as the Black Spot Program, Roads to Recovery Program and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program.

Black Spot Program

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

The investment of \$502.2 million from 2008-09 to 2013-14, with \$64.5 million to be provided in 2013-14, is helping to make our local roads safer for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. Each state and territory receives a share of the total funding, based on population and crash data. Around half of Black Spot funds in each state (except Tasmania) are reserved for projects in non-metropolitan areas.

Roads to Recovery Program

The Australian Government is providing a record \$2.1 billion from 2008-09 to 2013-14 with \$373.5 million in 2013-14 to councils through the Roads to Recovery Program. Of this, more than 75 per cent (\$287.0 million) will be provided to 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 Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

The Australian Government has committed \$320.0 million to deliver heavy vehicle safety and productivity projects for the heavy vehicle industry and other road users across Australia. This includes \$112.0 million from 2008-09 to 2013-14, \$40.0 million in 2013-14, and \$208.0 million from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Projects funded under the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program are aimed at improving safety and productivity of the heavy vehicle industry through the construction of rest stops and parking bays, upgrading the capacity of roads (including bridges) and technology trials which will improve heavy vehicle productivity. Projects eligible for assistance under this program include livestock transport industry projects.

Regional Aviation Access Program

The Regional Aviation Access Program (RAAP) has a 2013-14 Budget allocation of \$18.8 million. This funding will be used across the funding components of the program, providing assistance for airstrip works projects and to subsidise essential flights to remote communities. Funding Components under RAAP include:

- the Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme;
- the Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program;
- the Remote Aviation Infrastructure Fund;
- the Remote Aerodrome Safety Program; and
- the Remote Aerodrome Inspection Program.

Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme

The Remote Air Services Subsidy (RASS) Scheme subsidises regular, typically weekly passenger and freight air transportation to communities that would otherwise have no regular access to transport. Flights under the Scheme serve 255 communities in remote locations across the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program

Australian Government funded grants are available for communities to improve the safety and accessibility of airstrips and facilitate the provision of non-commercial essential community air services. 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.

Remote Aviation Infrastructure Fund

The purpose of the Remote Aviation Infrastructure Fund is to upgrade airstrips at remote Indigenous communities that receive a weekly flight under RASS, where the airstrip is not at the required Regular Public Transport aviation safety standard as determined by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

Remote Aerodrome Safety Program

Australian Government funded grants were provided for remote communities to improve the safety and accessibility of airstrips and facilitate the provision of non-commercial essential community air services. The program has now closed.

Remote Aerodrome Inspection Program

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

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

Seatbelts on Regional School Buses

The Australian Government continues to fund the provision of seatbelts on school buses operating in regional and rural areas. The Seatbelts on Regional School Buses program aims to improve the safety of school children travelling by bus on higher risk regional routes. The program will provide funding of \$1.0 million in 2013-14 to help eligible bus operators cover the costs of seatbelt installation. A further \$1.0 million has been allocated in each of the forward years to 2015-16.

National Transport Planning

The Australian Government has provided funding 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 work is helping take critical research and analysis to the next level – ensuring governments are best placed to take informed decisions on transport systems and networks across the country.

Strengthening aviation security – regional and domestic aviation security

In 2013-14 the Australian Government has made available \$4.2 million to strengthen aviation security in regional Australia. This funding will provide continued support to regional airports implementing passenger and baggage screening for all regular public transport and open charter air services utilising aircraft with a maximum take off weight greater than 20,000 kilograms.

The Australian Government will assist with the cost of screening equipment at these regional airports.

This measure will deliver an enhanced security outcome for passengers passing through regional airports, and concludes the Australian Government's commitment to fund regional and domestic aviation security measures announced in the Strengthening Aviation Security Initiative on 9 February 2010.

Aviation security enhancements – regional passenger screening

Funding of \$3.1 million over the forward estimates has been made available by the Australian Government to the Regional Passenger Screening Program. In addition, \$1.0 million will be provided in 2013-14. This program is designed to build capability at Australian non-screened security controlled airports in security screening, through funding for security training including in the use of hand wand metal detection equipment, in the event of a heightened security alert level in Australia.

This initiative enables these airports, upon direction from the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, to screen passengers for weapons and prohibited items in order to safeguard air travellers and airport infrastructure.

REGIONAL AUSTRALIA, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ARTS AND SPORT

The Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio supports the Australian 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 Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (the Department) ensures services are efficiently delivered and policies and programs are evidence-based and appropriately targeted for regional Australia. The Department works across all levels of government and with a range of community and industry stakeholders to ensure that regional perspectives are considered and reflected in policy and program design and delivery. A key focus of the Department is the delivery of almost \$1 billion in Australian Government funding for the Regional Development Australia Fund for infrastructure projects that address the identified priorities of regional communities.

The Department works closely with local governments to build capacity, provide essential services and develop effective planning initiatives. The Department manages the Australian Government's interests in the self-governing territories – the Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory and Norfolk Island, as well as administering the non-self-governing territories – Ashmore and Cartier Islands, Christmas Island, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, the Coral Sea Islands and Jervis Bay Territory.

The Department also has an important role overseeing and managing both sport and recreation and arts and culture functions. The Department develops and administers policies and programs that cultivate the arts, including those that celebrate and build pride in our Indigenous culture. It also delivers a number of programs that promote sport at the grassroots, national and elite levels.

SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 10: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport portfolio

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport					
Program 1.1: Regional Development	Regional	281	119	68	43
	Non-regional	21	3	3	3
	Non-specific ¹	30	336	227	96
Program 1.2: Local Government ²	Regional	1,051	2,154	2,248	2,343
	Non-regional	113	213	222	232
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 2.1: Services to Territories	Regional	110	101	102	104
	Non-regional	2	2	2	2
	Non-specific ¹	-	-	-	-
Program 3.1: Arts and Cultural Development	Regional	39	40	41	42
	Non-regional	102	123	98	120
	Non-specific ¹	57	63	56	60
Program 4.1: Sport and Recreation	Regional	17	17	16	17
	Non-regional	13	21	4	4
	Non-specific ¹	11	11	12	13
Total	Regional	1,497	2,430	2,475	2,549
	Non-regional	252	362	329	360
	Non-specific ¹	98	410	295	170
Australia Council					
Investment in the Arts	Regional	25	25	25	25
	Non-regional	151	152	154	156
	Non-specific ¹	23	24	24	24
Total Australian Council	Regional	25	25	25	25
	Non-regional	151	152	154	156
	Non-specific ¹	23	24	24	24
Australian Sports Commission					
Other Departmental	Regional	9	5	-	-
	Non-regional	144	133	129	128
	Non-specific ¹	143	135	127	130
Total Australian Sport Commission	Regional	9	5	-	-
	Non-regional	144	133	129	128
	Non-specific ¹	143	135	127	130
Portfolio Grand Total	Regional	1,531	2,460	2,500	2,575
	Non-regional	546	647	612	644
	Non-specific ¹	264	570	446	323

¹ Represents funding that has not yet been allocated

² Allocation process for 2013-14 has enabled for identification of area specification of funding.

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 the nation by supporting the creation, presentation and appreciation 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, including sport in regional Australia.

NEW INITIATIVES

Active After-school Communities program – continuation

The Australian Government will provide an additional \$39.4 million in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to extend the Active After-school Communities (AASC) program to 31 December 2014.

The AASC program is a nationally resourced and coordinated initiative that gets Australian children participating in sport and other structured physical activities. The AASC program is intended to engage traditionally inactive children in sport, deliver a quality program which is safe fun and inclusive, and promote transitions into community sport.

