

A photograph of four government ministers standing in a library or office. From left to right: a man in a dark suit and red patterned tie; a man in a dark suit and light blue tie holding a blue folder; a woman in a black dress with a brooch; and a man in a dark suit and blue patterned tie. The background features bookshelves with red and blue books, framed portraits, and a painting of a ship.

# Building a Stronger Australia

*An overview of the first year of the Abbott Coalition Government*

# Building a Stronger Australia

This document provides a short summary of just some of the progress and achievements of the Abbott Coalition Government.

For more information about these and other initiatives and to keep up to date, go to [www.liberal.org.au](http://www.liberal.org.au)

September 2014

## The Coalition's *Commitment*

“This is what a Liberal and  
National Party government will do.

We'll build a stronger economy so  
everyone can get ahead.

We'll scrap the Carbon Tax so your  
family will be \$550 a year better off.

We'll get the budget back under  
control by ending Labor's waste.

We'll stop the boats.

And we'll build the roads of the  
21st century.”

**Tony Abbott MP**

*Coalition Campaign Launch  
25 August 2013*



**Building  
a Stronger  
Australia**

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challenge

# Building a Stronger Australia

One year ago, the Australian people entrusted the Coalition with the job of building a stronger Australia.

Since then we have sought to keep your trust by delivering on our commitments to you and by making decisions that are in the best long-term interests of Australia.

Our focus has been on building a strong, prosperous economy and a safe, secure Australia.

We're making progress:

- The Carbon Tax is gone;
- The boats are stopping;
- Our record \$50 billion roads and infrastructure programme is underway;
- We've given environmental approvals to major new projects worth over \$800 billion;
- We're boosting exports and jobs with Free Trade Agreements with two of our major trading partners;
- We're reducing Government debt and getting the Budget back under control;
- And importantly, 109,000 new jobs have been created since the end of last year.

As a nation, we've also faced serious challenges in the past year because of the increasingly uncertain world in which we live.

Uncertainty in Syria, Iraq and Ukraine and the rise of violent extremism has tested Australia, as it has other nations.

In an increasingly uncertain world, the Coalition Government is determined to keep our nation safe and secure and is implementing a detailed set of measures to achieve this.

Over the next two years, the Government will continue its work building a stronger economy and a safe, secure Australia. This will help families get ahead, support our seniors, create jobs, provide world-class health and education, encourage small business, and build the roads of the 21st century.



Tony Abbott

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**A stronger  
economy**

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**A safer  
Australia**

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**A stronger  
society**



# Key achievements

## **We've abolished the Carbon Tax**

Removing a \$9 billion a year hit to our economy and reducing energy costs for all Australians.

## **We're stopping the boats**

Just one successful people smuggling venture has arrived in the first eight months of 2014 – compared to 268 in the same period last year under Labor.

## **We're reducing debt and getting the nation's Budget under control**

Australian taxpayers are paying \$1 billion a month in interest on Labor's debt – we're not going to pass on a massive debt burden and higher taxes to the next generation of Australians.

## **We're undertaking the largest infrastructure investment in Australia's history**

A record \$50 billion to improve road and rail links, reduce travel times and support economic growth.

## **We're paving the way for billions worth of major projects**

We've given environmental approval to major projects worth over \$800 billion to Australia. By removing bureaucratic backlogs, we're making it easier for business to invest and create jobs.



## **We're boosting exports and jobs**

Securing Free Trade Agreements with two of our largest trading partners, Japan and Korea.

## **We've abolished the Mining Tax**

Improving competitiveness and certainty for this key job creating and export industry.

## **We're making things easier for small business**

More than 10,000 pieces of legislation and regulations have been removed as part of a commitment to reduce red tape costs by \$1 billion a year.



**Our  
Progress**

**Scrapped the  
Carbon Tax**



**Stopping  
the boats**



### **We're investing more in schools and hospitals**

Schools funding is increasing by \$4.9 billion (37%) and hospitals funding is increasing by \$5.3 billion (40%), over the next four years.

### **We're getting the NBN rollout back on track**

More than double the number of homes and businesses are receiving NBN services compared to a year ago.

