

The Coalition's Growth Plan for the Central Coast

August 2013

Key Points

The Coalition will boost job growth, investment and services on the Central Coast.

To boost jobs and generate benefits for the regional economy, we will locate a Commonwealth agency in the Gosford CBD. Providing a Commonwealth agency as a tenant in Gosford means employment within the agency and secondary employment through increased economic activity, such as at cafes and retail shopping.

To boost skills training and employment opportunities, we will invest \$2.7 million to develop a new skills and jobs centre on the Central Coast.

We will provide \$7 million to fund the development of the Kibbleplex Centre in Gosford, a new state-of-the-art community facility.

We will provide better local infrastructure by investing \$3.5 million in the Woy Woy Oval Redevelopment. The redeveloped oval will accommodate up to 10,000 spectators and will provide much needed investment in civic and sporting infrastructure on the Central Coast.

To assist in the development of the Central Coast Regional Sporting and Recreation Complex, we will provide \$1 million for land acquisition and for planning studies and design work.

We will invest more than \$3 million to upgrade local roads, including upgrades to The Ridgeway Road, Jensens Road and to help address a black spot at Langford Drive and Woy Woy Road.

The Coalition will end the frustration of Central Coast motorists by investing \$405 million to get the missing F3 to M2 link underway, which will mean shorter travel times, reduced congestion and safer roads for the residents of the Central Coast.

We will work with local governments on the Central Coast to progress necessary approvals to facilitate universities developing campuses on local government owned land.

To help protect the environment, we will provide \$3.25 million to clean up and improve the water quality of Tuggerah Lakes.

We will give more financial assistance to apprentices in the Central Coast by providing interest free 'Trade Support Loans' of up to \$20,000 to help an apprentice with everyday costs during their apprenticeship.



The Coalition will make it easier for Central Coast businesses to employ new people and expand by abolishing the carbon tax, lowering the company tax rate to 28.5 per cent, and cutting red tape costs for business by \$1 billion a year.

We will also invest \$100 million to fix mobile phone black spots across Australia and we will build the significant infrastructure our nation needs, including finishing the duplication of the Pacific Highway.

To help curb anti-social and unlawful behaviour, our \$50 million *Plan for Safer Streets* will provide funding opportunities for more CCTV cameras, better lighting and community safety initiatives to tackle crime and safety hot spots across Australia, including the Central Coast.

The Coalition's *Growth Plan for the Central Coast* will boost infrastructure, skills and education training, and sporting facilities and will create jobs on the Central Coast.



Introduction

The Central Coast is an important region for the New South Wales and Australian economies.

Over 300,000 people live in the Central Coast region.

The region is approximately 1,900 square kilometres and incorporates the landmass broadly between Sydney and Newcastle and extending between Gwandalan, the Hawkesbury River, Bucketty and Mangrove Creek. Gosford, Erina, and Woy Woy are key urban centres in the region.

The Central Coast's economic significance is recognised, as is the need for more jobs:

“The Central Coast economy is made up of 22,500 businesses and employs about 86,000 people. A high proportion of businesses are small or micro businesses, and many are dependent on population growth. After strong signs of recovery from the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in late 2009 and early 2010, economic activity in the Central Coast has slowed and key indicators such as participation rates and employment numbers have weakened... A major challenge is creation of local job opportunities. The Region will look to build on its strengths: innovative small manufacturers, competitiveness in logistics, strong growth in building and construction, food production, hospitality and tourism.”¹

The major challenge faced on the Central Coast is the creation of local job opportunities to match labour force growth. The Central Coast is expected to grow by an additional 100,000 people by 2031, requiring more than 45,000 new jobs to be generated to keep unemployment low.

Currently, the level of youth unemployment on the Central Coast is high – one in four people aged 15 to 19 looking for full-time work is unable to find it.

More can and should be done to address unemployment and to give the Central Coast the hope, reward and opportunity it deserves.

The Coalition will create jobs for the Central Coast.

