

Grayndler

Gazette

FROM ANTHONY ALBANESE MP, YOUR FEDERAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Budget 2010: Investing in health, infrastructure and the environment



The 2010-11 Federal Budget will build on the work done by the Rudd Labor Government to keep Australia out of the Global Recession, according to the Member for Grayndler, Anthony Albanese.

With **responsible management** the Government will **halve peak debt** and get the Budget back in black in three years, **three years early**.

"The best thing about the way the Rudd Labor Government has handled the Global Recession has been the protection of jobs," Anthony said.

"Our unemployment rate, which peaked much lower than most other nations, is heading down to 4.75 per cent by mid-2012. Through the Nation Building and Jobs Plan and the Building Education Revolution, we have worked hard to keep jobs in every local community in Australia, including here in the Inner West."

While the Budget has been described as no frills, Anthony said there are a number of important initiatives in reforming the health and hospital sector, investing in renewable energy and infrastructure.

Better Health and Hospitals

The Budget will fully fund the recently announced historic health and hospitals reform, including an additional \$2.2 billion investment in the health system that takes the Government's new investment in health reform to \$7.3 billion over five years, and \$23 billion over the rest of the decade.

Building Skills

More young people will have the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications and skills following the Rudd Government's announcement of up to 40,000 additional training places and support for 22,500 new apprentices.

This \$661 million investment will help young people get jobs in critical skill shortage areas such as infrastructure, construction, renewable energy and the resource sector.

Stronger, Fairer and Simpler Tax Reform

Following on from the Henry Tax Review, the Government has announced the **Resource Super Profits Tax** to ensure that all Australians will benefit from our finite mineral resources. The proceeds will be used to boost superannuation

for all workers from 9 to 12 per cent, cut company tax to 28 per cent and fund infrastructure.

In addition the Budget announced a 50 per cent tax discount for the first \$1,000 of interest earned, including interest earned on deposits.

In further tax reform announced in the Budget, from 1 July 2012 the Government will simplify tax returns by offering a standard deduction. The new optional standard deduction will mean you could get \$500 instead of having to claim work-related expenses each tax season, with this increasing to \$1,000 from 1 July 2013.

Investing in Renewable Energy

The Budget contains a new \$652 million fund to provide further support for the development and deployment of large and small scale renewable energy projects, including wind, solar and biomass, as part of the \$5.1 billion Clean Energy Initiative.

"This government is committed to reducing our carbon pollution and tackling climate change," said Anthony.

Infrastructure for tomorrow

Nearly \$1 billion will be invested to further accelerate the modernisation of the interstate rail network. This new money means the Rudd Government has quadrupled its investment in rail, bringing it to some \$9 billion.

At the local level, the Government has allocated \$70 million to complete planning on the Moorebank Intermodal Terminal Project, a facility with the potential to take one million trucks off Sydney's roads each year and transform the movement of freight across the Sydney Basin.

Historic reform of our health and hospital system

The 2010 Budget includes the most comprehensive and significant reforms to Australia's health and hospital systems since the introduction of Medicare. \$7.3 billion will fund the Rudd Labor Government's health initiatives.

GPs and Primary Health Care boosted with a \$1.2 billion investment

- Medicare Locals – a nation-wide network of primary health care organisations, providing access to high quality, affordable after hours GP services, linked to a 24 hours National Health Call Centre Network;
- Primary care infrastructure investment increased by \$355.2 million to build GP Super Clinics and upgrade a further 425 facilities, which will accommodate allied health services, health education, counselling and community health promotion;
- Comprehensive care for the nearly one million people with diabetes with a commitment of \$449.2 million, funding patients' management of their diabetes through their GP;
- Support for GP practice nurses through a \$390.3 million funding program, helping GPs in urban areas employ registered or enrolled nurses to reduce the workload for doctors.

Hospital Reform

- The National Health and Hospitals Network means 60% of funding will come from the Commonwealth;
- Locally run hospital networks will improve the efficacy of hospitals through the establishment of activity-based funding making them more responsive to community needs;
- Waiting times will be capped at 4 hours from 2011; \$803 million will work towards ensuring that 95% of Australians receive their surgery within clinically recommended times from 2012;
- **Professor Chris O'Brien's Cancer Centre, the Lifehouse, at RPA is to receive \$150 million.**

- Additional sub-acute and aged-care beds with a \$1.6 billion investment.

Increase of the low-income thresholds for the Medicare Levy to \$18,488 for singles and \$31,196 for couples.