The AASC program provides coverage across regional and non-regional Australia and contributes to the Australian Government's social inclusion agenda, with 52 per cent of AASC sites located in regional Australia.

Northern Australia Sustainable Futures program – continuation

The Australian Government is providing an additional \$2.4 million to 2014-15 to continue the important work of the Sustainable Futures program. The Northern Australia Sustainable Futures program was established in 2010 to focus on northern Australia's challenges and opportunities. The Sustainable Futures program is led by the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum which regularly brings together regional development ministers from across the north of Australia. The Ministerial Forum is chaired by the Minister for Regional Services, Local Communities and Territories, the Hon Catherine King MP, with members including ministers responsible for regional development from the Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australian Governments.

The Ministerial Forum has proved to be an effective vehicle for the four jurisdictions to collaborate on a range of foundational research efforts to underpin northern development and demonstrates the Australian Government's commitment to a strategic, cooperative and bipartisan approach to the development of the north.

The program addresses the need for:

- a deeper understanding of large-scale infrastructure investment priorities in the resources sector;
- improved understanding of opportunities and risks to sustainable development in the northern beef industry;
- a deeper understanding of the potential for carbon farming in the north, and opportunities for land tenure and water rights reform across the north;
- enhanced Indigenous and community engagement in policy and planning;
- deepening our understanding of opportunities and constraints to new Indigenous business;
- opportunities to improve service delivery; and
- building capacity in water management and planning among remote communities and local governments.

Referendum on the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government

On 9 May 2013 the Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP, and the Minister for Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, announced that a referendum on the constitutional recognition of local government will be held at the September 14 election.

The Australian Government has committed \$11.6 million over two years for the referendum. This includes \$10.0 million for a national civics education campaign to provide easy to understand information about the Constitution and the constitutional reform process.

Local Government Financial Assistance Grants

This measure provides for the acceleration of the 2013-14 first two quarter payments totalling \$1.1 billion of the Financial Assistance Grants into 2012-13. This will assist local governments to manage reconstruction efforts in light of recent natural disasters in Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

Christmas Island Strategy – Support for Increased Population Extension

The Australian Government is providing \$4.7 million in 2013-14 to extend the continued delivery of essential services such as health, education and policing for the Christmas Island community. This will help meet the Australian Government's commitment that our external territories enjoy the same level of services of equivalent State communities.

Norfolk Island Reform Package

To address Norfolk Island's current financial situation the Australian Government is providing \$5.4 million in 2013-14. This includes \$4.4 million to address the Norfolk Island Administration's structural deficit and \$1.0 million to provide short term services. This funding will continue the advances made to implement substantive reforms, consistent with the Australian Government's 2010 election commitment.

Community Infrastructure Grants

The Community Infrastructure Grants program funds projects that are 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.

The 2013-14 Budget provides funding of \$1.2 million for community infrastructure projects in Dunalley, Manning Valley, Port Macquarie and Hastings Valley, Armidale, Inverell and Werris Creek.

It also includes provisions under the Community Infrastructure Grants program for the projects detailed below.

Townsville Entertainment Centre Upgrade

The Australian Government has allocated \$5.0 million in the 2013-14 Budget as a one-off grant to upgrade the existing Townsville Entertainment and Convention Centre. The estimated total cost to upgrade the existing facility is approximately \$7 million with the Townsville City Council contributing \$2 million.

The Council has indicated that the existing facility, built in 1993, needs structural repair to remain operational and be maintained for the benefit of the community and users of the facility. Immediate repairs are required to air conditioning, painting, water damage and replacement of electronics, fittings and fixtures, carpet, roof trusses and acoustic treatments.

Pentland Power – Feasibility Study

This measure provides for an Australian Government contribution of \$2.5 million to assist in a study to examine the potential to develop up to 120,000 hectares of sugar cane farming land and associated milling, ethanol and cogeneration infrastructure in the Pentland, North Queensland area.

Extension of the National Disaster Recovery Taskforce

On 8 February 2013 the Acting Prime Minister, the Hon Wayne Swan MP, agreed to extend the operation of the National Disaster Recovery Inspectorate and Taskforce until 30 June 2015. The National Disaster Recovery Taskforce will continue to assist Queensland to recover from the significant flooding and cyclone events it experienced

between November 2010 and January 2013. The 2013-14 Budget provides \$9.9 million to the Department for the work of the Taskforce to 30 June 2015.

National Cultural Policy

Creative Australia, the Australian Government's national cultural policy, was launched on 13 March 2013. It sets a strategic framework for Australian Government investment in the arts, cultural heritage and creative industries over the next ten years and establishes a solid base for future growth and improved sustainability in the sector. It will ensure that the cultural sector – incorporating all aspects of arts, cultural heritage and the creative industries – has the skills, resources, and resilience to play an active role in Australia's future and that all Australians, no matter where they live or their background or circumstances, have the opportunity to connect with Australia's artistic and cultural resources either as part of an audience or through participating, directly or online.

Creative Australia includes a commitment of \$235 million over the next four years to drive implementation of the policy and to ensure that its benefits flow to all Australians. Through a mix of longer-term reforms and specific initiatives, Creative Australia will ensure that those living in regional and remote areas have:

- access to high-quality contemporary music, performing arts, and exhibitions of visual art and cultural artefacts that reflect and expand their cultural interests;
- increased opportunity to participate in e-learning initiatives, online training, remote auditioning and regional outreach programs;
- access to more cultural infrastructure through the Regional Development Australia Fund;
- increased social and economic dividends through strengthened community cultural vibrancy; and
- stronger connections with international markets.

Creative Young Stars

The Creative Young Stars program, which was announced as part of Creative Australia, will encourage, support and celebrate creative, cultural, academic and community achievement. The program commits funding of \$8.1 million over two years, with funding commencing in 2013-14 and will be available to young people in every Australian electorate. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will administer the initiative.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Regional Development Australia

The Australian 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 Australian 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 the communities' needs.

The Australian Government is delivering on its commitment to strengthening RDA committees through an annual national RDA forum, professional development opportunities, enhanced regional strategic planning tools, and targeted assisted in local areas and regions experiencing economic transition or pressures.

Regional Development Australia Fund

The Australian Government has allocated almost \$1 billion to the Regional Development Australia Fund (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 address the identified priorities of regional communities. It is designed to ensure that new investments build on strengths and reflect the characteristics, opportunities and challenges of our diverse regions.

Round Two

A total of 459 expressions of interest were submitted for the \$200.0 million Round Two of the RDAF. A total of 162 projects were selected by RDA committees to proceed to full application. Grants of between \$500,000 and \$15.0 million were allocated to support 46 projects across the country.

