

Governing For all of Us: First Term Achievements

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ATTORNEY GENERAL AND JUSTICE

- **Additional funding of \$6.1 million over three years for marriage and relationship services** implements the Coalition's commitment to double Labor's expenditure in this area. This has led to the establishment of 34 new community-based marriage and relationship services utilised by 80,000 Australians. Greater emphasis is being placed on counselling and mediation rather than litigation.
- **Reform of the treaty-making process** has provided greater scrutiny of international treaties before Australia adheres to them.

- **Tough On Drugs strategy** – A \$215 million package is being implemented to focus upon attacking the illegal drug trade through our national law enforcement agencies and tackling the demand for illegal drugs through education.
- **Increased funding for the Australian Federal Police** by \$65 million over three years from 1998-99. This will result in 200 new officers and better training to fight crime.
- **The National Firearms Buyback and Uniform Firearms Laws** resulted in the surrender of 640,000 firearms.
- **A security plan to safeguard the Sydney 2000 Olympics** - \$45.6 million funding to be provided by the Coalition.
- **New Legal Aid agreements** implemented have required each Commission to use its resources more efficiently, with greater accountability, and on a more equitable basis across the Commonwealth.
- **Six new community legal centres** have been formed, to extend access to legal services to more Australians in rural and regional areas.
- **Community Assessment Panels set up** to ensure broad community standards are reflected in film and literature classification decisions.

COMMUNICATIONS, THE INFORMATION ECONOMY AND THE ARTS

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- **One-third of Telstra successfully privatised** enabling a record number of Australians, including 92 per cent of Telstra employees, to buy shares in our nation's telecommunications carrier.

- **The telecommunications market was opened up to full competition** in July 1997, resulting in 17 new carriers and major reductions in prices for consumers, including over 50 per cent in STD and international calls.
- **Customer Service Guarantee** introduced so phone users are financially compensated if their phones are not installed or repaired on time.
- **A Telecommunications National Code** was introduced subjecting the Commonwealth to planning and environmental laws.
- **Ensuring regional mobile phone coverage** – Arrangements have been made to ensure that all areas of regional Australia currently receiving mobile phone coverage will continue to enjoy reasonably equivalent coverage after the year 2000, overcoming the adverse impact of Labor's analog phase out.
- **\$250 million Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund** for community projects to enhance internet access, extend mobile phone coverage and trial alternative means of delivering telecommunications services.

BROADCASTING

- **Delivering digital television** - The Coalition has legislated to ensure Australia enters the era of digital television and radio early next century.
- **\$7 million to the ABC and the SBS** for closed captioning of the early news service.
- **SBS television extended** to nearly 700,000 more Australians with \$10.5 million funding.
- **Encouraging independent screen productions** through a commitment for an additional \$19 million to enable the continuation of the SBS Independent Production Fund.
- **Assisting remote Australians** by allocating \$11.2 million towards the cost of new digital decoders to enable people in remote Australia to convert to digital transmission and receive new broadcasting services.

- **Extra \$4.5 million to the community broadcasting sector**, including \$3 million for multicultural community broadcasting. In addition the Government has, for the first time, enabled continuous transmission by community radio broadcasters.

AUSTRALIA POST

- **Australia Post to remain in full public ownership**, delivering a standard letter service to all Australians at a uniform rate. The decision will mean lower postal costs for business, but will not result in the closure of any post offices or mail centres in regional Australia or any downgrading of Australia Post's community service obligations.

THE INFORMATION ECONOMY

- **The Online Public Access Initiative** improves public access to online services like the internet in public libraries and other institutions.
- **\$3 million for innovative projects to assist disabled** people to use the internet.

THE ARTS

- **Cheaper CDs** will result from legislation allowing parallel importation of sound recordings. As well as lower prices, the new law will encourage a greater range of CDs and increased opportunities for the local music industry.
- **\$10 million music industry package** to assist the industry in its development, promotion and distribution.
- **\$3 million Emerging Artists Programme** to help young artists reach their maximum potential.
- **\$147 million funding for the National Museum** to be built in the Australian Capital Territory.
- **\$15.4 million to revitalise Old Parliament House** and

establish permanent galleries for the National Portrait Gallery.

- **\$12.1 million for the conservation** and restoration of five of Australia's great cathedrals.
- **One-stop arts shop** accessed either on the Internet or by telephone hotline, providing information about arts funding from federal, state/territory and local governments and non-government sources.

