Welcome to the Consultation Draft of Labor’s National Platform

This consultation draft of Labor’s National Platform is being released in the lead up to the 48th ALP National Conference, which will be held in Adelaide in July 2018.

The consultation draft is the work of Labor’s National Policy Forum, which over the past 12 months has engaged more than 3,000 Party members in the Platform Development process through workshops, policy submissions and surveys.

On behalf of the Party I would like thank every member who participated in these discussions.

The result is a consultation draft that distils the policies and enduring values that Labor aspires to implement in government.

Some areas of the draft will continue to be the subject of discussion and debate in the lead up to Adelaide.

I encourage Party members to have their say by discussing the Platform at your branch, raising issues with your National Conference delegates and making a submission online at www.alp.org.au/national_platform.

Submissions will remain open until Friday May 18th, 2018.

Noah Carroll
ALP National Secretary
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Chapter 1: Labor’s Enduring Values

1. We pay respect to the traditional owners of our ancient continent, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we honour their continuing connection to country and their custodianship of the world’s oldest living culture.

2. Alongside those words of respect, we re-dedicate ourselves to Closing the Gap in health and housing, in education and employment, in community safety and justice, so the First Australians live long lives of equal opportunity.

3. We understand that this can only be achieved by ensuring First Nations people have a voice and a say in the decisions that govern their lives.

4. We renew this platform as a party of progress, not protest. We believe in making change through the power of parliamentary democracy and we know the timeless truth of solidarity, working alongside the mighty trade union movement of Australia.

5. We believe government has a responsibility to keep the nation safe, to invest in all our people's potential, to tackle disadvantage and to care for the most vulnerable among us.

6. We share a common faith in Australia’s oldest idea: a fair go all round. That is the tradition we respect and the evolving mission we pledge ourselves to today.

7. We salute our legends, we honour their achievements but we are not captives of our past or hostages to history. We know modern Labor must rise to the challenges of our time and this moment with courage, imagination and new ideas.

8. A strong minimum wage, a fair day’s work and a decent pension were once radical notions, Labor made them universal rights. Our greatest achievements have always come from broadening the meaning of the fair go to include more people in its benefits.

9. The fair go didn’t mean much to Australians for whom getting sick meant going broke, until Labor created Medicare.

10. The fair go didn’t mean much to people who worked hard all their lives only to retire poor, until Labor created universal superannuation.

11. The fair go didn’t mean much to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples denied their place in this nation, until Labor delivered Land Rights, Native Title and the National Apology to the Stolen Generations.

12. The fair go didn’t mean much to hundreds of thousands of Australians with disability and their carers exiled to second-class opportunity, until Labor built the National Disability Insurance scheme.

13. The test for our movement in the decade ahead is to honour those achievements by building on them, to bring new meaning to our oldest ideal, to revere it and revitalise it.
14. Because fairness has never been a finite resource, equality is not a zero sum game, the whole history of Labor tells the truth of this.

15. Every time we expand the definition of the fair go, we all gain from its deeper meaning. Every time we enlarge the circle of Australian fairness, we all gain new allies in our national success.

16. We write this platform at a time when too many Australians feel disengaged from their democracy and distrustful of their representatives, when more than ever before people suspect politicians are only in it for themselves.

17. In the years ahead, let Labor lead the restoration of trust and faith in our democratic institutions with a National Integrity Commission.

18. In a time of economic and technological change the gig economy, casualization, off-shoring and out-sourcing, championing the fair go means ensuring Australian workers can continue to find secure jobs in safe workplaces for decent pay.

19. In an era of open markets and free trade, upholding the fair go means Australian workers, Australian standards and Australian wages come first.

20. We believe in the dignity of work, we know how important a good job is to an individual’s sense of self and to the stability and health of their family.

21. We defend and extend these enduring values in partnership with the union movement, standing up for all those Australians who feel exploited, unsafe or under-represented at work.

22. For modern Labor, the fair go also means leading a new wave of economic reform: restoring the link between effort and reward, boosting wages and productivity and delivering a more equal share of national wealth for all those whose hard work helps create it.

23. We believe government has a duty to develop our nation’s economic capacity and sovereignty, to make the investments and deliver the opportunities the market alone will not.

24. We know that fundamental to the success of Australia is the idea that each generation hands on a better set of circumstances to the next and our policies will always be aimed at delivering greater opportunities for young Australians, in everything from finding a job to buying a first home.

