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AUSSIES CALL FOR MORE FUNDING TOWARD EDUCATION AND DEFENCE

news.com.au announces latest results from InstaBudget

Australians would strip tens of billions of dollars from the dole and other welfare payments to sink billions more into Education and Defence if they were to decide where their taxes would be allocated in the 2009-10 Federal Budget.

That's the general sentiment according to *news.com.au's* InstaBudget (www.news.com.au/instabudget) – an interactive application that lets users create their own national budget in the lead up to the forthcoming Federal Budget on May 12.

Over 13,000 Australians have completed *news.com.au's* InstaBudget with the average results showing optimism during the current economic climate.

According to the average InstaBudget results:

- Australia would have a surplus of \$2.165 billion
- There would be tax cuts for everyone. On average, tax rates would fall to 14 per cent for low income earners, 25 per cent to middle income earners and 34 per cent for high income earners
- On average, the excise revenue would increase by about \$9 billion
- Spending on Education would double
- Similarly, spending on Defence would also increase by almost 40 per cent
- Social Security and Welfare is the sector to lose out.- indeed the average InstaBudget allocation almost halves funding in this sector

David Higgins, editor, *news.com.au* said that the InstaBudget was a strong indication as to what Australians want to see from the Federal Budget being handed down in a fortnight.

“Through our InstaBudget, Australians have stated what they hope to see Treasurer Wayne Swan announce in his budget – a surplus, tax cuts and more spending on defence and education.

“All Australians are struggling and think that Government help shouldn't just be limited to those on welfare payments. Allocated spending to this sector from our InstaBudget dropped dramatically from previous years.”

The InstaBudget is divided into 14 sectors that users can allocate a certain number of funds. These sectors are:

- Defence
- Education
- Health
- Social Security and Welfare
- Housing/Community Amenities
- Recreation and Culture

- Fuel and Energy
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Mining/Manufacture/Construction
- Transport and Communications
- Public Order and Safety
- General Public Services
- Piggy Bank
- Petty Cash

Users are given a budget surplus balance to begin and then go on to choose which sectors they would like to allocate funds to and how much they would like to give that particular sector.

Users also have the option to increase or cut taxes in order to adjust the amount of money they have to spend.

After users submit their budget, a relating story is generated based on their budget decisions.

News.com.au/Instabudget will be live until May 12.

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