### **We're providing jobseekers with more support and assistance**

With Restart (payments up to \$10,000 for businesses to employ mature long-term unemployed workers), Job Commitment Bonuses and Relocation Assistance.

### **We're making it easier for people to get qualifications**

For the first time Australian Government support will be provided for all sub-bachelor qualifications. 80,000 more students will get government support by 2018.

### **We're helping communities tackle local environmental issues**

The Green Army has been established. Over the next three years it will facilitate 15,000 young Australians, working on 1,500 community-led projects, to improve our environment.

### **We're supporting apprentices**

We've created Trade Support Loans of up to \$20,000 for apprentices.

### **We've established the New Colombo Plan**

The first group of 1,300 Australian undergraduate students are studying in our region, as part of the New Colombo Plan.

### **We're committed to the National Disability Insurance Scheme**

Trial sites are up and running and more than 7,300 tailored packages are now supporting Australians with disability, with a participant satisfaction rate of over 90 per cent.



**Building a stronger economy**



**Getting the Budget back under control**



**Building the roads of the 21st century**

LABOR'S LEGACY

# Our challenge

**After six years of chaos and mismanagement, Labor left Australia with a mess.**

### Record deficits

Labor produced the six largest Budget deficits in our history.

### Massive debt

Labor's government debt blew out to \$320 billion (\$13,500 per Australian) and was projected to reach \$667 billion in 10 years (approximately \$25,000 per Australian).

### Soaring interest payments

Interest on debt is now costing taxpayers \$1 billion per month – more than is spent on aged care or universities. The interest on Labor's debt was projected to reach \$3 billion per month in 10 years – more than would be spent on schools.

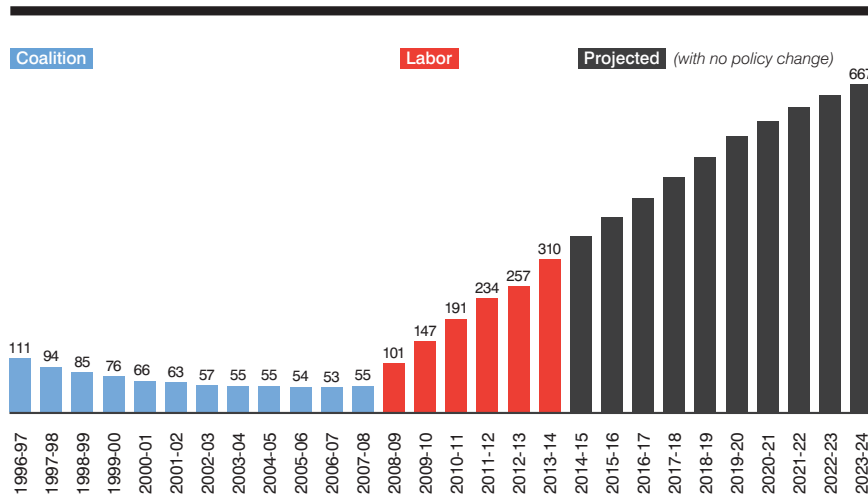
### World's biggest Carbon Tax

Labor imposed the world's biggest Carbon Tax – a \$9 billion a year hit to the economy costing average households around \$550 per year.

### More people unemployed

Under Labor, the number of unemployed increased by over 200,000. Productivity declined by 0.7% per year, working days lost to strikes doubled and business red tape increased.

**Government Debt (Gross) (\$ Billions)**



Source: MYEFO 2013-14

**Taxpayers are paying the price:** Interest on Labor's debt is costing taxpayers \$1 billion every month.





*“The challenge is not of our making, but we ... accept responsibility to fix it.”*

Joe Hockey MP, 13 May 2014

**NBN project delays and cost blow out**

Labor’s National Broadband Network would have cost at least \$29 billion more than we were told. Crucial road infrastructure was announced but then cancelled, delayed or left unfunded.

**Cost of living was on the rise**

Over six years, household costs for health increased 35%, education increased 39%, gas increased 71% and electricity increased 101%.

**Illegal boat arrivals were out of control**

Over 50,000 illegal arrivals came in more than 800 boats, causing a cost blow out of over \$11 billion.

