



# School Reform

Making every school  
a great school



Julia Gillard and Labor  
**Let's move Australia forward**





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# School Reform

## Making every school a great school

The Gillard Labor Government's vision is to make every school a great school – because in the 21st century, a great school and a great education are the keys that unlock an individual's potential and the nation's future.

Only with world class schools can we build a high-productivity, high-participation economy that gives all Australians the opportunity of rewarding and satisfying work.

In government, Labor is delivering ambitious reforms that are already changing Australia's schools – achieving more for our schools in less than three years than the Coalition delivered in almost 12.

The Government is making major investments to reverse the under-funding that has held our schools back for too long – doubling the funding for Australian schools, because we know that no other investment will generate the enduring, long-term returns like our investment in our human capital.

Consider this: a child who is 5 years old today is likely to still be in the workforce through to the 2070s. The quality of their schooling now will make a difference to what they learn and whether they achieve their potential across the span of their working life.

That means that the investment we make in great schools today will be paying dividends for most of the century ahead through higher participation, stronger productivity and increased economic growth.

That is why the Government has invested in modernising infrastructure with the Building the Education Revolution program and Trade Training Centres – together with our investments in improving teacher quality.

Alongside our additional investments, the Gillard Labor Government is undertaking major reforms – with the goal of making Australia's schools among the best in the world so we can compete successfully with countries like Singapore, Korea and Hong Kong.

Creating world class schools is at the heart of 21st century microeconomic reform – it is every bit as important as Labor's past big economic reforms like tariff cuts, industry deregulation, national competition policy and enterprise bargaining.

The sectors in the economy that need renewal and reform are the services that were relatively untouched by the big economic reform era of the Hawke and Keating governments – sectors like education and health, which are largely delivered within the domestic economy.

The education and health sectors include schools, universities, hospitals and aged care facilities – with a diverse range of providers from the public, private and non-government sectors, and services where competition and value are often held back by jurisdictional red tape and the lack of seamless national markets.

The microeconomic reform required in these sectors involves improved market design – so that we work to create the conditions in which markets serve the public interest through vigorous competition, transparent information, greater choice and becoming more responsive to the needs of service users.

That is why the Government has delivered landmark educational reforms like *My School*, a national school curriculum, national teaching professional standards and trials of performance pay – to drive the transparency, accountability, national consistency and higher standards that will create better schools for Australian children.

Australia needs better schools if we are to create the workforce that we need for the high-skilled, rewarding and fulfilling jobs of the future.

Today, despite having many great schools in our country, around 360,000 young Australians still do not have either a Year 12 or Certificate II qualification – despite shortages of skilled labour in many occupations.

Worse, that number is growing each year as some schools allow a proportion of our young people to fail.

That is why the Government established the objective of lifting the proportion of young Australians completing Year 12 to 90 per cent by 2015.

Achieving a higher level of education gives young Australians more choices about their future, and makes it more likely they can find work, get better pay, stay in the workforce and fulfil their potential.

Building better schools means breaking with some of the old ideological debates and old orthodoxies about Australian schooling.

We have moved Australia on from the old ideological debates about competition between the public and private sectors which were at the expense of actually doing anything about the quality of schooling.

We are also moving Australia on from the long-held orthodoxy that what teachers do in the classroom is up to them, and that external scrutiny of schooling and accountability for student outcomes is somehow not appropriate.

The Gillard Labor Government is moving Australia forward to a schooling future where every school can become a great school.

With great schools, a new generation of young Australians can get the education, skills and training they need for the fulfilling, rewarding jobs of the future.

#### **Fundamental reforms already underway under a Gillard Government**

*My School* website

National School Curriculum

National professional standards for teachers

#### **A re-elected Gillard Labor Government has already announced it will deliver for our schools**

Empowering Local Schools to give principals greater authority

National Trade Cadetship

#### **New reforms from the Gillard Labor Government**

Online Diagnostic Tools for Parents and Teachers

Reward for School Improvement program

Australian Bacculaureate

Reward payments for great teachers

## 1. National transparency of school performance – My School

Making every school a great school is only possible if we know how each school is performing – so that we can learn from the best performers and reward those achieving the highest standards, while addressing poor performance so that students are no longer left behind.