Our *Growth Plan for the Central Coast* will boost infrastructure, skills and education training, and sporting facilities and will create jobs on the Central Coast.

¹ Regional Development Australia, *Central Coast Regional Plan 2011-2015*, p. 5.



The Plan

1. Generating Local Jobs by Locating a Commonwealth Agency in the Gosford

The Coalition will boost employment and investment in Gosford by locating a Commonwealth agency in the Gosford CBD. We want this to occur within the first term of an elected Coalition government.

The future development of Gosford is vital to providing new jobs and infrastructure for the Central Coast. Locating a Commonwealth agency in Gosford has the potential to boost its position as a regional centre, generating stronger investment, providing more services for the region and creating more jobs both in Gosford and the wider Central Coast.

Providing a Commonwealth agency as a tenant in Gosford will lead to direct employment within the agency and secondary employment through increased economic activity in cafes, retail shopping and other services.

The location of a Commonwealth agency in Gosford will provide clear direct and indirect economic benefits – such as jobs, economic multiplier effects and a boost to the Central Coast's position as a potential hub for the provision of government and non-government services.

The location of a Commonwealth agency in Gosford will potentially provide 250-300 new jobs for the Central Coast.

The Coalition believes there is scope for appropriate Commonwealth agencies or functions to be relocated in whole or part from Canberra to regional areas, as will occur with the headquartering of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Geelong.

2. Central Coast Group Training

The Coalition will invest \$2.7 million to develop a new local skills and jobs centre on the Central Coast.

Our investment comprises \$2 million to develop stage two of the Central Coast Group Training local skills and jobs incubator and \$700,000 for associated equipment.

The facility will offer 2,500 square metres of space that will be divided into individual trade business modules. Affordable space will be made available in the facility to participating businesses to showcase their skills to visiting schools, TAFE colleges and other training providers.



The new facility will give young people the skills and professional connections they need to expand their job and career potential and ensure they will have better opportunities to be mentored by experienced tradespeople.

This initiative will help address the unacceptably high youth unemployment rate – one in four people aged 15 to 19 looking for full-time work is unable to find it.

3. Development of the Kibbleplex Centre

The Coalition will provide \$7 million to fund the development of the Kibbleplex Centre in Gosford.

The Kibbleplex Centre will see the development of a new state-of-the-art community facility that includes a regional library, a teleworkers' hub, childcare centre and meeting rooms. The Gosford City Council has noted the benefits of the Kibbleplex Centre:

“The concentration of learning and information resources and small scale commercial enterprises will enable mutually reinforcing benefits from being co-located in a space that maximises opportunities for interaction and collaboration, drivers of growth and innovation.”²

The Coalition understands the need for the Central Coast to have a facility that encourages and promotes growth and innovation.

Our funding commitment will ensure that the Kibbleplex Centre provides a building for the Central Coast that has learning, information resources and local enterprises all located in the one space.

4. Support Local Businesses Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in Commercial Areas

The Central Coast will benefit through the Coalition's \$50 million *Plan for Safer Streets*, which will help reinvigorate local shopping strips and precincts that have been compromised by anti-social and unlawful. This will include the roll-out of fixed and mobile CCTV and specific funding for local graffiti removal programmes.

The appeal and vitality of retail, entertainment and commercial precincts can be compromised by customers and businesses being turned by anti-social behaviour, crime and property damage and a diminished sense of personal security.

² Gosford City Council, Council Meeting Reports, 4 December 2012, Available: www.gosford.nsw.gov.au/council/council_meetings/agenda_reports/2012/12/04/Reports%20of%20the%20Strategy%20Policy%20Workshop%20held%20%20November%202012.pdf



More CCTV cameras, better lighting and community safety initiatives to tackle crime and safety hot spots supported by local commerce groups, councils and police will be available under the Coalition's \$50 million *Plan for Safer Streets*.

The grants programme will have a particular emphasis on supporting solutions for local retail, entertainment and commercial precincts in the Central Coast and across Australia.

