



**Anthony Albanese**  
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development and Local  
Government

**Tony Burke**  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries  
and Forestry  
Minister for Population

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# **BUDGET 2010-11**

## **Joint Media Statement**

### **RURAL AND REGIONAL INVESTMENTS TO KEEP COMMUNITIES STRONG**

The 2010-11 Budget will inject a further \$3.8 billion into rural and regional communities to be delivered through greater infrastructure investment and better targeted industry support.


The Rudd Government has been determined to ensure regional Australia shares in the prosperity of a growing economy and its industries remain in a strong position to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the global marketplace.

On both counts, the 2010-11 Budget delivers.

Over the next twelve months, it will provide:

- Around \$1.35 billion to assist rural and regional councils and shires deliver their basic services, maintain their local roads and upgrade their local community facilities;
- \$1.2 billion to maintain and upgrade the road and rail infrastructure across regional Australia, including new funding of \$1 billion to accelerate the modernisation of the interstate rail network;
- Around \$235 million in funding for rural and remote councils through the Roads to Recovery program;
- \$200 million to improve security arrangements at airports, including major regional airports, and a further \$5.9 million to upgrade more airstrips in remote communities;
- \$420.3 million to continue existing Exceptional Circumstances drought support, including income support and interest rate subsidies;
- \$346.8 million to maintain tough biosecurity measures which help to protect against exotic pests and diseases and to continue to strengthen our biosecurity system.

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Anthony Albanese said this Labor Government is making an unprecedented investment in the future prosperity of rural and regional communities.



“We fully understand the contribution regional Australia makes to the living standards of all Australians, particularly from the export earnings generated by its primary producers and resources sector,” said Mr Albanese.

“That’s why, we’ve doubled investment in our regional highways and country roads and quadrupled investment in rail.

“In addition, facilities in every country school are being rebuilt and we’ve started rolling out high speed broadband to the nation’s homes and workplaces, a vital piece of 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure with greater potential to transform regional Australia than anything we’ve ever built before.

“Construction of the National Broadband Network on the mainland is beginning in regional Australia – with the construction already underway of 6000km of fibre optic backbone links connecting 100 regional locations across five states and territories. Over 540 kilometres is already laid.

“Not only will the National Broadband Network help overcome the ‘tyranny of distance’, it could also help tackle the declining populations in some regional areas and worsening traffic congestion within our cities.

“Once in place, many businesses and their workers would no longer be constrained by geography. Companies could relocate to regional communities confident they would still be able to service their local and international customers. Equally, workers would be able to communicate instantly with colleagues and clients without needing to leave their home and commute to the office.

“The purpose of all this investment is simple: to build prosperous regional economies that contribute to and share in our nation’s continued economic development.”

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Tony Burke said a key measure in the Budget was a 12 month trial of an improved drought support system.

The trial will cover around half of Western Australia and will test a range of new measures, including farm planning, farm business grants, farmer training, family income support and community grants.

It represents a major milestone in the Rudd Government’s commitment to reform the current drought support system which is failing farmers and their families.

“Drought has a terrible impact on farming families and their communities and the current system can add to that pressure, rather than ease it,” Mr Burke said.

“These reforms are difficult but we are determined to deliver new support measures which better prepare farmers and their communities for the challenges ahead.

“This will bring relief for the families of farmers and small business owners and help to support regional jobs and investment.

“The agriculture, fishing and forestry sectors help to underpin Australia’s economic growth and valuable export markets.

“We will also continue to invest in vital research and development to ensure these industries expand into the future.”

Other initiatives for rural and regional Australia include:

- Around \$30.0 million for Landcare projects across Australia in 2010-11;
- \$49.0 million to be allocated in 2010-11 for grants and research under the Reef Rescue program. More than 2000 additional grants expected to be paid over the next three years to Queensland canegrowers and cattle farmers;
- \$7.6 million in 2010-11 for annual FarmReady training reimbursement grants of up to \$1,500 for farmers and up to \$80,000 for industry groups;
- Investing \$1.1 million over two years from 2010-11 through the Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership to continue improving animal welfare in the live export industry, which underpins 10,000 regional jobs;
- Delivering a three-year \$2.4 million program from 2010-11 to settle legal arrangements to help countries in our region share data and cooperate in fisheries enforcement activities;
- Completing a three-year investment of more than \$7.0 million in 2010-11 for projects that add value to our forest resources;
- On-going investment in weeds research, with \$12.2 million allocated over three years from 2009-10;
- Investing another \$700,000 in 2010-11 to continue the five year, \$3.9 million Australian Pest Management Program, which targets the most damaging vertebrate pests including camels, foxes, rabbits, foxes and wild dogs;
- \$5.9 million for remote aviation infrastructure, to support regional and rural service delivery, in up to 19 Indigenous communities.

The Rudd Government’s major investments in rural and regional Australia are part of our plan to strengthen our economy for all Australians.

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**Media Contacts**

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