

The Labor Party was getting up to its old tricks in wanting to bring back the kind of policies that have contributed to the worst inflation and unemployment in Australia's history, the Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Richmond, Mr Anthony said in Lismore today.

Mr Anthony said the Government was acutely aware of the damage being caused by inflation, and of the personal suffering of individuals and families caused by unemployment.

The Government was doing all it could in very difficult economic circumstances to sustain the unemployed and help them through their difficulties while resolutely tackling the basic problem of inflation.

He said the four point economic package put forward by the Opposition was based on precisely the approach that had pushed the Budget deficit to massive and highly inflationary levels.

"The Government is battling to clear up the aftermath of the Whitlam Government's big spending, the effects of which are still damaging Australia through high inflation and record unemployment," Mr Anthony said.

"Yet we now have the Opposition wanting the Government to spend a lot more money at a time when we need to be doing everything we can to keep Government's spending in check and bring down the Budget deficit.

Mr Anthony said the Labor Party had introduced the R.E.D. Scheme when it was in office to try to soak up some of the unemployed, but had abolished the scheme when its cost got out of hand.

"Now Labor wants us to bring back the kind of scheme it abolished," he said.

He said Labor suggestions for man power schemes, youth employment subsidies and apprenticeship and other training programmes were already being implemented by the Government, which had introduced a series of new initiatives in these areas.

Mr Anthony said that indications of the magnitude of the problem inherited by the Government was the fact that when Labor was elected in 1972 there were 136,769 people unemployed.

When Labor left office in 1975, there were nearly 329,000 unemployed.

This meant there had been an increase in the unemployed rate from 2.4 percent to 5.4 percent while Labor was in office.

"We now have the task of trying to reverse this rising tide of unemployment," Mr Anthony said.

"We cannot reverse the trend until we get rid of the continuing effect of the policies which cause the unemployment.

"In essence, this means bringing inflation under control and that is the job we are committed to do."