

The Ferguson Report



Labor Budget Delivers for Batman

The Rudd Labor Government has delivered its first Budget and it is a Budget focussed on building a strong economy and delivering for working families.

We are providing a \$55 billion Working Families Support Package to fund our election commitments and help people meet the increasing costs of living by providing tax cuts, and help with childcare fees and the costs of education.

We have also met our commitments to the Education Revolution (\$5.9 billion), to climate change and water (\$2.3 billion), and to ending the blame game over our hospitals (\$3.2 billion).

We have announced three new multi-billion dollar funds – the Building Australia Fund; the Education Investment Fund; and the Health and Hospitals Fund.

- The \$20b Building Australia Fund will pay for ongoing improvements in our roads, ports, railways and telecommunications infrastructure
- The \$11b Education Investment Fund will pay for ongoing improvements in our TAFEs and universities as part of the Education Revolution
- The \$10b Health and Hospitals Fund will pay for better hospitals, better healthcare generally, and important medical research

Every single dollar of new spending has been more than matched by spending cuts elsewhere in the Budget, which makes this the most responsible Budget in years.

We've done our best to spare working families from necessary Budget cuts elsewhere.

We have built a strong surplus because it is an important way to fight inflation and invest in long term improvements in our hospitals, roads, universities and TAFEs.

We have made the tax and welfare system fairer, to close loopholes and ensure multi-millionaires aren't getting welfare payments they don't need.

Anzac Legend

Key Anzac Day services were held in several areas of the Batman region again this year and Martin Ferguson attended a commemoration at Fairfield RSL to honour the generations of men and women who have served our nation in times of war and peace.

Anzac Day is a chance for Australians to remember the brave women and men who have served, and continue to serve, our country at home and abroad.

Ninety-three years ago, at dawn on 25 April 1915, the first Australian soldiers left their ships and came ashore under fire on Turkey's Gallipoli peninsula.

That spirit of Anzac extended beyond the shores of Gallipoli, notably on the Western Front where Australia suffered great losses. 2008 marks the 90th anniversaries of the final battles of the war, including at Villers-Bretonneux. This year the Australian Government, with the assistance of the French authorities, hosted a special, one off, Anzac Day Dawn Service at the Australian Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux.

The Anzac ideals of determination, courage and service have stood since that first Anzac Day and continue in today's Australian Defence Force.

Anzac Day is also a time to help younger Australians understand the significance of our wartime history. It is important that younger generations understand how the Anzac legend has helped shape Australia as a nation and its part in defining our national identity.

One of the best ways to do this is to attend the local Anzac Day service and talk to the veterans, to hear their stories and learn first hand about their extraordinary experiences.

Hundreds of thousands of Australians gathered at home and overseas on Anzac Day to acknowledge those who serve and have served in defence of our nation. We remembered more than 102,000 servicemen and women who have lost their lives in Australia's service.

Australian Defence Medal Presentation

After the Anzac dawn service on 25 April 2008, at a breakfast hosted by the Fairfield RSL, Martin presented four recipients with the Australian Defence Medal.

The four medal recipients were Brian HEALY, Brian McCALLUM, William McCANN and Andrew WILLIAMS.

Also in attendance was LTCOL Craig Atkins who was the military representative for the Batman AD Medal presentations, along with family and friends of the recipients.

The AD Medal seeks to recognise the service of members of the Australian Defence Force, past and present who have made a commitment and contribution to our nation's security.

The AD Medal is awarded to Regular and Reserve Force members who have completed their initial enlistment period or four years service, whichever is the lesser, since 3 September, 1945. This time frame reflects the Government's commitment to recognising the significance of their service to our nation.

If you are eligible to receive this medal please contact Hearn in my office on 9416 8690



Primary School Student Thanks Your Local Member

Monique McShanag, a student from Kingsbury Primary School, recently wrote to Martin Ferguson thanking him for an award she received from him and expressed the great pleasure that it gave her.

She further wrote about the admiration she had for Martin's wonderful work within the community and said she looked up to him as a role model because of the work he did was so worthwhile.

Monique further expressed that Martin's work inspired her to one day show the same leadership that he demonstrates everyday.

KEY ISSUES RAISED AT BATMAN LOCAL 2020 SCHOOL SUMMIT

Martin Ferguson wishes to thank the local schools and students who made the local 2020 summit such a success on April 12, 2008.

Participants had a broad range of creative ideas relating to the building of a modern Australia – both at a local and a national level.

Key issues raised included transport, health, housing, employment and industrial relations, school funding, broadband, racism, national security, and Centrelink.

Not surprisingly, this list reflects many of the issues I discussed with residents during the election campaign.

The schools summit was about placing our thoughts and ideas on the record and ensuring we played a part in the major national summit, which took place on the 19 and 20 April 2008, to help shape a long term strategy for the nation's future.

The schools summit focused mainly on the same ten key areas as Australia 2020 – the economy, the nation's infrastructure, our environment, our farmers, healthcare, indigenous Australians, the arts, national security, improving the system of government and strengthening our communities.

It followed on from summits held by local schools. Two delegates from each school were invited to attend the Batman schools summit at Martin's office. Students were very keen to have a direct say in the future of Australia.

All ideas from the local summit were submitted to Canberra by the students for inclusion as a formal submission to Australia 2020.

We now look forward to seeing the outcomes from the Australia 2020 summit presented in Canberra helping the Rudd Labor Government turn our nation's potential into a reality.

The Apology

February 13, 2008 was a historic day for Australia and one that was long overdue.

That day saw Prime Minister Kevin Rudd stand in the House of Representatives in Parliament House in Canberra to apologise to the Indigenous people of Australia for the injustices of the past.

As a Member of Parliament, I am proud to have been part of this momentous event. There comes a time in the history of nations when their peoples must become fully reconciled to their past if they are to go forward with confidence to embrace their future.

Earlier this year, on that momentous day, Australia, reached such a time.

Below is the motion the Prime Minister moved as part of his speech:

Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations—this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians.

A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.

A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity.

A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility.

A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia.

RATIFYING THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

The Government of John Howard had 11 years to consider whether or not to sign the Kyoto Protocol.

It took the Rudd Labor Government less than 11 weeks to act on this important issue and we are now part of the global solution to climate change.

Within weeks of being sworn into Government, the Rudd Labor Government officially ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

This was an important step forward towards Australia's accepting its global environmental responsibilities and it demonstrates this Government's commitment to tackling climate change.

After so many years of neglect under the previous Government, we are sending a clear signal to the world that Australia is acting responsibly on climate change.

The signing of the Protocol also means that Australia has secured its place at the negotiation table of the next round of global emissions discussions post-Kyoto in 2012.

Thanks to the swift action of the Prime Minister, Australia is now a full member of the Kyoto Protocol which is considered to be the most far-reaching agreement on environment and sustainable development ever adopted.

The Rudd Government has put Australia on track to meet its Kyoto target. Under the previous Government's policies, Australia was going to miss the Kyoto target.

Australia's official declaration demonstrates to the global community that we are taking the challenges of climate change seriously and that is a significant step forward in our efforts to fight climate change domestically and with the international community.

The Australian Government will seek to strengthen its cooperation with other countries on climate change as we continue to pursue a future international agreement that is both equitable and effective.



