

# Pathways to Employment

**Pathways to Employment**– The Coalition’s employment policies are generating more jobs in the Australian economy and giving unemployed people their best ever opportunity to access those jobs. The Coalition will continue to maximise employment growth within a coherent policy framework.

## Pathways to Employment

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## Executive Summary

The Coalition will:

- continue to generate strong and sustained jobs growth through sound economic policies and fiscal management, workplace relations

reforms and initiatives to support small business, and further improvements to the national training system to strengthen the competitiveness of Australian businesses;

- provide a platform for further jobs growth through our tax plan which will benefit all Australian businesses - large and small - by removing unfair indirect taxes, reducing industry costs and making business more competitive in global markets. The Coalition's tax system will help businesses achieve their growth potential, resulting in more jobs;
- through the \$1 billion Federation Fund, spend \$400 million over the next two years creating thousands of new jobs in major infrastructure and other projects across all regions of Australia;
- continue to attract new investment. Since March 1996, 216 new investment projects have been attracted to Australia as a result of the Government's investment programmes. These have generated \$5.3 billion in new investment which is expected to create 12,000 new jobs and generate \$3.4 billion in exports;
- maximise employment growth within a coherent policy framework;
- expand Work for the Dole by around 25 percent - to up to 125,000 places over four years - to include year 12 school leavers on the full rate of Youth Allowance once they have been unemployed for three months to give them work experience, confidence and build their work ethic;
- introduce a new Return to Work Programme to provide skills assistance, build confidence and increase familiarity with current technology, for people seeking to re-enter the labour force after an absence of two years or more. Support will be focused on primary carers;
- provide an additional \$91.5 million over four years to boost New Apprenticeships in rural and regional small businesses;
- further address the underlying causes of youth unemployment such as low literacy and numeracy skills, low educational attainment, lack of skills and work experience, through a comprehensive strategy involving literacy tests for all in primary school through to Work for the Dole;
- provide an additional \$112 million over four years to improve literacy

and numeracy standards in schools.

- strengthen School to Work initiatives so young people can make a smooth transition to the labour market and avoid periods of unemployment;
- develop Job Network to its potential as the most powerful mechanism yet to help unemployed people access new jobs and continue to target employment assistance through Job Network to the most disadvantaged job seekers;
- strengthen the network of 58 Area Consultative Committees to help regions make the most of their economic and labour market strengths and develop regional employment strategies that will generate new opportunities for economic development and jobs growth; and
- continue to improve the educational achievement and skills base of indigenous Australians to help overcome the significant disadvantages many indigenous people face in gaining employment.

## **Labor's Record**

### **A Destroying Jobs and Entrenching High**

#### **Unemployment**

13 years of Labor left Australia with chronic economic problems, a \$10.5 billion budget deficit, and high rates of unemployment deeply entrenched in our society. Their 'boom and bust' policies had created huge economic and social costs for all Australians.

#### **(i) Destroying Jobs**

Labor's poor economic management and failed employment policies caused:

- the destruction of 338,800 jobs in the worst recession since the Great Depression;
- the creation of fewer than 20,000 additional full time jobs in Labor's last 6 years in office;
- a decline in apprenticeship and traineeship numbers to their lowest level in three decades as a proportion of the workforce;

- a serious neglect of the 70 per cent of school leavers not going from school to university.

## **(ii) Entrenched High Unemployment**

Under Labor:

- unemployment rose to 11.2% in December 1992 - the highest rate since the Great Depression;
- over 1 million Australians were unemployed;
- the number of long term unemployed people soared by 95,000 when Kim Beazley was Minister for Employment;
- youth unemployment rose to a record 34.9% in July 1992;
- over 135,000 15-19 year olds were unemployed and looking for full-time work;
- the unemployment rate averaged over 9.9% in Labor's last five years in office.

## **(iii) Failure to Help Unemployed People Get Jobs**

Labor had no solutions to high unemployment. Labor wasted billions of dollars on failed Working Nation programmes that did nothing to help the unemployed:

- Working Nation programmes were costly and ineffective. Labor's \$500 million New Work Opportunities programme cost \$143,000 for each net job it created for unemployed people. It had a 4% net success rate;
- job seekers were placed on the unemployment merry go round - long term unemployed people were pushed through labour market programmes that led straight back to the unemployment queue where they were recycled as short term unemployed;
- the most disadvantaged job seekers missed out - as Labor's spending increased, the share of assistance to long term unemployed job seekers fell;

- Labor focussed on short term training programmes that did not lead on to jobs;
- the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) was ineffective - it could only access 20% of vacancies and many vacancies listed were not real jobs – for example, many so called jobs were one-off placements for as little as one hour's work;
- Labor abolished the Jobs Placement Employment and Training Programme, denying assistance to homeless young people and those at risk of becoming homeless.