DEFENCE

- **Redirected \$125 million to combat-related and personnel retention initiatives** - This is helping to expand the capabilities of key platforms, together with the restructure of the army, the upgrading of F-111 and F/A-18 aircraft and improved command, control and communication systems.
- **Commissioned an Efficiency Review of Defence** which resulted in an additional 8,000 Defence Force personnel being shifted to combat and combat support positions over the next three years.
- **Achieved substantial savings in Defence without compromising Australia's security** - Reform efficiency savings of some \$100 million have been achieved by the end of 1997-98. Indications that annual savings of \$900 million can be achieved. These savings will be retained and used to increase combat capability.
- **Major capital equipment projects are continuing** - These include the acquisition of ANZAC ships, Collins-class submarines, C-130J Hercules aircraft, coastal minehunters, light armoured vehicles, the upgrade of P-3C Orion aircraft, and the development of the Jindalee Operational Radar Network.
- **New projects initiated** include enhanced missile and torpedo launch equipment, sonar counter-measure devices for the ANZAC frigates upgrade, improved communications systems for the Land Force and Air Command, maritime mines and the development of an enhanced electronics suite for the anti-ship missile decoy.

- **Strengthening training, new equipment and improving key facilities** - Continuing and new major capital equipment projects have attracted \$2,720 million in the 1998-99 budget year including the acquisition of the ANZAC ships, Collins-class submarines, the upgrade of the FA/18 Hornet fighters, and the acquisition of 'Penguin' anti-ship missiles for the ANZAC ship helicopters.

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

EMPLOYMENT

- **Strong and sustained jobs growth** since March 1996, the Coalition's sound economic policies have created 317,000 new jobs in the Australian economy. More than 125,000 of these jobs have been created in small business.
- **Addressing youth unemployment** - Despite an increase of 35,000 in the teenage population, the number of teenagers seeking full-time work has fallen by 4,500 in trend terms.
- **Getting more unemployed people into jobs** – The Job Network is already outperforming the CES in many key respects – attracting 15 per cent more quality vacancies and placing 8 per cent more job seekers on income support in jobs, including a greater proportion (40 per cent) of long-term unemployed people.
- Helping Regional Australia:
 - - Regional Australia has benefited from the new jobs that have been created in the Australian economy. Non-metropolitan areas recorded jobs growth of 1.6 per cent between March 1996 and June 1998, with the majority of regions experiencing a rise in employment.
 - - The network of 58 Area Consultative Committees are establishing three-year regional employment strategies that will enable their regions to generate new opportunities for economic development and

jobs growth in their region.

- - Funding for the Regional Assistance Programme has been increased to \$33 million each year to support projects identified by Area Consultative Committees that will create new jobs, assist small business and improve the regional skills base.
- Work for the Dole and Green Corps have been specifically directed to regional Australia, creating more opportunities for young people to participate in projects that will benefit their community and environment.

WORK FOR THE DOLE

- **Work for the Dole enshrined in legislation** - Despite opposition from the Labor Party and the minor parties the Coalition passed and implemented Work for the Dole.
- **Hope, experience and opportunity** is provided to young Australians aged 18 to 24 years and unemployed for six months or more through Work for the Dole. It aims to build participants' work ethic and restore their links with the community, which can prove so valuable when seeking work.
- **Piloted 10,400 Work for the Dole places** - Over 630 applications from community groups were received to run projects during the pilot round, indicating the strong community support for Work for the Dole. In 1997-98, 179 Work for the Dole projects were piloted throughout Australia providing 10,400 places for young, unemployed Australians.
- **Expanded Work for the Dole to 100,000 places** - due to the enormous success of the Work for the Dole pilots, and the overwhelming community response, the Coalition expanded Work for the Dole to provide a further 100,000 places over the next four years.
- **Enhanced Mutual Obligation Arrangements to 206,500 places.** From 1 July 1998, all young unemployed people (18-24, unemployed 6 months or more) are required to undertake an additional activity, such as Work for the Dole, literacy and numeracy training, voluntary work or education in return for the receipt of their unemployment allowance. 206,500 places will be available on a \$466 million programme over the next four years.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- **Increased undergraduate student places to 392,560** - The number of undergraduate places is at a record level, 19,754 more places than under Labor.
- **Unmet demand falling.** The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee's survey of eligible university applicants not receiving an offer showed the number fell by 41 per cent between 1997 and 1998.
- **Choice for students** - Australian students now have the same opportunity as foreign students to invest in their future by enrolling in a full-fee paying undergraduate course of first choice once all publicly funded places are filled.
- **Higher funding per fully-funded student place** – The operating grant per fully-funded student was \$11,406 in 1998 compared to \$11,300 in 1996.
- **More resources than ever before** - The total income of universities for 1998 is estimated to be \$8.55 billion, \$550 million greater than in 1995.
- **Guaranteed base of public funding** - The Coalition has guaranteed the universities a secure base of public funding as set out in the budget forward estimates.
- **Higher Research Expenditure** - In 1998 the research programme budget was \$450.3 million, up from \$398.6 million in 1996. Priority has been given to improving research infrastructure
- **Quality Education** - Universities are being focussed on student needs, with greater financial incentives and enhanced reporting requirements. The 1997 Graduate Satisfaction Survey shows overall satisfaction rising.

