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**Australian
Library and
Information
Association**

ALIA FEDERAL BUDGET 2011 ANALYSIS

Introduction

In his Budget speech on Tuesday 10 May 2011, Treasurer Wayne Swan promised "to put the opportunities that flow from a strong economy within reach of more Australians. To get more people into work, and to train them for more rewarding jobs. So that national prosperity reaches more lives, in more corners, of our patchwork economy."

Natural disasters were a major factor. For the Labor government, this meant a tight budget and strict spending limits, but the influence of the independent MPs, who hold the balance of power in the House of Representatives, was evident by the emphasis on policies and programs to support regional Australia.

Although mentions of libraries per se were few and far between, the Portfolio Budget Statements provided interesting reading for library and information professionals employed in all sectors. Key topics were:

- National Broadband Network

- Internet filtering

- Cyber-safety

- Education and early childhood development

- Adult literacy

This is ALIA's analysis of the Federal Government Budget 2011 and the items which may well affect our members and their organisations.

The Federal Government's Budget page can be found at http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/index.htm. The Budget At A Glance page provides a useful overview http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/at_a_glance/html/index.htm. Other analysis that could be of interest can be found at the Australian Local Government Association http://www.alga.asn.au and Pro Bono http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au.

Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE)

National Broadband Network

http://www.dbcde.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/134208/2011-12_BCDE_PBS_Complete.pdf

From the DBCDE's perspective, the big ticket item was the National Broadband Network. The Budget included $23.4 million "for the DBCDE to provide information to consumers and small businesses about the NBN roll out and support them in the migration from the copper network to the fibre network; provide technical and policy advice to Government on the implementation of the project National Broadband Network policy objectives; and establish an entity to take responsibility for the delivery of the Universal Service Obligation (USO) and legislative scheme for the changes to the USO arrangement." ALIA continues to lobby for libraries to be key partners in helping to maximise the benefits of the NBN in local communities.

The Digital Regions Initiative, "supporting cross-regional and national deployment of successful broadband delivery models in health, education and emergency services in regional, rural and remote communities including National Broadband Network enabled in-home health trials" is the kind of program to which libraries could make a significant contribution. Libraries could also promote the www.digitalbusiness.gov.au website to the Government's target audience of small businesses and community organisations. We also aim to work closely with regional National Broadband Network coordinators, "who encourage the take up of broadband opportunities by local Government, communities

and businesses," and to collaborate with state and territory Governments and Indigenous communities, providing improved public internet access and computer and internet training to remote Indigenous communities.

Internet filtering

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p120)

"The Government will not proceed with the Voluntary Internet Filtering Grants Program. This will provide savings of $9.6 million over three years. The Government provided $9.8 million in the 2010-11 Budget to establish the Voluntary Internet Filtering Grants Program to assist internet service providers (ISPs) to offer customers internet filtering options on a commercial basis. However, consultation with industry has identified limited interest in the grants due to the increasing range of filtering technologies readily available to online users, including browser and search engine filters, and the decision of the three largest ISPs, which account for over 70 per cent of Australian internet users, to voluntarily filter child abuse sites using a list compiled and maintained by the Australian Communications and Media Authority."

Cyber-safety

http://www.dbcde.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/134208/2011-12_BCDE_PBS_Complete.pdf

It was heartening after our work with the Safer Internet Group to see cyber-safety continuing to be in the spotlight.

- Cyber-safety initiatives to inform and educate the Australian community about internet safety tools and online help, Operation of the Youth Advisory Group online forum and the Teachers and Parents Advisory Group, and support of the Consultative Working Group on Cyber-safety; and

- Cyber-security initiatives to inform and educate Australian consumers and small businesses about how best to manage the risk of financial fraud and loss of personal information over the internet.

With two of the Department's key performance indicators being:

- The extent to which Australian households and small businesses are aware of, and adopt, appropriate actions to address cyber-security and cyber-safety risks.

