

PRODUCTIVITY PLACES SKILLING AUSTRALIANS FOR THE FUTURE



Martin Ferguson with local mechanics

The Rudd Government's \$1.9 billion *Skilling Australia for the Future* is delivering the skills job seekers and industry need, with thousands of Australians having already received training in skill shortage areas.

In just over six months, more than 53,000 job seekers have enrolled in the program, with 43,200 in training and more than

11,000 having completed training. Of the 5,400 participants who have completed training, 814 have gained a placement – 810 into jobs and four into further education.

In response to these outstanding results, the Government has approved an additional 15,000 Productivity Places for 2008-09. These extra places take the Rudd Government's commitment to 645,000 training places.

The roll out of these places and the next phase of the program is also being informed by the feedback the Government received from its *Skilling Australia for the Future* discussion paper released in April 2008. More than 100 submissions were received.

A report on this feedback has been released and provides further opportunities for individuals, employers and organisations to engage with issues related to the training reforms.

The submissions to the discussion paper highlighted the importance of the Government's commitment to skilling the Australian workforce and made useful recommendations for the future phases of the Productivity Places Program.

For more information about the Productivity Places Program and feedback on the discussion paper visit:

www.productivityplaces.deewr.gov.au

WORLD YOUTH DAY

On 17th July 2008 His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI was welcomed to Sydney for World Youth Day.

This was an occasion of great significance for the whole of the Australian community and especially significant for the Lebanese Victorian Maronite community who warmly welcomed His Beatitude Patriarch Mar Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir, the world's Maronite spiritual leader, to the newly erected Church of Our Lady of Lebanon located in Thornbury.

Maronites came from all over Victoria to Thornbury to greet the Patriarch and participate in a mass.

I was pleased to meet the Patriarch during his visit to Australia for World Youth Day and other accompanying Maronite bishops and officials.

Batman's Catholic community reflects the great diversity of the church worldwide, comprised of descendants from early Irish and English settlers, post-War migrants from Italy, from Malta and from other parts of Europe. And those who are arrived more recently, from diverse parts of the world, including Asia, Latin America and Lebanon and the Pacific Islands.



Martin Ferguson with Patriarch

DIGITAL TV SWITCHOVER

The Government has now released the timetable for the switchover to digital television.

The digital TV revolution is in full swing and Australians now know when they will need to be digital-ready.

The digital television switchover is a challenge on the scale of the 1966 decimal currency change. The Rudd Government's region-by-region approach will ensure Australia is best placed to meet the 31 December 2013 deadline for analogue switch-off.



INFORMATION KITS:

As you know my office has a number of information kits and other resources, such as Families Kit; Food and Nutrition Kit, Pensioner and Senior's Kit, Environment Kit, Promote Oz Kit, and Youth Information Kit. There are now two new kits available, the **Safe And Secure Kit For Seniors** and also **You and Your Government Kit**. Please contact my office on 9416 8690 if your wish to receive a copy of any of these Kits

The following is an extract from my 31 page You and Your Government Kit:-

What suburbs are in Batman?

Alphington (part); Bundoora (part); Coburg North (part); Fairfield (part); Kingsbury; Macleod (part); Northcote; Preston; Reservoir; Thornbury.

Where did Batman get its name?

The electorate of Batman is named after John Batman, an early explorer and farmer who was one of the first people to settle in the Melbourne area. He was born in Sydney in 1801 and later moved to Tasmania (then known as Van Diemen's Land) where he took to farming on leasehold land. He gradually increased his land holdings through grants and purchases and in 1827 applied for a grant of land at Westernport, Victoria which was later rejected by colonial authorities. In 1835, as a leading member of the Port Phillip Association, he explored the area around Port Phillip Bay and negotiated a treaty with the local Aborigines to rent their land on a continual basis. He eventually settled in the area known as Batman's Hill.

Suburbs of Batman Electorate:

ALPHINGTON

The suburb of Alphington was named after the birthplace of New South Wales solicitor-general William Manning in Devonshire, England. He was an early land owner in the area.