SCHOOLS

- **Additional funding for schools** - Australian schools received \$4.1 billion in the 1998-99 federal budget. The last three federal budgets have provided additional funding for schools of almost \$750

million, and in aggregate an additional \$1.47 billion since 1995-96.

- **Improving literacy** - The Coalition has provided leadership in achieving Australia's first National Literacy and Numeracy Goal - that every child leaving primary school should be able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level. In the next four years to 2001/2002, the Coalition will commit almost \$680 million to overall literacy funding.
- **Greater choice in schooling** - The Coalition abolished Labor's restrictive New Schools Policy thereby allowing families, especially low income families, greater choice in schooling for their children.
- **The 'Discovering Democracy' Civics programme** was developed to give students an understanding of, and pride in, their democratic heritage. This initiative will focus on Years 4 to 10 of schooling and will be supported by \$17.5 million over four years from 1996-97.
- **Pathways for school leavers** - The Coalition is providing more than \$200 million over four years to promote effective pathways for students from schooling to employment and to expand the provision of vocational education and training for senior secondary students.
- **Full Service Schools Programme** - An additional \$24 million has been allocated to address the specific needs of at risk young people returning to school.
- **Increased Assistance for Isolated Children** - The non-income Basic Boarding Allowance has been increased to \$2,900 a year.
- **Continued funding for the Country Areas Programme** with \$50 million over three years to state and territory government and non-government education authorities to help schools and students in rural and geographically isolated areas.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **New Apprenticeships opportunities for young people** expanded by focussing on key principles including an industry led system, streamlined regulation, expanded training opportunities, and regional and community involvement. Under the Coalition, the number of people in training reached a record high of 183,000 in early

1998 and is on target to reach 200,000 by the end of 1998.

- **200 New Apprenticeships Centres established** - These 'one-stop shops' help simplify access to New Apprenticeships and New Apprenticeships support services.
- **More places available for training in the TAFE sector** - There were 43,000 new Commonwealth funded places in TAFE in 1997, and 44,000 expected places in 1998.
- **A New Australian National Training Authority Agreement** has been negotiated with the states and territories which includes funding of \$904 million for states and territories.
- **Vocational education support** in schools ensured through a funding package of \$187 million over four years.
- **\$20 million provided for the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation** to support school-industry programmes in 1998-99. The number of students enrolled in ASTF supported programmes has grown from 18,000 at the end of 1996 to 38,000 in 1997.
- **The Jobs Pathway Programme** will provide funding of \$13.6 million to assist almost 24,000 young school leavers during 1998-99.
- **Pre-apprenticeship and traineeship assistance** of \$23 million has been provided for the New Apprenticeships Access programme in 1998-99. Over \$43 million has been allocated since 1997-98.

PUBLIC SERVICE

- **Improved customer service** - Implemented customer service reforms, which include the requirement that all Commonwealth departments and agencies develop a Service Charter by June 1999.
- **Applying the Workplace Relations Act to the Australian Public Service** providing a more flexible workplace, with employees having the same opportunities to access better pay for better work as now exists in other sectors.
- **Less industrial action** - The Coalition's Workplace Relations Act has led to a sharp drop in industrial action taken in spite of the pace of

reform - workplace bans and limitations have virtually disappeared.

- **All advertised job vacancies** have been opened up to the general public to enable all Australian citizens to compete for jobs in the APS on merit.

ENVIRONMENT

- **Record levels of funding for the environment through the \$1.25 billion Natural Heritage Trust** - The largest investment ever made in Australia's environment. In 1998-99 the Coalition will spend \$290 million on environmental programmes - a 36 per cent increase over funding provided during Labor's last year in office.
- **\$340 million Bushcare programme**, which is funding a massive revegetation and vegetation protection programme.
- **\$80 million to expand National Parks** - So far over 450,000 hectares have been purchased for the National Park system.
- **\$280 million to protect and improve water quality in Australia's rivers** including establishing the national Rivercare programme and supporting the Murray-Darling 2001 Initiative to restore Australia's largest river system.
- **Protecting the coastal and marine environment** by providing \$125 million funding and, for the first time, providing national leadership in addressing marine pollution from sewage and stormwater.
- **Declared the world's second largest marine park in the Great Australian Bight** which will protect the endangered Australian sea lion and the Southern Right Whale.
- **Provided \$16 million to improve the air quality of major cities** - This air pollution programme follows the first national independent air pollution inquiry, which was established by the

Government in 1996.