- The extent to which Youth Advisory Group and Consultative Working Group advice and input enables development of improved cyber-safety measures, such as the Cyber-safety Help Button.

Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

DEEWR provided rich pickings, especially for teacher librarians in schools and children and youth services librarians in public libraries, although libraries were not specifically mentioned as important contributors to the early childhood development agenda.

Early childhood

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Documents/20112012/2011-2012_DEEWR_PBS_02_DEEWR_Overview.pdf

"In 2011-12 the Australian Government will implement a suite of reforms to drive greater participation and productivity for the nation. Directed at improving access, equity and quality this includes driving systemic change in early childhood, school and tertiary education, skills development and workforce participation.

"2011 will see a continued focus by the department on progressing key COAG commitments that underpin the National Early Childhood Development Strategy … The Australian Government has committed in the 2011-12 Budget to ongoing three yearly cycles of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI). The AEDI is a population based measure of how children have developed by the time they start school.

Schools

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Documents/20112012/2011-2012_DEEWR_PBS_02_DEEWR_Overview.pdf

"This Budget will see further investment in Australia's schools sector with key new initiatives: Reward Payments for Great Teachers, More Support for Children with Disabilities, expansion of the Chaplains program and Teach Next. These initiatives will help to recognise the great work of our teachers and reward them for their valuable work, provide more support for Australian students and assist in attracting and retaining highly qualified people in the teaching profession."

There was more detail about these initiatives here http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Documents/20112012/2011-2012_DEEWR_PBS_04_Outcome_2.pdf.

- Rewards for School Improvement—($164.8 million appropriated for 2010–11 to 2013–14), supports improved student outcomes through the introduction of a National School Improvement Framework and the provision of reward payments to schools showing the most improvement under the framework. A total of $388 million in reward payments will be paid to 4500 schools between 2012–13 and 2016–17.

- Empowering Local Schools—the Government will invest $480.5 million by 2018 to drive improved student performance and outcomes by giving principals, parents and each school community greater power to determine how their local school is run.

- Reward Payments for Great Teachers—the Government will provide $425 million over four years to facilitate the development of a new nationally consistent, rigorous and objective performance management system for all teachers and recognise and reward Australia's top performing teachers. The development of the nationally consistent performance management system, known as the Australian Teacher Performance Management Principles and Procedures will be undertaken in close consultation with education stakeholders. The Australian Teacher Performance Management Principles and Procedures will assess teachers' performance using a range of methods, which may include: lesson observations; analysis of student data; and parent feedback.

- Teach Next—the Government will provide $18.1 million over four years to establish a new employment-based pathway into teaching for up to 450 highly skilled and experienced professionals with specialist qualifications who are seeking a career change. This program will address areas of teacher shortage in specialised subject areas, such as mathematics and science, and in hard-to-staff schools, particularly in regional areas.

Indigenous literacy

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Documents/20112012/2011-2012_DEEWR_PBS_04_Outcome_2.pdf

"In 2011–12, the Government's focus on targets directed at lifting educational outcomes for all Australians and meeting the Closing the Gap targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will continue as a priority. These targets are:

- Lifting the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2015

- Halving the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade (by 2018) at least halving the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020."

"The Government will provide $171.3 million over two years to 2013-14 to extend Indigenous education support programs funded under the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000 (IETA Act) until the end of 2013. The IETA Act provides funding for programs to improve Indigenous literacy and numeracy, school attendance and providing education support. This measure will ensure support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students while the Review of Funding for Schooling is being conducted. The review has been directed to provide recommendations that include options for supporting Indigenous students."

Computers in schools

"Through its major funding element, the National Secondary School Computer Fund, the Government is providing for new or upgraded ICT for secondary schools with students in Years 9 to 12 to ensure a 1:1 computer to student ratio by 31 December 2011. Funding is being provided biannually to education authorities on a per capita basis through the Digital Education Revolution (DER) National Partnership with state and territories and by DER funding agreements with the Catholic and independent education authorities. Other funding elements include development of online curriculum tools and resources and ICT teacher professional development."