#### **(iv) Youth Unemployment Worsened**

Rather than addressing the underlying causes of unemployment, and particularly youth unemployment, Labor made things worse:

- Labor gave in to the unions on school accountability for literacy and numeracy standards, and as a result 30 percent of 14 year olds in year 9 could not read and write adequately;
- Labor's dole system encouraged young people to drop out of school and do nothing, giving them the message that life on the dole was acceptable - school retention rates dropped by 6% in the last 5 years of Labor;
- Labor ignored the 70% of students who were not going on to university. As the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs available to school leavers virtually disappeared in the late 1980s, they did not adjust adequately to this change and failed to provide alternative pathways to jobs for the majority of young people;
- Labor let the apprenticeship system decline by caving in to union interference which raised costs for employers and confined apprenticeships to a limited range of industries, crushing the availability of quality on-the-job training for young people; and
- Labor supported the Australian Council of Trade Unions' drive to abolish junior wage rates. When the Keating/Beazley recession struck, youth employment collapsed. Labor's policy of ending junior wage rates will put the jobs of up to 300,000 young people at risk.

## **Highlights of the Government's Achievements**

### **A Creating New Jobs**

During the first term of the Howard Government:

- our sound economic policies have delivered strong and sustained jobs growth. Since March 1996 more than 317,000 new jobs have been created in the Australian economy. Over 222,000 of these jobs have been created in the past 12 months;
- more than 125,000 new jobs have been created in small business, showing that the Coalition's policies of reducing the taxation and compliance burdens and improving access to finance and export markets are working for small business;
- nearly 50% of the 317,000 new jobs are full-time; and
- over 60% of the new jobs have gone to women.

### **B Reducing Unemployment**

Against the backdrop of the most unfavourable economic situation in Asia for decades, and a rapid increase in the working age population of almost 500,000 people, we have achieved a sustained reduction in unemployment.

- The Budget forecast of an unemployment rate of 8% in the June Quarter 1998 was achieved, and unemployment fell to 7.9% in April 1998, the lowest rate in almost 8 years.
- Youth unemployment has fallen - despite an increase of 35,700 in the teenage population, the number of teenagers seeking full-time work has fallen by 4,000. More teenagers are staying in education and training and getting the skills they need for jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **C Getting More Unemployed People into Jobs**

The Howard/Fischer Government's overhaul of services for unemployed people represents one of the most significant social reforms in Australia in over 50 years. The introduction of Job Network has improved services for job seekers and employers and will result in more unemployed people getting jobs.

- Job Network is the most powerful and successful mechanism yet to help disadvantaged unemployed people compete for jobs;
- although in its infancy, Job Network is already outperforming the CES in many key respects. After only 12 weeks it was attracting 16% more quality vacancies from employers and placing 8% more job seekers on income support in jobs, including a greater proportion (40%) of long term unemployed people;
- there are more than 4 times as many sites to apply for jobs through Job Network than there were through the CES;
- Job Network is focussed on performance and results - not just managing the unemployed. There are much stronger incentives to place the long term unemployed and disadvantaged job seekers in jobs, with these job seekers attracting the highest payments for Job Network organisations;
- employers and job seekers are benefiting from having a choice of agency, which is continually driving up the quality of services;
- building on the early success of Job Network, the range of job seekers who attract Job Matching payments for providers when placed in a job has been expanded to include all unemployed people; and
- the emphasis on the most disadvantaged job seekers has been maintained, with Job Network members being required to maintain a ratio of at least 75% of placements for people in receipt of income support and young people aged under 21.

## **D Addressing Youth Unemployment**

The Howard/Fischer Government's comprehensive strategy to end youth unemployment addresses its underlying causes. This strategy starts with basic literacy and numeracy for all in primary school, gets schools and businesses working together to educate and train young people, supports schools who work to place school leavers in jobs and provides greatly expanded New Apprenticeship opportunities.

