



Making a difference



Introduction



The Australian Labor Party is Australia's oldest political party. Labor's history and the history of Australia's democracy are inextricably intertwined.

We have a great objective — *the light on the hill*.

For 120 years, the enduring values of fairness, opportunity and the betterment of humankind have motivated members of the Labor Party and the wider Labour Movement, and they motivate us still.

The government I am privileged to lead continues in that proud tradition.

We are working hard to build a strong economy, a sustainable environment and a fair society that provides opportunity and looks after the vulnerable.

My government's first year has been testing: a finely balanced parliament, state election defeats, devastating natural disasters and the most negative Opposition in Australia's history.

Despite these factors, we are advancing our historic purpose with a significant reform program.

Addressing climate change. High-speed broadband. Sharing our mineral wealth. Better health services. More university and training places. Better services for our regions. Fixing the Murray-Darling.

On all these issues and more, Labor has a program that is firmly focused on the future.

We set our alarm clocks early because we know that to be in government is a great honour and privilege. The results of our work are beginning to show in the policies and achievements documented in this booklet.

We are making a difference. And that means for Labor in 2011, the *light on the hill* still burns brightly.

Let's keep the faith and see the job through together.

Julia Gillard Prime Minister of Australia

Highlights of the Labor Government



Since 2007 the Labor Government has set out to advance and modernise Australia and make our country stronger and fairer.

- Supporting jobs with nearly three quarters of a million new jobs created since Labor took office in December 2007, and another 500,000 to be created over the next two years.
- Kept Australia out of recession.
- More help for pensioners with an increase of \$128 a fortnight for single pensioners and around \$116 a fortnight for pensioner couples.
- Getting rid of WorkChoices to make sure Australians get a fair go at work.
- Interest rates are still lower than they were when the Liberals left office.
- Cutting taxes three budgets in a row so that someone earning \$50,000 a year is now paying \$1,750 less in tax than they were in 2007.
- Helping families with the cost of childcare by increasing the childcare rebate from 30 per cent to 50 per cent and making payments available fortnightly instead of yearly.
- Introducing Australia's first ever Paid Parental Leave scheme, giving new parents more time with their babies and reducing financial pressures on families.
- The Education Tax Refund to help families meet the cost of education.



- Launching MySchool 2.0 to provide parents with better information about their kids' schools.
- Developing and implementing a high-quality National Curriculum for our schools and investing in better quality teaching and school leadership.
- Investing in new infrastructure to boost our economic capacity and create jobs under our \$37 billion Nation Building Plan.
- Getting the Budget back to surplus by 2012–13 to help take the pressure off inflation.
- Working towards pricing carbon so that we can cut carbon pollution, move to a low-carbon economy and drive innovation and investment in the jobs for the future.
- A new health deal with the states and territories to deliver the biggest health reforms since Medicare, meaning faster and better care for patients.
- Secured an agreement with the mining industry on the Minerals Resource Rent Tax. The tax will help spread the prosperity of the mining sector to more lives and more corners of our patchwork economy.
- Said 'sorry' to Indigenous Australians.
- The structural separation of Telstra into a retail and wholesale telecommunications business. This will provide major new competition in the telco sector and pave the way for the roll-out of the National Broadband Network (NBN).
- Made mental health a national priority with an investment of \$2.2 billion in mental health reform to deliver additional services, a greater focus on prevention and early intervention and a better integrated system.

The economy



Our economy is strong today because of what Labor did during the Global Financial Crisis to protect Australians.

We acted decisively to keep 200,000 Australians in work during the Global Financial Crisis and we're very proud of what we achieved together.

Nothing is more important to us than making our economy even stronger, because that's how we create more jobs and better jobs for Australians.

We've got very low unemployment, lots of business investment coming down the track and our budget position is the envy of the world.

Our economy in 2011 is in transition and we want to make sure the opportunities of the mining boom are shared by all Australians.