5. Woy Woy Oval Redevelopment

The Coalition will invest \$3.5 million for the Woy Woy Oval Redevelopment.

Woy Woy Oval is in need of redevelopment and renewal.

The progressive redevelopment will see the oval capable of accommodating up to 10,000 spectators.

The Gosford City Council states that the redevelopment will:

*"... deliver an 800 seat grandstand, change rooms, referees room, first aid room, media box, kiosks, barbeque area, club house, storage areas, sportsground amenities, scoreboard, and a commercial area for potential leases."*³

Redeveloping and renewing the Woy Woy Oval will provide much needed investment in community and sporting infrastructure on the Central Coast. The redeveloped oval will be a civic centrepiece of Woy Woy and contribute to job creation in the area.

The Coalition is committed to investing in Australian communities and to contributing to facilities that encourage sport, physical activity and community involvement.

6. Better Support for Australian Apprentices

The Coalition will provide better support for Australia's apprentices.

We will give more financial assistance to apprentices by providing interest free 'Trade Support Loans' of up to \$20,000 to help an apprentice with everyday costs during their apprenticeship.

Trade Support Loans will be repayable at the same thresholds as FEE-HELP loans for university students, so apprentices do not have to repay any money until they are earning a sustainable income.

³ Gosford City Council, Council Meeting Agenda Reports, 2 July 2013, Available: http://www.gosford.nsw.gov.au/council/council_meetings/agenda_reports/2013/07/2/Economic%20-%20Community%20Development.pdf



Apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeships will receive an immediate 20 per cent discount on their Trade Support Loans. This will help boost apprenticeship completion rates that have dropped to lows of 48 per cent.

Our loan scheme will provide real support for current apprentices to complete their skills training and it will provide a stronger incentive for young Australians to become apprentices.

Future productivity and competitiveness depends on a skilled and trained workforce.

Learning a trade skill is invaluable to the individual, the community and the economy. But whether it's becoming a plumber, a doctor, a lawyer or a welder there's no avoiding the fact that learning a skill is expensive.

Existing financial assistance schemes for apprentices provide some assistance but eligibility requirements mean some miss out.

Australia urgently needs more apprentices. The skills developed and nurtured within an apprenticeship become the essential and highly valued trade, technical and business skills that underpin a large segment of the Australian economy. We need more young people to take up a trade career to ensure future growth and jobs.

The Coalition will provide real financial assistance for apprentices.

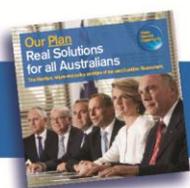
By doing so, we will ensure Australia has a workforce that is highly skilled, highly trained and capable of filling the diverse and changing needs of a modern Australian economy.

7. Invest in the Central Coast Regional Sporting and Recreation Complex

The Coalition will provide \$1 million toward land acquisition and required planning studies to assist in the development of the Central Coast Regional Sporting and Recreation Complex at Pioneer Dairy in Wyong.

The Central Coast is a sporting region. Our financial investment will allow the acquisition of approximately 18 hectares of land to be developed into sporting fields, including a premier field with a grandstand, a club house, fitness track and public amenities.

The Coalition supports the Central Coast Regional Sporting and Recreation Complex because it will deliver economic benefits to the Central Coast through increased tourism, sporting and recreational events, and more jobs.



8. Upgrade to Local Roads

We will invest more than \$3 million to upgrade local roads, including upgrades to The Ridgeway Road, Jensens Road and to help address a black spot at Langford Drive and Woy Woy Road.

The Coalition will invest \$2.4 million to provide critical upgrades to The Ridgeway Road. As a major commuter route, the road requires upgrades to ensure that it is a safe route for higher volume traffic. We will also invest \$350,000 to upgrade Jensens Road in Waldaba and \$675,000 to address an accident prone black spot at Langford Drive and Woy Woy Road in Kariong.

Investing in roads on the Central Coast is part of the Coalition's commitment to providing the necessary infrastructure on the Coast to support people getting to and from work.