- **\$160 million programme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions** to increase energy efficiency within Australian industry and households and support the development of renewable energies such as solar, tidal and wind power. It also will reduce greenhouse emissions from motor vehicles.
- **Leading the world in efforts to save whales** by pursuing a complete ban on all commercial whaling and the creation of a global whale sanctuary.
- **Increased protection for Australia's forests** through the Regional Forest Agreement process. Over 500,000 hectares have been added to the reserve system in Tasmania and the Central Highland and East Gippsland regions of Victoria.
- **Protecting World Heritage areas** by significantly increasing funding for state-run World Heritage areas and the listing of the Heard and Macdonald Islands and Macquarie Island. A nomination has been lodged for the Blue Mountains and assessments are under way for Australia's most important convict sites and Purnululu (the Bungle Bungles) in Western Australia.
- **Provided \$41 million to establish the Green Corps** which give thousands of young Australians the opportunity to gain new skills while working on projects that will protect our environment.
- **Established a National Pollutant Inventory** to ensure that large businesses report their emissions of 90 pollutants.
- **Allocated up to \$40 million to protect Cape York** by expanding the national park system on Cape York and helping protect the region's endangered species. It will also ensure that Cape York industries operate sustainably.
- **Providing new protection for endangered species** through increased funding. The Government has established the world's first network of sanctuaries designed to protect the dugong. The Government also has led world efforts to protect the albatross in the Southern Hemisphere and is developing a recovery plan for endangered turtles.
- **Record funding for the protection of cultural heritage**

through the Federation Fund and the National Estate Grants Programme.

- **The most comprehensive review of national environment laws in two decades** has resulted in new environment laws introduced into the Parliament to strengthen environmental protection and reduce duplication between the Commonwealth and the states.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

- **Completed the first White Paper on Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy** addressing our global and regional challenges over the next 15 years.
- **Completed the Simons Aid Review 'Better Aid for a Better Future'** refocussing Australia's aid programme to advance Australia's national interest by assisting developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development.
- **Reformed Labor's secret treaty-making process** - Treaties are now open to public scrutiny through Parliament.
- **Helped the region deal with the Asian economic crisis** by contributing to IMF rescue packages for Indonesia, Thailand and Korea.
- **Enhanced regional security** through establishing regional security dialogues with China, Russia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam and South Korea.
- **Helped bring a peace settlement to Bougainville in PNG** and assisted the country during the drought and tsunami crises.
- **Negotiated a successful outcome at the Kyoto Conference on Climate Change** contributing to greenhouse gas reductions and

protecting Australian jobs.

- **Contributed to a global ban on landmines** through signing the Ottawa landmines ban treaty.
- **Helped have the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty adopted** in 1996 lessening the nuclear threat.
- **Pursued a practical approach to human rights** by dialogue and strengthening human rights institutions in the region:
 - - established the Centre for Democratic Institutions to promote good governance and human rights improvements;
 - - supported the establishment of the International Criminal Court;
 - - established a human rights dialogue with China; and
 - - supported a dialogue on East Timor.

TRADE

- **Record Exports** are a result of this Government's pro-trade policies. In 1997-98 Australia had record exports of goods and services – up 8.2 per cent to \$114 billion.
- **Improved market access** has resulted from the establishment of the Market Development Taskforce and other efforts. Examples include better market access for wool to Mexico, citrus to Japan, and legal and banking services to China.
- **Reporting to the people** - This Government sets out trade objectives and achievements in a comprehensive report to parliament annually.
- **Improved the Export Market Development Grants Scheme** by extending it, targetting it towards small and medium businesses and giving the tourism industry equal access to the scheme for the first time.
- **A rural and regional focus** through the establishment of 11 new TradeStart offices which provide a new service for potential exporters in these areas of Australia. The Export Access scheme has also been

expanded to increase its focus on rural and regional exporters.

- **Specialist market access teams** are helping the food, information, textile, clothing and footwear and automotive industries.
- **Protecting Australia's interests** on the world stage. For example, tariff reductions were agreed which could add \$400 million a year to Australia's exports by 2000.
- **Benefits to our agriculture exporters** through our chairmanship of the Cairns Group of agriculture traders, and other efforts, including locking in the commencement of world agriculture negotiations in 1999.

HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

HEALTH

- **Increased funding for public hospitals** - The Coalition has given more money to state governments to fund public hospitals and health services such as dental care. We have committed \$30.6 billion to our public hospitals - a real increase of \$7.2 billion or 17.6 per cent over Labor's last agreement.
- **Encouraging Private Health coverage - After years of neglect from Labor, we have slowed the dropout rate from private health insurance while we worked on making it more attractive.**
- **Helping your doctor offer you the best possible care** – The Coalition has spent \$127 million to increase the Medicare rebates for General Practice, as well as substantially increasing the rebates for after-hours visits from your doctor, after Labor increased the Medicare rebate by only half the rate of inflation.
- The Coalition's strategy to limit Medicare provider numbers to those doctors properly trained in family practice has improved the quality of care offered to the community and taken the pressure off properly-trained GPs competing with inadequately trained doctors offering

'six-minute medicine'.