New South Wales

- Affordable Student Accommodation in the Upper Hunter – Muswellbrook
- Albury Regional Art Gallery Redevelopment - Albury
- Arkinstall Park Regional Sports Centre – Tweed Heads South
- Ballina Biochar and Waste to Energy Project - Ballina
- Barden Park Regional Centre of Excellence for Athletics - Orana
- Bombala Timber Precinct Infrastructure Project - Bombala
- Broken Hill Heavy Vehicle Bypass Road – Broken Hill
- Crown Street Mall Refurbishment - Wollongong
- Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange - Glendale
- Mount Panorama Infrastructure Upgrade - Bathurst

- Narara Valley Sporting Precinct - Lisarow (near Gosford)
- Orange Airport Expansion - Central West
- Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics - Riverina
- Southern Community Hub and Youth Foyer Project - Warilla
- Southern Riverina Regional Event Complex - Deniliquin

Victoria

- Dandenong Connects - Dandenong
- Frankston Regional Aquatic Centre - Frankston
- Growing Aerospace Manufacturing at Latrobe Regional Airport - Morwell
- Melton Library and Learning Hub - Melton
- Mildura Riverfront - Mildura
- Ovens Riverside Precinct - Wangaratta
- Redevelopment of Wedderburn Community Centre Stage 1 - Wedderburn
- The Sir Edward Weary Dunlop Learning Centre - Benalla
- Wimmera Community Service Centre - Horsham

Queensland

- Development of Robelle Domain (Stage 2) Parkland - Springfield
- Emerald Airport Apron Extension - Emerald
- Mackay Regional Events Centre - Mackay
- The Corso at North Lakes - North Lakes
- Toowoomba Regional Arts and Community TRACC - Toowoomba
- ACT for Kids Child and Family Centre of Excellence - Douglas
- Kilcoy Showground Facility Development - Kilcoy
- Torres Strait Coastal Protection Works - Saibai

South Australia

- Keith and District Sport Recreation Centre Upgrade - Keith
- Coober Pedy's Water for Growth Project - Coober Pedy
- Far North Regional Community/Sports Hub - Port Augusta
- Lucky Bay Harbour Extension - Eyre Peninsula
- Northern Region Affordable Housing Initiative - Port Augusta
- Leukaemia Foundation Patient Village - Northfield
- Wakefield Region Water Supply Upgrade - Balaklava

Western Australia

- West End Recreation and Entertainment Precinct Revitalisation - Geraldton
- North West Regional Office, Training and Ambulance Centre - Broome
- Margaret River Surfers Point Precinct Redevelopment - Margaret River
- Stage 2 Carnarvon Flood Mitigation Works - Mid West Gascoyne

Northern Territory

- Michael Long NT Thunder Learning and Leadership Centre - Marrara

Tasmania

- South East Region Sporting - Sorell
- Upgrade of the Penguin Regional Athletics Centre – Penguin

Rounds Three and Four

Rounds Three and Four of the RDAF have now closed. RDA committees have considered all Expressions of Interest from their region and selected up to five priority projects for Round Three and up to three priority projects for Round Four to proceed to full application. Round Three is providing \$50.0 million for projects in small towns, while Round Four is providing \$175.0 million for strategic infrastructure projects in regional Australia.

A total of 201 applications, requesting grants of \$80.7 million, were received under Round Three. Under Round Four, 163 applications, requesting grants of \$939 million, were received. Eligible applications have been considered by the independent advisory panel. Projects to be funded under Rounds Three and Four will be announced by the Minister.

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 for projects in 2013-14 is detailed under the New Initiatives section of this chapter.

Regional Economic Diversification

The Australian Government is continuing to collaborate with State and local governments engaging with local communities to support regions in pursuing and maintaining sustainable economic development, including industry diversification, and building stronger and more liveable regions.

Policies and programs are being tailored to the local needs of particular regions, taking account of specific economic, social and environmental priorities. By bringing stakeholders together and developing options for managing change and economic diversification in regional economies, regions are better able to plan their futures.

Formal agreements are now in place between the Australian Government, State and local governments for Tasmania, the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, Queensland and South

Australia's Upper Spencer Gulf region. These agreements outline how different tiers of government and community stakeholders will work together to respond to the specific circumstances in those regions.

A brief summary of each of these regional activities are outlined below:

Latrobe Valley

In the Latrobe Valley, the Australian and Victorian Governments signed a Cooperative Agreement on 13 December 2011 to support the transition of the Latrobe Valley economy. The agreement facilitates coordinated, strategic, cooperative arrangements between the Australian Government and Victorian State Government that support Latrobe Valley communities to realise their economic potential as they transition to a clean energy future.

Queensland

A Northern Queensland Strategy and underpinning action plan are currently being developed by the Australian Government, Queensland Government and the RDA committees of Far North Queensland and Torres Strait, Townsville and North West, Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday and Fitzroy and Central West, in consultation with key local stakeholders.

South Australia

On 25 September 2012, the Australian Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with State and local governments in South Australia, for a location specific approach to regional development in the Upper Spencer Gulf. The MOU values local input and ownership and is underpinned by a robust governance structure, an agreed strategy and action plans based on the five key determinants of regional economic growth (agreed to by COAG). The action plans identify projects that will transform the economy to be more diversified and resilient, with a skilled local labour force, improved regional liveability, a more sustainable physical environment and better co-ordinated planning processes.

Tasmania

The Australian Government is working with the Tasmanian Government to support the diversification of the Tasmanian economy through a MOU for location specific investment. As part of the Tasmanian Intergovernmental Forests agreement \$24 million has been provided to support a diverse range of projects which will assist the Tasmanian economy to strengthen and grow. Work is continuing to identify and support further initiatives creating new jobs and growth

Office of Northern Australia

The Office of Northern Australia provides policy advice to the Australian Government on sustainable development issues in, or affecting, northern Australia. It enables better

coordination across the Australian 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 the Australian Government on a range of priority issues.

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 provided supplementary funding of \$16.8 million in 2012-13 and will provide \$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.

Indian Ocean Territories Reform

The Australian Government has embarked on a reform package for the Indian Ocean Territories. The package of reforms aims to improve community decision making, streamline and strengthen governance arrangements and improve transparency. The reform process will work to strengthen the role of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands Administrator and consolidate a number of administrative functions and enable those on the islands to manage key tasks. Additionally, this

reform process will increase community empowerment through the establishment of a community-led Regional Development Organisation, strengthen the relationship between the Australian Government and local governments and improve transparency of budgets and state-type service delivery. Importantly, the reform agenda will work to foster economic development and diversification through the continued support for phosphate mining on Christmas Island and supporting new commercial opportunities such as the Dive Centre project and the Market Garden project.

Digital Television for the Indian Ocean Territories

The Australian Government's Digital Switchover initiative will soon take effect on Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The analogue television transmission will be switched off in June 2013 and the Australian Government has allocated \$1.9 million to upgrade the government's analogue retransmission sites in the Indian Ocean Territories to digital. This project will enable the government's retransmission technology to transmit digital television to both Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands without the need for residents to purchase a residential satellite. This will provide residents of the Indian Ocean Territories with access to digital television channels equivalent to those available in Western Australia.

Regional Arts Fund

The Australian Government has allocated \$3.2 million for 2013-14 to support sustainable cultural development in regional and remote Australia under the Regional Arts Fund. The fund is delivered on behalf of the Australian Government by regional arts organisations in the States and arts agencies in the Territories.

National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program

The National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program is an initiative announced by the Australian Government in the 2009-10 Budget and provides \$1.0 million per annum 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.

Indigenous Repatriation

This program facilitates the return of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestral remains in overseas collections, and ancestral remains and secret sacred objects held in major government funded museums, to their communities of origin.

Indigenous Languages Support Program

The Indigenous Languages Support program addresses the steady erosion and loss of Australia's estimated 250 original Indigenous languages by providing support for the maintenance and revival of these languages to community organisations throughout Australia.

In 2012-13, the Indigenous Languages Support program provided \$9.9 million in funding to support 72 activities around Australia.

As part of the National Cultural Policy, Creative Australia, the Australian Government has allocated a further \$14.0 million over the next four years to support community driven and culturally appropriate digital and multi-media resources as tools for the maintenance, revival and development of traditional languages.