The Government will redirect $132.5 million over four years from the DER project pool. Since the announcement of the DER, the Australian Government has made significant investments in the integration of information and communication technology into teaching and learning. $20.0 million per annum will continue to be available in the DER project pool until the end of 2013-14 to support:

- The Digital Strategy for Teachers and School Leaders

- The establishment of a Digital Education Advisory Group

- National initiatives to support the aims of the DER, such as the National Digital Learning Resources Framework.
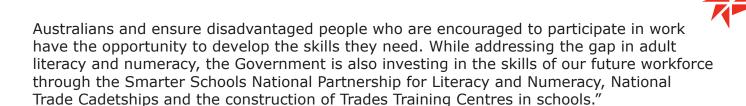
Higher education

"The Australian Government is continuing to work hard to make higher education more accessible to all Australians. The implementation of reforms introduced in 2009, as part of the Review of Australian Higher Education (the Bradley Review), are still a key focus for the department in 2011, as a new demand driven funding system commence for universities from 2012. In addition, performance-funding targets will be included in the first mission-based compacts to be agreed with universities in 2011, and new indexation arrangements will be implemented to provide increased funding to higher education providers to support the reforms. The Government has also made a commitment of $50 million over the forward estimates for promoting excellence in universities and an additional $500 million to the Education Investment Fund for regional priority areas of Australia."

Adult literacy programs

"The Australian Government is committed to investing in developing a skilled workforce. This Budget will see further support to improve the numeracy and literacy of unemployed

Australians and ensure disadvantaged people who are encouraged to participate in work have the opportunity to develop the skills they need. While addressing the gap in adult literacy and numeracy, the Government is also investing in the skills of our future workforce through the Smarter Schools National Partnership for Literacy and Numeracy, National Trade Cadetships and the construction of Trades Training Centres in schools."

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (pp134 – 152)

- The Government will provide $20.0 million over four years to provide additional training places for workers with low language, literacy and numeracy skills. The funding will provide approximately 13,000 additional training places over four years under the Workforce English Language and Literacy Program. This measure will assist organisations up-skill their workers so they can better participate in the workforce.

- The Government will provide $143.1 million (including capital funding of $1.3 million) over four years to fund approximately 30,000 additional training places under the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP). The LLNP assists job seekers of working age to achieve sustainable employment outcomes by providing up to 800 hours of free accredited Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) training.

- The Government will provide $25.0 million over three years to establish the National Workforce and Productivity Agency. The National Workforce and Productivity Agency will be established from 1 July 2012 through an expansion of the current functions of Skills Australia, the independent statutory body that provides advice to the Government on workforce skills and development needs.

- The Government will provide $67.6 million over four years (including capital fundingof $0.3 million in 2011-12) to deliver transitional activities for early school leavers aged 15-21 years of age who do not have a year 12 certificate or equivalent qualification. Early School Leavers Transition Support (ETS) will commence from 1 July 2012 and be delivered through Job Services Australia. ETS will assist early school leavers in The measure will also fund additional pathway and outcome payments to Job Services Australia service providers who assist early school leavers with low levels of literacy and numeracy to complete the first block of the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program upon completion of ETS.

National Action Plan on literacy and numeracy

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Documents/20112012/2011-2012_DEEWR_PBS_04_Outcome_2.pdf

With the National Year of Reading 2012 in our sites, the focus on literacy in the Budget was encouraging.

"Literacy and numeracy are the essential foundation skills that allow young people to achieve at school, go on to further learning, and participate fully in society and work. This program [National Partnership for Literacy and Numeracy (NP)] focuses on the key areas of teaching, leadership and the effective use of student performance information to deliver sustained improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, especially those who are falling behind.

