

**OUR PLAN TO**

**SHOWCASE  
AGRICULTURE:**

**OUR HERITAGE.  
OUR FUTURE.**



## KEY POINTS

The Liberal and Nationals Government has a plan to showcase agriculture and bring the city and country closer together. Our plan for a strong economy is ensuring we can better educate the next generation and the generations to come about where their food and fibre come from.

Agriculture has always played an important role in the success of our nation – it touches all Australians. It's a key pillar of the economy.

Our farmers care for our land while feeding and clothing us and tens of millions more in markets abroad.

Hundreds of thousands of Australians work on the land or in related sectors in our regional towns and the major cities. It's an advanced and innovative industry with an exciting future.

But many of our kids don't know or are confused about where their food comes from and we are trying to fix this.

We need to engage current and future generations about the contribution, the promise and the future of farming, show them where our food and fibre come from and encourage more young Australians to study agriculture.

A re-elected Liberal and Nationals Government will invest \$10 million in two new programs to **bring our kids and our farms together**. We will fund primary and secondary school student visits to farms and we will establish up to 80 mobile 'mini farms' in urban based schools through the iFarm program.

Australia's regional communities are the hubs supporting our farmers. Hubs that play an important role in Australia's economic growth.

The Liberal and Nationals Government has invested in our regional communities, especially those faced with droughts and, most recently, the extensive flood event in north Queensland. The Drought Communities Program for example, is delivering infrastructure projects that provide employment, stimulate local community spending use local resources, businesses and suppliers and have a long-lasting benefit to the communities.

More needs to be done to bring regional communities together, to keep them strong and resilient. Agricultural shows are the most authentic and accessible showcases of Australian farming. These institutions are at the very heart of our regional communities. They bring farmers and people from the city together.



Agricultural shows are fun, bring communities together and showcase new technology and promote competition with prized livestock. However, many are struggling with old infrastructure making it hard for shows to go ahead and attract visitors.

A re-elected Liberal and Nationals Government will establish a new \$20 million **Regional Agricultural Show Development grant program**. Grants will be available for regional agricultural show societies that run annual shows to upgrade and maintain existing infrastructure and to build new infrastructure. This investment will help keep our agricultural shows running, help bring communities together and help bridge the divide between country and city.

Labor has no plan to strengthen the Australian farm sector's resilience to drought.

## OUR PLAN

Regional Australia makes a significant contribution to our national economy. It has long been the engine room of the economy with around \$537 billion (31 per cent) of our annual GDP coming from regional Australia in 2016-17.

When Australia's regional towns prosper, so does the Australian economy. But when times are tough, the Liberal and Nationals Government has demonstrated our commitment to back in regional communities.

A prime example is our Drought Communities Program, which is delivering \$1 million each to Councils across the country severely impacted by the drought.

The Program has supported community infrastructure and other drought relief projects. It's aimed at providing employment for people whose work opportunities have been impacted by the drought and stimulating local community spending.

The Liberal and Nationals Government has also provided \$30 million in much needed drought support to families through the Drought Community Support Initiative. This program has allowed the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society and Rotary to provide up to \$3,000 in assistance to at least 10,000 households. This includes up to \$2,000 in cash and \$1,000 in vouchers, making sure the money is spent in the local community.

After the major flood event in north Queensland the Liberal and Nationals Government provided 11 of the most impacted Councils \$1 million each to help them with the costs of the response and clean-up.



The significant donations made by the public to help farmers tackle drought and natural disasters demonstrate that Australians support the bush and want to make sure that our farmers have a future.

Gone are the days when large numbers of Australians had a close relative working the land. This is resulting in a lack of understanding about where our food and fibre come from and the career and lifestyle opportunities available in modern farming and our regions.

Agriculture is more than big hats and boots. It's a high-tech industry with an exciting future producing the food we eat and the fibre we wear.

A re-elected Liberal and Nationals Government will help promote that message, especially to our kids.

### **Taking kids to farms and farms to kids**

Studies have found that 75 per cent of primary and secondary school students think that cotton socks are made from animal products. Sadly, 45 per cent don't think that bread, bananas and cheese come from farmed product and 40 per cent believe that farming damages the environment.