The development of additional resources would allow communities to leverage new partnership opportunities with schools, cultural organisations and libraries to support learning across a range of media to ensure the continued use and long-term survival of traditional languages.

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.

In 2012-13, the Indigenous Culture Support program provided \$7.5 million in funding to support 128 activities around Australia.

National Jobs Transition Program

Through the National Jobs Transition Program the Australian Government is providing funding to support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in organisations that deliver arts, culture, languages and broadcasting programs in regional and remote areas of Australia.

In 2012-13, the program provided \$18.5 million in National Jobs funding, supporting 251 jobs in the arts, 93 jobs for culture, 38 jobs to support language activities and 149 jobs to support regional and remote broadcasters.

Cape York Welfare Reform Trials

The Australian Government will support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in entry-level positions supporting the arts, culture, languages 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.

In 2012-13, trials supported four arts and three broadcasting positions at a cost of \$0.2 million.

Torres Strait Island Jobs Creation

The Australian Government allocated \$2.8 million in 2012-13 to support the employment of 53 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 Australian Government has increased funding to the Indigenous visual arts sector by more than \$17.0 million. As part of the National Cultural Policy, Creative Australia, the Australian Government continues to support this sector by maintaining funding of \$11.3 million over the next four years. This funding will assist in implementing 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 Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program that provided funding of approximately \$10.9 million in 2012-13 to more than 80 Indigenous owned art centres, mostly in remote and very remote locations, and to support a number of allied industry support organisations.

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.

In 2012-13, funding of \$0.7 million is supporting five industry support organisations to provide the Indigenous visual arts sector training, industry and business advice and advocacy support to artists and Arts Centres.

Australia Council Programs

The Australia Council (the Council) is the Australian Government's principal arts funding and advisory body, and supports the creation, presentation and appreciation of the arts by providing assistance to Australian artists, including those in regional and remote areas, and making their works accessible to the public. The Council achieves this by:

- investing in artistic production and the development of Australian artists;
- supporting the presentation of Australian art, nationally and internationally;

- recognising and rewarding significant contributions to the arts in Australia;
- promoting appreciation, knowledge and understanding of the arts;
- supporting and promoting the development of markets and audiences of the arts; and
- conducting research, undertaking evaluation and providing advisory services

The Australian Government will provide funding of \$218.8 million to the Australia Council in 2013-14 to continue to enrich the nation by supporting the practice and enjoyment of the arts. This appropriation includes:

- \$11.5 million for the Regional Touring programs. The management of programs were transferred from the Office for the Arts during 2012-13 and these programs augment existing Australia Council funding which 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; and
- \$23.0 million for the new measures embodied in Creative Australia, the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, comprising:
 - \$18.3 million for enhancing the Australia Council (following the Australia Council Review in 2012) which included: \$15.0 million in critical additional funding for artists and arts organisations across a large number of artforms to address an identified significant level of 'unfunded excellence'; \$1.3 million for the Major Performing Arts Excellence Pool; \$1.0 million to build the professional capacity of the arts sector; and \$1.0 million to develop and implement a detailed and systematic data collection program to inform research for the benefit of the sector as a whole;
 - \$2.3 million of increased base funding for six Major Performing Arts companies to enable them to fulfill their objectives; and
 - \$2.4 million to continue the highly successful ArtStart program beyond 2012-13, thereby assisting graduating practitioners to hone their business skills and apply their craft across a range of career pathways.

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 2013-14 the Australian 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 part of touring exhibitions.

Festivals Australia

The Australian Government has allocated \$1.2 million for 2013-14 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 more than 1,287 new arts and cultural projects with funding totalling over \$18.8 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 2013-14, the Australian Government has allocated \$7 million to the Playing Australia program, the Australian Government's national touring program for the performing arts. Since its inception in 1992, funding of \$98.8 million has assisted more than 918 tours to take performing arts across Australia, particularly to regional and remote communities. The program supports projects in 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 to 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. In 2013-14, the Australian Government has allocated \$0.4 million.

Visions of Australia

In 2013-14, 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 better access to Australian cultural material.

Maritime Museum of Australia Project Support Scheme

Many cultural institutions and community organisations around Australia care for maritime items of historical and national significance. The Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme is a grants program which collects, conserves and exhibits Australia's rich maritime heritage by helping these groups undertake this important role.

The scheme is jointly funded by the Australian Government and the Australian National Maritime Museum and provides grants up to \$10,000 to cultural institutions and community organisations for collection management initiatives, including storage and research; conservation activities, including documenting and caring for collections; and presentation projects, including education programs and workshops.

The scheme also provided grants up to \$5,000 in 2012-13 to assist community museums and organisations to develop education or public programs to make their significant collections more accessible to audiences. More than 85 per cent of the grants funded under the scheme in the 2012-13 financial year to date, were provided to projects and institutions located in regional Australia.

Indigenous Sport and Active Recreation Program

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 objectives of the ISARP are to:

- increase the active participation of able and disabled Indigenous Australians in sport and active recreation activities;
- encourage and increase community ownership and management of sport and active recreation activities, including through skills development; and
- provide employment opportunities for people to support and/or assist in the provision of sport and active recreation activities and specifically for entry level positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for positions available more broadly in the sport and active recreation industry.

ISARP supports community participation in sport and active recreation activities that help to improve the health and physical wellbeing of Indigenous Australians and that contribute to broader social benefits for participants and their communities.

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.

Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program

The Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program (EITAAP) supports Indigenous sportspeople to participate in mainstream official national championships and international sporting competitions by providing financial assistance for travel and accommodation expenses. Through the EITAAP program, the Australian Government provides up to \$1500 per person for national events and \$4000 per person for international events during a financial year. In 2012-13 to date, 80 per cent of funding recipients of the EITAAP initiative were from regional areas.

Local Sporting Champions

The Local Sporting Champions initiative provides financial assistance to young athletes or teams to attend an official National Sporting Organisation endorsed by State, national or international sporting championships or a School Sport Australia State or national championships. Applicants must reside further than 125 kilometres from the nominated competition to be eligible. Successful individual applicants receive \$500 and successful teams will receive \$3,000.

In 2012-13, to date, 44 per cent of the recipients supported by the Local Sporting Champions initiative were young sportspeople located in regional Australia.

Sport Leadership Grants for Women

The Sport Leadership Grants for Women program provides development opportunities and training for women to reach their leadership potential within the sports industry.

Grants are provided of up to \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organisations per annum, and for up to \$10,000 for scholarships per annum over three years. Grants and scholarships are available in the following categories: coaching, officiating, governance, management and administration, communications, media and marketing. In 2012-13 to date, 30 per cent of grant recipients were located in regional Australia.

Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program

The Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program (MYSPP) creates sustainable opportunities for young people (up to and including 30 years of age) from new and emerging communities and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in sport and physical activity. Funding grants between \$5,000 and \$50,000 are available to eligible organisations. In 2012-13 to date, 21 per cent of grant recipients for the MYSPP were from regional areas.

Direct Athlete Support Grants

The Direct Athlete Support (DAS) initiative provides direct financial assistance to world-class athletes, selected on the basis of medal potential and individual need, to support their training requirements and preparation for benchmark competitions that are of significance to Australians.

Athlete funding is allocated based on world rankings (Tier 1 ranked 1-5 in the world and Tier 2 ranked 6-10) with athletes in Tier 1 receiving \$10,000 per six month period and athletes in Tier 2 receiving \$5,000 per six month period. In 2012-13 to date, 28 per cent of recipients of the DAS grant initiative were based in regional areas, with the DAS initiative supporting many elite regional Australian athletes who have relocated to urban centres.