As Education Minister, Julia Gillard's earliest priority was to press for more information about the performance and the circumstances of the nation's schools.

The result was the *My School* website – [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) – which, for the first time ever, provides consistent, accurate information about the performance and circumstances of every school in the country. That includes the number of students and teachers, and the school's performance in national literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) tests, which are undertaken by students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

	Reading		Writing		Spelling		Grammar & Punctuation		Numeracy	
Year 3	▶ 437		442		448		428		426	
	SIM 367	ALL 411	SIM 378	ALL 414	SIM 368	ALL 405	SIM 367	ALL 420	SIM 356	ALL 394
Year 5	▶ 495		517		521		505		502	
	SIM 453	ALL 494	SIM 447	ALL 485	SIM 454	ALL 487	SIM 452	ALL 500	SIM 450	ALL 487
Year 7										
Year 9										

Student background			
<a href="#">Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)</a>			
School ICSEA value: 894			
Bottom quarter	Middle quarters		Top quarter
92%	6%	2%	1%

Links	
School website: <a href="#">St Albans Meadows Primary School</a>	
Sector or system website: <a href="#">VRQA State Register</a>	

*My School* is empowering parents. It is changing the way Australian parents think and talk about our schools, providing more information about our schools than parents and the nation have ever had before.

*My School* lets parents and school communities compare their school's results with neighbouring schools and up to 60 statistically similar schools.

*My School* gives parents information they have never had before – so they can make better informed choices about their children's future.

The public response to *My School* demonstrates its value to Australian parents. Since the *My School* website went live in January 2010, it has already been visited on more than three million occasions.

*My School* is also a valuable tool to improve schools, helping educational authorities to identify the most successful schools and the schools that most need a helping hand to lift their performance.

*My School* will become an increasingly powerful tool in future years as it is enhanced with more categories of information, such as consistent information about the income of each school and the backgrounds of its student population which will become available by the beginning of 2011.

Using the data from successive years of national testing, a new measure of student gain will also be developed to understand how well students are progressing from year to year.

This will be enabled through a personal student identifier that remains with a student throughout their schooling – allowing students' individual performance to be assessed as they move across schools, systems and states, and helping us identify which schools are most effective in improving students' results and which schools need extra attention to lift their performance.

## 2. National school curriculum

Making every Australian school a great school starts with having a rigorous curriculum that sets out a consistent framework for learning and clear achievement standards for all Australian students.

A national school curriculum means that every student, parent and teacher can know what is expected at every stage of schooling, no matter in which State or Territory they live.

As Minister for Education, Julia Gillard has delivered on the national school curriculum – a reform that past education ministers had talked about for thirty years, but now has been delivered.

The curriculum sets out the knowledge, skills and understanding that all Australian school students will be taught as part of a curriculum for the 21st Century. This includes, for the first time ever, explicit requirements for learning grammar at every year level from kindergarten through to year 12.

The national curriculum is also a major advance in transparency – allowing students, parents and employers to go online and see what students will be learning at each stage of school.

By establishing a consistent curriculum, we are ensuring that all Australian students can benefit from the work of the nation's best creators of the school curriculum and educational resources.

Our national investment in the skills base of our teachers will also go much further because investments in teaching and assessment materials can be used in every classroom.

Likewise, a national curriculum will make it easier to assess where our schools are performing best, and where they are struggling.

The national curriculum is especially good news for the families of the 80,000 students who move interstate every year.

The national curriculum for the core subjects of Maths, Science, English and History is being phased in across Australian schools from 2011. A draft senior curriculum for years 11 and 12 has recently been released.

After the implementation of the national curriculum, a re-elected Gillard Labor Government will consult with State and Territory governments over the potential benefits of adopting a nationally consistent school starting age for children.



### 3. National standards for teachers

Great schools require great teachers, with high professional standards.

That is why the Government has worked to deliver Australia's first National Professional Standards for teachers.

The standards have been developed by the newly-established Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) which is providing national leadership for the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership.

The draft National Standards describe what is required of teachers at four levels of professional expertise – Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher.

They make explicit, for those within and outside the profession, the knowledge, skills and values required of teachers at each level.