"The Literacy and Numeracy NP is well underway. To date, all participating schools have commenced activity, totalling approximately 1045 schools (10.3 per cent of all schools in Australia). These schools enrol around 406, 879 students (11.7 per cent of all students), of whom around 28 001 identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This represents 17.9 per cent of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in schools around the country.

"The NP has now entered the reward stage. States and territories will receive reward funding based on the achievement of agreed literacy and numeracy targets as well as local measures."

Building the Education Revolution

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Documents/20112012/2011-2012_DEEWR_PBS_04_Outcome_2.pdf

"As part of the Government's $42 billion Nation Building—Economic Stimulus Plan, 16.2 billion is being invested over four financial years (2008–09 to 2011–12) through Building the Education Revolution (BER). The BER aims to provide economic stimulus through the rapid construction and refurbishment of school infrastructure, and to build learning environments to help children, families and communities participate in activities that will support achievement, develop learning potential and bring communities together."

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p153)

The Government will provide $11.6 million over four years to respond to the recommendations of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) Implementation Taskforce Interim Report released on 6 August 2010. The Government accepted and agreed to implement the recommendations of the report in full.

Tertiary infrastructure

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p156)

"The Government will provide $500 million over five years (including $100 million in 2015-16) to fund a regional priority round from the Education Investment Fund (EIF). This will support regional higher education and vocational institutions to improve their infrastructure, and help improve the quality of training and education regional students receive. Higher educational and vocational institutions will apply in a competitive round, with all applications to be assessed by the EIF Advisory Board."

Smarter Schools

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Documents/20112012/2011-2012_DEEWR_PBS_04_Outcome_2.pdf

"The Smarter Schools—Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership (NP) supports ambitious, nationally significant and sustainable reforms to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and school leaders in classrooms and schools.

"States and territories will be eligible to receive reward funding from 2011–12 for the demonstration of achievement in reform areas that improve teacher remuneration structures, increase school-based decision-making, improve in-school support, reward teachers in 'hard-to-staff' and disadvantaged schools and increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and schools leaders' engagement with community members. The COAG Reform Council will assess achievements against reward reforms and will report performance information to COAG.

"The NP will provide $550 million in Commonwealth funding, which includes:

- $94 million in facilitation funding to be paid to states and territories
- Up to $350 million in reward funding to be paid to states and territories
- $56 million to be retained by the Commonwealth to support joint national activity
- $50 million to be retained by the Commonwealth for professional development and support for principals.

Vocational Education Broadband Network

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p176)

"The Government will terminate future funding from the Vocational Education Broadband Network from 2010-11. This will provide savings of $78.4 million over three years. The

Vocational Education Broadband Network was announced in April 2009 to deliver a high speed broadband network for the vocational education and training sector. The new National Broadband Network is expected to deliver the same functionality as the Vocational Education Broadband Network."

Broadband for Seniors

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p178)

"The Government will provide $10.4 million over four years for the ongoing maintenance of the 2,000 Broadband Kiosks for Seniors. This funding continues the Helping Seniors Make Ends Meet — Broadband for Seniors measure announced in the 2008-09 Budget, which provides older Australians with free access to the internet and assists them to gain confidence to use computers through free training in their local communities."

National institutes

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Budget/Documents/20112012/2011-2012_DEEWR_PBS_05_Outcome_3.pdf

"National institutes—funding to the Australian National University, the University of Melbourne (for the Victorian College of the Arts), the University of Tasmania (for the Australian Maritime College Institute) and Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in recognition of their national role in particular areas of higher education."

Department of Innovation Industry Science and Research

Australian Institution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

http://www.innovation.gov.au/AboutUs/FinancialInformationandLegislation/BudgetInformation/Documents/IISRPortfolioBudgetStatementsFull2011-12.pdf

Expenses for the Australian Institution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies are expected to continue at around current levels for next year.   Plans are to encourage and publish new Indigenous authors; develop the skills of writers and use outreach facilities to increase access to the AIATSIS library and audio-visual collections. It is also hoped to develop the website to provide greater access to collections and research.