We know not everybody is doing well in our patchwork economy, which is why jobs are so important to us and why we're helping families with cost of living and small businesses with cash flow.

We're getting back in the black in 2012-13 — years ahead of major advanced economies because that's the best way to ensure we don't compound the price pressures in our economy.

We've supported the creation of nearly three quarters of a million jobs since December 2007. And we are creating another 500,000 jobs in the next two years. Investing in infrastructure, training Australians, boosting superannuation for workers and cutting taxes for small business.

Our economic achievements: And there's more to do:

- Underlying inflation is at a ten-year low of just 2.3 per cent and has halved in the last couple of years.
- Real wages have increased by around 4.5 per cent over the last three years, increasing the purchasing power of workers.
- We have grown the economy by over \$200 billion, making Australians the second richest people in the G20.
- We have turned John Howard's \$130 billion trade deficit into a \$6.5 billion surplus. Australia is now paying its way in international markets.
- We have given much-needed support to small business through the \$3.7 billion Small Business and General Business Tax Break, providing a \$5000 upfront tax break, plus an instant write off of the first \$5000 towards any car purchased.
- We have guaranteed on-time payment for small business contracts with government. And we've provided \$100 million to the Tax Office to help businesses experiencing financial distress.
- Getting the Budget back in the black — we will return the Budget to surplus in 2012–13 and ensure surpluses are delivered in the years beyond.
- Obtaining a fairer return on Australia's natural resources, to invest for the future in superannuation, more infrastructure in mining regions, and tax cuts for small businesses.
- Training and skills — we're equipping our economy for future workforce challenges and have invested \$10.9 billion in skills (almost double the investment of the Howard Government).
- We're rebuilding Australia's roads, rail, ports and other critical infrastructure — which will boost economic activity and address years of Liberal neglect.
- The NBN will set us up for the 21st century by giving all Australians access to world-class internet services — boosting productivity, driving innovation and lifting economic output.
- By putting a price on carbon, we will allow the market to drive the investment and innovation needed to transform to a low-pollution economy, creating exciting job opportunities for the future.



Helping with the cost of living

The top priority of the Gillard Labor Government is to keep the economy strong and support Australian families.





That's why we have delivered:

- Tax cuts three budgets in a row so that someone earning \$50,000 a year is now paying \$1,750 less in tax than they were in 2007.
- Australia's first ever Paid Parental Leave scheme, providing 18 weeks pay at the minimum wage. Our scheme has already benefitted over 22,500 families in just the first six months.
- An increase in the Child Care Rebate to 50 per cent of out-of-pocket expenses (up from 30 per cent) providing families with up to \$7,500 per child per year (from \$4,354) towards their child care costs
- The Education Tax Refund allowing eligible families to claim up to 50 per cent of education expenses, including school uniforms.

The recent Federal Budget provides even more assistance, including:

- Increasing the share of the Low Income Tax Offset that is delivered for 6.5 million Australian workers through their regular pay from 50 per cent to 70 per cent, putting more money in the pockets of low income families when they need it most, as the bills come in each fortnight.
- Increasing the rate of the Family Tax Benefit A for 16–19 year olds who are in school or training by up to \$160 per fortnight.

The Gillard Government understands that cost of living pressures extend beyond working life. That's why we're delivering a world-class retirement income system and boosting support for pensioners:

- Since 2009 our historic pension reforms have delivered an increase of up to \$128 per fortnight for singles and \$116 per fortnight for couples.
- We have begun raising the Superannuation Guarantee Levy from 9 per cent to 12 per cent. When combined with our historic superannuation reforms, this will boost the retirement savings of an average worker aged 30 today by \$150,000 by the time they retire.



A great education

Labor has always been the party that believes in educational opportunities for all Australians.

We know education is the way to help every kid reach their full potential, to give our industries the knowledge and skills they need to innovate and become more productive, and to invest in our future.

