The Coalition’s Policy to Secure our Ports and Airports

Stand up for Australia. Stand up for real action.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Coalition believes in an uncompromising approach to protecting Australia’s borders and keeping our country safe.

We are committed to securing our borders against illicit drugs, disease, illegal fishing and people smuggling.

The integrity of our borders cannot be maintained without a properly resourced Australian Customs and Border Protection Service.

Since coming to office three years ago, Labor has cut funding to Customs for cargo screening, making Australia’s borders less secure and our nation more vulnerable.

The Coalition will restore trust and integrity to our border protection system.

We will restore the funding Labor has cut - and provide additional resources to increase cargo screening at ports and airports.

A Coalition Government will:

1. **Restore Labor’s cuts to cargo screening at ports and airports**

   The Coalition will restore the $58.1 million in funding cut by the Labor Government in the 2009-10 Budget for Customs’ cargo inspection.

2. **Provide additional funding to increase cargo screening capacity**

   The Coalition will also increase Customs’ resources for screening by $35 million. This will allow a greater percentage of air and sea cargo to be screened and inspected for illicit goods that threaten our communities and agriculture.

This $93.1 million funding increase will dramatically improve our capacity to inspect incoming consignments.

This funding increase will enable Customs to inspect an estimated additional 52,500 sea cargo consignments and at least 7.5 million additional air cargo consignments.

This increase will improve the rate of detection of illicit drugs, weapons and other contraband, boosting border security and keeping Australia safe.
HOW LABOR HAS FAILED

By Julia Gillard’s own admission, the Rudd-Gillard Government has lost its way.

Reckless spending, nearly $90 billion of debt, a $57 billion deficit and Labor Government borrowings of more than $100 million every day have left the Australian economy in a highly vulnerable position.

By taking an axe to Australia’s Customs’ services, Labor has made it much easier for illicit drugs and animal and plant disease to enter Australia. Labor has cut funding for essential border security activities, yet wasted billions of dollars on ‘school halls’ and ‘pink batts’ programmes.

Labor’s mismanagement means our communities face the threat of more illicit drugs entering the country.

Our regional communities also face a growing threat that potentially devastating animal and plant diseases will enter Australia.

By contrast, the Coalition has a strong track record of keeping our borders secure.

The previous Coalition Government increased funding for Customs from $357 million in 1995-96 to $1 billion in 2007. This represented a funding increase of 98 percent in real terms. This funding increase helped to tackle smuggling - and substantially boosted quarantine controls.

Between 1995-96 and 2005-06, drug seizures (excluding cannabis) increased from 162 kgs to 1,114 kgs per annum.

Since coming to office three years ago, Labor has weakened Australia's border security.

In 2008, it was estimated that Customs had the resources to x-ray only five percent of sea cargo arriving in Australia - and of that five percent, only one-tenth was physically inspected. ¹

Since then, Labor has cut the budget of Customs for cargo screening. In the 2009-10 Budget, Labor cut cargo screening resources by $58.1 million.

This cut to screening reduced the number of potential sea cargo inspections from a targeted 134,000 to 101,500 per annum - a reduction of 25 per cent.

Potential air cargo inspections have also fallen - from a targeted 6.2 million to 1.5 million per annum – a reduction of 75 per cent.

Labor's failure to maintain adequate funding and resources for cargo screening has compromised community safety and made Australia less secure.

THE COALITION’S PLAN FOR REAL ACTION TO IMPROVE SECURITY AT PORTS AND AIRPORTS

Container examination helps Customs to ensure the integrity of Australia's borders by preventing the flow of illicit drugs, weapons and other harmful goods into Australia.

A Coalition Government will increase the percentage of sea and air cargo x-rayed at Australian ports and airports.

The Coalition will:

1. Restore Labor's cuts to cargo screening at ports and airports

The Coalition will restore the $58.1 million in funding cut by the Labor Government in the 2009-10 Budget for Customs cargo inspection.

This will help reverse Labor's weakening of Australia's border security.

2. Provide additional funding to increase cargo screening capacity

The Coalition will also increase Customs' resources for screening by $35 million.

This will allow a greater percentage of air and sea cargo to be screened and inspected for illicit goods that threaten our communities and agriculture.

This $93.1 million funding increase will dramatically improve our capacity to inspect incoming consignments.

This funding increase will enable Customs to inspect an estimated additional 52,500 sea cargo consignments and at least 7.5 million additional air cargo consignments.

This will increase the rate of detection of illicit drugs, weapons and other contraband, improving border security and keeping Australia safe.
COSTING

The Coalition will commit an additional $93.1 million over the forward estimates towards increased security screening of cargo at ports and airports.

This funding will be provided from the nearly $24 billion in recurrent savings that have been identified by the Coalition over the forward estimates.

These savings are a result of cutting Labor’s waste and mismanagement and redirecting funding from inefficient and poorly performing Labor Government programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010-11 $M</th>
<th>2011-12 $M</th>
<th>2012-13 $M</th>
<th>2013-14 $M</th>
<th>TOTAL $M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>