Excellence in Research Australia

http://www.innovation.gov.au/AboutUs/FinancialInformationandLegislation/BudgetInformation/Documents/IISRPortfolioBudgetStatementsFull2011-12.pdf

ERA assesses research quality within Australia's higher education research institutions using a combination of indicators and expert review by committees comprising experienced, internationally-recognised experts. "In 2011-12, priorities will include … a review of the ERA 2010 process, through targeted and broad sector-wide reviews. These include reviews of the measures used to assess quality of research, such as applied measures, the ERA evaluation process more broadly, and the discipline and discipline groups examined."

Collaborative Research Networks — redirect funding

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p276)

"The Government will achieve savings of $20.7 million over two years from the Collaborative Research Networks (CRN) program. Funding will remain available to continue to provide assistance to encourage less research-intensive higher education institutions to develop their research capability by teaming up with other institutions with established research expertise."

Prime Minister and Cabinet

Office for the Arts

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p287)

The Government is providing $10 million over five years for the Australia Council to support young and emerging artists. This new program provides funding for the creation of new Australian work across all art forms and will assist artists to build more sustainable careers. It will also assist artists facing specific access barriers – including artists with a disability, artists from non-English speaking culturally diverse backgrounds, and artists in regional and remote areas.

This measure will implement the Government's election commitment to invest in a creative Australia. This commitment will support up to 150 additional artistic works, presentations and fellowships.

The initiative will deliver grants of

- Up to $80,000 per annum for new artistic works, including visual arts, performing arts, literature, new media and music

- Up to $50,000 per annum for additional presentations to Australian audiences, including to communities outside the major metropolitan areas

- $60,000 or more for fellowships for Australia's young and emerging artists and mid-career artists.

Artists developing new content for use by the National Broadband Network or showcasing distinctive Australian work overseas may also be supported through this initiative.

http://www.dpmc.gov.au/accountability/budget/2011-12/index.cfm

Objectives for the arts included:

- Access to Australian books in public and educational libraries is maintained or increased.

- Increased sales of Prime Minister's Literary Award shortlisted or winning titles.

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p286)

On a less positive note, "the Government will achieve savings of $1.6 million over four years from the Get Reading! program. The Get Reading! Program, an annual promotion of books and reading, will be delivered in a more cost-effective way, including utilising digital technology and e-publishing.

Cultural institutions

http://www.dpmc.gov.au/accountability/budget/2011-12/index.cfm

Old Parliament House was to maintain its oral history program in partnership with the National Library of Australia.

In 2011-12, actions for the National Library of Australia itself were to:

- Implement a new international standard for the bibliographic description of library materials.

- Collaborate with relevant agencies to discuss the extension of legal deposit to non-print resources.

- Plan and design the implementation of a next generation Digital Library Infrastructure to support digital Australian collections.

- Complete construction of a Treasures Gallery, which will enable the NLA to

permanently display its iconic, rare and important collection items to the public.

- Commence work on the integration of the Main and Newspaper reading rooms.

- Implement improved systems and workflows to enhance the supply of copies of collection material to users.

- Continue to work collaboratively with National and State Libraries Australasia on a series of major projects known as Reimagining Libraries, which aim to transform services offered by the national, state and territory libraries to better meet the needs of Australians for access to library services in the digital age.

- Continue a major oral history project, funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, to record the story of the Forgotten Australians and former child migrants.

- Improve our national collection discovery service, Trove, and extend Trove to include journal articles and licensed electronic resources.

- Improve the performance of Libraries Australia, a national resource sharing service, by redeveloping the search interface.

- Participate in and contribute to the work of international library bodies including the Committee of Principles, the Conference of Directors of National Libraries and the International Federation of Library Associations.

The Portfolio Budget stated that the Library did not have any significant trends, changes or variance in program expenses over the forward years and it was the same story for National Archives. However, http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/ bp2_expense.pdf (p286), "the Government will provide funding to the National Archives of Australia (NAA) to address long-term requirements for additional archives preservation and storage capacity. The funding will allow the NAA to lease a new preservation and storage facility and to refurbish existing facilities."