25. For Labor, the choice between prosperity and fairness will always be a false one, we know economic growth comes from extending opportunity and tackling inequality. We know building a more prosperous Australia means making sure no-one is left behind. This is the mission which will define the next Labor government.

26. We will champion equality for the women of Australia: in pay, in opportunity, in leadership and in freedom from the fear of family violence.

27. We will end the two-class tax system in this country: closing the unsustainable loopholes that favour the very wealthy so we can reward the hard work of ordinary people and properly fund the services our nation needs.
28. A Labor Government will invest in the luck Australia makes for itself: in the early years, in schools, skills, TAFE and university. Because we know top-quality education is the way we give every child, whatever their circumstances, hope for a great future.

29. We are the party that believes a university degree is an opportunity earned on merit, not a privilege conferred at birth and we will always fight for affordable, accessible higher education.

30. Just as we support and defend public TAFE, apprenticeships, training and re-training so Australians young and old, from the cities to the bush, can gain the skills they need for good jobs in a changing economy.

31. We will build productivity-boosting public transport in our cities, we will build the roads, rail and ports to revitalise our regions and we know Australia deserves an NBN that connects small businesses around our nation with the global market.

32. We are the architects and defenders of universal Medicare and we will continue to champion a health care system every Australian can count on when they are sick, because the health of any one of us, matters to all of us.

33. And in our pursuit of a strong economy and fair society we will be guided always by our duty to protect the most vulnerable: alleviating poverty, combating homelessness and disadvantage, bringing new resources to the scourges of addiction and national redress for the survivors of abuse.

34. With more of us living longer, let us strive to give older Australians the love and care they gave us, from security in retirement to leading the world in pursuit of a cure for dementia.

35. In the Asian Century, let us continue to seek security in our region, not from it.

36. Let us compete and succeed in Asia on our terms, not as a low-wage nation doing low-skill work but building for ourselves a point-of-difference as a smart, high-wage home for agriculture and science, for industry, ideas and for advanced manufacturing, so ‘Made in Australia’ speaks for quality around the world.

37. Under Labor, let Australia be known as a good international citizen, a faithful ally in the fight against terrorism and extremism, a leader for peace in our region and a generous friend of nations most in need.

38. And instead of borrowing a foreign crown from the other side of the globe, let us face the world as a proud Australian Republic with an Australian citizen as our head of state.

39. Let our confident and modern identity continue to find expression in the vibrancy of our arts, the diversity of our multicultural society and the strength and compassion of our community.

40. And let us recognise that harmony and unity are vital to preserving national security, while saluting and supporting the men and women whose courage keeps us safe.

41. As the party of the environment we are steadfast in our determination to take real action on climate change and invest in the new jobs and industries powered by renewable energy.
42. The generational contract demands we ensure our children can show their children the wonders of the Great Barrier Reef and share in the beauty of our national estate.

43. This platform speaks with the voice of Labor’s greatest strength: our members, the people who keep the faith, even in difficult times.

44. And so we pledge ourselves to Labor’s enduring values, to our evolving mission and to a fair go for all Australians.
Chapter 2: A strong economy for all Australians

The contemporary challenge

1. Australia needs economic policy to foster investment across the entire economy and ongoing reform and economic management to increase productivity, create good paying and secure jobs, the future health of the Australian economy. Reducing inequality, modernising our infrastructure, improving housing affordability, managing the transition to clean energy, investing in skills and innovation and making our taxation system fairer are all necessary for Australia’s economy to grow in all Australians’ interests.

2. Australia received a permanent increase in our national income through the mining boom. But with the mining construction boom now over, we need to generate new sources of growth which will support the creation of new jobs. Strong growth in employment will need to be generated in other sectors to keep our unemployment rate low. Australians have benefited enormously from more than two decades of uninterrupted economic growth which came on the back of pro-reforming Labor governments. Labor’s economic priority is to continue this good run of economic growth, in an inclusive and sustainable way. Climate change continues to pose a significant risk to economic growth, while the rise of automation and technological disruption, and the threat it poses to worsening inequality, presents challenges for future governments.

Labor values

3. Equality and an inclusive economy lie at the heart of Labor’s mission. To ensure that every Australian has equal opportunities to participate and contribute to building the wealth of the nation. To ensure that all Australians can grow to their full potential, regardless of their social class or the wealth of their parents.