**Education standards slipped**

Student test results declined, along with the international rating of Australia’s schools.

**Health services got more expensive**

Hospital waiting times increased and \$4 billion was cut from private health insurance, while health bureaucracies thrived.

**Defence spending was slashed**

The Defence Budget fell to the lowest level as a percentage of GDP since 1938.

Daily Telegraph, 10/7/2013

The Australian, 14/11/2012

**Bosses’ work is ‘26pc red tape’**

**TANGLED UP IN RED**  
RED tape is thought to have been invented by the court of King...

**\$2.5B BOATS BLOW OUT**

A BILLION-dollar blowout in the detention centre budget

The Australian, 13/11/2013

**REFORM ‘OUT OF STEAM’**  
**Defence ‘cut down’ by Gillard**

THE Gillard government’s severe budget cuts did not just move the goalposts for Defence but cut them down for ‘firewood’, says department secretary Dennis Richardson. The cuts left the department understandably cynical about pushing ahead with promised reforms to improve its performance. Mr Richardson told the Australian Strategic Policy Institute think tank last night. The loss of billions of dollars in...

**Costly carbon tax has to go**

Environment Minister Greg Hunt will today introduce legislation to repeal the carbon tax which has been in place for nearly 500 days. In all that time, not one of the world’s other major coal-producing nations has applied a carbon price to emissions related to the production of coal. Not China, not Indonesia. Not Colombia.

Australian Financial Review, 12/11/2013

**Let down by Labor: small businesses**

Small business is more dissatisfied with federal government than ever. Small business owners, says John Anderton, chief executive of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, are more dissatisfied with the federal government than ever. “Productivity went backwards – just as demand was softening and...

Australian Financial Review, 11/12/2012

**Labor adrift on a sea of chaos**

Julia Gillard remains Prime Minister only to be defeated on another front. “More likely the Labor Government is the Titanic, get back on course”.

Herald Sun, 22/3/2013

**Labor blamed for productivity hit**

Qantas chairman Leigh Clifford, currently staring down the unions over 5000 job cuts at the national carrier, has blamed the recession yesterday covering his 40 years in the mining game, the economy, boom-bust commodity price cycles and the rise of China, back stalled the productivity improvement,” Mr Clifford said. “Productivity went backwards – just as demand was softening and...


Canberra Times, 14/3/2014

**NBN: No Blunder Neglected**

Australia’s unique global experiment in infrastructure projects between now and 2017. \$US57 trillion (\$63 trillion) in infrastructure projects between now and 2017.

Australian Financial Review, 22/2/2014



A photograph of two men in white shirts and ties sitting at a desk. The man on the left is wearing a light purple tie and a watch. The man on the right is wearing a blue and white striped tie and is holding a blue pen and a document. They are both looking at the document. In the background, there are bookshelves and framed pictures.

*“We’re striving to achieve a stronger Budget because that’s the way to a stronger economy, to a stronger society and to make your life better and your job more secure.”*

Tony Abbott MP  
29 April 2014

# A stronger economy



## Repairing the Budget

The Abbott Government's first Budget cuts Labor's waste and makes savings that would reduce projected debt by \$277 billion over the next decade, saving \$16 billion in annual interest payments.

Returning the Budget to a sustainable position with reduced interest costs will mean more money for critical services and infrastructure.

## Encouraging Investment

To clear the backlog of stalled projects under Labor, the Government has made over 300 decisions to approve or progress projects worth over \$800 billion.

The Government is also working with the states and territories to deliver one-stop shops for environmental approvals, to ensure high environmental standards can be met, without unnecessary red and green tape.

## Removing the Carbon Tax

The world's biggest Carbon Tax has been abolished, removing a \$9 billion a year hit to our economy.

Removing the Carbon Tax makes our major industries more competitive and reduces costs for the 75,000 businesses that paid it.

Electricity prices will be around 9% less expensive, and gas prices around 7% less expensive, than they would otherwise have been.

Scrapping the Carbon Tax is reducing cost of living pressures for families, who were paying hundreds of dollars extra on household power bills and due to the flow on effect on the prices of other goods.