Treasury

Not-for-profit changes

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_revenue.pdf (p36)

The Government will reform the tax concessions provided to not-for-profit (NFP) entities to ensure they are targeted only at those activities that directly further a NFP's altruistic purposes. The new arrangements will commence on 1 July 2011 and will initially affect only new unrelated commercial activities that commence after 10 May 2011.

The Government will consult on and introduce a statutory definition of 'charity' for all

Commonwealth laws to take effect from 1 July 2013. It will provide the proposed Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission with $2.9 million over four years to develop new guidance for the sector, implement system changes, and re-assess the charitable status of entities on the basis of the new statutory definition.

Grants

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_revenue.pdf (p46)

"The Government will provide $43.3 million over four years to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to allow it to monitor the accurate accounting of government grants and payments.

"This increased funding will enable the ATO to collect payment information from government agencies across all three levels of government, and will provide for sophisticated data-matching techniques to examine compliance by the recipients of such payments."

Australian War Memorial

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p327)

"The Government will provide $33.9 million over four years in additional resourcing to the Australian War Memorial. This will allow the Australian War Memorial to maintain its current level of activities. Additionally, this funding will provide supplementation for the anticipated increase in demand for research services, education programs and historical professional advice in the lead up to, and beyond, the Centenary of Anzac."

Department of Health and Ageing

Co-location of services

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/bp2_expense.pdf (p249)

"The Government will provide $107.5 million over four years to continue the progressive co-location of 520 Centrelink and Medicare Australia shop fronts. Of this funding $65.8 million in capital, will be met from within the existing resources of the Department of Human Services. Co-location will involve the expansion of existing office space to accommodate additional services or the merging of a small number of existing shop fronts (around 61 sites) into existing or new premises. This will generate savings of $14.0 million over four years through a reduction in property costs and will only occur where an alternate service location is available. This initiative will improve access to government services by expanding the range of services available in any one location. It will also provide a platform for the future co-location of other Commonwealth, state and territory agencies."

Regional Australia

Regional Loading for Universities

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/ms_rural_and_regional.pdf

In response to the Review of Regional Loading, announced in Transforming Australia's Higher Education System, the Government will provide an additional $109.9 million over four years for the regional loading, increasing funding to a total of $249.4 million. This will strengthen regional higher education by helping to overcome the higher costs of regional campuses, compared to campuses in major cities. The Government will also improve the way the regional loading is provided to universities. Funding will be targeted to the campuses that most need support and it will be provided through a transparent process that responds to student demand.

Regional Priorities Round of the Education Investment Fund

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/ms_rural_and_regional.pdf

The Government has already committed $4.15 billion from the Education Investment Fund (EIF) for infrastructure to support higher education, research and vocational education and training.

In this Budget, the Government is providing a further $500 million over the next five years to meet regional infrastructure needs with an EIF Regional Priorities Round, which will open mid-2011. This includes seed funding of $20 million for the establishment of a multi-partner university campus on the mid-north coast of New South Wales.

The EIF Regional Priorities Round will help support education participation and attainment, contribute to regional economic growth and development and build sustainable institutions and communities.

Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans

http://budget.australia.gov.au/2011-12/content/download/ms_rural_and_regional.pdf

The Government will provide funding of $19.1 million over three years for 34 Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators who will be deployed to regional communities across the country. These coordinators will work with community stakeholders, including Regional Development Australia Committees, to develop Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans strategies to improve participation and outcomes in education, training and employment in regional Australia. These Plans, built from local knowledge, meet local needs, and can then be drawn upon to inform the delivery of a range of Government policy and programs. The Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators will work closely with the Local Employment Coordinators outlined in the initiative: Extension of Priority Employment Areas, Local Employment Coordinators and Jobs and Skills Expos.