Expansion of preventative health measures

- The introduction of tough measures to cut smoking rates – all tobacco products will be sold in plain packaging, a 25% excise increase from 30 April and all excises from tobacco products will be directly invested into health;
- An anti-binge drinking campaign;
- Increase in the funding of community level sport.

Health Agreements with the Pharmacy Guild and Medicines Australia will save \$2.5 billion, through freezing the pharmacy fee indexation and taking advantage of discounting of off-patent and generic medicines.

Access to personally controlled electronic health records

Patients will be able to access information about their medical history and to share that history with a medical practitioner anywhere in the country, avoiding medication errors and unnecessary tests.

Gaps in mental health sector addressed with a \$175.8 million package

- Headspace, a service in the Inner West offering support and information for young people who have general health, mental health, alcohol and other drug concerns, will receive funding under this package.
- Expansion of the Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Model;
- Funding for Specialist mental health nurses will be increased by \$13 million;
- Improved coordination of mental health care.

Investing in Renewable Energy

The Rudd Government will invest **\$652 million** over four years in a new **Renewable Energy Fund**, which will form part of the Government's expanded \$5.1 billion Clean Energy Initiative.

The Fund will be used to provide further support for the development and deployment of large and small scale renewable energy projects, including wind, solar and biomass.

Through partnerships with the private sector, the Fund will support critical early stage investments to encourage private funds for the commercialisation of renewable technologies.

In addition, the Fund will be used to promote the take-up of energy efficiency in Australia and help businesses and households reduce their energy consumption.

The Fund complements existing support through the Government's expanded Renewable Energy Target, which will ensure that **by 2020, 20 percent of**

Australia's energy comes from renewable resources such as wind, solar and geothermal.

As part of the existing Clean Energy Initiative, several projects have been announced.

These include a Biofuels Research and Development Program, a Geothermal Drilling Program, a Wind Energy Forecasting Capability Program and an Advanced Electricity Storage Technologies Program.

The Government also announced in the Budget that Australia will become a member of the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC).

Membership of IPEEC will offer a flexible international forum for Australia to have high level policy discussion, regular strategic co-operation and exchanges focused exclusively on energy efficiency as part of the global response to climate change.

The Government has also committed a further **\$56 million to the International Forest Carbon Initiative**, bringing the fund to a total of \$273 million. This funding is working toward helping developing countries reduce their greenhouse emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Additionally, **\$178 million** has been added to the **Climate Change Adaptation Initiative** to provide practical support, underpinned by research, to vulnerable countries and island states as they plan for and respond to, the effects of climate change.

The government recognises that climate change is a core challenge for the future and acknowledges the need for combined global and domestic action.

The Government is committed to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Nation Building Agenda

Strong and rapid stimulus sustained economic activity and jobs during the global downturn. Infrastructure projects played a large part in this recovery.

The Rudd Labor Government's massive investments mean Australia is only now emerging from a decade of neglect of vital infrastructure. "We've doubled investment in roads, quadrupled investment in rail and made the first significant Federal investment in urban passenger rail" said Anthony Albanese, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

Easing Bottlenecks

Productivity enhancing rail projects will be funded through \$1 billion worth of investments in the Australian Rail Track Corporation. "This new money means the Government has quadrupled its investment in rail, bringing it to some \$9 billion," explained Anthony.

These projects will increase the movement of freight by rail, reduce travel times and improve productivity.

In addition, the development of an intermodal terminal precinct at Moorebank, near Liverpool, will provide an integrated transport solution for the movement of freight within the Sydney basin. This initiative will take up to one million trucks off Sydney's roads, relieve urban congestion and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Cooks River Regeneration

The next step in the revitalisation of the Cooks River is underway with the start of work on the **River Bank Naturalisation Project** around Cup and Saucer Creek in Canterbury.

The project will entail the diversion of water from Cup and Saucer Creek into newly-constructed native wetlands before it feeds into the river. This process will allow pollutants to be removed from the water.

Another project contributing to the renewal of the Cooks River is the construction of an innovative new water play park which was begun in April.

Steel Park will be the site of the **Marrickville Waterplay Park**, which has been designed to be fun, educational and environmentally friendly.

Water will be treated and recycled after its use in play features such as interactive fountains.

"This is going to be a very popular park in summer time," Anthony commented.

"It will also be a place for school excursions so children can learn about the water cycle in action.

"The Cooks River has undergone substantial improvement in recent years. We are committed to continuing the work being done here to restore it to a clean and healthy waterway, supporting a variety of plant and animal life. It also fulfils a role as a pleasant environment for local residents and visitors to enjoy," Anthony said.