These upgrades will provide direct benefit to the people of the Central Coast.

9. Build the F3 to M2 Missing link

The Coalition will end the frustration of Central Coast motorists and by investing \$405 million to get the missing F3 to M2 link underway.

The F3 to M2 link is a vital piece of economic infrastructure that will boost the productive capacity of the New South Wales economy.

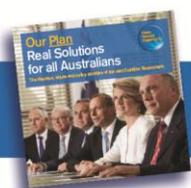
The link will mean shorter travel times, reduced congestion and safer roads for the residents of the Central Coast. It also means reduced freight costs for all trucks that use this important national road corridor.

The Coalition will get this link built.

For the people of the Central Coast who battle traffic every working day, the Coalition's commitment means less time in traffic and more time with their families.

The project is supported by Infrastructure Australia and will see a tunnel from the southern end of the F3 at Wahroonga to the M2 Motorway at Pennant Hills Road. It will also see improvements to the F3 at Wahroonga and to the M2 Motorway between Pennant Hills Road and the North Rocks Road intersection.

The F3 to M2 link will be delivered in partnership with the NSW Coalition Government and with the private sector.



We aim to have the F3 to M2 link started by late 2014, pending the finalisation of commercial agreements between the private sector and the NSW Government.

The Coalition's commitment to the F3 to M2 is part of our policy to reduce traffic congestion in our major cities and to deliver the infrastructure needed to increase our nation's productivity, competitiveness and standards of living.

10. Facilitating Approval Processes for Universities Development

The Coalition understands the crucial role that universities play in driving development in regional areas through job creation and educating the community. We will work in partnership with the Central Coast community to identify further training and education opportunities for the Central Coast region.

We will work with local governments on the Central Coast to progress necessary approvals to facilitate universities developing campuses on local government owned land.

Wyong and Gosford City Councils are currently working on such projects.

11. Protect the Environment

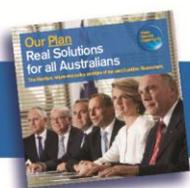
The Coalition will provide \$3.25 million to clean up and improve the water quality of Tuggerah Lakes on the Central Coast.

The health and wellbeing of Tuggerah Lakes is crucial in supporting a vibrant tourist economy and local industry that together provide much needed local jobs.

The Tuggerah Lakes estuary has been under significant environmental strain from the rapid urban development in the region. Stormwater is a major problem leading to poor water quality in the lakes, contributing to what is described as a 'black ooze' forming in the water.

It is clear that significant investment is needed to break the back of the problem. This is not a project which a local council can manage on its own.

The Tuggerah Lakes are central to the lives of the people of the Central Coast. This funding will make a significant difference in regenerating the Lakes.



12. Abolish the Carbon Tax

The Coalition will act immediately to abolish Labor's carbon tax.

This toxic job-destroying tax is damaging for the Central Coast's small businesses, many of whom are under severe pressure from overseas competitors who do not pay the tax.

It is implausible to suggest that the carbon tax benefits the Central Coast. It is a massive cost on small business – a cost that is not borne by any of our international competitors. The carbon tax is a reverse tariff that destroys the competitiveness of businesses on the Central Coast and costs jobs in the region.

The carbon tax has already led to:

- a \$9 billion a year additional tax on industry and households;
- a 10 per cent hike in electricity bills in the first year alone; and
- a 9 per cent hike in gas bills in the first year alone.

The carbon tax has also contributed to a record number of manufacturing job losses.

In 2011, a Senate Committee concluded that, based on Treasury modelling, the carbon tax would cut national income by \$1 trillion by 2050 – at an average of over \$40,000 per person in today's dollars.

The Coalition is determined to free Australian industry and households from the carbon tax that unnecessarily increases costs for businesses and families.

13. Lower Company Tax

We will cut the company tax rate by 1.5 per cent, which will see Australian companies paying a new lower rate of 28.5 per cent from 1 July 2015.

By cutting corporate taxes we will make Australian jobs more secure, boost real wage growth and make our economy stronger.