4. Labor will ensure that our growth is inclusive and that our prosperity shared. Labor will continue to argue against the reliance on “trickle-down” economics and argue for an activist role for Government, such as through investing in human capital and expanding the nation’s physical capital stock. With inequality rising around the world, Labor will implement policies that ensure that the threat of worsening inequality isn’t realised and that families of all backgrounds can continue to contribute to Australia’s prosperity. Excessive inequality detracts from economic growth and damages the social fabric. Economic growth should be inclusive of all. Labor believes in economic growth, opportunity and fairness.

5. A modern Australian economy relies on us being competitive internationally and open to the rest of the world, while ensuring that the wealth generated from our openness is shared and that people aren’t left behind. Labor is best placed to guide the Australian economy through a time of rapid change and to support Australian families.

6. Labor rejects the arguments of those who do not believe in inclusive economic growth. This has always been essential to our agenda: from early Labor Governments’ nation-building reforms and the creation of a genuinely national economy in wartime, to economic reform through the Hawke and Keating years and seeing Australia through the global financial crisis without recession.

7. Opportunity and fairness are essential to Labor’s economic approach: economic policy should create opportunities and governments should spread these to all Australians. Your family’s wealth should not determine your ability to grow to your full potential. A strong economy allows Labor to
deliver programs and services Australians need, and to support the most vulnerable. The benefits of economic growth should be redistributed through the economy to those on low wages, not in work or reliant on welfare. Government should ensure people from all backgrounds and circumstances can both contribute to economic growth and benefit from it.

8. Labor believes in the power of ideas to transform our nation and build a richer, fairer and more sustainable future. Science includes knowledge of the world in all its forms. It is not confined to any one discipline. We turn to science and research to understand the world, and to help change it. Our unique situation – as a large country with a small population, as custodians of fragile ecosystems, and as a developed, responsible democracy – demands we invest in the science and research that will underpin Australia’s wellbeing in the 21st century. We recognise the imperative of harnessing new ideas, processes and technologies for the benefit of all Australians.

9. Innovation, science and commercialising scientific advances are essential to sustainable economic growth. Companies, organisations and individuals are the driving force behind innovation but Governments can and should enable and facilitate innovation. Australia’s economy needs innovation, venture capital and angel investors, start-ups and the spirit of entrepreneurialism. Open markets, supported by a framework of pro-competitive rules, provide the best incentives for innovation, enterprise, investment and hard work.

10. Australia’s openness to the global economy has made us more competitive, productive and prosperous. Australians have benefited through job creation and rising incomes, lower consumer prices and greater choice. Our long-term prosperity depends on competing successfully in global markets. Australia needs to produce high quality goods and services the world wants to buy, and remove barriers to overseas markets. Labor will ensure skills development and training, infrastructure planning, tax and regulation frameworks do not hold businesses and workers back from achieving their full potential in global markets and ensure all Australians enjoy a fair share of the benefits of growth.

11. Strong and sustainable public finances are essential to fund progressive policy in future. Every Australian should be able to contribute to and benefit from economic growth and wealth creation through a fair tax system, quality public services, equal educational opportunities and a decent social safety net. A commitment to maintaining an adequate revenue base, prudent budget management, and increased productivity will ensure universal access for future generations to vital health, education and social services. This is why Labor will return to the Budget to balance when economic circumstances allow.

12. Markets have helped foster growth and increases in living standards that would have been inconceivable to previous generations. All markets are structured by legal frameworks, as well as underwritten by public investments in physical and human capital. Markets exist to serve communities, and government can and should take an activist approach in shaping and complementing markets to support a democratic, prosperous and inclusive society. The market will often create the most equal and efficient distributions of power, wealth and services, but markets sometimes fail. Labor supports an active role for governments in addressing market failure and improving equity, promoting equality and social justice through the full range of government policy instruments including expenditure, taxation, regulation, and the provision of goods and services. Strong regulatory frameworks in both the global and the Australian economies are important to ensure competitive markets operate with transparency and openness, and to prevent and expose misconduct, and tackle the threat of monopoly power. Government should intervene to address market failures and the extremes of capitalism. Government should act to ensure the Australian economy becomes an increasingly diversified advanced economy – business by business and region
by region – by providing world’s best infrastructure, supporting strategic industries, promoting skills, overcoming barriers to growth and supporting science and innovation.