Grants to National Sporting Organisations

Scholarship sports grants are paid to National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) to fund collaborative Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) and NSO programs in non-regional areas. Other grants to NSOs are primarily made up of high performance grants which focus on sports performance and continued international success by coaches and athletes; and participation grants which focus on structured physical activity at the community level. Whilst the physical location of the NSOs is predominately non-regional, the outcomes of both grants to NSOs is far reaching across all regions of Australia.

RESOURCES, ENERGY AND TOURISM

The Resources, Energy and Tourism portfolio is committed to supporting rural and regional communities in Australia. A number of the portfolio's programs specifically target regional Australia in the areas of enhancing tourism and facilitating progress and employment in the resources and energy sectors.

The majority of resources, energy and tourism industries are located throughout regional Australia, and their employees and related businesses underpin many local economies. In 2013-14 the portfolio will continue important work to improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of these critical industries and support their ability to enhance Australia's economic prosperity.

The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (the Department) will continue to support regional Australia by delivering services directly to those who need it. Through its Ethanol Production Grants Program, grant funding is distributed to selected regional businesses for the production of biofuels. The Department also provides funding to regional areas to promote harmony between Indigenous communities and the mining industry through Working in Partnership.

The Australian tourism industry comprises almost 280,000 enterprises (or 13 per cent of all enterprises in the Australian economy), generates \$107 billion in spending, contributes \$41 billion to Australia's GDP, directly employs over 500,000 people and contributes \$26 billion or over 8 per cent of total national export income. It is Australia's largest service industry and is significant for regional Australia where 45 cents in every tourist dollar is spent. The industry helps to fund critical economic infrastructure like airports, roads and hotels and provides the people to people linkages necessary to pursue Australia's long term strategic national interest. Regional Australia is the major beneficiary under the T-QUAL Grants Tourism Quality Projects Program where in the 2012 round of the program, 83 per cent of projects were located in regional Australia. In addition to this, the Department administers the Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund which was created to improve the quality of regional tourism through an investment of \$48.5 million over 4 years.

SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 11: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
Program 1: Resources Related Initiatives and Management					
1.1 Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships	Regional	102	179	250	87
1.2 Ethanol Production Grants	Regional	174	200	200	200
1.3 National Low Emissions Coal Initiative	Non-regional	33	26	19	-
1.4 National CO2 Infrastructure Project	Non-regional	15	6	-	-
Other programs	Non-regional	9	4	5	24
	Non-specific	9	9	8	-
Program 2: Energy Related Initiatives and Management					
2.1 Coal Sector Jobs Package	Regional	231	243	115	177
2.2 Coal Mining Abatement Technology Support Package	Regional	24	14	-	-
Other programs	Regional	20	40	-	-
	Non-regional	1	1	-	-
	Non-specific	25	50	55	55
Program 3: Tourism Related Initiatives and Management					
3.1 TQUAL Grants ¹	Regional	3	-	-	-
	Non-regional	1	-	-	-
	Non-specific	4	10	-	-
3.2 TIRF Program ²	Regional	4	1	-	-
	Non-regional	1	-	-	-
	Non-specific	6	12	13	-
Other programs	Non-regional	12	14	14	14

Table 11: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism

Program	Category	Budget estimate 2013-14 \$m	Forward estimate 2014-15 \$m	Forward estimate 2015-16 \$m	Forward estimate 2016-17 \$m
Program 4: Improving Australia's Energy Efficiency					
4.1 Carbon Price Deductable Gift Recipient Fund	Non-regional	1	1	1	1
	Non-specific	4	4	4	6
4.2 Low Carbon Communities	Regional	5	9	1	-
	Non-regional	17	16	7	-
	Non-specific	72	28	18	-
4.3 Energy Efficiency Information	Regional	3	1	-	-
	Non-regional	2	1	-	-
	Non-specific	6	9	-	-
4.4 Other	Regional	1	1	1	-
	Non-regional	5	6	5	7
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Total	Regional	567	688	568	464
	Non-regional	97	74	50	46
	Non-specific	126	122	98	61
Australian Renewable Energy Agency Outcome 1					
ARENA Departmental ³	Regional	193	119	33	4
	Non-regional	82	40	21	15
	Non-specific	235	208	206	131
Total	Regional	193	119	33	4
	Non-regional	82	40	21	15
	Non-specific	235	208	206	131
	Regional	759	807	601	468
	Non-regional	179	113	72	61
Portfolio Grand Total	Non-specific	360	330	304	192

¹ T-QUAL GRANTS - Regional / Non-Regional figures reflect funding committed for T-QUAL Round 2 projects and Strategic Tourism Investment Grants. Uncommitted funds (e.g. for future grant rounds) is shown as Non-specific.

² TIRF Program - Regional / Non-Regional figures reflect funding committed for TIRF Round 1 projects. Uncommitted funds (e.g. for future grant rounds) is shown as Non-specific.

³ The non-specific category for ARENA includes uncommitted funds of \$118 million in 2013-14, \$278 million in 2014-15, \$266 million in 2015-16 and \$281 million in 2016-17.

In 2013-14, at least 63 per cent of the portfolio's grant expenditure will be made to regional Australia. The actual figure could be higher still, depending on the outcome of future grant rounds.

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 Ministerial Statement were transferred to the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) on 1 July 2012 and are now reported as part of ARENA:

- Solar Flagships;
- Australian Centre for Renewable Energy;
- Connecting Renewables Initiative; and
- Australian Biofuels Research Institute.

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.

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

Working in Partnership 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 2020 was developed to respond to ongoing challenges and emerging opportunities for the Australian tourism industry. Providing a framework for growth, Tourism 2020 has delivered significant outcomes for the tourism industry, delivering programs and initiatives that have enhanced the commercial environment for the industry and practical tools for businesses to increase their productivity and competitiveness. Key areas of focus include growing demand from 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.

The Australian Government is providing \$6.0 million over four years from 2011-12 to support the ongoing implementation of Tourism 2020.

T-QUAL Grants Program

The Australian Government has allocated \$36.1 million over four years for 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 and is assisting tourism in regional areas.

Tourism Quality Project Grants

Tourism Quality Project grants of up to \$100,000 are available for smaller scale projects that support tourism industry development, encourage private sector investment and provide community benefits. Funding was offered in annual rounds in 2011 (117 projects valued at \$8.5 million) and 2012 (77 projects valued at \$6.7 million). Applications for the third round of Tourism Quality Projects grants closed on 3 May 2013, with announcements of successful projects expected in July 2013.

Strategic Tourism Investment Grants

Strategic Tourism Investment grants of up to \$1 million are also available to fund a small number of nationally significant, larger scale projects to support Indigenous tourism, economic development and tourism employment. To date, funding of \$4.6 million has been awarded for seven projects, including: \$1 million awarded to the William Angliss Institute to develop a business skills curriculum at the National Indigenous Training Academy at Ayers Rock Resort; \$1 million awarded to TRC Tourism for strategic planning and other industry initiatives in Australia's national landscapes areas; and \$825,000 awarded to Lirwi Yolngu Aboriginal Corporation to develop a cultural tourism master plan for the Arnhem Land region. These projects are attracting dollar for dollar matched investment from the private sector, and will deliver tangible benefits for the tourism industry and regional Australia.

Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund

The Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund (TIRF) was announced in June 2012 with funding of \$48.5 million over four years to increase the quality and range of visitor experiences in regional Australia. A major focus of the program is to improve the quality of accommodation and attractions in regional areas and encourage innovative projects to attract interstate and international visitors and extend their length of stay.

The TIRF Grants Program offers provides grants of up to \$250,000 on a dollar-for-dollar matched funding basis to support investment in tourism industry related accommodation, infrastructure, experiences and facilities. This funding program provides a unique opportunity for regional accommodation providers, regional tourism operators, attractions, related businesses and industry partners to access matched grant funding, aiming to achieve maximum return on investment both in dollars and quality visitor outcomes.

On 15 March 2013, the Minister for Tourism announced that 65 applicants were successful in the first round of the TIRF Grants Program. The Australian Government has offered these projects a total of \$13.1 million in funding, which will leverage a combined investment value of over \$141 million.

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 regional profiles on an annual basis. These profiles provide reliable, independent visitor information to support the development of regional tourism and growth of regional economies. Each year, TRA produces an Investment Monitor that tracks the tourism investment pipeline and a State of the Industry report that monitors the performance of the tourism industry.

Tourism Australia Campaigns

Tourism Australia continues to market Australia as a tourism destination, both internationally and domestically. Through its campaigns, Tourism Australia seeks to

stimulate consumer travel demand and increase regional dispersal of the economic benefits of tourism by encouraging people to travel throughout Australia.

The Asia Marketing Fund, announced by the Australian Government in the 2012-13 Budget, provides \$48.5 million over four years to promote Australia as a tourism destination to growing markets in Asia. The establishment of the fund provides Tourism Australia with enhanced resources to generate increased visitor numbers from Asian markets and to secure greater economic returns for Australia, including in regional areas.

Energy Efficiency Information Grants Program

The Energy Efficiency Information Grants Program is intended to improve awareness about energy efficiency amongst small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and community organisations in regional and metropolitan Australia. 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.

In the first funding round, announced in 2012, twenty-eight grants were awarded totalling \$21.5 million over two years. Twenty-two of these projects will directly or indirectly benefit regional Australia. Applications for the second round of funding are currently being assessed with successful applications expected to be announced in mid 2013.

Local Government Energy Efficiency Program

The Australia Government has established the \$24 million Local Government Energy Efficiency Program to co-fund local governing authorities to install energy efficient solar and heat pump hot water systems in their buildings and community facilities, particularly where those authorities are situated in low socio-economic or otherwise disadvantaged areas. This program is a non-competitive grant program and all local governing authorities are eligible to apply.

Local governing authorities are able to receive a grant amount according to their size and socio-economic status and are required to co-fund their project to be eligible. Local governing authorities who are considered to be located in a low-socio economic area will be eligible to apply for additional funding and lower co-funding amounts.

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency

Regional Australia's Renewables

This initiative aims to demonstrate the viability of renewable energy in regional and remote locations. It will support the deployment of commercially prospective renewable energy technologies, both generation and enabling, in off-grid and edge-of-grid situations.

Deploying utility scale renewable energy

ARENA is working with AGL to progress the project selected under the former Solar Flagships program and will conclude the evaluation of, and recommend decisions for, the remaining large scale solar projects referred to it by the Minister for Resources and Energy.

Building Australia's next generation solar

Australia has world leading skills and capabilities in solar technologies. Supporting early stage technology investments that draw on this research base offers the best prospects for successful commercialisation. For this reason, ARENA will manage existing solar research and development projects transferred from the former Australian Solar Institute and will consider former Australian Solar Institute initiatives that it may look to extend.

Knowledge Sharing

ARENA will manage a new initiative in 2013-14, Supporting High-value Australian Renewable Energy Knowledge, that will aim to share knowledge from ARENA supported projects and offer funding for strategic knowledge development and dissemination that addresses key knowledge gaps, and increases awareness and acceptance of renewable energy technologies.

Emerging Renewables Program

The \$126 million Emerging Renewables Program (ERP) supports the development of renewable energy technologies in Australia across the innovation chain. The program was originally administered by the Australian Centre for Renewable Energy. To provide continuity in support for innovation in the renewable energy sector, ARENA has continued operation of the program.

The ERP is a non-competitive, merit-based program that provides grants for emerging renewable energy technologies in two funding categories:

- Projects – grants for the development of renewable energy technologies along the technology innovation chain.
- Measures – grants for:
 - renewable energy industry capacity building activities;
 - renewable energy industry development activities; and
 - preparatory activities for a project.

Renewable Energy Venture Capital Fund

The Southern Cross Renewable Energy Fund is a 10-year venture capital fund that was established under the Australian Government's \$100 million Renewable Energy Venture Capital (REVC) Fund Program.

The fund is a key element of the Australian Government's renewable energy strategy. Responsibility for managing the Commonwealth's investment in the fund has been transferred to ARENA. The primary objectives of the fund are to:

- increase the number of Australian renewable energy and enabling technology companies that are successful in Australian and overseas markets;
- foster the skills and management capability of Australian renewable energy and enabling technology companies by providing active investment management; and
- leverage additional investment in Australian renewable energy technology and enabling technology companies from the private sector, including from international sources.

Advanced Biofuels Investment Readiness Program

The Advanced Biofuels Investment Readiness program is a competitive one-stage, merit-based program that offered grant funding to selected projects undertaking activities that build the investment case for significant and scalable pre-commercial demonstration projects for the production of high energy, drop-in advanced biofuels in Australia.

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, www.arena.gov.au and www.tourism.australia.com.

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT, WATER, POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES

The Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio promotes economic and environmental sustainability in regional communities through policy advice and new and existing programs. Three significant programs: Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment; Carbon Pollution Reduction – Land Sector Initiatives; and Water Reform, provide direct benefits to rural and regional communities across Australia. New initiatives in the 2013–14 Budget continue the strong focus on ensuring regional Australia is equipped for a sustainable future.

SPATIAL REPORTING

Table 12: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

Program	Category	Budget estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate	Forward estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program 1.1: Sustainable	Regional	311	317	364	367
Management of Natural Resources and the Environment ^{1,2}	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	42	42	42	42
Program 1.3: Carbon Pollution Reduction - Land Sector Initiatives	Regional	200	168	139	116
Program 4.1: Water Reform ³	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Other programs	Regional	317	502	1,001	813
	Non-regional	16	24	2	-
	Non-specific	25	25	26	27
Total	Regional	46	39	33	35
	Non-regional	30	14	3	3
	Non-specific	9	17	33	32
Total	Regional	874	1,026	1,537	1,331
	Non-regional	46	38	5	3
	Non-specific	76	82	101	101

¹ Includes Caring for our Country, Working on Country and Environmental Stewardship Program.

² Does not include the Landcare component of Caring for Country which is a program of the the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

³ The Water Reform includes estimates for water entitlement purchases

The Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment program provides significant funding to support local, State and Territory governments, regional natural resource management groups, Indigenous groups, industry bodies, land managers, farmers, and communities to make real and measurable differences to Australia's environment.

The initiatives under the Land Sector Package contribute to the restoration and protection of biodiversity, supporting landholders to conserve biodiversity values on their land and increase the resilience of the natural environment to the effects of climate change.