- **Commitment to improving Australia's immunisation levels**
- When we came into office in 1996, Australia's childhood immunisation rate was at the third-world level of 53 per cent. This disgraceful situation resulted in the deaths of nine children during the recent whooping cough epidemic, and an average of 14 deaths a year from measles during Labor's administration. We are undertaking the biggest immunisation campaign ever conducted in this country – 'Let's Work Together To Beat Measles'.
- Under the Coalition's Immunise Australia programme, immunisation rates for children under 18 months have already risen to over 78 per cent.
- **Refinement of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme** - The scheme provides affordable medicines to all Australians and is the envy of the world. In 1996 the cost of maintaining it was doubling every four years – an unsustainable rate. A range of measures to ensure cost effectiveness, has saved the PBS, benefiting all Australians.
- **Improved rural, remote and regional health through extra funding** - We have put in place a plan for the long-term future of health care in rural and remote areas.
- In 1997 the number of doctors in rural Australia increased by 4 per cent and 9 per cent in remote areas. More Australians have access to Medicare through pharmacy Easyclaim. Training opportunities and infrastructure have been expanded in rural and remote areas.

FAMILY SERVICES

- **Rebuilding Australia's decayed aged care system** with policies designed to increase capital spending. More resources have been spent on the care of those older Australians in need of residential aged care.
- **Spending on aged care increased by \$600 million** – Recurrent expenditure increasing by \$165 million a year.
- **An additional \$280 million to deliver services and support to older Australians in their own home** – This increase of

\$94.7 million a year recognises older Australians desire to remain independent as long as possible.

- **National Strategy for an Ageing Australia** being developed to plan for the future needs of our ageing population.
- **\$2.9 billion funding to support people with disabilities** has increased opportunities and extended services provided to those most in need.
- **Additional \$18 million to address youth suicide** through the National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy. This programme aims to raise awareness and provide practical solutions through building partnerships with service providers, the general community and all levels of government.
- **National Advisory Council on Youth Suicide Prevention** established. This Council brings all states and territories together to address the underlying causes of youth suicide and ensure a concerted and coordinated national approach to suicide prevention.
- **Additional 40,000 childcare places and 310 more centres** now operate across Australia.
- **Additional \$30 million to increase access to childcare for families in rural and remote Australia.**

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

- **Tighter eligibility for benefits** - Migrants must now wait two years after arriving in Australia before they are eligible to access benefits (humanitarian entrants are exempt from this provision).
- **More public input on immigration** - Open public meetings on immigration and multicultural affairs have been held as well as extensive consultations on the composition of the Migration Programme and migrants settlement needs.

- **Skills in identified shortage in Australia constitute first priority for skilled entry** - There is an increased emphasis on migration to regional areas of Australia, including a skill matching data base to identify shortages. English language competency is a mandatory criterion in the selection of skilled migrants. The Points Test has been raised for skilled migrants, thus improving employment opportunities.
- **Improved screening procedures** including enhanced data on people in high risk groups, and improved liaison with law enforcement agencies, increased staff at a number of overseas posts and at Australian and overseas airports to identify passengers of concern.
- **Greater enforcement** - Strengthened the enforcement of revoking visas obtained with fraudulent or false declarations, by enacting legislation to revoke the citizenship of those who obtain citizenship through fraud.
- **Illegal immigrants with no claim to stay in Australia are now removed promptly** - Limited circumstances under which unlawful non-citizens may be granted visas to compassionate and compelling situations only. Expanded data-matching with other government agencies. Limited access to work rights for Protection Visa applicants. Introduced a \$1,000 post-decision fee for review of primary decisions, to deter frivolous applications.
- **Reduced spouse sponsorship** - Individual sponsors are now limited to two spouse sponsorships, a minimum of five years apart, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- **Tougher health screening arrangements introduced.**
- **Extra funding** includes an additional \$20.7 million over four years for enhanced settlement services to humanitarian entrants, through community based organisations. \$17.6 million allocated over four years for English language and literacy training and education. The 'You, Me aUStralian – Living in Harmony' campaign was launched, including \$2.5 million programme of community grants and a series of partnerships between the Federal Government and the Australian Cricket Board, the NSW Rural Fire Service and Woolworths.