A re-elected Liberal and Nationals Government is committed to changing attitudes to farming and addressing the gap in kids' understanding of where our food and fibre come from.

We will invest \$5 million over three years to fund primary and secondary school student visits to farms and other primary production worksites.

The funding will be used for state farming bodies to sponsor government, Catholic and independent primary and secondary school visits to teach kids about agricultural production, sustainability practices and farm land stewardship.

City kids will have a hands-on, practical farm experience with the intention of gaining a better understanding of where and how their food and fibre are produced as well as the role and importance of agriculture to Australia's way of life, regional communities and the economy.

\$5 million will also be provided to the iFarm initiative for up to 80 city schools to establish 'mini farms': a mobile, living 'mini farm' that is fully integrated and computerised as an educational platform to teach students about the use of water, land and energy in food production. Where they have little room to establish a permanent garden, iFarm is ideal for schools on small footprints, particularly in inner city locations – demonstrating how food is grown through water management, solar energy, soil quality, fertilisers, recycling and waste management. iFarms replicate large farming practices into a small scale unit..



## Showcasing agriculture

Agricultural shows are an integral part of Australian culture. They play an important part in country life, highlighting the local strengths and bringing communities together. This is particularly important when our regional communities are tested with extended droughts and one-in-one hundred-year weather events.

Agricultural shows started in the nineteenth century and at their core they still provide unique opportunities to showcase new technologies. Shows also promote competition with awards for best in class or category for livestock and produce.

Agricultural shows allow people from cities and big regional centres to better understand where their food and fibre come from. Right across regional Australia our agricultural shows are delivered each year by hardworking volunteers. Often show societies are faced with ageing infrastructure and expensive repair bills, impacting on the quality of the show and, in some cases, forcing shows to be cancelled.

More can and should be done to support these institutions that are at the very heart of our regional communities.

A re-elected Liberal and Nationals Government will establish a \$20 million Regional Agricultural Show Development Grants Program. Grants will be available for regional agricultural show societies that run annual shows to upgrade and maintain existing infrastructure and to build new infrastructure.

Regional show ground upgrades support more than agricultural shows. This vital community infrastructure is often used for other local events, including local farmers markets, that bring communities together.

## Promoting the role of farming

The Liberal and Nationals Government is providing \$720,000 to Agricultural Shows Australia (ASA) to utilise and mobilise the agricultural show network to enhance the skills of young people in agriculture and promote the value and role of farmers.

This funding will support the Young Judges and Paraders Program and the Young Farmers Challenge.

ASA will also use this funding to boost education around sustainable agri-food production for schools, shows and community events. It will see ASA work with organisations like the





Primary Industries Education Foundation Australia to deliver better educational material and resources.

This funding will ensure the agricultural shows movement continues to be a strong contributor to our economy, culture and communities and continues to support our young farmers and rural leaders.

### **Encouraging more Australians to study agriculture**

The Liberal and Nationals Government is providing \$220,000 to Primary Industry Education Foundation Australia (PIEFA) to fund a new major study of students' and teachers' perceptions about food and fibre production, as well as their views on the careers that are available in the agricultural sector.

The outcomes will inform future education and communication initiatives to improve young Australians' connection with agriculture and food and fibre production, and encourage young people to study agriculture.

If Australian agriculture is going to have a strong and sustainable future, we must invest in our most important resources – our people. The funding also allows PIEFA to deliver annual one-day workshops on food and fibre education for Australian school students in each state and territory.

The Liberal and Nationals Government wants to get more kids excited about the job opportunities and long-term rewarding careers that agriculture offers.

This program is part of the Government's Plan to strengthen agriculture, support jobs and our regional communities and boost our economy.

## **THE CHOICE**

The Liberal and Nationals Government appreciates the need to ensure that our children understand and value the contribution of farming. We are invested in supporting the sector, regional communities and the future of farming.

By contrast, Labor has no empathy for 'the bush.'

Labor under-estimates the value of the farming sector to the Australian economy.



## COST

The Liberals and Nationals will invest an additional \$30 million to showcase farming and agricultural careers.