As former Treasury Secretary and personal adviser to Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Ken Henry, said at the Government's own Tax Forum in late 2011:

*"...if the company income tax were to be cut, the principal beneficiaries would be workers."*⁴

⁴ Ken Henry, Comment on Day 1 of Tax Forum, 4 October 2011, Parliament House; see The Australian, 'Cut Company Rate to Aid Workers, Henry Urges,' 5 October 2011.



A competitive corporate tax rate is also essential to ensure ongoing investment in our economy and especially for our manufacturing industry.

According to the Government's own Business Tax Working Group, a one percentage point reduction in the company tax rate would have the following effects in the long run:

- GDP up 0.2 per cent (around \$3 billion a year);
- wages up 0.2 per cent; and
- employment up 0.1 per cent (over 10,000 jobs based on the current labour force).

The Australia's Future Tax System Review (the 'Henry Review') concluded that:

*"...company tax rates matter for investment decisions, particularly investments for which location is not critical, and decisions by firms about where to declare profits and pay tax..."*⁵

Cutting company tax is a key part of helping Australian workers and easing cost-of-living pressures on Australian families, since it will flow through to better wages for employees of Australia's 750,000 companies, better returns for shareholders and lower prices.

Our company tax cut will also contribute to making Australia a more attractive centre for investment in manufacturing.

14. Cut Red Tape Costs by \$1 Billion a Year

The Coalition will ease the burden imposed on the Australian economy by reducing red tape costs on business by at least \$1 billion a year.

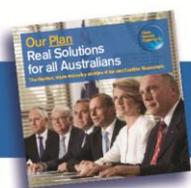
Excessive regulation stifles our economic prospects and impedes the work of Australia's businesses and community organisations.

The Coalition will implement a genuine deregulation reform agenda so that industry can create more jobs and opportunities for all Australians.

One important element of the Coalition's deregulation agenda will be implementing a 'one-stop-shop' for environmental approvals, to get rid of needless and costly duplication of paperwork while retaining Australia's current high environmental standards.

Our 'one-stop-shop' will make it much easier for Australian industry to invest in new projects and to employ thousands more Australians.

⁵ Australia's Future Tax System, December 2009, p. 8.



15. Regional Airport for the Central Coast

The Coalition supports ongoing work by the Wyong Council on a proposed 'Type 3' regional airport site at Bushells Ridge (a Type 3 airport has a single runway of up to 2.6 kilometres in length). The Central Coast is a key regional centre that is currently not serviced by a regional airport.

An incoming Coalition government will work with Local and State governments on the necessary regulatory and planning issues.

Future development of a regional airport on the Central Coast will drive investment, deliver new infrastructure, create jobs and have a positive impact on the economy of the Central Coast.

16. Better Mobile Phone Coverage

The Coalition will provide \$100 million to fix mobile phone black spots across Australia, including the Central Coast.

Hundreds of rural, regional and remote communities, as well as motorists travelling on national roads, will experience improved mobile phone coverage under our policy.

If elected, a Coalition government will partner with local communities, state governments and telecommunications companies and make this investment in black spot remediation far greater than our \$100 million commitment.

Our policy will provide \$80 million for a Mobile Network Expansion Programme that will improve mobile phone coverage along major transport routes, in small communities and in locations prone to experiencing natural disasters. The Mobile Network Expansion Programme is expected to generate at least an additional \$80 million investment from the major mobile phone carriers.

We will also provide \$20 million for a mobile black spot programme that will address unique mobile coverage problems, such as locations with high seasonal demand. A Coalition government will fund up to 50 per cent of the cost of deploying a mobile black-spot solution.

Our policy will seek to maximise the contribution of mobile phone network providers as well as ensure the most economic and social benefits.

The Coalition will also work with the NBN, a company fully owned by Australian taxpayers, to co-locate new mobile phone base stations with many of the NBN's fixed wireless broadband towers that are being rolled out across regional Australia, including in the Central Coast.