With a strong economy we have the opportunity to ensure every child — no matter what their background — gets the best opportunity to reach their potential.

Giving every child a great education will mean Australia is a fairer nation, where there are more opportunities for people to prosper and be successful.

The Prime Minister believes education is the key to success for individuals and for the nation. Her vision is for Australia to have the best and fairest education system in the world.

Having the world's best education system will mean Australia can compete

with bigger economies. It's the rock on which a strong modern Australian economy will be founded.

After a decade of neglect, the Labor Government has almost doubled investment in school education. We've launched MySchool, are delivering a National Curriculum for our schools and are now investing in quality teaching and school leadership.

This is just the beginning. With a strong economy we can take the next step and introduce rewards for our top teachers and long overdue support for students with disabilities.

Labor is investing in our schools:

- We have almost doubled investment in schools, investing over \$64 billion over four years.
- We're providing record funding for key areas:
 - \$1.5 billion to help disadvantaged schools
 - \$540 million to improve children's literacy and numeracy
 - \$550 million to improve teacher quality.
- We're spending \$2.5 billion to ensure every high school has access to a Trade Training Centre to help kids learn a trade and address future skill shortages.
- We've already delivered over 430,000 computers in over 2000 schools, with more to come to ensure high school students learn the basic computing skills they'll need to get a job when they finish school.
- We've built or upgraded 24,000 facilities across every single Australian school. That includes new science labs or language centres for 500 secondary schools, 1300 covered outdoor learning areas and 1900 libraries.
- MySchool 2.0 is giving parents unprecedented access to information about their kids' schools and how their children compare with other students.
- The National Curriculum is helping make sure every student, no matter where they live, regardless of their school, benefits from the same high-quality teaching and learning.
- Teach for Australia — a new pathway to bring top-quality graduates into the classrooms of our disadvantaged schools. There are 85 teachers in schools today and more will be starting in 2012.
- Funding reform — a panel of highly qualified Australians is looking at how we can make sure school funding delivers excellent education and value for money for all schools and students.
- We're improving quality, with Australia's first National Professional Standards for Teachers and the Teach Next program to support experienced professionals in becoming teachers.
- We're providing \$200 million to help improve special access and services for children with a disability.



The key to success for individuals and for the nation

Skills for the future

The Gillard Government believes that the benefits and dignity of work should be extended to more Australians — our economy needs more workers and many Australians need work.



We've seen almost three quarters of a million jobs created since our election, but over 200,000 Australians are not working when they could be.

We believe every individual who can work should be given that chance. But we also know that can only happen with appropriate support.

That's why we will provide the long-term unemployed with the right training, work experience, and incentives — because we want as many people as possible to enjoy the dignity and benefits of work.

We're helping people get back into work through:

- Learn or Earn — a guaranteed training place for every young Australian under 25 if they're not already in full-time education or work.
- Up to \$4,200 increased support for eligible families to encourage teenagers aged 16 to 19 to stay in school or TAFE.
- Uncapping Disability Employment Services to give more people with a disability access to employment services.
- Establishing Jobs Services Australia, which has helped 680,000 Australians into jobs, 36 per cent of whom were disadvantaged.
- 130,000 more quality, industry-driven training places. We are funding thousands of other training places too.
- Updating apprenticeships — with \$101 million in funding to support apprentices and ensure they can progress as their skills increase, instead of just serving time.
- More funding for language, literacy and numeracy programs to help 30,000 job seekers with 800 hours of free language and numeracy training.
- Australia's first ever Paid Parental Leave scheme, which will help more women stay connected to the workforce.

The right training, work experience and incentives



Better health care



The Labor Government believes that access to decent healthcare shouldn't depend on your postcode, or your income, or the jobs your parents have.

Just as past Labor governments took the far-sighted step of building Medicare, the Gillard Government believes significant reforms are needed to make sure our health care system is sustainable and can meet the challenges of an ageing population.