They capture key elements of teachers' work, reflecting how their expertise should develop over time as they become more experienced and continue to improve their teaching performance.

These standards will make it possible for teachers to measure their own professional progress and for principals and school authorities to assess the performance of their staff.

The National Standards will also provide the foundation for establishing a national system for registration, be a powerful mechanism for raising the professional status of teachers, for improving accountability and for lifting the quality of teaching in classrooms across Australia.



### 4. Empowering local schools to give principals greater autonomy



Australia's 9529 schools and their communities have differing needs and aspirations. But if each of those schools is to be a truly great school, it needs great leadership.

That is why the Gillard Labor Government is committed to giving principals and parents a bigger say in how schools are run.

Already, as Minister for Education Julia Gillard has embarked on reforms to empower school principals that have gone further than anything done before in the history of the Commonwealth.

Now, the Government is going further, with the *Empowering Local Schools* reform that a re-elected Gillard Labor Government will deliver.

As part of this reform, participating schools will have greater responsibility over school budgets, selecting and employing teachers and staff and identifying funding priorities. This will drive improvements in students' achievements and enable schools to better meet the needs of students.

These are important changes – in an era of greater transparency and accountability delivered with *My School*, principals need to be able to take action to implement changes that can help improve their school.

Schools will make decisions through new governance structures, with models similar to school boards or governing councils being established to give parents a bigger say in how their schools are run.

A key element of this reform is empowering local school communities to make decisions about what is best for their schools and their students, rather than a centralised system run by State bureaucracies dictating matters like the mix of staffing and how resources are allocated between competing demands.

This means that instead of teachers being burdened by administrative duties, they can focus on teaching. Principals will have the authority to use site managers, business managers and administration staff to handle operational matters – so they can focus on school leadership. Principals will also be able to hire specialist teachers and support officers for areas of need identified by their school community.

The *Empowering Local Schools* program will be rolled out from 2012, with 1,000 schools participating in the program, beginning with Government schools in the first year, and extending to non-government schools in 2013.

Funding will support principals to learn from best practice models of school success, as well as supporting information technology investments that can help schools run more efficiently.

Principals will also have the opportunity to strengthen their leadership skills and improve professional standards through the new Australian Institute of Teaching School Leadership.

## 5. Helping parents, students and teachers with online diagnostic tools

Great schools require the support of parents helping their children to achieve their best – and that requires support at home, reinforcing and applying what children are learning each day at school.

To help parents in this task, a re-elected Gillard Labor Government will develop a national online assessment and learning bank for students, parents and teachers to provide a sophisticated diagnostic assessment of each student's strengths and learning needs.

With a National Curriculum and National Assessment program in place, Australia for the first time has the opportunity to develop specialised learning and assessment programs around a shared set of knowledge and skills.

Digital technologies make it possible to accurately assess each student's performance and provide feedback on which aspects of their learning they need to develop.

- 17** Anne wants to find the answer to  $1999 + 1476$ . Which one of these shows a way to get the same answer?
- $2000 + 1477$
  - $2000 + 1475$
  - $2005 + 1400$
  - $2005 + 1500$

This initiative will create a digital platform, linked to the national curriculum and national assessment programs, to provide those assessments for students, parents and teachers.

A bank of test and assessment items based on NAPLAN and other comparable tests will be compiled and linked to programs to provide profiles and feedback on a student's performance.

Parents and students will be able to access these programs and pointers outside school hours through a dedicated website portal.

This means that parents will be able to diagnose their kids' progress on key areas of learning like spelling, and will be able to sit down with them in front of their computer at home and help them undertake homework tasks online to improve their understanding.

Teachers will be able to create individualised assessments for each student, get instant diagnostic feedback and then link to thousands of high quality curriculum materials from which they can develop learning strategies designed to address the needs of each learner.

These materials will help Australian students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills as well as a much wider range of knowledge, from science and languages to information and communications technologies themselves.

Teachers will also benefit from accessing curriculum resources and teaching materials online.

A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will support the development of this digital facility and work with schools and education providers to make it available to all schools and parents.

The tools will be available through a dedicated website and by linking the digital test bank and directory of curriculum resources to existing educational ICT networks.