## Encouraging Job Seekers

Job seekers now have more assistance and incentive, with:

- **Restart** (payments up to \$10,000 for businesses to employ mature long-term unemployed workers);
- **Job Commitment Bonuses** (to encourage young, long-term unemployed to find and keep jobs);
- **Relocation Assistance** (to help job seekers move to take up jobs);
- **Work for the Dole** reinvigorated, with projects already underway in 18 areas across Australia.

## Reducing Paperwork

As part of the Abbott Government's commitment to reduce business red tape costs by \$1 billion a year, more than 10,000 unnecessary and counter-productive pieces of legislation have already been removed.

For the first time, two days of Parliament each year are being dedicated to removing government red tape.



## Developing Australia's North

The Government's White Paper on Developing Northern Australia is underway. It is being developed in consultation with the Queensland, Western Australian and Northern Territory Governments. It will set out a clear, well defined plan to grow our energy, tourism, education, health and agricultural sectors.

## Removing the Mining Tax

Removing Labor's Mining Tax will improve competitiveness and certainty for this key job creating and export industry.



## Boosting Export Opportunities

With the specific aim of increasing growth and jobs, Free Trade Agreements have been signed with two of our largest trading partners – Japan and Korea. Significant progress has also been made toward a Free Trade Agreement with China.



## 21st Century Infrastructure

The Government is making the largest infrastructure investment in Australia's history – \$50 billion to improve road and rail links, reduce travel times and support economic growth.

In the Budget, the Government announced an asset recycling initiative with the states, offering substantial financial incentives to sell old assets and reinvest the proceeds into new productive infrastructure.

Together with state government and private investment, the Abbott Government's Infrastructure Growth Package will drive over \$125 billion of new infrastructure – the modern day equivalent of eight Snowy Mountains Schemes.

The Government is investing \$2.1 billion for Roads to Recovery. This includes \$565 million for Black Spots and \$300 million for the Bridges Renewal Programme.

The Government's **Infrastructure Growth Package** will drive over \$125 billion of new infrastructure – the modern day equivalent of eight Snowy Mountains Schemes.



There is also an additional \$230 million for a National Highway Programme.

And after five decades of talk, this government has decided to build a second Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek.

## SUMMARY OF MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

### New South Wales

#### WestConnex

Linking Western Sydney and South-Western Sydney with the city, airport and ports.

#### Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan

Supporting Sydney's second airport at Badgerys Creek.

#### NorthConnex

Linking the Central Coast.

#### Pacific Highway

Fully upgrading this major transport and freight route by the end of 2020.

### Victoria

#### East West Link

Providing the missing link in Melbourne's road network that will slash travel times, boost productivity and create more than 6,000 jobs.

#### Regional Rail Link

Removing major bottlenecks in Victoria's rail network.

#### Princes Highway West duplication

Helping link key industries to markets and bring regional communities together.

### Queensland

#### Bruce Highway

Providing up to \$6.7 billion (to 2022-23) to help fix the Highway, benefiting motorists and local businesses.

#### Gateway Motorway North

Improving access to the Bruce Highway from North Brisbane and the Port of Brisbane.

#### Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

Cutting travel times and removing traffic from Toowoomba Town Centre.



## Helping Small Business

Small business will benefit from the abolition of the Carbon Tax, less paperwork, modern infrastructure and a stronger economy.

We've changed tax thresholds, saving business \$56 million a year in red tape.

Other initiatives to specifically help small business include a Small Business Helpline in the Fair Work Ombudsman's office, which has already received over 100,000 calls.

A review of competition laws now underway will help ensure big and small businesses compete on a level playing field.



## New Opportunities for Regions facing Difficulties

The \$155 million Growth Fund will help generate the jobs of the future for employees and supply-chain businesses in Victoria and South Australia affected by the closure of local automotive manufacturing operations.

From next year, the \$1 billion National Stronger Regions Fund will promote economic development in many communities through investment in small-scale infrastructure projects.

## Investing in Skills

Trade Support Loans of up to \$20,000 have been introduced for apprentices.