13. Labor, in government, will work with economic and statistical agencies and the community on developing a broader suite of measures for economic performance and social progress to complement traditional measures such as GDP figures, to ensure progress can be achieved in improving societal well-being, as well as measures of economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Labor will also work to ensure that there is proper measurement of technological progress and economic activity generated online. A blind focus on national averages can obscure measures of inequality, which have grown markedly over the past generation. Labor believes in growth that benefits the many, not just the few.

14. Labor is the party of jobs and fairness at work. We believe in the benefits of decent, secure work for individuals and society. Every Australian capable of working should be encouraged to do so. Automation and technological advances are good for society and the economy, but these changes need to be managed to minimise negative impacts on individuals, regions and industries.

15. As technology changes the economy, it is also changing the way that we work. We need to prepare Australians for this change, lifting skills and encouraging fair transition pathways. Workplace laws must keep pace with the growth of the gig-economy and other forms of on-demand work, to ensure that the jobs of the future are secure and well paid.

16. Labor believes that workplaces and communities that support and value diversity and are free of discrimination are more productive, and that discrimination in all forms is harmful to communities, productivity, the economy and society. Labor will ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to live and work without discrimination and will implement strategies that support an increase in workplace diversity including for people with family and caring responsibilities, both women and men (noting that many workplaces are highly gendered), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex and people from different religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

17. The rise of automation and artificial intelligence will threaten old jobs, but new ones will emerge. This is why Australia needs an education system producing skilled workers who are well trained and capable of performing in high-technology, high-skilled jobs of the future. Australia’s innovation and education framework should foster and encourage the very best of Australian ingenuity, so Australia is setting the pace of technological change. Australians with good ideas should not be forced to leave Australia to see their ideas developed. Entrepreneurs and innovators from around the world should be encouraged and invited to come to Australia to see their ideas developed, deployed and commercialised.

18. Labor believes in creating stability and confidence in the market, through stable policy settings so that businesses have the confidence to grow and create jobs, and consumers have the confidence to spend.

19. Labor is the party of full employment. It is the primary mechanism for enhancing individual well-being, improving social inclusion, eliminating poverty and maximising our human capital. Accordingly, in government Labor will deliver a mix of economic, industrial, social and educational policies that will seek to maximise employment opportunities for all of working age.

20. Labor is committed to a specific goal of reducing economic inequality while expanding economic growth. Reducing inequality is necessary for fairness, social cohesion and to ensure sufficient levels
of demand in the economy. Activist government intervention is required to address growing inequality in Australia and ensure a prosperous economy. Labor notes with concern that inequality in Australia is higher than the OECD average and that tax concessions can exacerbate this problem. This affects both the distribution of earnings and wealth in our society. While inequality is an economic problem, decisions to address it are made through political choice. Labor condemns the Turnbull government’s policies which are aimed at hitting low and middle-income Australians the hardest, while leaving untouched the raft of tax concessions which accrue largely to higher income earners. Labor will pursue a range of positive measures in government to tackle inequality and will target expenditure towards creating jobs, opportunities and tackling disadvantage wherever it occurs.

21. Labor recognises that wage stagnation and falling levels of collective bargaining contribute to inequality. Labor will ensure that Australia’s workplace relations system is fair and balanced, so that workers have the capacity to bargain for better wages and conditions.

22. Labor will develop a structural and institutional response to the cost of the damage that prejudice, discrimination and harassment wreak on productivity in particular and society generally, and will quantify the importance of participation and protection for equal opportunity on all attributes, LGBTI status expressly included.

Labor priorities

First Nations Economies

23. Labor recognizes the presence and importance of First Nations economies over Millenia.

24. Today First Nations people are using their cultural values and land management skills to develop sustainable businesses that stimulate economic growth for First Nations people, including in remote communities, ignite social change and enrich ecological biodiversity.

25. Labor supports cultural enterprises which, founded on the core principle that looking after country and the protection of Indigenous cultural values, has significant economic value.

26. Labor supports First Nations people being in a strong position to manage their native title lands to achieve positive economic outcomes when negotiating across their country.

27. Labor will support the development of Cultural enterprise economies based on recognition, cultural governance, sustainable enterprise, conservation and increasing meaningful employment opportunities to generate income.