BUNDOORA

Bundoora was so named because the missionary George Langhorne told surveyor Robert Hoddle that Keelbundoora was the name of a local tribesman and the eldest son of Jika Jika, one of the Aboriginal chiefs that made the treaty which was supposed to sell the site of Melbourne to John Batman in 1835. Bundoora is said to mean 'many kangaroos'.

COBURG NORTH

Coburg is named after the Duke of Edinburgh who was also Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and who visited Melbourne in 1868. Coburg became a town in 1912 and a city in 1922. It was earlier known as Pentridge.

FAIRFIELD

Fairfield is named after a town in Derbyshire, England. It was named by C. H. James, the owner and subdivider of Fairfield estate.

KINGSBURY

Kingsbury is named after Private Bruce Kingsbury who won the Victoria Cross in New Guinea where he was killed in 1942.

NORTHCOTE

Northcote is named after Baron Henry Stafford Northcote, who served as Governor-General of Australia from 1904-1908. Northcote became a borough in 1883 and was proclaimed a town in 1893 and was proclaimed a city in 1914. According to most history books, the 1835 treaty between John Batman and the Port Phillip Aborigines was signed in the area that Northcote now occupies. This fact however is now disputed.

LAUNCH OF MYCHILD.GOV.AU WEBSITE: EDUCATION REVOLUTION

The Rudd Government's recent announcement of \$2.4 billion for early childhood education and child care plan is to ensure every Australian child gets the best start in life. This includes a newly launched virtual children's hub for parents and carers that provides access to important health, early learning, child care and parenting support information in one convenient location. The website will be a place where local families can go for information about Government initiatives and for assistance with their child care options with a searchable database of local child care centres including the services they provide and the fees they charge.

For more information visit: www.mychild.gov.au or call the mychild information line on 13 36 84.

The Ferguson Report



"The Australian economy is sound, but we will not be immune from the global slow down. That's why we need to take decisive and early action."

Martin Ferguson AM MP
Federal Member for Batman

Economic Security Strategy

Kevin Rudd and Martin Ferguson know that life has been getting tougher for many people.

The Rudd Government's \$10.4 billion Economic Security Strategy will strengthen the Australian economy in the face of the worst global financial crisis since the Great Depression.

The Australian economy is strong and we remain better placed than most other nations to deal with any global economic slowdown. However Australia is not immune from this crisis, which is why the Government is taking decisive action. The Government's \$10.4 billion Economic Security Strategy contains five key measures:

- \$4.8 billion for an immediate down payment on long term pension reform.
- \$3.9 billion in support payments for low and middle income families.
- \$1.5 billion investment to help first home buyers purchase a home.
- \$187 million to create 56,000 new training places in 2008-09.

■ Accelerate the implementation of the Government's three nation building funds and bring forward, the commencement of investment in nation building projects to 2009.

The Government made tough decisions in the May Budget to build up a large budget surplus to act as a buffer in tough economic times. Those tough economic times have arrived and the Government is now acting decisively to use the surplus to strengthen the Australian economy.

The Government's Economic Security Strategy is a significant economic response to deal with extraordinary economic times. This \$10.4 billion strategy will be entirely funded from the budget. Treasury advises that the Budget will be in surplus after these measures.

The Rudd Labor Government's Economic Security Strategy includes:

- First home owners grants of up to \$21,000
- \$1,400 for single pensioners and \$2,100 for couples*
- \$1,000 for people receiving the Carer Allowance
- \$1,000 for each eligible child of families who receive Family Tax Benefit A
- Funding for 56,000 new training places

*This includes Age pensioners, Carer payment recipients, Veterans' pensioners, DSP recipients and Commonwealth Seniors Health Card Holders.

Martin Ferguson AM MP, Federal Member for Batman
159 High Street, Preston Vic 3072
Phone: 9416 8690 Fax: 9416 7810

Email: Martin.Ferguson.MP@aph.gov.au Website: www.martinferguson.com.au



Martin Ferguson and Kevin Rudd are taking decisive and early action to protect our economy from the global financial crisis.

ECONOMIC SECURITY STRATEGY FOR PENSIONERS, SENIORS AND CARERS

Kevin Rudd and Martin Ferguson know that life has been getting tougher for many people on a fixed income.