For the first time Australian Government support will be provided for all sub-bachelor qualifications. 80,000 more students will get government support by 2018.



## Fixing the NBN

The Government is getting the NBN back on track, with more than twice as many homes and businesses now receiving NBN services than a year ago.

This year, for the first time, the NBN Co met its rollout target.

## Tackling Union Corruption

A Royal Commission has commenced into Trade Union Governance and Corruption.

To ensure the rule of law is restored in the building industry, the Government is seeking to reintroduce the Australian Building and Construction Commission.



### Western Australia

#### Perth Freight Link

Providing a direct, free flowing connection to the Port of Fremantle.

#### Perth Airport Gateway

Reducing congestion around Perth Airport.

#### Swan Valley Bypass

A new 40km highway to improve freight and save travel times through the Swan Valley.

### Tasmania

#### Midland Highway upgrade

Safety upgrades on this north-south corridor between Hobart and Launceston.

### Northern Territory

#### Tiger Brennan Drive

Duplication of Tiger Brennan Drive from Berrimah Road to the Darwin CBD.

### South Australia

#### North-South Road Corridor

Completing the Darlington and Torrens to Torrens projects as the first stages of the full upgrade.

### ACT

#### Majura Parkway

Linking the Federal Highway and the Monaro Highway.





*“The important thing is not to be deterred from doing what is necessary to protect our citizens, our interests and our values.”*

Tony Abbott MP  
9 June 2014

## OUR PROGRESS

# A safer Australia

## Secure Borders

In the first eight months of 2014, just one successful people smuggling venture made it to Australia, compared to 268 over the same eight month period last year.

Stopping the boats has already produced Budget savings of \$2.5 billion (to 2017-18), stopped people drowning at sea and reduced the number of children in detention by over 35%.



\* Only 1 successful people smuggling venture to Australia between January 2014 - August 2014.

**A safer Australia:**  
New legislation will help monitor, investigate, arrest and prosecute returning foreign fighters and prevent extremists departing.

## A Stronger Defence Force

The Abbott Government has committed to restoring Defence funding to 2% of GDP and has commissioned a new Defence White Paper, due for release in 2015.

Significant decisions already announced include acquisitions of: another 58 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) aircraft; Triton Broad Area Maritime Unmanned Aerial Vehicles; and the P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol aircraft.

The Government is delivering for Defence personnel – past, present and future, through:

- More generous indexation for Defence Forces Retirement Benefits scheme (DFRB) and Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits scheme (DFRDB);
- Providing free basic health care to all ADF family members;
- Re-starting the ADF Gap Year Programme.



## Tackling Home Grown Terrorism

To bolster our security agencies in their monitoring and disruption activities in Australia and overseas, the Abbott Government is providing an additional \$630 million over the next four years.

New legislation will help monitor, investigate, arrest and prosecute returning foreign fighters and prevent extremists departing. Additional legislation will ensure welfare payments can be stopped for extremists.

## Representing Australia's Interests

The Government's efforts overseas have helped secure Free Trade Agreements with Japan and Korea, a historic Defence technology exchange agreement with Japan and a prompt, unequivocal UN Security Council Resolution in response to the downing of Flight MH-17.

Australia's overseas aid is now reoriented to economic development and poverty reduction in our region.

1,300 Australian undergraduate students are now studying in the region as part of the New Colombo Plan.



OUR PROGRESS

# A stronger society

## Supporting Families

Households are projected to save, on average, \$550 per year following the scrapping of the Carbon Tax.

Reducing government debt and getting the Budget back under control now will create a stronger economy and more sustainable support for families.

The Government is committed to making childcare – which increased in cost by 53% in six years of Labor – more accessible, affordable and flexible, with a Productivity Commission Inquiry underway.

The Abbott Government's proposed Paid Parental Leave scheme will provide mothers with more support at this important time.

New legislation has streamlined the process for overseas adoptions.

## Sustainable, World Class Healthcare

The Abbott Government is increasing funding to hospitals by \$5.3 billion (40%) over the next four years.

A new Medical Research Future Fund has been announced, to be funded by savings from a proposed modest co-contribution for some GP visits.