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TOURISM

INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE

- **Investing for Growth** is a \$1.2 billion strategy for industry development and the creation of new jobs. It encourages innovation through increased research and development, boosts investment to create more jobs, and creates more opportunities for Australian exporters.
- **Sustainable jobs in industry** have resulted from a \$300 million programme to encourage the continued manufacture of pharmaceuticals, a \$2 billion strategy over five years to promote new investment in the car industry, and a \$772 million strategy for the textiles, clothing and footwear industries.
- **Developing new partnerships between business and government** in industries ranging from car manufacturing to tourism. Agendas have been developed in key sectors to identify and remove impediments to growth and to encourage stronger exports and innovation.
- **Major investment in science and technology** - More than \$3.7 billion has been allocated this year alone to support these industries. \$1 billion will be spent to encourage innovation and research and development by Australian business over the next four years. CSIRO funding has been restored and a major capital works programme for other science research agencies agreed. The Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council has been established to ensure that science policy is recognised at the highest levels of government.
- **Australia's space industry re-launched** and focussed towards re-establishing Australia as a key player in the international space industry. Work is progressing to enable the launching of commercial satellites from Australian soil. Kistler Aerospace has committed to a new satellite launch facility at Woomera in South Australia.

SPORT AND TOURISM

- **Boosted our commitment to the Sydney 2000 Games** with total Commonwealth assistance now amounting to about \$460 million after an allocation of another \$32 million in the last Budget.
- **Initiated the 2000 Plus and Active Australia programmes** to lead sport into the new millenium and to maximise participation.
- **Committed up to \$25 million to underwrite the staging of the 2000 Paralympics.**
- **Initiated ‘Sports Export Advisory Council’** - an organisation to assist the sports industry through Australia to position itself as a niche exporter of products and services to the world.
- **Combating Drugs in Sport** by reviewing the Australian Sports Drug Agency Legislation to keep apace with medical and technological advances; International Agreement for drug testing and reviewed the National Drugs in Sport Policy.
- **Launched the National Action Plan** which provides the most comprehensive blueprint for tourism policy formulation and industry planning ever.
- **Boosted funding to the Australian Tourist Commission** by \$50 million to secure Australia’s position in new markets and to tap the huge tourism potential presented by Sydney hosting the 2000 Games.
- **Funded a two-year \$10.4 million National Tourism Development Programme** in the Government’s first budget to enhance the tourism potential of regional and rural Australia.
- **Provided \$900 million from the \$1 billion Centenary of Federation Fund** for major projects of national significance (including tourism-related projects).
- Designating 2001 as the year to ‘Meet in Australia’ and implementing a multi-million dollar campaign over five years to attract the international business travel market to Australia in that year and beyond.

- **Providing \$1 million for tourism initiatives in the Hunter Valley** as part of the Government's assistance to the Newcastle region.
- **Introduced legislation to protect Sydney Games** from 'ambush marketing' and hence assist in ensuring that the Games are not a burden on NSW taxpayers.
- **Removed market development barriers** to allow the tourism industry full access to the Export Market Development Grants Scheme (bringing the total annual allocation to tourism under the scheme to \$30 million).

CUSTOMS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

- **Anti-dumping legislation** passed by parliament in June 1998, gave Australia the fastest and fairest anti-dumping regime in the world.
- **Protecting Australia's borders** through increasing the size and sea-going capability of Customs' Marine Fleet to strengthen Australia's civil surveillance and response capability. The Coalition has awarded a contract worth \$58.4 million for eight 35m vessels to enhance surveillance and response capabilities within Australia's 200 nautical mile Economic Exclusion Zone.
- The **Tough on Drugs** initiative includes:
 - - \$43.8 million allocated to prevent illegal drugs entering Australia by more effective interception techniques
 - - \$7.5 million to increase the capacity of the Customs profiling system and examination facilities in Sydney
 - - \$6.9 million for improved coastal surveillance in the Torres Strait
 - - Increased co-operation with other Commonwealth agencies such as the Federal Police and the National Crime Authority

- **Increased drug seizures** - During 1996-97, Customs officers intercepted and prevented importation of 75kg of heroin compared with 31kg in 1995-96, 68kg of cocaine (58kg in 1995 in 1995-96), 24.29kg tonnes of cannabis (53kg in 1995-96) and 181kg of other drugs (17kg in 1995-96).
- **Protecting Australia's borders** - New surveillance contracts for Coastwatch have doubled the total coastal and offshore area covered. A marine fleet upgrade will boost the size and number of vessels patrolling Australian waters.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND ENERGY

- **Record help for the environment** through the \$1.25 billion Natural Heritage Trust. Benefits for primary industries include \$163 million in funding over five years to improve the state of the Murray-Darling River system, and a large increase in Landcare funding.
- **Agriculture - Advancing Australia** is a key element of our rural strategy. The \$525 million package provides an effective welfare safety net for farmers, better risk management tools, a farm business management improvement programme, and help to transfer farms from one generation to the next.
- **Certainty for our forests** through the continuing Regional Forest Agreement process. The agreements provide a stable future for jobs in our forest industry through long term access to specified forest areas, but protect high conservation value areas, including old growth and wilderness.
- **Protecting Australia from imported diseases and pests** - An additional \$90 million is being spent to strengthen Australia's quarantine arrangements, including an extra \$38.2 million for border activities such as wharf surveillance. The funding includes \$14.7 million for the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy to help protect our vulnerable north.

