

INVESTING IN ENGINEERING, SCIENCE AND ICT TO REBUILD AUSTRALIA'S ECONOMY POST-COVID-19

2020-21 BUDGET PRIORITIES



It is clear that we need a vision for Australia's future that is not just an excuse to wind back hard-won workers' rights and entitlements in the name of IR 'reform', flexibility or undoing 'rigidities'. We need workforce development that prioritises economic recovery, skills development and safeguarding livelihoods.



1. FAIR INDUSTRIAL REGULATION

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5. CHIEF ENGINEERS

Support for a Chief Engineer in each state is needed.



8. JOBKEEPER

It is vital that JobKeeper is extended ensuring anomalies are fixed.



2. STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN EMERGING AREAS

Strategic investment in emerging knowledge-based industries like biotechnology, communications technologies and advanced manufacturing is vital as well as providing competitive advantages to established industries like agriculture, resources and health care.



6. A SHIFT IN EMPHASIS IN GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

Government procurement policies that do not put too much emphasis on the cheapest tenders and too little attention on local jobs, local supply chains, capital investment in Australia and the manufacturing value-add are needed. This emphasis needs to change as part of our response to the pandemic.



9. EDUCATION AND RESEARCH TO LIFT PRODUCTIVITY AND CREATE JOBS

It is essential that we recognise our universities and research institutions as vital ways of lifting productivity and creating jobs, new companies and new industries - ensure that the tertiary education system is positioned to respond to industry needs and continues to effectively build the nation's STEM skills base - and invest in research capacity - in particular for Early to Mid-Career Researchers - to ensure that Australia strengthens its research base rather than allowing it to contract as a result of the pandemic.



3. 3% R&D INVESTMENT BY 2030

We need to increase R&D investment to 3% of GDP by 2030.



7. INVESTMENT IN SKILLS

Skills is a priority area - we need investment in keeping engineers and scientists' technical and enterprise skills up-to-date by committing to career-long learning and more modular forms of training and re-skilling to ensure an agile and well-trained workforce to lead us through economic recovery - and support for development, re-skilling and upskilling of IT professionals as key enablers of productivity gains, innovation and maximising the opportunities afforded by the pandemic.



10. GENDER DIVERSITY AS A VITAL PART OF STEM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Gender diversity is crucial to the continued expansion and success of STEM and in turn, the capacity of STEM to drive productivity growth as we emerge from the pandemic. The optimal approach to the Federal Budget initiatives would be to invest in projects that have the potential to contribute to business and economic growth while advancing women's progress - and support for affordable and geographically accessible childcare for working parents and those looking to return to paid employment to facilitate increased workforce participation should be a priority.



4. INVESTMENT IN RESIDENTIAL AND CIVIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Investment in residential construction and civil infrastructure including road and rail projects, fast-tracking projects will be crucial but ensuring reduction of red tape is not at the expense of community safety or building standards with sign-off by registered engineers as required.