That's why we are making record investments in health and undertaking the biggest health reforms since Labor introduced Medicare.

After years of neglect, we have increased hospital funding by 50 per cent, providing more training places for nurses, building new GP Super Clinics and helping family doctors to upgrade their surgeries.

This is just the beginning. With a strong economy, there are new initiatives like our \$2.2 billion mental health reform package and \$16.4 billion in hospital growth funding for the states and territories.



More money

- We have increased hospital funding by 50 per cent, and for the first time the Commonwealth will pay half of all the growth in new hospital expenditure, making sure our hospitals are properly funded.
- Tough national standards to lift quality and reduce hospital waiting times.

More doctors and nurses

- We're funding 1000 new training places for nurses every year.
- We're also training 6000 extra doctors over ten years.

More GP services

- We're making it easier for Australians to see a GP by building 64 new GP Super Clinics and upgrading 425 existing GP clinics across Australia.
- Our new GP After Hours Service is making it easier for people to see a GP or nurse, including after hours, closer to home.

More surgery

- We've delivered 70,000 elective surgery procedures in the last two years.
- 120 hospitals have been equipped with new elective surgery equipment or operating theatres.

More dental check-ups

- One million check-ups have been provided under our Medicare Teen Dental Plan.

More aged care places

- We're providing 13,000 new residential aged care places, and 1104 new transition care places to help frail older Australians leave hospital sooner.

More funding for preventative health

- We're helping improve the community's health with programs like plain packaging plans for cigarette packs, increased tobacco excise and subsidised nicotine patches.

More cancer services

- We're creating 22 Regional Cancer Centres to bring services closer to patients in rural and regional areas.
- We've funded 44 specialist breast cancer nurses (employed by the McGrath Foundation) as part of our National Cancer Plan.

More information for patients and families

- Through the new My Hospitals website, Australians will have better information about our hospitals, which will also help improve accountability and service quality.

More services for Australians with a mental illness

- In this year's Federal Budget, we delivered the nation's largest ever mental health package, with \$2.2 billion focused on early intervention and coordinated care.

Labor is doing more for our health system

Tackling climate change



Climate change is threatening the safety of our planet.

It is critical that we act now to bring down carbon pollution levels and protect our children's future.

A price on carbon emissions is a price on pollution that will make dirty energy more expensive and clean energy — like solar, wind and gas — cheaper.

Only the big polluters — less than 1000 companies — will pay, based on every tonne of pollution they emit.

All the revenue raised will go to assist households and support jobs and programs to tackle climate change.

This is the most effective and cheapest way to build a clean-energy economy that will create new jobs and drive investment in new industries.

- Introducing carbon pricing so that we can cut carbon pollution, move to a clean-energy economy and drive innovation and investment in the jobs of the future.
- Renewable target — our expanded Renewable Energy Target will ensure 20 per cent of Australia's electricity will come from renewable energy sources by 2020.
- Clean energy jobs — we're supporting green jobs and modernising our economy by investing in clean-energy initiatives, including our Solar Flagships Program which will help build two of the largest solar power stations in the world — Solar Dawn in Chinchilla, Queensland and Moree Solar Farm near Moree, NSW..
- Kyoto — one of the first acts of the Labor Government in 2007 was to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

Labor acts to reduce emissions and secure jobs

Protecting our precious land and water



The Gillard Labor Government is taking action to protect and conserve our environment and preserve the Australian way of life.

We are delivering a more sustainable environment with practical measures like investing in *Caring for our Country* programs to support local on-the-ground projects and by continuing to protect our precious oceans through the marine bioregional planning program.

We are also committed to managing water resources in the Murray–Darling Basin in a way that supports healthy rivers, strong communities and sustainable food production.

