



# The Coalition's Policy

## Key Commitments

The Government is strengthening Australia's national security and enhancing our prosperity after years of mismanagement by Labor.

Our economic diplomacy strategy is delivering real benefits to Australian businesses and our economy and is generating jobs.

The Coalition's emphasis on consultation and mutual respect is building trust in Australia as a reliable partner of choice in the Indo-Pacific region.

We are broadening and deepening our bilateral relationships with key strategic and economic partners including the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Singapore and Indonesia.

We are keeping Australians safe from terrorism by cancelling the passports of foreign fighters, making it an offence for Australians to enter declared terrorist-controlled areas in Syria and Iraq and working closely with regional friends and partners.

We are refocusing Australia's diplomatic, trade and development efforts on our region.

We are delivering a sustainable, effective and affordable aid program that helps developing countries reduce poverty and promote sustainable economic growth, giving priority to women and girls, education, health and aid-for-trade.

The Government's student overseas study program, the New Colombo Plan, is supporting Australian university students to study and undertake internships in more than 35 countries in our region. This is building a generation of future Australian leaders with deeper understanding of our region and relationships to last a lifetime.

The Coalition's foreign policy prepares Australia for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century by:

- expanding Australia's overseas diplomatic presence
- boosting Australia's crisis response capability
- establishing regional health security partnerships
- supporting a Pacific Women Mentoring Programme
- developing a contemporary foreign policy strategy that builds on our achievements and focuses on 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and opportunities

## **Our Plan for a Safe and Prosperous Australia**

The Coalition's commitments will strengthen Australia's international engagement, protect our national security and enhance the prosperity of the Australian people.

### **1. Expanding Australia's overseas diplomatic presence**

The Coalition will invest \$58 million over four years to expand Australia's overseas diplomatic presence as part of our economic diplomacy strategy, which is enhancing our country's prosperity and creating jobs.

These new missions will increase market access for Australian businesses in the global economy, strengthen our national security, and enhance our ability to provide consular assistance to Australians working and travelling overseas. Since 2013 the Coalition has established eight new diplomatic missions and Austrade posts – the largest single expansion in over 40 years.

### **2. Enhancing Australia's crisis response capability**

The Coalition will invest \$8 million over four years to boost Australia's crisis response capability.

We will establish a Global Watch Office, staffed 24 hours a day, to provide timely and accurate advice on emergency situations overseas, enhancing Australia's capacity to respond to crises anywhere in the world.

The shooting down of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 over Ukraine and other recent global emergencies, including terrorist attacks in France, Belgium and Turkey, and natural disasters in our region, have highlighted the need to enhance Australia's crisis response capability.

### **3. Establishing a regional health security partnerships fund**

The Coalition will invest \$100 million over five years to establish a regional health security partnership fund to harness Australia's world leading research institutions, scientific expertise, innovators and entrepreneurs to improve health outcomes in our part of the world.

The regional health security partnership fund will sponsor partnerships with academic, private sector, non-government and medical institutions to tackle the emerging health security risks in our region.

Our commitment will also support internships for Australian medical and research students and young professionals to undertake work in partner institutions in the region.

The Coalition's commitment will be funded from the official development assistance budget.

#### **4. Supporting a Pacific Women Mentoring Programme**

The Coalition will invest \$5.4 million over five years to support a mentoring programme that connects female leaders in Australia with emerging women leaders in our region.

Through exchanges and forums, Australian women will provide cross border support to emerging women leaders in the public and private sector.

The programme will encourage women to take on leadership roles, particularly in policy making, and deepen people-to-people links between Australia and nations in our region.

The empowerment of women in our region is a crucial pillar in building peace and stability.

The Coalition's commitment will be funded from the official development assistance budget.

#### **5. Developing a contemporary foreign policy strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The Coalition will develop a contemporary and comprehensive foreign policy strategy within twelve months of the election to build on our achievements over the past three years and to focus on the challenges, including new and emerging threats, and the opportunities that lie ahead.

The last Australian foreign policy strategy was produced by the Howard Government in 2003.

The strategy will include analysis of the international opportunities and challenges that Australia faces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and will guide foreign policy and diplomatic efforts for the future.

As a liberal democracy committed to the rule of law and an open export orientated market economy, Australia must continue to be a significant voice on the world stage to protect our national interest.

## The Choice

The Coalition has delivered significant commitments to strengthen Australia's foreign engagement. Since the 2013 election, the Coalition has:

- concluded free trade agreements with three of our largest export markets – China, Japan and South Korea – after six years of Labor indecision and inaction
- strengthened Australia's national security, introducing new laws to keep Australians safe from terrorism and combatting ISIL in Syria and Iraq
- launched a student overseas study program, the New Colombo Plan, to support Australian university students to study and undertake internships in the region
- implemented an economic diplomacy strategy to support jobs and growth in Australia
- promoted Australia's interests at the United Nations Security Council, playing a lead role in the international response to the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 over Ukraine
- opened eight new diplomatic missions and Austrade posts around the world – the single largest expansion of our overseas presence in 40 years
- established the innovationXchange to develop bold and creative solutions to development challenges in our region
- created new partnerships with the private sector to deliver development outcomes
- strengthened Australia's relationships with key strategic and economic partners including the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Singapore and Indonesia
- enhanced Australia's engagement with Pacific Island countries, including normalising relations with Fiji and leading international recovery and reconstruction efforts in Vanuatu and Fiji following devastating tropical cyclones
- established a school of government in PNG

Throughout its time in Government, Labor's rushed decision making and obsession with the media cycle damaged Australia's important bilateral relationships.

From unilaterally cancelling Australia's live cattle trade with Indonesia to announcing a regional processing centre in Timor-Leste without proper consultation, Labor's efforts focused on addressing its domestic political failures, rather than serving the national interest.

Labor would scrap the Coalition's economic diplomacy agenda, which is creating new jobs for Australian workers through increased trade and investment.

## Costs

The Coalition's policy for a safe and prosperous Australia will not place additional costs on the Budget.



**THE NATIONALS**  
*for Regional Australia*

For further details of the Coalition's plan go to  
[www.liberal.org.au/our-plan](http://www.liberal.org.au/our-plan)  
[nationals.org.au/our-plan/](http://nationals.org.au/our-plan/)