That's why the Government has taken decisive and early action to protect the Australian economy from the global financial crisis which started in the United States.

The Government's Economic Security Strategy provides lump sum payments to assist Aged Pensioners, Veterans, Disability Support Pensioners and Carers. This assistance builds on the additional support provided to pensioners in the Government's first budget, but also recognises that many pensioners are calling for more help now.

Self-funded retirees, who hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card will receive the same lump sum payments as pensioners in recognition of the tough economic circumstances they currently face.

The Rudd Labor Government's Economic Security Package will include:

- \$1,400 for single pensioners.
- \$2,100 for couples.

This includes aged pensioners, carer payment recipients and veterans.



Martin at the Italian Senior Citizen's Club of Preston

DECISIVE AND EARLY ACTION TO PROTECT OUR ECONOMY FOR FAMILIES

The global financial crisis is placing increasing pressure on family budgets which are already stretched by the rising cost of living.

That's why when it came to making the practical decisions to help working families balance their budgets and stimulate economic growth, the Government delivered \$3.9 billion to families raising their children.

The support will be delivered to families who receive Family Tax Benefit Part (A) through a one-off payment of \$1,000 for each eligible child in their care.

Families with dependent children who receive Youth Allowance, Abstudy or a benefit from the Veterans' Children's Scheme will also get the \$1000 one-off payment.

The payment will be made automatically from 8 December 2008 for families who receive their family assistance or other payments as fortnightly installments.

Families who receive their family payments as a lump sum at the end of the financial year will receive their additional payment when they make their claim.

Payments will be tax exempt and not included for income-testing purposes. Around three quarters of all families with dependent children will benefit from immediate financial support as part of the Rudd Government's \$10.4 billion Economic Security Strategy.

The Government is determined to protect our national economy and provide security for working families in these difficult global economic times.

ECONOMIC SECURITY STRATEGY TO ASSIST FIRST HOMEBUYERS

Responding to the challenge of housing affordability and stimulating residential construction activity through the First Home Owners Boost.

Under the First Home Owners Boost: (This will apply for all contracts entered into by 30 June 2009)

- First home buyers who purchase established homes will have their grant doubled from \$7,000 to \$14,000.
- First home buyers who purchase a newly constructed home will receive an extra \$14,000 to take their grant to \$21,000.

This measure builds on the Government's \$2.2 billion worth of housing initiatives in the 2008-09 Budget, including:

- A National Rental Affordability Scheme to build 50,000 new affordable rental properties.
- A Housing Affordability Fund to reduce the cost of bringing new homes to market.
- First Home Saver Accounts to encourage young people to save for a new home.

The First Home Owners Boost responds to the housing affordability challenge and will help strengthen residential investment activity in Australia. This initiative will help strengthen the Australian economy during the global financial crisis and help protect Australians during the difficult global economic times that lie ahead.

The Government is taking decisive and early action to protect the Australian economy from the global financial crisis.

CROXTON SPECIAL SCHOOL RECEIVES INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS PROGRAM FUNDING



Martin Ferguson at Croxton Special School

I recently had the pleasure of opening a range of new facilities at the Croxton Special School, Northcote, which has been funded by the Australian Government's *Investing In Our Schools* program.

Croxton Special School received \$150,000, which allowed the development of a performing arts/life skills training centre which will provide an expanded curriculum for students.

Successful applications for all four rounds total 20,414 approved projects for 6,867 government schools across Australia.

Government school communities were able to apply for funding for such projects as air-conditioning, shade structures, computer equipment and upgrades, musical and sporting equipment.

The Government is committed to school infrastructure funding, and will provide more than \$546.6 million during 2008 to the State and Territory Governments and school sectors.

This funding will assist schools, particularly through the Capital Grants Program, which helps the neediest schools to construct and upgrade their school facilities.

RESERVOIR WEST PRIMARY RECEIVES INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS PROGRAM FUNDING

I also recently had the pleasure of opening facilities at the Reservoir West Primary School, which was also funded by *Investing In Our Schools* program.

Reservoir West Primary School has received \$149,226 over the life of the program.