## Students First in School Education

The Abbott Government is increasing funding to schools by \$4.9 billion (37%) over the next four years.

A Students First approach has been established to ensure this increased investment translates into better results. It will focus on teacher quality, school autonomy, engaging parents in education and strengthening the curriculum.



## Supporting Older Australians

Older Australians will have lower bills following the abolition of the Carbon Tax, but still keep their Energy Supplement.

Pensions will continue to increase twice a year and the family home will continue to be exempt from the pension assets test.

The income thresholds for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card will be indexed from 20 September 2014, enabling up to 27,000 additional people to qualify for the Card.

## The National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme has so far allocated more than 7,300 tailored support packages to Australians with disability, with a participant satisfaction rate of over 90%.

Trial sites are now operating in Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, the Northern Territory, South Australia, the ACT and Tasmania.

The Abbott Government is taking a considered approach to ensure the NDIS is built on a financially sustainable platform, that it delivers for those who need it most and is there for future generations.

## Improving the Lives of Aboriginal People

The Abbott Government is embarking on a significant shake-up of Indigenous Affairs, with a \$4.8 billion Indigenous Advancement Strategy consolidating over 150 separate programmes and services into five key programme areas, with a clear focus on getting children into school, adults into work and safer communities.

The Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, chaired by Warren Mundine, will help the Government focus on practical changes to the lives of Aboriginal people.



## Grassroots Environmental Action

The recently launched Green Army will mean over the next three years, 15,000 Australians aged 17-24 will work on 1,500 community-led projects to improve our environment.



*“Australia has always been the land of the fair go, but part of giving people a fair go is encouraging them to be their best selves, making it easier for them to have a go too.”*

Tony Abbott MP  
26 June 2014

## Supporting Regional Australia

### **Scrapping the Carbon Tax**

Regional Australia benefits strongly from the abolition of the Carbon Tax, which saves farmers and regional small businesses and households up to 10% on the cost of their electricity.

### **More export opportunities**

Recent Free Trade Agreements with Japan and Korea are of particular benefit to agricultural export industries. The re-commencement of live-export of sheep, cattle and goats to Bahrain and Egypt and the opening of new markets in Iran also benefits some farming communities.



### **Better regional roads**

The Government's record \$50 billion investment in infrastructure includes major upgrades to the Pacific, Bruce and Princes Highways and other roads that link regional communities.

The \$2.1 billion Roads to Recovery Programme will help fix regional black spots, renew regional bridges and repair regional highways.



### **Regional health services**

The Government has provided 300 more GP training places, 500 new scholarships for nurses and allied health professionals, plus new incentive payments and infrastructure funding in order to address shortages in health services in rural and regional areas.

### **Stronger communities**

Local projects are also being delivered around the country through the \$342 million Community Development Grants Programme. Next year, regional Australia will share in the benefits of the \$1 billion National Stronger Regions Fund, which will provide important community infrastructure.

### **Mobile Black Spots**

The Abbott Government is also investing \$100 million on a Mobile Black Spot Programme.

### **Drought relief**

For drought affected areas, the Government is providing a comprehensive \$320 million drought support package to help our farming communities.


### **Water security**

The Government has also completed an agreement which brings all states together to implement the Murray-Darling Basin Plan for water reform and has committed to over \$2.3 billion in water infrastructure upgrades.

### **Protecting our local environment**

The Green Army – along with the \$20 million Tree Programme – will improve the local environment in regional communities across Australia.



A photograph of two men in white hard hats and orange safety vests, wearing suits and ties, looking at a large map spread out on a table. They are outdoors, with a white utility vehicle and power lines visible in the background under a blue sky with clouds. The man on the right is pointing at the map. A blue text box is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

*“Our government is turbo-charging infrastructure construction and regional development for a stronger Australia. And there’s more to come.”*

Warren Truss MP  
30 April 2014



*“Over the next two years, the Government will continue its work building a stronger economy and a safe, secure Australia. This will help families get ahead, support our seniors, create jobs, provide world-class health and education, encourage small business, and build the roads of the 21st century.”*

**Tony Abbott MP**  
Prime Minister

**THE NATIONALS**  
*for Regional Australia*

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