17. Index the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

The Coalition recognises that self-funded retirees, after a life-time of hard work, have made a significant contribution to our nation's success and are entitled to a safe and secure retirement.

The Coalition recognises that by looking after their own retirement needs, self-funded retirees save the Commonwealth Budget considerable pension costs.

That's why we will provide Australian seniors with further peace of mind regarding their health care costs by indexing eligibility for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

The Coalition knows that many self-funded retirees are not wealthy and are under financial pressure.

Having done the right thing and saved for their retirement, many seniors live in fear of unexpected medical bills and of losing their entitlement because of modest changes in retirement income.

Indexing the current income thresholds so that they do not erode in real terms will allow more self-funded retirees to access the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

This will allow more self-funded retirees access to medicines listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme at the concessional rate.

The Coalition's indexation of the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card will help reduce the cost of living for self-funded retirees.

18. Fair Indexation of Military Superannuation

The Coalition will deliver fair indexation to military superannuants.

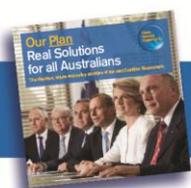
Recipients of the Defence Forces Retirement Benefits (DFRB) and the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB) military superannuation pensions will see their payments indexed in the same way as aged and service pensions.

All DFRB and DFRDB superannuants aged 55 and over will benefit.

Under the Coalition, 57,000 military superannuants and their families will be better off.

The Coalition is committed to ensuring fairness for our retired military personnel and to ease their cost of living.

Not only will DFRB and DFRDB superannuants see their benefits fairly indexed – they will also see their cost of living made easier by the repeal of the carbon tax.



The government does not increase Centrelink pensions just by the consumer price index, so it is not fair to apply only that index to the pensions of those who have risked their lives for our country.

Loyalty goes both ways.

The very least we can do is pay ex-servicemen and women a retirement benefit that increases in line with the increases received by regular pensioners.

19. Pay Small Business Bills on Time

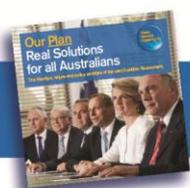
The Coalition will ensure that Commonwealth departments and agencies will meet their obligations to small business suppliers on the Central Coast by adopting a 'pay on time or pay interest' policy.

Labor has made much of its promise to pay small business accounts within 30 days. However, Labor has limited the application of this pledge to formal contractual relationships only.

Under the Coalition, all small businesses that provide services to the Commonwealth will get the benefit of a 'pay on time or pay interest' approach.

This will apply for all financial obligations of the Commonwealth to small business from 1 July 2014 providing certainty for small business.

If an account is not paid within the 30 days, interest will be applied at the same rate as the 'General Interest Charge' applied by the Australian Taxation Office to late tax payments.



The Choice

The Central Coast has been let down by the Rudd-Gillard Government.

The Coalition recognises that Australian families are struggling with cost of living pressures. They are seeing their electricity bills increase significantly, even when they have done the right thing and reduced their usage.

Under a Coalition government, the Carbon Tax will be scrapped.

Innovative small business is the powerhouse of the economy on the Central Coast. The Coalition will actively work to help small business on the Coast.

We want to create more jobs on the Central Coast. This jobs boost can be achieved through our Growth Plan that focusses on building new infrastructure to support increased learning options and community activity such as sporting events.

Bringing new employment opportunities direct to the Central Coast will only be done under a Coalition government.

Investment in training and mentoring for skills development will give the youth on the Central Coast greater choice and opportunity to learn and work where they live – without having to travel or not being able to find suitable jobs.

We will give people living on the Central Coast the opportunity to choose whether they want to travel for work or actually be able to find employment on the Coast.

Only the Coalition has the vision and determination to deliver for the people of the Central Coast.

Cost

The Coalition's *Growth Plan for the Central Coast* will invest \$21 million to boost job growth, investment, services and productivity in the region.



Hope.
Reward.
Opportunity.



THE NATIONALS *for Regional Australia*

For further details of the Coalition's Plan go to
www.realsolutions.org.au