28. Labor recognises that cultural enterprise economy, Indigenous culture and knowledge does not conflict with modern economic principles but complements and enhances business development opportunities.

29. Labor recognises that empowering Aboriginal people to manage their country, is also proving to be a solution to reduce entrenched, socio-economic disadvantage and welfare dependence, political marginalisation and poverty.
30. Labor supports First Nations people implementing and operating cultural enterprises including environmental management services, carbon abatement businesses, Indigenous Protected Areas, research projects, data recording and management, and cultural immersion experiences.

**Responsible Fiscal Policy**

31. Labor will deliver sound public finances by adhering to a fiscal strategy that achieves a balanced budget on average over the economic cycle. This provides the flexibility for the budget to vary with changing economic conditions to support economic stability, while ensuring public finances remain strong over time. Achieving a balanced budget is not an end in itself, but it is an appropriate medium-term objective, as part of sound fiscal policy and economic management and taking into account the economic cycle.

32. Fiscal policy has an economic and social role in both the short and long term. Labor will keep government finances strong, while acting to support jobs and growth and investing in future prosperity. Fiscal support for the Australian economy during the global recession saved hundreds of thousands of jobs and tens of thousands of businesses.

33. Labor’s fiscal strategy will be guided by these principles:

   - As a consequence of the decisions made by the last Labor Government Australia’s public finances are in good shape, by contrast with comparable countries across the developed world;
   - Fiscal policy should support growth and employment when growth is below trend and unemployment is above trend, and should accumulate surpluses and pay down debt during above trend growth;
   - There are long-term revenue challenges, including because people are living longer;
   - The Budget should be constantly reviewed and refined on both the expenditure and revenue sides, in the context of Labor’s values and the need to address longer term challenges; and
   - The tax system requires reform based on efficiency, equity and fairness.

34. Labor will be a responsible and careful steward of the nation’s finances, supporting equity, opportunity and growth as the Australian people expect and deserve while paying for the activities of Government as fairly and efficiently as possible.

**Stable Monetary Policy**

35. Labor wants to lift sustainable economic growth, consistent with maintaining low and stable inflation. The Reserve Bank should remain independent and fulfil each of its charter objectives of currency stability, employment and general economic welfare. The independent conduct of monetary policy by the Reserve Bank should continue and its medium-term inflation target of an average of two to three per cent over the course of the economic cycle should remain.

36. Labor will invest in the long-term drivers of growth and productivity so we can maintain growth with low inflation.
Retirement Incomes and Superannuation

37. Labor is the party of universal, compulsory superannuation. Labor Governments established a world-class retirement income system for Australia. There is now over $2 ½ trillion in our national savings pool. This gives working Australians the opportunity to maintain their living standards in retirement and takes pressure off pension payments. Our national savings pool was also an important factor in ensuring Australia’s banking system was well capitalised during the global financial crisis.

38. Labor Governments have and will in the future ensure the long term sustainability and fairness of Australia’s retirement income system. Labor increased the Superannuation Guarantee from 9 to 12 per cent, introduced low-cost MySuper accounts and the superannuation tax concession for low income earners. The Coalition has sought to either abolish or frustrate these important reforms.

39. Labor will protect and grow superannuation to provide a comfortable retirement for all Australians. This will include, when prudent, ending the freeze of the Superannuation Guarantee at 9.5 per cent and fast-tracking the Superannuation Guarantee increase to 12 per cent, to provide millions of Australians with higher retirement incomes.

40. Labor is committed to a strong default contribution system and fund governance arrangements that are in the best interests of members. This includes maintaining the ability of funds to have equal representation governance models.

41. The system of superannuation tax concessions has delivered half of all tax concessions to the top 20 per cent of income earners. Labor will work to ensure Australia has a sustainable and fair retirement income system. Labor will lower the annual non-concessional contributions cap to $75,000 and lower the High Income Superannuation Contribution threshold to $200,000. Labor will also remove the catch-up concessional contributions and tax deductibility for personal superannuation contributions introduced by the Coalition.

42. Labor will continue to develop policies that ensure superannuation works more effectively for those on lower incomes, women, young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

43. Labor is committed to maintaining a low income superannuation tax concession (currently called the LISTO) and to developing policies that will further support low income earners to save for their retirement. Labor also recognises the need to review the interaction between the age pension and superannuation.

