



The Coalition's Policy

Key Commitments

A strong agriculture sector will boost Australia's productivity, jobs and exports.

The Coalition has delivered a \$4 billion Agriculture White Paper that will support jobs growth in our regions, drive export opportunities for agricultural businesses, and encourage investment to ensure Australia remains a globally competitive agriculture producer.

We are delivering significant commitments to the agriculture sector, including a \$200 million increase in biosecurity funding, \$190 million for rural research and development for profit, \$100 million for pest and weed management, a \$2.5 billion concessional loan programme for farmers, and a \$500 million National Water Infrastructure Fund to provide future water security for our farmers.

Australian agriculture is stronger under the Coalition.

The Coalition will continue to support jobs and growth in the agriculture sector by:

- delivering a \$2 billion National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility to support major water infrastructure projects over 10 years
- building the Rookwood Weir, upgrading the Macalister Irrigation District and laying the south-west Loddon pipeline
- investing \$20 million to help eradicate invasive pests through Invasive Animals Solutions
- encouraging investment by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation in agriculture
- committing \$8.3 million to complete implementation of the Livestock Export Global Assurance programme
- providing \$1.2 million to boost research and development for thoroughbred breeders
- delivering \$4 million to establish a Northern Australian rice industry
- establishing a Regional Investment Corporation
- providing \$4 million to support Casino Beef Week and ensure the Beef Australia 2018 event occurs in Rockhampton
- investing \$2 million to establish a commodity milk price index
- developing leadership capacity in agricultural industries
- providing \$1.8 million in additional funding for the Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities programme
- creating centres of excellence in agriculture

Our Plan for a Stronger Agriculture Sector

Australian agriculture is stronger under the Coalition.

The Coalition has delivered a \$4 billion Agriculture White Paper that will support jobs growth in our regions, drive export opportunities for agricultural businesses, and encourage investment to ensure Australia remains a globally competitive agriculture producer.

Australia's farmers contribute around \$51 billion to our nation's economy, including \$41 billion in agricultural exports.

Only the Coalition can ensure Australia's agriculture sector and jobs remain strong.

1. Delivering a \$2 billion National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility to support major water infrastructure projects over 10 years

The Coalition will deliver a \$2 billion National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility.

Our commitment will support major water infrastructure projects over 10 years and stimulate and accelerate investment in major water infrastructure, such as dams, pipelines and managed aquifer recharge projects, which are essential to rural and regional communities, agriculture and numerous other industries.

The National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility provides a financial incentive to states to invest in, or to cultivate partnerships with the private sector to construct the vital water infrastructure required to support the growth of our regional economies.

2. Building water infrastructure to help agriculture grow

The Coalition will build on its strong record of providing \$60 million for water infrastructure feasibility studies so far, by committing to the construction of weirs, pipelines and irrigation system upgrades to deliver water for agricultural growth.

Water infrastructure is essential to population growth, sustainable communities, jobs, productivity, and stronger economic outcomes.

The Coalition will fund half the cost of Rookwood Weir – up to \$130 million – if the business case meets all the necessary requirements and it acquires the required environmental approval.

The Coalition will invest \$20 million towards the upgrade of the Macalister Irrigation District in Gippsland and \$20 million to construct the south-west Loddon pipeline in central Victoria.

3. Investing \$20 million to help eradicate invasive pests

The Coalition will invest \$20 million over five years to boost research and development aimed at eradicating invasive pest species.

The Coalition will support the transition of the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre into Invasive Animals Solutions in 2017 to build on this investment by leveraging up to a total of \$70 million cash and in-kind from universities, state governments, the CSIRO and industry partners.

Animal pests cost the economy over \$4 billion a year in lost agricultural output.

Our commitment is important to ensuring the effectiveness, competitiveness, and innovation of Australia's agriculture sector.

4. Encouraging CEFC investment in agriculture

The Coalition will encourage greater use by the agricultural sector of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) to enhance energy efficiency.

Energy costs have a direct impact on the productivity of agricultural businesses. The introduction of Labor's carbon tax in 2012 significantly reduced the competitiveness and profitability of the agriculture sector.

For example, Murray-Goulburn's annual expenses increased by \$14 million in the first year of Labor's carbon tax. Costs for individual dairy farms were pushed up on average \$5,500-\$7,000 per year, according to Australian Dairy Farmers.

The Coalition believes that investment in energy efficiency is better policy than a devastating tax on production.

The CEFC is already able to invest in energy efficient technologies and renewables.

However, by 30 June 2015, only 12 per cent of the CEFC's investments were in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector.

We must increase the CEFC's focus on agriculture to improve competitiveness and profitability.

The Coalition will direct the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to work with the CEFC to identify projects suitable for investment. Eligible businesses may include farms, abattoirs, sugar mills, irrigation infrastructure operators and timber and dairy processors. Examples of energy efficient suitable technologies may include micro hydro power generation, bio-digestion and on-farm renewables.

5. Livestock Export Global Assurance programme

The Coalition will commit \$8.3 million to ensure the complete implementation of the Livestock Export Global Assurance programme.

The Livestock Export Global Assurance programme is managed by industry and is currently under trial. The programme is intended to work with the current Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System framework to better protect the welfare of animals by ensuring comprehensive animal assessment.

The goal of the Livestock Export Global Assurance programme is to ensure animals are treated in accordance with international guidelines, in any market, and at all stages within a supply chain.