In the Coalition's first term:

- a national commitment has been obtained from all State and Territories that every child will be literate and numerate by the end of primary school, with every child assessed against national standards in



years 3 and 5;

- students in Years 9 and 10 at risk of leaving school early are being identified and provided with a supportive environment and more relevant courses through the expansion of Australian Student Traineeship Foundation activities and the Full Service Schools policies;
- quality vocational education programmes in senior secondary schools have increased and school-based New Apprenticeships have been introduced. In 1998 around 115,000 students will participate in these programmes, up from 26,000 in 1995;
- the culture of senior schools is being transformed, with over 1500 high schools participating in the Jobs Pathway Programme which lets schools work as, or with, job brokers to place school leavers in jobs;
- Enterprise Education has been introduced in schools to develop entrepreneurial skills among young people and an understanding of jobs and careers in a democratic free enterprise economy;
- the Youth Allowance has been established to remove incentives for young people to go on the dole rather than complete Year 12 or engage in vocational education and training;
- a new national apprenticeship system has been put in place, with New Apprenticeships now available in more industries and occupations where rapid jobs growth is occurring. In 1998 it is estimated there will be over 200,000 people in New Apprenticeships, a record level (up 38% from 144,000 in March 1996);
- places in TAFE have been increased: in 1997 there were an extra 68,000 participants in TAFE, and in 1998 it is estimated there will be a further 44,000 student places;
- new programmes have been introduced to help young unemployed people rebuild their confidence and self-esteem, establish a work ethic and create stronger links with their community, such as Work for the Dole and new Mutual Obligations initiatives;
- the Jobs Placement, Employment and Training programme has been reinstated, and there are now 102 projects offering services to homeless and at risk youth; and
- nearly \$42 million has been committed for the Green Corps initiative

for 3,500 places in 1997/98 and 1,700 places in 1998/99 for young people to work on projects to restore our environment and heritage. More than half the participants have found ongoing employment after completing the programme.

## **E Helping Regional Australia**

The Coalition recognises that the prosperity of regional Australia is critically important to the prosperity of every Australian. The Howard/Fischer Government's regional policy and programme initiatives are generating employment growth and increasing training opportunities, and ensuring all Australians have equitable access to government services and programmes.

- Regional Australia has benefited from the new jobs which 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.
- Labour market conditions in regional Australia have also improved between March 1996 and June 1998, with unemployment falling by 17,200 in non-metropolitan areas.
- The Coalition has reviewed and strengthened the network of 58 Area Consultative Committees across Australia. Under their new Charter, these Committees are establishing three-year regional employment strategies that will enable their regions to make the most of their economic and labour market strengths and 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 - helping regions achieve the objectives of their regional employment strategies.
- Area Consultative Committees have been given a leadership role in their communities, to improve the coordination of Commonwealth, State and local activities that are aimed at stimulating jobs growth and skills development, to minimise duplication and overlap and gain maximum benefit from the pool of resources available.
- Through the Regional Assistance Programme the Howard/Fischer Government has supported a wide range of job-creating projects

across regional Australia, including.

- establishment of a regional network of business incubators in Central Victoria: over the next four years more than 90 new small businesses will be supported in Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Castlemaine, Gisborne and Maldon, creating up to 220 new jobs;
- a package of assistance in Cobar to respond to the needs of retrenched workers, including feasibility studies for the development of a 24 hour Freight Centre Interchange, expansion of the Heritage Museum, development of a Gas Pipeline, development of a Stock Sales Yard and establishment of a School of Mines;
- establishment of a Mid West Industry Development Unit in Geraldton, Western Australia, to increase sustainable long term regional employment and local content in major development projects, and maximise local business access to local, State and Federal Government purchasing; and
- formation of a Riverland Business and Industry Network to coordinate events and functions for the region, promote and encourage Trader membership and employment and training and assist in the formation of similar Networks in the Barossa and Mid North Regions.
- The Howard/Fischer Government has worked with Area Consultative Committees to promote the opportunities available through Commonwealth employment and training policies and programmes such as New Apprenticeships and Work for the Dole. The Committees have provided the Government with advice and feedback on the employment and training needs of regions and the impact of Commonwealth policies and programmes on the regional labour market.
- Programmes like 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.
- Job Network has vastly improved the delivery of employment services to regional Australia. There are more than four times as many sites as there were under the CES, creating far better access to services in regional Australia.