This funding provided the installation of information and communications technology equipment in its ICT centre, library, and classrooms.

It has also funded security fencing to increase student safety and the installation of air conditioners to create a more comfortable learning environment.

500 NEW COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTED UNIVERSITY PLACES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS.

The Rudd Government has recently funded 500 new early childhood education places at universities across Australia.

This is a \$126.6 million Government initiative to train and retain a high-quality early childhood education and care workforce.

The new places will be available from 2009, and represent the Australian Government's commitment to high-quality early childhood care and education.

The extra places in early childhood education places will help meet demand for degree-qualified early childhood education teachers.

For more information: www.deewr.gov.au

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH FORUM (AYF) LAUNCHED.

The AYF is an interactive website with ideas, discussion boards and information exchanges. Young Australians can directly engage in debate and offer perspectives and ideas through local public forums.

For more information: www.youth.gov.au/ayf



Martin Ferguson at Reservoir Primary School

TRY A TRADE

It gave me great pleasure to attend the Northern Region Try a Trade day on May 20. Try a Trade days are important. They give young people information about what learning a trade involves and that good careers are available.

Many young people aren't suited or don't want to attend university, and want information about what career opportunities are available.

Try a Trade days bring together employers, TAFE Colleges, and secondary school students to see a wide range of skilled trades. 800 students in years seven to nine from 35 schools attended the event in May.

Employers tell me that we have shortages of skilled workers in many of the traditional trades. Parents tell me of young people looking for opportunities.

This is why the Rudd Labor Government has put additional funding into trade training in our schools to prepare school leavers for a career in the skilled trades.

A survey of students, teachers and employers strongly supported the day. The survey also yielded ideas to improve the process.

Young people reported that they really benefited from talking to young tradespeople and apprentices that staffed some employer's and TAFE stalls.



Martin Ferguson at NMIT Try A Trade Day

HELP FOR MANUFACTURERS

Small manufacturer's can get assistance to develop their business through the recently announced Enterprise Connect Scheme which is designed to provide free access to business advisers for small and medium manufacturers. Advisers will prepare reports on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and innovations which strengthen business.

If you have a manufacturing business turning over between \$2M and \$100M, have been trading for at least three years, and have not received similar assistance

from state or federal governments, you should consider lodging an application. In addition to the advice, the scheme also provides implementation grants of up to \$20,000 to implement the adviser's recommendations.

If you work for a business that might be eligible, show this to the boss. If you want more information visit

www.enterprisedirect.gov.au

or phone 131 791. If you would like assistance or advice on preparing an application contact my electorate office.

SOLAR ENERGY INDUSTRY

The Rudd Government has done more to promote renewable energy development in its first 12 months than John Howard did during his almost-12 years in government.

As Minister for Resources and Energy, the development of Australia's solar energy industry is a matter of great importance to me. I am very pleased that the Rudd Labor Government as a whole is committed to accelerating progress in renewable energy development.

The Australian Government is doing this through a number of important mechanisms.

- committed to ensuring 20 per cent of Australia's electricity supply will be generated from renewable sources by 2020
- developing a carbon pollution reduction scheme
- increasing direct funding of low emission energy technology

In 2008-09 there will be record levels of commonwealth funding for the

development and installation of solar energy systems.

- \$480 million for the national solar schools program;
- \$300 million for subsidised low-interest green loans to help households install additional solar systems;
- \$225 million for the solar hot water rebate program;
- more than \$128 million to continue the renewable remote power generation program; and
- \$25 million to extend the solar cities program.

The Government is also committed to the development of new, commercially-viable technologies. The Government's vision is that Australia will be a global leader in solar research and technology – exporting our expertise worldwide.

The Government recognises the potential for growth in this sector, which is why the 2008 budget contains Australia's largest

ever spend on renewable energy research and development.

The \$500 million renewable energy fund and the \$150 million energy innovation fund are administered by my department and these funds will support the research, development, demonstration, and adoption of renewable energy technologies in Australia.

The energy innovation fund contains \$100 million dollars specifically for solar development.

Each of these funds will be open for applications early next year and are designed to support the ongoing growth of many companies.



Martin Ferguson at Merri Creek