The commitment will boost the output, competitiveness, and innovative capacity of Australia's agriculture sector.

6. Boosting research and development for thoroughbred breeders

The Coalition will invest \$1.2 million in research and development intended to boost disease control, bio-security, and reproductive capabilities in the Australian thoroughbred industry.

Our commitment will be matched dollar-for-dollar through an industry supported R&D levy.

The thoroughbred industry employs approximately 4,400 people, a quarter of whom are located in the Hunter region.

The commitment will help ensure the competitiveness and sustainability of the thoroughbred industry and the regional communities it supports.

7. Developing the Northern Australian rice industry

The Coalition will support the development of the rice industry in Northern Australia building on successful initial research trials growing crops in Queensland.

Additional investment in research and development is required at this early stage to maximise the prospects of establishing a successful rice industry.

The Coalition recognises it would not be reasonable to expect southern Australian rice growers to contribute significantly to research and development from industry levies in support of development of a northern industry.

That is why the Coalition will invest \$4 million over four years, funded from the Rural R&D for Profit program.

8. Establishing a Regional Investment Corporation

The Coalition will streamline Commonwealth financing and concessional loan processing by establishing the Regional Investment Corporation.

The Regional Investment Corporation will be the single administrator for financing and concessional loans relating to drought concessional loans, the National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility, and loans already delivered under the drought, drought recovery, and farm finance concessional loans scheme.

The Regional Investment Corporation will also administer any new financing and concessional loan schemes.

The commitment is consistent with the Government's approach to deregulation and improving public sector efficiencies.

9. Continuing funding of Beef Australia

The Coalition will provide \$4 million to support Casino's annual Beef Week and ensure the internationally recognised Beef Australia 2018 event occurs in Rockhampton.

Beef Australia occurs every three years in Rockhampton and is the nation's largest beef exposition. The Casino Beef Week is the nation's longest volunteer-run week of beef industry celebrations, occurring over 11 days.

These events are opportunities to showcase Australia's agricultural success and boost agriculture exports.

10. Establishing a commodity milk price index

The Coalition will invest up to \$2 million to establish a commodity milk price index.

Southern Australian dairy farmers have been hit with significant farm gate milk price reductions late in the 2015-16 season, causing severe financial hardship.

To help ensure the dairy industry does not find itself in a similar situation in future, an index would deliver greater transparency and market signals in domestic and global milk prices.

The Coalition will consult with the dairy industry on the design of the index that would provide dairy farmers with valuable information for use in supply negotiations with processors and to assist in following international dairy commodity price trends.

11. Supporting leadership in agricultural industries

The Coalition will support efforts to develop leadership capacity within the agricultural industries to enhance the ability of emerging farm leaders to advocate agricultural and rural issues to the Australian community.

In addition to managing their own businesses, farm leaders are expected by their communities to champion agricultural issues with rural authenticity into urban communities, join international trade delegations to open new markets, and run national corporate organisations and agribusiness companies.

The \$5 million Leadership in Agricultural Industries Fund will also assist build farmer representative organisations capacities to lead the industry through transitional and structural adjustments that strengthen the long term viability of the sector as well as communicating with farmers on questions regarding agricultural research and development levies.

12. Enhancing animal management in remote communities

The Coalition will provide \$1.8 million in additional funding for the Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities programme.

The Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities programme is a not for profit programme that provides Indigenous communities with coordinated veterinary and education services.

13. Creating centres of excellence in agriculture

The Coalition will establish Centres of Excellence in Agriculture in regional areas, with government agencies partnering with regional universities and industry research organisations to become agricultural research hubs.

Within the first year of re-election, the Coalition will proceed with the relocation of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority to Armidale, New South Wales.

The Coalition will also commence formal consultations with other government agencies to examine relocation options to other regional towns and cities.

The Choice

The Coalition has delivered significant commitments to strengthen and grow Australia's agriculture sector.

Since coming to government, the Coalition has:

- produced a major \$4 billion White Paper to promote competitiveness and investment in the agriculture sector
- set up a National Water Infrastructure Development Fund with \$500 million for water infrastructure, including dams
- implemented free trade agreements with China, Japan and South Korea that will deliver substantial increases to agricultural exports and market access
- delivered a \$2.5 billion concessional loan programme for farmers experiencing hardship
- introduced a clearer country of origin food labelling regime
- increased biosecurity funding by \$200 million
- tasked the ACCC with driving greater transparency in the agribusiness supply chain
- allowed more favourable depreciation arrangements for water facilities and fodder storage, worth an estimated \$86 million
- created a new Agricultural Commissioner within the ACCC
- provided \$125 million for pest and weed management
- delivered \$20 million for better financial preparedness and risk management for farm insurance advice and assessments
- delivered \$78 million and invested a further \$100 million in rural research and development for profit through to 2022 – which is a significant boost to productivity given a \$12 return is generated within ten years for each dollar the government invests in agricultural research and development.

When in government, Labor short-changed Australia's agricultural sector, costing jobs and investment opportunities.

Labor cut funding to Australian agriculture by \$2.1 billion.

Labor's panicked reaction to an ABC TV programme devastated the Northern Australian cattle industry.

Labor's super trawler fiasco damaged Australia's reputation as a trade partner.

Costs

The Coalition will invest \$240 million to ensure a stronger agriculture sector.



THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

For further details of the Coalition's plan go to
www.liberal.org.au/our-plan
nationals.org.au/our-plan/