44. In recognition of the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Labor supports exploring the introduction of early access to preserved superannuation accounts, retirement and aged pensions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

45. Labor acknowledges the significant gender gap in superannuation savings will develop policies that work towards closing this gap. Labor also understands the particular challenge for millions of Australians who for parts of their career are primary care providers, including those women on parental leave without pay, and the shortfalls they may experience in generating appropriate retirement income levels.

46. Labor recognises that too many workers are not receiving the superannuation that they are entitled to. Labor will pursue policies that seek to reduce the extent of unpaid superannuation in Australia.
Labor notes that the fragmentation of work is placing pressure on the superannuation guarantee—in particular where employment relationships are displaced by contracting arrangements. Labor will pursue reforms to ensure the superannuation system continues to fulfil its purpose, allowing all workers to accumulate superannuation on every dollar earned during their working years, and improving the standard of living in retirement for all Australians.

47. Labor supports the establishment of a national objective for the Australian retirement income and superannuation system consistent with the report of the Murray Financial System Inquiry. Labor’s vision is that the vast majority of the workforce should be able to maintain their working life standard of living in retirement, financed through a combination of adequate superannuation savings, private savings and the age pension.

48. Labor will create a regulatory framework that facilitates the offering of better retirement income stream products for those entering retirement.

A Strong and Vibrant Small Business Sector

49. Labor believes in a strong small business sector that focuses on jobs, growth and the Labor principles of fairness and equity. Labor recognises the importance of small business to the Australian economy, employing close to 5 million Australians and contributing some 47% of private sector employment. Small business contributes more than $330 billion annually to the national economy. Labor will encourage genuine small business activity and will ensure ABNs are not simply a means to transfer workers into insecure work with lower wages and conditions.

50. Small business is vitally important to regional economies with around 35 per cent of the total number of small businesses in each state located in regional areas, compared to 20 per cent for large firms. Over 95% of the businesses in Australia are small businesses; almost two-thirds have no employees and a further one quarter have only four or fewer employees. This means only 10 per cent of small businesses have more than 4 employees.

51. The strength and diversity of our micro, small and medium enterprises will determine Australia’s prosperity over the next half decade. Small and medium businesses make a significant contribution to the economy through innovation, with over 85 per cent of the businesses in Australia engaged in innovation being small businesses.

52. Labor will pursue four essential policies to help small business: more taxation assistance and simplification, lower regulatory burdens (including national harmonisation), competition laws with tougher penalties and better access to justice, and better access to finance. We recognise the impact that high energy prices and poor service from the NBN have on small businesses. We believe that small businesses need to be paid on time and to be treated fairly by the banks.

53. The digital economy means the nature of small business is changing and Labor will adopt policies to make the most of this.

54. Labor is committed to access to justice for small businesses and will support small businesses to take cases of anti-competitive conduct to court.

55. Labor will deliver preferential taxation assistance measures consistent with recommendations from the Henry Tax Review. Labor introduced numerous tax measures designed to assist small business with cash-flow to counter the effects of the global financial crisis. These measures included the instant asset write-off, tax loss carry-back, special depreciation for motor vehicles and the research
and development tax incentive, which, when combined, were worth in excess of $7 billion of direct assistance to small business. Labor supports company tax cuts for small businesses.

56. In recognition that small businesses are fundamental to the economy, way of life and character of all our communities, both urban and country, Labor will support small businesses by helping to facilitate them to better compete for government and private contracts, and by promoting industry networking between small and medium sized enterprises.

57. The Council of Australian Governments should deliver national reforms to reduce red tape and lower the costs of doing business across jurisdictions to benefit small business. Labor’s record includes:

- Establishing the Small Business Superannuation Clearing House enabling small businesses to pay their employees’ superannuation contributions to a single location;
- Establishing the National Business Names registration service for a single online service, removing the requirement for a small business to register in multiple jurisdictions;
- Introducing Standard Business Reporting through the use of the online standard business reporting; and
- Worked through the Council of Australian Governments to deliver regulation and competition reforms under the Seamless National Economy framework.

58. Small businesses will be significant drivers of future economic growth. Small businesses are often the first to recognise new technologies; apply the energy, passion and entrepreneurial skill required to grow their business; and find new ways to work in an ever more connected world. Strong local small businesses support community cohesion: through the mum and dad businesses, fruit shops, butchers, dry cleaners, farm and rural businesses that contribute to the fabric of our community, satisfy local need, create relationships, support other local business and contribute to our sense of place and identity.