The Murray Darling Basin Plan and other water reform initiatives under the Water for the Future initiative provide support for regional Australia to sustainably manage water for communities, the environment and farmers. The 2013-14 Budget gives effect to several new measures in support of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

NEW INITIATIVES

Maintaining Australia's Presence in Antarctica and Life Extension Works – Aurora Australis

Two measures in the 2013-14 Budget will support Australia's presence in Antarctica, with flow on benefits to the Tasmanian economy. The Antarctic sector, largely centred around the Australian Antarctic Division, represents a significant element of Tasmania's knowledge economy, contributing to employment (including highly skilled jobs in scientific and research fields and local service industries) as well as through local investment associated with operational purchases by Antarctic program operators.

The Australian Government will provide \$9.5 million in 2013-14, through the measure Maintaining Australia's Presence in Antarctica, to ensure the critical functions that support Australia's presence in Antarctica are maintained, and that Australia retains its influence in the Antarctic region. In addition, \$7.9 million will be provided over four years from 2012-13 to extend the life of the iconic icebreaker, the Aurora Australis, to ensure it can remain in operation until the completion of the 2016-17 season. These measures will have a positive effect on the strength and diversity of the Tasmanian economy, with a significant portion of Antarctic program expenditure related to Tasmanian staff and suppliers.

Murray Darling Basin Reform – additional support

The 2013-14 Budget gives effect to a number of measures to support water management reform in the Murray-Darling Basin. The Australian Government will invest \$10.0 million for a Murray Darling Basin Environmental Water Knowledge and Research grant to ensure that the best scientific information is available to underpin environmental water use under the Murray Darling Basin Plan. A \$4.9 million investment will establish local engagement officers in regional centres of the Murray Darling Basin to strengthen local involvement in the use of Commonwealth environmental water. Both measures will be met within existing resources of the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.

The Australian Government has a designated commitment of up to \$1.4 billion which will enable investment in Environmental Works and Measures to improve the efficiency of environmental water delivery to significant environmental assets within the Murray Darling Basin. This will contribute to social and economic outcomes by reducing the need to recover water from productive use by up to 650 gigalitres.

In addition, through the Water for the Environment Special Account, funding of \$1.8 billion will support the recovery of an additional 450 gigalitres of water for the environment through projects that ensure no social or economic downside for local communities. This includes \$200.0 million for addressing priority delivery system constraints to ensure more efficient and effective delivery of Commonwealth environmental water throughout the Basin, enabling greater environmental outcomes to be achieved.

Given South Australia's location in the system and reliance on the River Murray, funding of \$155.0 million has been committed for the Murray Darling Basin Authority to deliver a series of works to restore the health of significant floodplain wetlands in the Riverland region of South Australia. \$55.0 million of this funding will be met within existing resources of the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program.

Amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act – New Water Trigger

In recognition of the importance of protection of water resources in regional Australia, funding of \$38.5 million over four years will be provided in the 2013–14 Budget to implement the amendment passed by the House of Representatives on 21 March 2013 to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to include a new matter of national environmental significance. The proposed amendments will ensure that coal seam gas and large coal mining developments are assessed under national environment law if they are likely to have a significant impact on water resources. The Australian Government is aware of the considerable concerns that surround the impact of coal seam gas on ground water and surface water resources in regional Australia. The proposed legislative amendments will respond to these concerns through the provision of greater scrutiny of potential impacts on water resources.

Caring for our Country – Reef Rescue Program

The second phase of the Reef Rescue program under Caring for our Country, will see \$200.0 million invested over five years, commencing in 2013-14, to improve the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon. The program aims to assist land managers across the reef catchment adopt improved agricultural and urban management practices that will reduce the discharge of nutrients, sediments and pesticides in the reef lagoon and improve the reef's resilience to climate change.

By participating in this program, land managers, and local and regional communities will have access to resources and expertise to increase the voluntary uptake of

improved land management practices. Reef Rescue's second phase will also continue to support research and development of new cutting-edge water quality technologies and fund the control of crown of thorns starfish. The program will be delivered through competitive grants, extension and training programs.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Clean Energy Future – Land Sector Package

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (The Department) administers four initiatives under the Land Sector Package announced in 2011 to assist land managers reduce carbon pollution and increase the amount of carbon stored on land.

The ongoing Biodiversity Fund provides funding to support land managers restore, manage and better protect biodiversity on public and private land. It also supports land managers who wish to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the carbon market. The Biodiversity Fund provides support to establish new biodiverse carbon stores or to 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, which commenced 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 Natural Resource Management (NRM) Planning for Climate Change Fund supports regional NRM organisations across Australia to update existing regional NRM plans to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, and help guide the location of biodiversity and carbon farming projects in the landscape.

Funding of \$4.4 million supports the establishment and operation of the Land Sector Carbon and Biodiversity Board to provide advice to the Australian Government on the implementation of all seven Land Sector Package measures.

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: taking action on climate change; using water wisely; securing water supplies; and supporting healthy rivers. Water for the Future underpins national water management reform including through programs to improve the efficiency and productivity of irrigation water use through investment in delivery infrastructure, strategic system reconfiguration, and on-farm water application technology.

Currently, the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program under Water for the Future has committed more than \$4.8 billion for infrastructure upgrades to secure the future of irrigated agriculture in both the Murray Darling Basin and beyond, including supporting more efficient irrigation in Tasmania.

Where willing sellers offer the sale of existing water entitlements, purchase of water to return water to the environment will also be used as appropriate to help bridge the gap to sustainable diversion limits under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. The existing initiatives are making significant contributions to delivering a healthy river system, strong regional communities and sustainable food production.

Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Coal Mining

The Australian Government has established an Independent Expert Scientific Committee that provides scientific advice to governments about relevant coal seam gas and large coal mining approvals where they have significant impacts on water resources; provide advice on research on impacts on water resources from coal seam gas and large coal mining projects; and provide scientific input to bioregional assessments. This initiative, which commenced in 2011-12, provides transparent advice and knowledge building with independent assessment to help build trust and community confidence that advice of the risks of the water related aspects of coal seam gas and coal mining developments are able to be considered as part of the regulatory process.

Caring for our Country

The Australian Government renews its commitment to the ongoing Caring for our Country initiative with \$2.1 billion (from 2013-14 to 2017-18) to invest in projects across Australia, including regional and remote areas, to improve biodiversity and promote the adoption of sustainable farm practices. The Australian Government will continue working with regional natural resource management organisations to effectively manage Australia's unique natural resources. Caring for our Country remains focused on achieving an environment that is healthier, better protected, well managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate.

Caring for our Country – Regional Delivery

The Australian Government is renewing its commitment to regional delivery, through Caring for our Country, with another \$668.7 million over the next five years from 2013-14.

This funding will support Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations to conserve and protect the environment and maintain productive working landscapes. Funded organisations will deliver against the Sustainable Environment stream and Sustainable Agriculture stream outcomes under Caring for our Country to secure landscape-scale outcomes consistent with priorities identified in regional NRM plans.

Regional NRM organisations are key stakeholders for Caring for our Country and this funding will support, among other things:

- Projects delivering enhanced outcomes for Australia's National Reserve System, World Heritage Areas, Ramsar listed wetlands and other matters of national environmental significance.
- Community support and engagement of improved NRM practices; brokering partnerships across industry sectors; aligning industry best practice with regional NRM targets; improving Indigenous capacity and engagement in NRM.
- The maintenance of ecosystem services; the protection of Australia's conservation estate; and, the enhanced capacity of Indigenous communities to conserve and protect our natural resources.
- Regional Landcare Facilitators to promote the uptake of sustainable management practices and assist community Landcare and professional farming system groups develop their skills, knowledge and capacity to support and increase knowledge of individual farmers and other land managers.