The area also received **\$200,000** last year under the Rudd Government's **National Bike Paths Projects** scheme which will see reconstruction and widening of the popular Cooks River cycleway.

"As an alternative form of transport, it will help take cars off our roads and reduce carbon emissions over the longer term."



work underway at Mackey Park

A Second Sydney Airport

In December 2009, Anthony launched the Rudd Government's National Aviation White Paper – the first consistent policy paper on aviation in Australia's history.

The Rudd Labor Government has taken the following specific initiatives on aircraft noise:

- Sydney needs a second airport and, in December 2009, the Government established a joint planning taskforce with the NSW government to do the necessary land and transport strategic planning. On 11 May 2010 the Federal Budget provided \$8.5 million to fund this taskforce;
- From 1 September 2010, noisy old jet aircraft will be banned from Australia's major airports. This means that from 1 September 2010, 396 flights by those noisy old planes will be prohibited, including the noisy freight plane that flies over the Inner West after 10 pm every week night;
- Establishing a new Aircraft Noise Ombudsman to give residents a better way to follow up issues about aircraft noise and improve the flow of information to the public;
- Maintaining the existing curfew and cap at Sydney Airport;
- Retaining the Sydney Airport Community Forum to make sure the Inner West community is regularly informed and consulted.



The new covered outdoor learning area (COLA) at Australia Street Infants School in Newtown has been shortlisted for the prestigious Sulman Architecture Award. The project was largely funded from the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) program, a \$16.2 billion investment that provides world-class educational facilities, through new infrastructure and refurbishments, to all eligible Australian schools.

Grants for young Local Sporting Champions

Junior sportspeople often find it difficult to meet the ongoing and significant costs associated with participation at sporting competitions.

The **Local Sporting Champions** program is an Australian Government initiative in its second year. It is designed to provide financial assistance for junior sportsmen and women (aged 12-18) towards the cost of competing at state or national sporting competitions endorsed by an official national sporting organisation.

In the 2010 Budget, the Rudd Labor Government has announced a doubling of the number of grants taking the total to 24 individual and 2 team grants available in 2010-2011.

The grants for individual applicants is \$500 and \$3000 for team applications.

Anthony is encouraging young sporting champions from the Inner West to apply for Local Sporting Champion grants.

"This is a great program for kids who could be sports stars of the future but can't afford all the costs involved in getting to national titles," said Mr Albanese.

Anthony is pictured with recent recipients, boxer, Raymond Ingram and fencer, Matthew Donald.



Advancing Equality for Women

Over the last two and a half years, the Rudd Government has been working towards strengthening women's long term social and economic outcomes. This budget introduces additional measures aimed at enhancing women's equal place in society.

The Superannuation reforms will deliver substantial improvements in women's retirement savings. The importance of these changes for women cannot be underestimated. 80% of women have children and therefore may spend significant periods outside the paid workforce, reducing the amount of super that they can earn. Men work an average of 39 years, but for women the average is 20 years.

\$17.1 billion over the next 4 years will be invested in **early childhood education and childcare**. The setting of a national quality standard in this sector will provide parents with peace of mind, as there will be improvements in staff-to-child ratios and staff qualifications established as part of that standard.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 will be strengthened:

- With protections applying equally to women and men;
- Importantly, discrimination against breastfeeding will be considered as a separate ground of discrimination;
- Students and workers will be given greater protection from sexual harassment;
- Protection from discrimination on the ground of family responsibilities for BOTH women and men will be extended.

Balancing paid work and family life will be made easier with the Fair Work Act 2009.

The National Employment Standards in the Act include:

- The right for parents to request flexible working arrangements until their child reaches school age or a child with a disability turns 18;
- The doubling of unpaid parental leave available to families – both parents can have separate periods of up to 12 months leave.

Paid parental leave will be delivered from 1 January 2011, giving babies the best start in life, offering parents more options to balance work and family and helping employers retain skilled and experienced staff.

Greater choice in maternity care - Midwives will be given more support with the introduction of two important new measures.

- Eligible midwives working in collaboration with doctors to provide certain services will be subsidised by the Medicare Benefits Schedule and will be able to prescribe certain PBS medicines;
- In addition, for the first time, professional indemnity for midwives, practising at hospitals, will be supported by the Commonwealth.

Marrickville Legal Centre funding boost

The Rudd Labor Government will invest an additional \$154 million over four years in legal assistance services across the country.

Marrickville Legal Centre will receive **\$55,385** to allow for the continuation of the *Community Legal Centres - Family Relationship Centre* pilot program which provides legal advice and assistance to separating families.