## 6. Incentives and rewards for the best performing schools

Turning good schools into great schools is hard work – and that hard work deserves to be rewarded.

A re-elected Gillard Labor Government will create new incentives for better school performance including lifting attendance, literacy and numeracy performance, Year 12 results and improved post-school education outcomes.

Primary schools will receive a \$75,000 reward payment for demonstrating the greatest improvement in a range of areas including:

- School attendance
- Literacy results
- Numeracy results

Secondary schools will also be eligible for a \$100,000 reward payment if they demonstrate the most improvement in areas including:

- School attendance and retention
- Year 12 results
- Post school destinations like the number of students going onto further education, training or work

Every school should strive to do better and every school is in the running for these rewards.

Principals and parents will decide how the reward funding is spent at their school.

For example, principals and parents could spend the money on new materials and resources for literacy, to support extracurricular activities like sport or drama, or to purchase new technology.

Part of the development and consultation for the National School Improvement Framework will consider how external inspections may be utilised to enhance the school evaluation and assessment process.

The *Reward for School Improvement* program is another plank in the Government's education reforms to drive excellence in every school and for every child.

To implement these reforms, a comprehensive National School Improvement Framework will be developed to inform the assessment and a new Office of National School Evaluation (ONSE) will be established as an independent unit within the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

The assessment process will be independent, transparent and equitable, acknowledging the broad range of Australian schools including schools with diverse student populations, small schools, rural and remote schools and schools that cater for students with special needs.

The assessment will consider nationally available data and a detailed self-evaluation report from schools to determine which schools receive reward payments.

The self-evaluation report will provide important local information including case studies, teacher assessments, parental feedback and other evidence of achievement

The *Reward for School Improvement* program will provide reward payments for up to 500 schools based on school performance in 2012. The National School Improvement Framework will be implemented in 2013, and rewards to 1,000 schools will be allocated based on 2013 school performance.

## 7. National skills standards and cadetships

Making every school a great school requires our schools to give our children better opportunities to acquire the skills they need for the jobs of the future – whether their next step is into an apprenticeship and work, or into further technical or academic education.

The Gillard Labor Government is committed to delivering better opportunities for school students so that trades are equal in quality, value and rigour to more traditional academic pursuits.

That is why from 2012 students from years 9 to 12 will be offered a new National Trade Cadetship as an option under the National Curriculum.

This Cadetship will be delivered through the national network of Trades Training Centres and through other accredited training providers, including TAFE.

There will be two streams of National Trade Cadetship available:

- National Trade Cadetship – Foundation which will focus on essential work readiness skills and laying the foundation for further training; and
- National Trade Cadetship – Pre-Apprentice which will focus on specific trade or occupation area.

The National Trade Cadetships will be developed by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority in partnership with Industry Skills Councils and with States and Territories.

National Trade Cadetships will be nationally recognised and will provide credit towards an apprenticeship or further training.

We will also ensure the Cadetships contribute towards state-based senior awards, in the same way as other approved subjects under the National Curriculum.

The National Trade Cadetship will help give employers access to a motivated pool of potential future employees, and assist in creating a more skilled workforce.



Crucially, the Cadetship will help more young Australians to develop basic work-readiness skills so they can make a successful transition from school into work – addressing one of the greatest failures in our education system, with around 60,000 students leaving school every year without either getting a job or going on to further education.

The Cadetships are part of the Gillard Labor Government's major reform of vocational education to provide employers and students with continued confidence in the quality and outcomes from the training system.

A national vocational education regulator will be established to ensure national standards are met and to strengthen quality assurance for more than 1.7 million students and thousands of Australian businesses with a stake in the sector.

Parents and students will be able to have confidence in the value and quality of Cadetship training and the pathways to work that National Trade Cadetships will deliver.

## **8. A national certificate of international standing – the Australian Baccalaureate**

For Australians to obtain an education recognised around the world, they need a credential of international standing – similar to national certificates like the British 'A' Levels, the French Baccalaureate, the German and Finnish Abitur, and the certificates of Australia's regional neighbours.

For that reason, a re-elected Gillard Labor Government will develop a new voluntary qualification of international standing – an Australian Baccalaureate as the next platform of Australia's world class education system.