## **Maximising Employment**

In recent decades unemployment has become the biggest social issue facing our nation. Every year, it directly affects hundreds of thousands of families across Australia. High rates of unemployment have brought with them huge costs to all Australians - both economically and socially.

Through a coherent program of economic reform and targeted assistance, the Coalition will continue to maximise employment growth.

## **A Creating More Jobs**

There are no short term or easy solutions to the problem of unemployment which has become so entrenched in our society. The only sustainable way to make an impact on unemployment is to generate more jobs in the Australian economy - and that means rewarding enterprise and, in particular, encouraging small business.

We need to keep creating full and part-time jobs, across all industries, so that opportunities are available for all Australians to work. We need sufficiently strong jobs growth to keep ahead of the continual increase in the size of the working population, and to make inroads into the pool of hidden unemployed - those people who became so discouraged after 13 years of failed labour market policies from the Labor Government that they stopped looking for work and left the labour force.

Strong and sustained jobs growth can only occur if Australia has a fundamentally sound economy. The Coalition will continue the sound economic policies implemented in our first term that have led to a reduction in Government debt and returned the Budget to surplus. The Coalition will continue to maintain low inflation and increase national savings and investment. The Coalition will continue to reform workplace relations, promote small business growth and strengthen the competitiveness of Australian businesses.

The Coalition's tax reforms will provide a platform for further jobs growth through removing unfair indirect taxes, reducing industry costs and making business more competitive in global markets. These and other structural reforms will combine to maintain a sound economy and generate further strong, sustained jobs growth.

The Howard/Fischer Government will continue the sound economic strategy which has placed the Australian economy in the strongest possible position to withstand the pressures of the Asian economic situation and deliver further jobs growth.

## **B Reducing Unemployment, Including Youth Unemployment**

### **(i) Achieving a Lower Unemployment Rate**

The strong jobs growth achieved in the Coalition's first 2½ years in Government has contributed to a sustained reduction in unemployment. Against the backdrop of a difficult economic situation in Asia and a period of rapid growth in the working age population (which has risen by almost 500,000 people), the reduction in unemployment is a positive achievement.

The Howard/Fischer Government achieved the 1997-98 Budget forecast of an unemployment rate of 8% in the June Quarter 1998, and unemployment in fact fell in April 1998 to 7.9%, the lowest rate in almost 8 years. As new jobs continue to come through, the Coalition will maintain the downwards trend in unemployment.

The Coalition will make further inroads into the pool of hidden unemployment. As strong jobs growth continues, more people will be encouraged back into the labour force to look for work and there will be corresponding rises in labour force participation rates.

### **(ii) Reducing Youth Unemployment**

The Coalition recognises that our youth are the group most vulnerable to high unemployment. The problem has arisen from fundamental structural changes in the labour market in the past two decades, mainly reflecting transformations in the global environment and technological change. Low-skilled positions that traditionally provided employment for early school leavers have largely disappeared in the Australian economy. Other changes, such as the increasing casualisation of the workforce in many industries, also impact on youth unemployment.

After 13 years of neglect, the problem of youth unemployment cannot be solved overnight - but it can be solved with the right policies.

Around 91% of teenagers are now in full and part-time education, training or work (or a combination of these), and a further 3% are not in the labour force (not looking for work). Unemployed teenagers looking for full time work only constitute around 6.5% of the age group - although they constitute around 28% of those in the full-time labour force.

Age itself is not a barrier to employment, but when combined with

other characteristics like leaving school early, low literacy and numeracy skills and lack of work experience, young people often have great difficulty finding work. Employers also consistently report that having the right attitude and behaviour is an important influence on their decision to recruit young people.

Young people are also often unfairly stereotyped as unwilling to work hard, when the reality is that there have never been so many competent, well trained young people available.

The Coalition recognises the importance of addressing these barriers and helping young people acquire additional skills through training and education. The Coalition will continue its strategy of structural reform to address the underlying causes of unemployment.