- Our commitment to reform for the Murray–Darling Basin will restore our rivers to health, support regional communities, and secure our food production, with more than \$5 billion for projects nationwide.
- We are funding innovative projects to secure Australia’s urban water supplies including storm-water harvesting, water recycling, desalination and practical water saving projects in our cities and towns.
- We are supporting the valuable contributions of volunteers and local community groups to our environment through the Caring for our Country program.
- We are protecting the iconic Great Barrier Reef, with \$200 million over five years for Reef Rescue, which will assist farmers, tourism, fishers, Indigenous communities, conservation groups, and researchers to protect our unique Reef.
- Working to end Japan’s commercial whaling by taking legal action in the International Court of Justice.
- Supporting the community-led agreement on the future of Tasmanian Forestry.
- Promoting the conservation and sustainable use of Australia’s oceans through our Marine Bioregional Planning process.

Fairness at work



From our earliest days, the Australian Labor Party has been the party of work.

The Gillard Labor Government believes Australians are entitled to job security, fairness in the workplace, and basic protections — like the right to penalty rates, overtime and holiday pay, and protection from unfair dismissal.

We believe the benefits and dignity of work should be available to all Australians who can work.

We abolished WorkChoices and have created a balanced industrial relations system that returns fairness to our workplaces, including protecting more Australians from being sacked unfairly.

The Labor Government has:

- Abolished WorkChoices and replaced it with a new industrial relations system that brings fairness back to our workplaces.
- Ended AWA individual contracts that stripped away the pay and conditions of hard-working Australians.
- Established Fair Work Australia, an independent umpire to help employees and employers resolve disputes in the workplace.
- Provided a fair minimum safety net for Australian employees, with ten National Employment Standards and a modern award system.
- Introduced a new 'no disadvantage' test to make sure workplace agreements can't strip away workers' rights.
- Restored protection from unfair dismissal to 2.8 million Australians who weren't protected under WorkChoices.
- Strengthened protections for workers, including cementing the freedom to choose effective union representation in the workplace.



Infrastructure — building the nation

The Gillard Labor Government is making record investments in our neglected infrastructure — in housing, transport, broadband, schools, universities and hospitals.

Our \$37 billion Nation Building Plan is a six-year blueprint to tackle urban congestion, supply-chain bottlenecks and falling national productivity.

It will help make business more efficient, reduce urban congestion, and create jobs.

Nation-building projects are now underway in every part of Australia, including major rail projects in every mainland capital city and an accelerated plan to complete the Pacific Highway upgrade by 2016.

- We have increased average annual rail spending tenfold and made the first significant Federal investment in new urban public transport infrastructure since 1901.
- We have more than doubled the federal roads budget.
- We are the first federal government in Australia's history to invest in our nation's ports.
- By establishing Infrastructure Australia as an independent body to identify our long-term needs, we have put infrastructure planning on a more coherent footing.
- Infrastructure Australia has compiled a National Priority List of economic projects that will strengthen our economy and make us more competitive.

Our government has invested more than any other

Broadband for all



High-speed broadband infrastructure will change the way we live and work. It will ensure the Australian economy does not fall behind the rest of the world.

That's why the Gillard Labor Government is delivering the National Broadband Network, our country's biggest ever infrastructure program. We are rolling out the NBN across Australia right now and Australia's two biggest communications companies — Telstra and Optus — have both signed up to the NBN.

The NBN will close the distance between our regions and cities, delivering fast, affordable, broadband to all Australians, no matter where they live.

Every child, whether they live in a remote country town or a capital city, will be able to access world-class education resources.

Australians will be able to see a specialist doctor, without leaving their lounge room; and local businesses all over Australia will have the opportunity to expand and sell their products to customers in Sydney, Singapore, or Stockholm, instantly.

The NBN is already creating jobs right here in Australia, and it's already being used in Tasmania and Armidale.

Our NBN arrangements have also broken Telstra's monopoly power so that all telecommunications companies can compete fairly — delivering better services and more competitive prices across the nation.