The Australian Government values the work of regional NRM organisations and will continue to help them protect, enhance, and maintain Australia's biodiversity, and productive and resilient agricultural landscapes.

Working on Country Indigenous Rangers Program

The Working on Country Indigenous ranger program currently supports more than 690 Indigenous rangers to deliver environmental outcomes. From July 2013 the Australian Government is providing more than \$320 million over five years to support Indigenous rangers. This includes support for 50 ranger jobs as part of the Northern Territory Stronger Futures Jobs Creation Package, bringing the total number of rangers on ground to over 730 over coming years. Working on Country is about protecting the environment and delivering permanent jobs for Indigenous people.

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 ongoing Measuring Sustainability program will provide information on current and emerging sustainability issues – spanning economic, environmental and social dimensions – to support decision-making and planning at national and community levels. A National Sustainability Council was established by the Australian Government in October 2012 as an independent, expert body to provide advice on sustainability issues, and will produce a regular report against sustainability indicators for Australia.

National level data can mask important differences in the way sustainability issues play out in different communities and the sustainability indicators will provide information at the most appropriate level according to the available data. The Department is delivering this program in collaboration with key data agencies, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This program is part of the Australian Government's Sustainable Population Strategy.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

The Great Barrier Reef, one of the world's most precious ecosystems, is critical to the cultural, economic and social wellbeing of more than one million Australians and supports a wide range of activities and industries in surrounding communities in Northern Queensland. The Great Barrier Reef supports around 68,000 full-time jobs and generates approximately \$5.7 billion annually through tourism and important marine industries.

The Ensuring the Resilience of the Great Barrier Reef measure announced in the 2012-13 Budget (\$8.0 million over two years) included funding to continue the highly successful Reef Guardian initiative to improve community, local government and industry capacity and facilitate adoption of environmentally sustainable best practices, knowledge and information sharing. This initiative has a positive impact on regional communities, engaging them in actions to ensure the long term sustainability of the Great Barrier Reef. To date, key focus areas of the Reef Guardians program include schools, local governments, farmers, graziers and commercial fishers.

TREASURY

The Treasury portfolio, through the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), administers a range of industry programs 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 REPORTING

Table 13: 2013-14 Budget and forward years regional and non-regional expenditure disaggregated for the Australian Taxation Office

Program	Category	Budget	Forward	Forward	Forward
		estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
		\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program 1.6 Australian Screen Production Incentive	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	237	219	189	215
Program 1.7 Cleaner Fuels Grant Scheme	Regional	3	3	3	3
	Non-regional	36	38	40	41
	Non-specific	4	4	4	4
Program 1.8 Fuel Tax Credit Scheme	Regional	4171	4195	4454	4518
	Non-regional	1673	1683	1787	1812
	Non-specific	27	28	29	30
Program 1.9 National Rental Affordability Scheme	Regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	131	150	170	228
Program 1.10 Product Stewardship for Oil	Regional	17	18	19	19
	Non-regional	30	30	32	34
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.11 Research and Development Tax Incentive	Regional	105	109	115	121
	Non-regional	1,305	1,361	1,432	1,507
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Program 1.14 First Home Saver Accounts	Regional	2	2	2	2
	Non-regional	17	16	16	17
	Non-specific
Program 1.15 Low Income Superannuation Contribution	Regional	293	287	290	294
	Non-regional	674	658	666	675
	Non-specific	8	8	8	8
Insurance Rebate	Regional	56	59	62	65
	Non-regional	133	140	147	154
	Non-specific	1	1	2	2
Program 1.17 Superannuation Co-Contribution	Regional	48	49	50	52
	Non-regional	89	91	93	96
	Non-specific	1	1	1	1
Program 1.21 Other administered ²	Regional	35	32	24	24
	Non-regional	-	-	-	-
	Non-specific	-	-	-	-
Portfolio Grand Total ³	Regional	4,730	4,753	5,019	5,098
	Non-regional	3,958	4,017	4,212	4,336
	Non-specific	409	411	402	487

¹ Fuel Tax Credit claims for the mining and agricultural industries have been classified as regional.

² Includes the Seafarer tax offset and the Conservation Tillage tax offset

³ The amounts in table 13 and the amounts reported in the Portfolio Budget Statement may differ due to rounding

Table 13 provides a summary of expenditure relating to personal benefits and industry programs paid by the Australian Government through the ATO.

The regional split of funding has been based on the current location of personal benefit and industry program 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 industry programs, 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 \$4.7 billion, or 52 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 2013-14 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 \$17.3 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 approximately \$1.2 billion being paid into super funds over the next four years through the Low Income Superannuation Contribution scheme.

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 (the Department) 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 Department of Human Services' Service Centres in regional centres and through outreach visits, further expanding the Department's regional footprint. The Booked Car Scheme, 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 2013-14 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

Anzac Centenary Travelling Exhibition

The Australian Government will provide a \$10.0 million contribution to design a national travelling exhibition to commemorate the Anzac Centenary.

Subject to additional funding being provided from the Anzac Centenary Public Fund the exhibition is expected to be the flagship project of the Anzac Centenary Program. Two self-contained 12 metre long interactive digital 'Walls' will travel across Australia and present film, artworks, images of objects, letters, maps and interpretive material from the Australian War Memorial's collections. The exhibition could reach up to 85 per cent of the population during the Centenary period.

The Anzac Centenary Public Fund relies on contributions from the corporate and community sectors. It is anticipated that this jointly funded Travelling Exhibition will bring the Anzac Centenary to many people in rural and regional Australia who

otherwise would have limited opportunity to be involved and actively engage in commemorating the centenary.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Saluting Their Service Commemorations Program Grants

Saluting Their Service forms a key part of the Australian Government's commemorations program. Under Saluting Their Service funding is available for projects, including events and activities to commemorate Australia's involvement in war, conflict and peace operations.

On average approximately 500 grants are approved each year in most electorates across Australia (in 2011 141 of 150 electorates received grants), including many in regional and rural areas.

Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program

The Australian Government's Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program will assist and encourage communities across Australia to undertake their own Anzac Centenary projects that commemorate the service and sacrifice of Australian servicemen and women in the First World War.

The program was announced by the Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP, and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac, the Hon Warren Snowdon MP, on 24 April 2012. The Department is responsible for administering the program.

The Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program is a key element of the Australian Government's Anzac Centenary program through which funding of up to \$100,000 will be made available for each Federal Member of Parliament to support projects in their electorate commemorating the First World War.

Guidelines and application forms are available from www.anzaccentenary.gov.au.

Honouring War Dead

The Australian 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.

APPENDIX A: SPATIAL REPORTING

The Australian 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 Australian Government provided the first instalment of enhanced information on Australian Government spending in regional Australia.

In the 2012-13 Budget, the Australian Government implemented 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.

These improvements include spatial reporting being 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/Australian+Statistical+Geography+Standard+\(ASGS\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Australian+Statistical+Geography+Standard+(ASGS))

INTERPRETING SPATIAL REPORTING INFORMATION

Consistent with the improved framework, expenditure reported in the 2013-14 Regional Ministerial Statement is disaggregated by material program between Major Cities and Regional Australia for the Budget Year (2013-14) and forward estimates (2014-15 to 2016-17). 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.

Please note, a dash (-) in the spatial reporting tables represents a nil entry. Where there is a double dot (..), this represents an entry which is not zero, but rounded to zero.

Further information on each portfolio is available in the respective section of this document and in their respective Portfolio Budget Statements.