The Australian Baccalaureate will sit alongside existing senior secondary school qualifications as a voluntary credential that will build upon the National Curriculum.

Right now, at the end of Year 12 Australian students have nine separate school certificates that result in a lack of comparability of student results, making it more difficult for students and their families moving interstate or overseas. High achieving Australian students should be able to choose Australian subjects through a qualification of equal standing to leading international certificates.

Those nine separate school systems have served past generations well, but today's students need a school qualification that provides a stronger foundation for future work and study opportunities.

The national certificate, to be known as the Australian Baccalaureate, will be phased in following the introduction of the national curriculum for senior secondary school students, expected to commence in 2015. It will not replace existing senior certificates and will be introduced on a voluntary basis, with students electing to be certified for the award and the Australian Baccalaureate operating alongside existing State and Territory certification and credentialing systems rather than competing with or replacing them.

High performing students who want an internationally recognised qualification that measures a wide range of their achievements will be encouraged to undertake the Australian Baccalaureate.

The introduction of the Australian Baccalaureate will require extensive and detailed consultation with educational authorities, schools, universities, training providers, employers, parents and students. Matters to be considered include completion requirements, methods of assessment, reporting and the integration of Vocational Education and Training outcomes.



The development of the Australian Bacculaureate will be led by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, and will leverage off work on the senior secondary national curriculum and achievement standards currently being developed by ACARA.

## 9. Reward payments for great teachers

Great schools are created by great teachers. As we remember back to our own school experiences or those of our children, we all know the difference a great teacher can make in the life of a student – a reality that is supported by extensive educational research.

That is why the Government is committed to recruiting, training, retaining and rewarding great teachers.

We are fast-tracking the best and brightest graduates into teaching and into struggling schools through the *Teach for Australia* program.

The *Teach for Australia* program is an important initiative to attract the best and brightest university graduates into the nation's classrooms, providing a pathway from non-teaching fields such as law, commerce and science to work as teachers for two years while studying towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching.

Under *Teach for Australia*, up to 180 high-achieving university graduates are being recruited from all Australian states and territories to participate in the initiative.

Already more than 40 graduates in the first cohort have commenced their two-year placement in 13 Victorian non-government secondary schools, and 300 applications have been received for the second cohort in 2011, with almost four applicants for every available place – an illustration that highly talented graduates are keen to take on the challenges and rewards of teaching.

In addition to recruiting the best people into teaching, we need to retain the best teachers, and we need to provide incentives for teachers to go the extra mile to turn good teaching into great teaching.

The Government has already embarked on reforms to better reward quality classroom teachers.

We are also increasing the funding available to universities for teacher education courses allowing them to improve the quality of these courses and ensuring graduates entering the teaching profession are better prepared.

Already our reforms are beginning to make a difference:

- In New South Wales, a new category of Highly Accomplished teachers is now working in schools in disadvantaged areas and being rewarded for their hard work and high performance, with six figure salaries.
- Victoria is trialling models of school-based and teacher-based rewards in government and independent schools including providing an annual bonus to top performing teachers.



**Building on these reforms, a re-elected Gillard Labor Government will implement Australia's first national system of performance assessment and pay to reward the very best teachers.**

Until now, most salary progression for teachers has been linked to duration of service rather than recognition of good performance – meaning there is little financial reward for high quality teaching and little is done to address issues of underperformance.

The recently released report by the Grattan Institute *What Teachers Want* indicates that our most effective teachers do not receive the greatest recognition and that good performance has little impact on career progression.

Australia also has compressed teacher pay scales, with progression to the top scale on average taking only around 10 years to reach the maximum salary. This discourages high performers from entering the profession and creates an incentive for many of our best teachers to leave the classroom to progress their careers.

For every school to be a great school, this must change. We must reward great teaching in the classroom – where it delivers the greatest benefits to students.

**A re-elected Gillard Government will fund a new National Partnership Agreement to provide bonuses to the very best classroom teachers.**

The first reward payment will be based on teacher performance in 2013, with the bonus to be payable in the following school year. The reward payment will be made in two instalments, at the start of each semester, starting in 2014.