- **Industry control handed back to producers** enabling the wheat and red meat industries to operate in a commercial way, without Government controls and manipulation.
- **Abolished restrictive export controls** on all mineral exports, except uranium. This decision has removed bureaucratic controls and encouraged exports and jobs.
- **A uranium policy that benefits all Australians** has resulted from the abolition of Labor's 'three mines' policy. The Jabiluka uranium project has been approved, subject to strict environmental conditions. It could support up to 1,500 jobs and be worth up to \$3.8 billion.
- **Replacing regulation with facilitation** encourages projects. This Government has ensured major resource projects will go ahead by ensuring they do not get caught up in red tape.
- **Standing up for Australian tuna fishers** - We have protected Australian jobs and the environment by banning Japanese fishing vessels from our waters after they breached the treaty protecting southern bluefin tuna.

PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

- **More targetted funding** - Almost \$700 million more in real terms to be spent on indigenous-specific programmes in this government's first four years in office than was spent in the last four years of the previous Labor government.
- **Increasing accountability** – A wide range of ATSIC procedures have been improved after a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of spending.
- **Health a key priority** – An additional \$73 million in funding for

35 new or expanded health services has been allocated, with priority given to rural or remote communities. This includes \$4.8 million to address eye health in indigenous communities and \$12 million for a programme to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

- **Better education** – Increased funding for programmes to address literacy, numeracy and education programme retention rates. There are now 40,000 indigenous students in secondary and TAFE education, 9,000 at university and 4,000 on apprenticeships and traineeships.
- **Expanding employment programmes** – The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme has been expanded to fund 30,800 places in 1997-98. Under this scheme indigenous people voluntarily work for the dole on community projects.
- **Encouraging enterprise** - \$120 million will be spent over four years to promote small business development within the indigenous community.
- **Improving access to legal services** through decentralisation and introduction of tendering for the provision of legal services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Better access to legal services for women has been a priority. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal and Advisory Service in Brisbane was launched in September 1997.
- **Responding to deaths in custody** – \$1 million provided for a pilot programme in response to the summit on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody to reduce indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system.
- **Addressing past actions** – A \$63 million package of initiatives was developed to address the consequences of family separation identified in the Bringing Them Home report. The package committed an extra \$11.3 million to establish a national network of Link-Up centres and an additional \$33.3 million for counselling and related services.
- **Ensuring adequate protection** – The new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Bill to ensure adequate protection of cultural and heritage sites has been introduced into parliament.

MATTERS OF STATE

Constitutional Convention

- The Constitutional Convention was held in February 1998 to discuss the issue of constitutional reform. All sections of the community were represented with half the delegates being elected by the Australian people and the other half appointed by the government.
- At the conclusion of the convention a communique was ‘delivered’ to the Government conveying the outcome of the convention. The government will hold a referendum in the next term of government at which the republican model supported by the Constitutional Convention will be put to the people.

Native Title

- Essential reform of the Native Title Act has delivered a fair and workable regime for all Australians. The Coalition’s reforms respect and protect the High Court’s *Mabo* and *Wik* decisions while ensuring that all Australians are treated equally. In particular, the Coalition’s reforms ensure:
 - farmers have the certainty to carry on their pastoral activities;
 - miners have the security to explore and invest, creating export income and jobs, especially in regional areas; and
 - indigenous people are guaranteed the same procedural rights as other Australians.

WOMEN

- **Encouraging economic independence** through reforms to superannuation. These include the introduction of a spouse rebate to promote superannuation savings, extending the age-contributors to superannuation and proposals to ensure a more equitable distribution of assets on the breakdown of a marriage.
- **Promoting safety and well being** through action on the prevention of domestic violence and the introduction of tough new gun laws. The Coalition has contributed \$23.5 million to the ‘*Partnerships against Domestic Violence*’ programme, distributed

over 70,000 copies of a rural domestic violence kit, formed a partnership with business to prevent domestic violence and developed a proposal for Uniform Domestic Violence legislation.

- **Encouraging healthy practices** – The Coalition has continued to promote biennial pap smear screening and regular mammography. We have also provided \$24.3 million over four years to establish rural health service centres.
- **Leadership and decision making** is encouraged through an executive search pilot project. To increase the number of women on government boards and committees, a programme has commenced with the Australian Council of Business Women to improve representation on private sector boards.
- **Valuing families** is a key focus of this Government:
 - The Coalition's *Workplace Relations Act 1996* provides opportunities for agreements that enable a better balance between work and family, provides greater security for casual and part-time workers and promotes workplace flexibility; and
 - **The Family Tax Initiative** provides real benefits to families. The average family mortgage has been reduced by over \$300 a month by the Coalition's good economic management delivering low inflation, low interest rates and a budget surplus for the first time in many years; and
 - **The Coalition is spending more on childcare** (over \$1.1 billion a year) than Labor did in its last year in office (\$875 million). The introduction of a planning framework in childcare has seen places allocated in areas of greatest need and stopped the spiralling, uncontrolled growth of the Labor era.

