

PRIME MINISTER

CHANGES TO THE MINISTRY

Today I announce changes to the Ministry and the Cabinet.

These changes will better equip the Government to focus on its priorities for the coming year:

- Keeping the economy strong and ensuring Australians have jobs as the economy goes through a period of profound transformation.
- Using our prosperity to spread benefits to all Australians.

The Australian economy and Australian businesses will face both challenges and opportunities in coming years as our economy transforms.

The transition to a clean energy future, the emergence of new technologies and the changes to existing industries to take advantage of new conditions will bring enormous opportunities our nation must be ready to seize.

The changes to the Ministry will support a stronger focus on industry, innovation, productivity and participation, to ensure Australia is in the best possible position as we go through this transition.

At the same time, we must use our prosperity to spread benefits to all Australians, giving people the chance to get ahead while we make sure nobody is left behind.

The changes to the Ministry reflect the high priority the Government places on the important social policy reforms we will pursue over the next year.

A newly expanded Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education will be established and led by two Cabinet Ministers.

The Honourable Greg Combet MP will be appointed Minister for Industry and Innovation.

Minister Combet will also retain his responsibilities for the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio.

Senator the Honourable Chris Evans will be appointed Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, along with his existing role as Leader of the Government in the Senate.

This new portfolio will mean better links between industry, innovation, science, research and tertiary education.

This new portfolio will also be responsible for international education given the importance of higher education and vocational education and training to this sector.

The Education, Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio will be led by two Cabinet Ministers.

The Honourable Bill Shorten MP will be appointed Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Minister Shorten will also retain his responsibilities as Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation.

To support the strong focus in the new Ministry on Australian industry, particularly the manufacturing sector, Senator the Honourable Kim Carr will be appointed Minister for Manufacturing. Minister Carr will also be appointed Minister for Defence Materiel.

The Government is also conscious of the challenge of housing affordability. To ensure a stronger focus on this issue in the future, the Honourable Robert McClelland MP will be appointed as Minister for Housing and Homelessness, within Cabinet, responsible for all Commonwealth housing policies and programs.

To support this new arrangement a number of machinery changes will be made to consolidate programs and Minister McClelland will be sworn to both FAHCSIA and the Treasury.

The Honourable Robert McClelland MP will also be appointed as the first ever Minister for Emergency Management, which will remain within the Attorney-General's portfolio.

Senator the Honourable Mark Arbib will be appointed as Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Small Business, in addition to his existing role as Minister for Sport. Minister Arbib will also be the Manager of Government Business in the Senate.

Disability reform and the creation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme will be a key priority for the Government, as will reforms in aged care and the implementation of the mental health package announced in the 2011 Budget.

Reflecting this, the Honourable Jenny Macklin MP will remain the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs but will also be sworn as the Minister for Disability Reform, with a lead role in building the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Honourable Julie Collins MP will be elevated to the Ministry and appointed Minister for Community Services, Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development and Minister for the Status of Women.

The Government will also be focussed on continuing to deliver in health, through our new health reform agreement, as well as in aged care and the implementation of our mental health package announced in the 2011 Budget.

Given the breadth of the Government's agenda two newly appointed Cabinet Ministers will be responsible for this work.

The Honourable Tanya Plibersek MP will be appointed as Minister for Health.

In addition, the Honourable Mark Butler MP will be appointed to Cabinet as the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, with additional responsibility as Minister for Social Inclusion.

The Honourable Brendan O'Connor MP will be appointed as Minister for Human Services and Minister Assisting for School Education.

This appointment of an additional Minister working on School Education also reflects the depth of the Government's reform agenda to improve the quality and equity of school education.

The Honourable Nicola Roxon MP will be appointed as the nation's first female Attorney-General. The Attorney-General will take on additional responsibility for Privacy and Freedom of Information.

The Honourable Jason Clare MP will be appointed as Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Justice.

The Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government will move from my portfolio to become a standalone Department.

Responsibility for Arts and Sport will transfer to the new standalone portfolio, which will be named Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

These new arrangements will ensure there is an appropriate focus on the arts in regional as well as non-regional Australia.

The Honourable Simon Crean MP will continue his important work as Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts.

I am also announcing a number of changes to Parliamentary Secretary responsibilities.

Senator the Honourable David Feeney will retain his existing responsibilities as Parliamentary Secretary for Defence.

In addition, the Honourable Mike Kelly MP will be appointed a Parliamentary Secretary in the Defence portfolio and will assist the Minister for Defence on the Afghanistan transition.

The Honourable Mark Dreyfus MP will be appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation, supporting Minister Combet.

Mr Dreyfus, will continue to serve as Cabinet Secretary and Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

Sid Sidebottom MP will be appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

I want to thank all Ministers who have served the Government so well in their current portfolios.

As a result of these changes the number of women in the Cabinet and Ministry will increase.

I intend to make some further administrative changes to better align responsibilities within portfolios.

Responsibility for the National Archives will move from my portfolio to the new Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

Responsibility for national security research and innovation will move from my portfolio to Defence.

Responsibility for cyber security policy will move from the Attorney-General's portfolio to my portfolio.

All departmental changes will occur within existing resources and existing Secretaries will remain in place.

I will recommend to her Excellency the Governor-General that the new Ministry be sworn on Wednesday 14 December 2011.

**CANBERRA
12 DECEMBER 2011**

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