- The NBN means that 93 per cent of Australian homes, schools and businesses will be connected to fibre—and will get speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second.
- Remaining premises will be connected with next-generation wireless and satellite technologies, which provide peak speeds of at least 12 megabits per second.
- High-speed broadband also means lower phone bills for small business and better business services like teleconferencing and virtual private networks.
- It will help deliver fast online services in education and health.
- It will also bring high-definition, multi-channel and interactive TV services within the reach of every Australian community.

A 21st century economy needs 21st century infrastructure

Building our regions



The Labor Government believes that no matter where Australians live, they should have access to the same opportunities.

This is why we are delivering more funding for regional infrastructure like schools, hospitals, roads and rail than ever before in our nation's history.

In the 2011–12 Budget alone, we are delivering a massive \$4.3 billion for regional hospitals, health care, universities and roads.

Strong regional economies underpin a strong national economy. And we're making sure the opportunities of the investment boom are shared by all Australians, particularly those in regional Australia.

Our record:

- We are investing \$1.8 billion in regional health facilities through the Health and Hospitals priority regional round.
- We're investing in education and skills, with up to \$500 million from the Education Investment Fund for regional university and TAFE facilities.
- The Regional Infrastructure Fund will put something back into mining communities with \$6 billion for local infrastructure needs, like roads and ports.
- We're delivering high-speed broadband through the National Broadband Network, with 22 of the first 29 areas to get the NBN in regional Australia.

And there's more to do:

- The Gillard Labor Government has committed \$10 billion of additional resources to regional Australia and we are delivering on this promise.
- We're providing an estimated \$6.6 billion to rebuilding communities devastated by the recent and unprecedented natural disasters.
- We're pushing through with long-overdue reform of the Murray–Darling Basin to restore our rivers and support regional communities, including \$5.8 billion to improve the efficiency of water use.

Our place in the world



- We have helped secure the G20 as the premier forum for global economic cooperation and are working to sustain the global economic recovery and ensure stronger, more sustainable and balanced global growth that benefits Australia.
- We have welcomed the United States and Russia to the East Asia Summit (EAS) and are working to strengthen the EAS as the premier forum to address the full range of political, security and economic issues facing the region.
- The government is strengthening our political and economic links to our leading partners in Asia, including through regular high-level exchanges, new mechanisms for security cooperation and an ambitious free trade agreement agenda.
- We have returned Australia to its place as a leader in international development and are helping the world's poorest people in areas like education and basic health care. As good international citizens, we are committed to increasing our spending on development assistance to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income by 2015.

Under Labor, Australia is shaping regional developments and playing a more active and responsible role on the international stage.





There is no greater responsibility for a government than the defence of Australia and Australia's interests.

This Labor Government has ended a decade-long strategic gap and is creating a smarter, stronger, and more adaptable Defence Force that can protect Australia in today's rapidly changing world.

The Gillard Labor Government is keeping Australia safe at home and strong in the world by countering threats at home, and keeping our defence and security forces strong.

- In May 2009, the government released a comprehensive blueprint to build a stronger, more versatile Defence Force, including 100 new Joint Strike Fighter aircraft, 12 new submarines, eight new maritime patrol aircraft, up to seven unmanned maritime surveillance aircraft and eight new Future Frigates.
- We are providing more funding for Defence than ever before, growing the Defence budget at 3 per cent average real annual growth until 2018, providing long-term planning certainty.
- We are keeping our Alliance relationship with the United States strong and capable of meeting today's security challenges — like terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Our forces came home from Iraq in July 2009 with our job complete. From 2003, 20,000 ADF men and women served in Iraq with professionalism and dedication.
- In Afghanistan, we are working with our Coalition partners under a UN mandate to ensure Afghanistan never again becomes a safe-haven for international terrorism. In Uruzgan Province, we are on track in our training mission to hand over responsibility for security to Afghan forces by 2014.

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