59. Micro and small businesses are variable and adaptable, and have the proximity and flexibility for Australians to arrange work around their life priorities. Labor will support micro, small and medium enterprises to do the things the nation needs to remain a competitive and cohesive nation: develop new ideas, explore new opportunities, transform themselves into viable thriving businesses, and provide the relationships and local servicing that supports community.

60. Small business contributes significantly to the economic and social well-being and prosperity of our nation. All small business people should share in this prosperity through sound Government policy settings.

61. Market concentration poses a direct threat to the competitiveness of small business, and the ability for new entrants to break into a market. Labor recognises that competition law should reflect the power imbalance between large firms in concentrated markets, and small businesses. Small businesses are often the generators of innovative goods and services, creating jobs, and increasing consumer welfare.

62. Labor will ensure small businesses have appropriate channels to access to justice on the misuse of market power by larger firms. This requires the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to have an adequate litigation budget, and complementary avenues such as facilitating litigation in the public interest.
63. Labor recognises that small businesses, including tradies and subcontractors, are often the hardest hit by late or defaulted payments, particularly by the actions of dishonest company directors. Labor will ensure regulatory oversight tackles pernicious fraudulent phoenix activity to protect small business creditors.

64. Labor understands that small businesses can take a variety of forms, and that social enterprises as well as member or worker-owned firms such as cooperatives are less understood than other forms. Labor will advance its Inclusive Ownership, Inclusive Growth agenda by putting cooperatives on a level playing field, including greater access to capital, government grants, and creating a better understanding of cooperatives and mutuals in public and commercial life.

65. Cooperatives are a flexible structure with the potential to not only create economic value, but also to foster community. There is also some evidence that employees in worker-owned firms are more productive and more satisfied, and that such firms have less turnover and enjoy greater staff loyalty.

A Professional Financial Services Industry

66. Labor acknowledges that our financial services sector is now the largest employing sector in our economy providing significant employment and career opportunities for many Australians now and into the future. Labor also recognises that businesses and the Australian community in general is compelled to participate daily in our financial services sector and that a comprehensive, professional, efficient and competitive industry is essential to allocating capital in the economy and delivering the essential services such as banking, insurance and superannuation.

67. It is in the national interest to ensure that Australia’s finance industry has comprehensive local capability to meet the needs of both the domestic and global economies. The strength of our regulatory regime, together with effective competition policy and consumer protections will ensure our finance sector has the best chance to make its full contribution to national wellbeing as well as providing a platform for growth in the export of financial services to our region and the world. We want Australia to become a financial services centre in the region and will continue to undertake the necessary reforms to achieve this. That means we need to foster a professional, efficient, ethical and innovative marketplace for financial services and investment in employment, technology and skill development across the sector.

68. Labor strongly supports a Royal Commission into the banking and financial services sector. A Royal Commission is the only way to get to the bottom of the systemic failures and cultural issues within financial services sector, to ensure that consumers are protected from the rip-offs and scandals of the past and that Australians banking and financial system remains strong, profitable and well led.

Financial Services Industry Plan

69. Australia needs a financial services industry plan that focuses on innovation and on identifying capabilities in the Australian economy for developing a globally competitive and traded financial services sector. This industry plan should include strategies to:

- Develop stronger links between universities, business and industry bodies, training institutions, unions, and the federal and state governments;
- Improve skills through training, especially through an expanded and restored TAFE sector, and other relevant skills development initiatives;
• Encourage leaders who are capable of building a globally competitive and productive sector;
• Invest in infrastructure that will allow Australian industry to be globally competitive;
• Leverage the roll out of the NBN to build competitiveness and productivity and to strengthen the regional job market;
• Increase capabilities in data management;
• Extend market links to the global financial services sector;
• Attract investment by companies that can build an international presence for Australia; and
• Promote Australia’s key capabilities in the financial services sector.

70. Off-shoring of financial service sector jobs has been emerging as an important issue impacting employees and communities for a number of years. Despite prolonged periods of record profit growth, our largest and strongest banks, have been off-shoring jobs as a way of reducing labour costs.