As an estimate, the funding from the Government would enable a one-off 10 per cent salary bonus to the top 10 per cent of teachers in 2014 based on their performance in 2013.

This will mean that around one in ten, or around 25,000, teachers would receive a performance bonus in each year. Based on current wages, this bonus would be up to \$8,100, or two payments of \$4,050 for our most experienced teachers. A teacher in the first few years of their career might receive a bonus of around \$5,400 dollars in total.

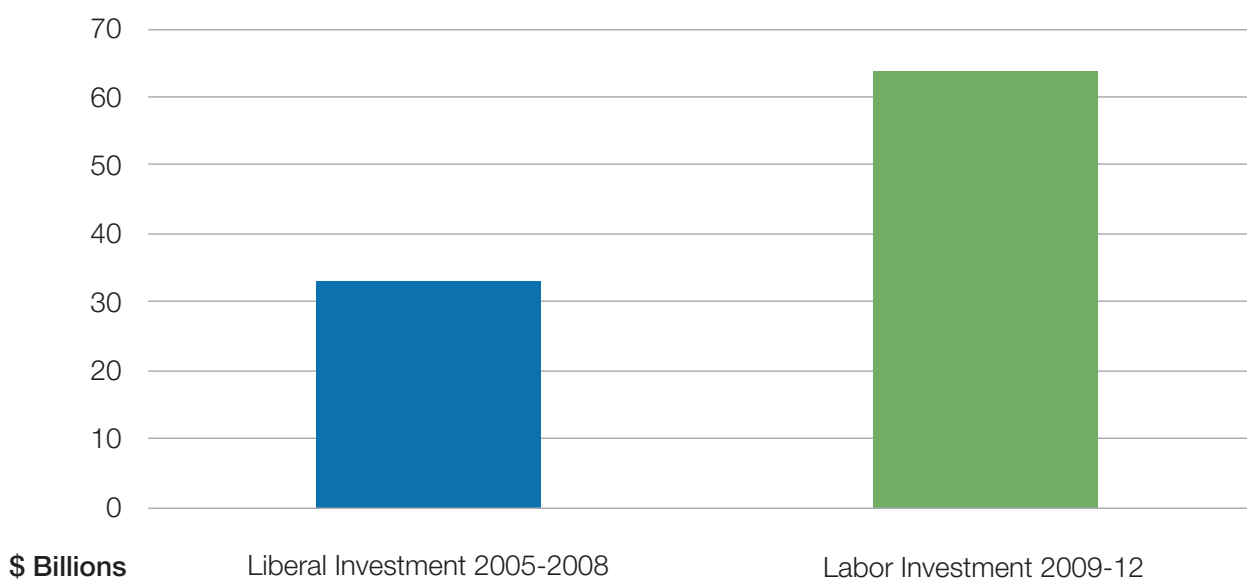
The Gillard Labor Government will develop a nationally consistent, robust, equitable performance management system the 'Australian Teacher Performance Management Principles and Procedures' (the Principles) so the best performing teachers can be identified and rewarded.

These reforms reward the efforts of those motivated teachers who demonstrate a high level of performance.

The implementation of this initiative will build upon existing teacher quality reforms including reforms underway as part of the Teacher Quality National Partnership with the goal of delivering a nationally consistent performance management framework for classroom teachers.



## Investment in School Education



## National Education Plan for our Schools

Financial Impact (\$ million, underlying cash balance)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
Online Diagnostic Tools for Parents and Teachers	3.3	15.7	10.7	10.2	39.8
Reward for School Improvement	5.1	16.9	49.7	92.9	164.7
Australian Baccalaureate	-	-	-	2.5	2.5
National incentives for great teachers	0.3	49.8	-	125.0	175.1
<b>Already announced</b>					
Empowering Local Schools to give principals greater authority	1.6	68.2	1.1	1.1	71.9
National Trade Cadetship	2.5	0.6	-	-	3.1
Work Experience for Trade Cadets	-	-	12.5	12.5	25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>151.1</b>	<b>74.0</b>	<b>244.2</b>	<b>482.1</b>

Funding for this commitment will be fully offset over the forward estimates, consistent with the Gillard Labor Government's commitment to return the budget to surplus by 2013, three years ahead of schedule.





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