- The Coalition will further improve our education systems to ensure all young people are given a solid foundation that will prepare them for entering employment. Initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy skills will remain a priority for the early years of schooling. These crucial early intervention strategies can help address one of the most common yet avoidable causes of unemployment.
- The Coalition will provide an additional \$112 million over four years to improve literacy and numeracy standards in schools.
- The Coalition will continue to develop School to Work initiatives so young people can make a smooth transition to the labour market and avoid periods of unemployment.
- The Coalition's expanded Charter for the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation and Full Service Schools initiatives will support the development of innovative strategies to help students at risk of leaving school early. Greater flexibility in assistance will enable schools to develop a more supportive environment and offer a wider range of education and training programmes to better reflect the needs and aspirations of these students.
- Through the Youth Allowance, the Coalition will maintain the strongest possible incentives for young people to complete Year 12, and to choose further education and training over unemployment.
- In addition to ongoing support for the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation, the Coalition will continue to provide over \$20 million

each year in training funds through the Australian National Training Authority to the schools sectors to expand the provision of quality, recognised vocational training programmes in senior secondary schools. Priority will continue to be focussed on industry-recognised training (involving work placements in local businesses) which is also recognised as part of a senior secondary certificate.

- The Coalition will support additional paid New Apprenticeships in school, so students can commence their apprenticeship while complete their senior secondary certificate, broadening their career options. Already over 1000 students have commenced New Apprenticeships while at school.
- The expansion of New Apprenticeships will continue into new industries and occupations, generating more quality training opportunities for young Australians and equipping Australian businesses with skilled workers who will help them operate effectively in an increasingly competitive global economy.
- The Coalition will provide an additional \$91.5 million over four years to boost New Apprenticeships in rural and regional small businesses. A regional skills shortage incentive payment of \$1,000 will be provided to employers of New Apprentices in defined trades and occupations experiencing skill shortages in non-metropolitan areas.
- The Coalition will encourage greater use of New Apprenticeship provisions for greater flexibility, such as part-time arrangements and Wage Top-Up provisions.
- The Coalition will provide over \$1.3 billion over the next four years for employer incentives and benefits to encourage the participation of up to 530,000 young people in New Apprenticeships
- The Coalition will continue to fund programmes like Work for the Dole, Jobs Placement, Employment and Training (JPET), and Green Corps to help young people (especially those who are unemployed or at risk of becoming unemployed) to establish links with the community and make a successful transition to employment.
- Under the Government's Mutual Obligations initiative, in 1998-99 Work for the Dole will be expanded from 10,000 to 25,000 places. In 1999 the Work for the Dole Programme will be expanded by a further 6000 places (25%) to provide opportunities for Year 12 school leavers having difficulty finding work. All Year 12 school leavers, once they have been unemployed and in receipt of Youth Allowance for three

months, will be required to join a Work for the Dole project, to give them the work experience and skills that employers seek.

## **C Job Network – Better Services to Get Unemployed People into Jobs**

The Howard/Fischer Government understands that many unemployed people require additional assistance in order to benefit from the sustained jobs growth that is occurring. Many unemployed people, particularly the long term unemployed, face significant barriers to re-entering the work force. We need to create greater equity for these unemployed job seekers - so they have an equal opportunity to compete for the jobs that are coming through.

Equity for unemployed people could not be achieved without major improvements to employment assistance. The Howard/Fischer Government therefore embarked on one of the most significant social reforms in 50 years. On 1 May 1998 Job Network was introduced - a new and better way of helping unemployed people get jobs. The CES was replaced with a more equitable system of helping job seekers - one that focussed on results.

- The Coalition will continue to develop Job Network to its potential as the most powerful and successful mechanism yet to help unemployed people access the new jobs that are being created in the economy.
- The second tender round for Job Network will be conducted and the Coalition will aim to create an even stronger mix of organisations that will specialise in getting unemployed people into jobs. This will include existing organisations with a proven track record and new organisations with sound and innovative strategies to further boost the performance of Job Network.
- The Coalition will continue to build on the principles underlying Job Network, including:
  - performance-driven, with organisations rewarded for their results in getting people into jobs;
  - strongest focus on helping the most disadvantaged people such as the long term unemployed, with these groups attracting the highest fees; and
  - greater choice for clients (both job seekers and employers) and greater



flexibility in providing services to meet individual needs.

