



PRESS RELEASE

THE HON. TONY ABBOTT MHR, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WARRINGAH

STRENGTHENING AUSTRALIA'S PRODUCTIVITY

The best way to create greater economic opportunities for all Australians is to improve national productivity.

Improving productivity is the way Australia can lift living standards, pay higher real wages, deliver goods and services at lower costs to Australian families and create a larger economy with more jobs.

It is the key to creating a strong, innovative and growing economy that allows governments the scope to invest more in services and infrastructure, cut taxes and pay back debt.

Australia's productivity has slumped under the Rudd-Gillard Government and represents a long term danger to the Australian economy. Output per person has risen by just 0.7 per cent a year, less than one-third the average rate of 2¼ per cent per year achieved throughout the life of the previous Coalition Government.

Global rankings for competitiveness and ease of doing business produced annually by the World Economic Forum and World Bank also indicate that Australia's international standing has gone backwards since 2007-08.

A Coalition Government will take immediate action to lift Australia's productivity performance so we can grow a stronger economy. Our plan to improve productivity is based on:

- cutting red tape;
- encouraging more people into the workforce;
- making public institutions more effective and responsive;
- better competition rules;
- getting greater value from infrastructure spending; and
- improving workplace laws to discourage law breaking.

We have already made significant announcements in relation to improving Australia's productivity including announcements regarding cutting \$1 billion a year in red tape, investing in major road projects in our capital cities, abolishing the carbon tax and mining tax, making schools and hospitals more accountable by introducing local boards and restoring the Australian Building and Construction Commission so that law and order again operates on our construction sites.

Today I am making two further announcements which form part of our plans to deliver a strong and prosperous economy and a safe and secure Australia:

Productivity Priorities Working Group

Today I am establishing a Productivity Priorities Working Group that will develop the necessary implementation arrangements so that a Coalition Government can swiftly implement our plan to improve productivity and get Australia back on track.

The Working Group will consult with business, state and local governments and the wider community to ensure that we can hit the ground running in implementing our productivity agenda.

The Productivity Priorities Plan will move beyond the question about what to do to boost productivity and it will make recommendations about how to do it and when to do it.

The Working Group will be chaired by Mr Steven Ciobo MHR, with Mr Josh Frydenberg MHR and Mr Dan Tehan MHR as Deputy Chairs. The Working Group will work closely with Shadow Minister for Productivity and Population, Mr Scott Morrison MHR, and Shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Joe Hockey MHR.

Submissions to the Working Group will close on 1 March 2013.

Establishment of the Prime Minister's Business Advisory Council

Today I announce that a Coalition Government will establish a Prime Minister's Business Advisory Council to meet three times a year with senior members of the government.

Government and business have a shared interest in the economic success of Australia.

Successful Australian businesses always mean more jobs and a greater capacity for government to fund the provision of services and investment in infrastructure.

I am delighted that Mr Maurice Newman AC has agreed to the inaugural Chairman of the Prime Minister's Business Advisory Council.

Mr Newman is a distinguished national business leader. He is a former Chairman of the Australian Stock Exchange, Deutsche Bank (Asia Pacific) and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as well as a former Chancellor of Macquarie University.

We will end the Gillard Government's class war on business and restore a working relationship between government and the nation's business. A strong relationship with business was a hallmark of the policy successes of the Hawke, Keating and Howard governments. It has not been a hallmark of the Rudd-Gillard government.

The Prime Minister's Business Advisory Council will include representatives from the manufacturing, agricultural, services and information sectors as well as from the resources sector because Australia's future depends on having a diverse five pillar economy when the mining boom is over.

The Prime Minister's Business Advisory Council will have its first meeting within six weeks of the swearing in of a new government.

2 November 2012