SOCIAL SECURITY

- **Attacked social security fraud and non-compliance** resulting in savings of \$46 million a week on future outlays and 570,000 cheats

caught. The Coalition's last Budget made it even harder to defraud social security through our "surfie clause" which penalises dole recipients for moving to areas of high unemployment.

- **Introduced the Family Tax Payment** covering 976,659 children in low-income families (as part of Family Tax Initiative which delivers one billion dollars in tax cuts to families).
- **Implemented a waiting period before migrants can receive social security** - migrants now will have to wait two years before accessing welfare payments, except family allowance and Medicare.
- **The first government to guarantee by law that pensions will be maintained at 25 per cent of Male Total Average Weekly Earnings.**
- **Extended eligibility for pharmaceutical benefits** through the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card to 222,000 older Australians, particularly benefiting self-funded retirees.
- **Replaced unemployment benefits and Austudy with a single Youth Allowance**, so children no longer can choose to drop out of school and go on the dole. Also ensures young people are no longer paid more on the dole than to be in study and grants students eligibility for rent assistance for the first time.
- **Developed a package of measures to improve the position of carers**, including more respite for carers, an increase in the Domiciliary Nursing Care Benefit, access to income support for those caring for a disabled child, and encouragement for carers to return to the workforce.
- **Established Centrelink** as a one-stop shop to provide government assistance programmes from under the one roof (including social security, employment assistance, and childcare assistance.) In future, Centrelink will deliver services for more government departments.
- **Reformed the child support system** to provide a fairer system for custodial and non-custodial parents and their children.
- **Gave older people the opportunity to work past retirement age** by paying them a lump sum bonus payment if they choose to do so.

- **Tightened the activity test requirements for jobseekers**, increasing the penalties for not adequately looking for work and introducing the Jobseeker Diary.
- **Eased the social security assets test** making it easier for older low-income farmers to receive the age pension.

TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **\$3.5 billion Regional Australia Strategy** designed to meet the economic, environmental and social needs of regional Australia.
- **\$676 million spent on the National Highway in 1998-99** - \$112 million on Roads of National Importance (90 per cent of direct Commonwealth road funds are spent in rural areas). The Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics estimates that 17 jobs are created for every \$1 million spent on roads in Australia.
- **\$73 million spent on the Road Safety Black Spot Programme**, with more than two-thirds of the funds spent in regional Australia.
- **Over \$250 million allocated to upgrade Australia's inefficient mainline rail tracks.**
- **The Infrastructure Borrowings Tax Offsets Scheme** will pave the way for over \$2 billion of private sector investment in public infrastructure projects, many of which will be in regional Australia.
- **Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund** will deliver benefits to regional Australia by funding community projects to enhance internet access, extend mobile phone coverage and trial alternative means of delivering telecommunications services.
- **The Supermarket to Asia Strategy** is a \$14.5 million programme to encourage exports.
- **\$78 million to help particular regions and industries** manage the impact of economic adjustments (such as the \$10 million Newcastle package, the \$20 million Rail Reform Transition Programme and the \$48 million Forest Industry Labour Adjustment Package).

- **The \$1.25 billion Natural Heritage Trust** has benefitted rural Australia through its significant conservation and resource management activities.
- **The Regional Assistance Programme** provides \$33 million in 1998-99 for employment generating projects in regions affected by structural adjustment or economic downturns.
- **Expanded Area Consultative Committees** are encouraged to develop strategies for employment growth and skills development in their regions and to provide advice to the Government on the needs of their regions.
- **An extra \$150 million to improve the delivery of health services** in regional Australia, including the provision of an extra \$13 million in the 1998-99 Budget to increase the number of doctors in rural areas.
- **\$2.7 million CreditCare programme** to help rural and remote communities attract non-bank financial service providers.
- **The Coalition's nation-wide initiatives** have also benefitted regional Australia:
 - - The Coalition's Job Network (a \$1.7 billion initiative) will provide improved assistance to employers and job seekers;
 - - The establishment of an Australia-wide network of Centrelink offices has improved community access to government services;
 - - \$219 million will be spent on extending the Work for the Dole scheme (an initiative which targets areas of high youth unemployment in rural and regional Australia) and is giving unemployed people a chance to work on projects of community value;
 - - The Green Corps programme (funded at \$41.6 million over three years) is giving young Australians an opportunity to work to preserve and restore our natural environment and cultural heritage;
- The \$1.26 billion *Investing in Growth* strategy is supporting business innovation, investment and jobs growth, and assisting in the development of new export markets.