- The Coalition will release accurate and reliable performance information on individual Job Network members and sites so employers and job seekers can make informed choices, taking into account differences in labour markets and client groups;
- A new Return to Work Programme will be introduced to assist parents returning to the workforce after absences to rear children, to restore their confidence and self-esteem, familiarise them with new technology and help them access training to update their skills. Additional funding of \$24m over four years will be provided for the programme;
- Assistance will continue to be targeted through Job Network to disadvantaged groups including in particular youth and mature aged job seekers, who for the first time are benefiting from individually tailored assistance which better reflects their needs and helps overcome the obstacles many face in getting jobs;
- The Coalition will work closely with Area Consultative Committees to promote the opportunities available through Commonwealth employment and training policies and programmes such as New Apprenticeships and Work for the Dole. Through the Committees we will receive advice and feedback on the employment and training needs of regions and the impact of Commonwealth policies and programmes on the regional labour market;

## **D Helping Regional Australia**

The Coalition recognises that the prosperity of Regional Australia is critically important to the prosperity of every Australian. The Coalition's policies will ensure that Regional Australia has the employment, education and training infrastructure necessary to realise its potential. Policy and programme initiatives designed to increase jobs and training opportunities, extend regional infrastructure and to ensure equitable access to services will continue to be a focus of the Coalition.

- Through the \$1 billion Federation Fund, the Coalition will spend \$400 million over the next two years creating thousands of new jobs in major infrastructure and other projects across all regions of Australia.
- The Howard/Fischer Government will continue to attract new

investment to Australia. Since March 1996, 216 new investment projects have been attracted to Australia as a result of the Government's investment programmes. These have generated \$5.3 billion in new investment which is expected to create 12,000 new jobs and generate \$3.4 billion in exports.

- The national network of 58 Area Consultative Committees will provide an important means for ongoing dialogue between the Government and regional employers and communities.
- Area Consultative Committees will be properly equipped to take adopt a longer term, strategic approach to regional growth. They will be required to develop three year strategic employment plans for their region to establish longer term strategies and priorities for their economic and employment growth. A three year funding commitment will be given by the Coalition to support their efforts.
- In partnership with the Howard/Fischer Government, Area Consultative Committees will provide leadership and resources to assist regions maximise their economic and labour market strengths. They will help regions to create opportunities for economic development, generate new jobs and grow and diversify their industries and skills base.
- Increased funding for the Regional Assistance Programme will be continued - \$33 million per annum will be available to support Area Consultative Committees activities and projects that will generate more jobs, support small business and meet regional skills needs.
- For the first time, Area Consultative Committees will have responsibility, and accountability, for their performance in achieving the objectives of their regional employment strategies - outcomes will be linked to achieving employment growth and skills development in their region. The Howard/Fischer Government is committed to ensuring that money allocated to Regional Australia makes a difference and assists those communities that need it most.
- Employers in regional Australia will benefit from our Regional Skill Shortages Incentive which will provide an additional \$91.5 million over four years to boost New Apprenticeships in rural and regional Australia.

## **E Indigenous Employment**

The Coalition recognises that many indigenous Australians face particular disadvantages when trying to gain employment and is committed to assisting indigenous Australians to improve their educational and vocational skills and find lasting and rewarding employment.

Indigenous people have an unemployment rate four times that of the general population. Indigenous unemployment nationally is almost 40 per cent.

There are a number of factors which impact upon indigenous employment levels, including a lack of local employment opportunities in the regions where many indigenous people live, the low educational attainment and low skills base of many indigenous people, and a decline in employment in those industries which have traditionally employed indigenous people.

High levels of indigenous unemployment presents Australia and our indigenous population with a serious social problem that must be addressed. Continued high levels of unemployment and welfare dependence for indigenous people will lead to entrenched inter-generational unemployment, high levels of poverty for many indigenous people, and a demoralisation and de-skilling of large proportions of the indigenous community.

The Coalition is working to address the problems faced by many indigenous Australians:

- Indigenous people will benefit greatly from the Coalition's mainstream education policies which place an emphasis on the fundamental building blocks of education – the three 'R's, reading, writing and arithmetic – and from our strong focus on appropriate literacy and numeracy programmes.
- The Coalition's emphasis on New Apprenticeship programmes in schools will also assist young indigenous students in secondary education to improve their work skills.
- The Coalition will continue to facilitate work experience opportunities for unemployed indigenous people by maintaining its support for the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme. Under the CDEP scheme (similar to work for the dole), unemployed indigenous Australians forego their right to unemployment benefits in order to undertake work on community projects. These projects are particularly important to remote areas with limited job opportunities, and they provide indigenous people with valuable work skills that are

recognised by mainstream employers. The CDEP scheme also provides additional benefits, including improved social cohesion, improvements in self-esteem, training opportunities, and the ability to increase income levels where CDEPs successfully generate profits.

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