71. Independent research assesses that at present rates, one in four Australian financial service sector workers will be at risk of losing their job to the offshoring initiatives of their employers. Labor believes that all Australian financial service sector employers have a responsibility to support and promote new and better Australian jobs, creating opportunities for local employment. Labor supports policies that promote Australia as a financial services centre and Labor supports those Australian financial services businesses who create and promote Australian jobs. Labor believes that offshoring financial services sector jobs undermines our capacity to develop and maintain an efficient, comprehensive, sustainable and internationally competitive local industry and therefore offshoring is not in the national interest.

Regulation of banking and finance

72. A well-regulated and comprehensive local banking and finance sector has been of paramount importance to Australia’s economic and social progress. Australia’s system of financial regulation overseen by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority and the Reserve Bank of Australia is strong. Labor will adequately resource Australia’s regulators to continue their work.

73. Labor believes all Australians should have access to information about key elements of our financial system. We will ensure our financial regulations continue to publish information about the size, nature and structure of our financial institutions, and work to ensure that information about the levels of prices and fees in the market continues to be available.

74. Labor will continue to take steps to promote an Australian finance sector that functions in accessible, affordable and fair manner by ensuring our financial institutions are:

• Regulated appropriately and professionally;
• Governed in a transparent and accountable manner;
• Staffed by appropriately trained and resourced professionals;
• Required to compete ethically and in the interests of all Australians;
• Operating free of conflicts of interest; and
• Investing in domestic jobs and skills development.
75. Australia should be a strong voice in international efforts to address weaknesses in the regulatory and supervisory framework and ensure greater future stability in the global economy.

76. Labor believes in the consumer protection principles (including consumer best interest duty and removal of conflicted remuneration) underpinning the Future of Financial Advice laws and that all financial product and service providers must be required to act in the best interests of their customers and clients at all times. We will consult further with the financial sector, unions, consumer and retiree groups about the detailed implementation of financial regulation applying to all financial services (including insurance and banking).

77. Labor has worked hard to remove conflicted remuneration practices and structures throughout the financial sector and we will continue to work with the industry and unions to ensure more appropriate remuneration systems, including for industry executives.

**Competitive and sustainable banking system**

78. Labor promotes a competitive and sustainable banking system for all. Australians are compelled to participate in the finance sector and as such the industry bears national economic and social significance. The banking industry must provide its products and services transparently and responsibly, balancing the needs of consumers, employees, shareholders and the economy. Our banks are highly profitable compared to their overseas counterparts, and Labor expects them to continue supporting the communities in which they operate.

79. Labor continues to support the four pillar policy. The four big banks continue to dominate our domestic banking environment and any move to merge these entities would severely compromise competition and be detrimental for consumers, local jobs, services and the economy.

80. We believe vigorous competition underpinned by ethical practices, prudent supervision, consumer protection and transparency is the best way to get a better deal for families and create a system that offers real choice for consumers and businesses. Combined with a strong prudential supervision and other regulation, this approach will continue to greatly benefit both the financial services sector and the consumers, and ensure that important reforms such as the Future of Financial Advice are pursued to the benefit of all Australians.

81. Labor recognises the structural changes in the finance sector arising from the digitalisation, artificial intelligence and automation. Labor notes the speed and scale of these changes, and their impact on employees.

82. Labor supports the establishment of a tripartite (Government, employer, employee) Finance Skills Taskforce to establish and oversee training and accreditation in the finance sector, in order to position workers for the finance jobs of the future. This Taskforce will emphasise:

- Skills accreditation;
- The portability of skills and qualifications;
- a scalable, pathways-based approach to training; and
- The importance of ethics training for all levels of staff to nurture public confidence in the sector.
Trading with the World

83. Labor supports trade between Australia and the rest of the world because trade generates economic growth, creates jobs, improves living standards and reduces poverty. Labor has a long record as an advocate for an open global trading system. Reducing barriers to trade creates more competitive industries and benefits consumers through lower prices and greater choice. Trade is a pathway to a high-skill, high-wage future for working Australians.

84. Australia’s trade success depends on its international competitiveness. There will be important trading opportunities for Australia in coming years through engaging with the Asia-Pacific region and ensuring our businesses take part in global value chains. Labor will ensure Australia can realise these opportunities through policies to improve Australia’s international competitiveness and to give businesses and individuals the skills and capabilities they need to succeed in a globalised economy.

85. The benefits of trade can and must be shared fairly, both at home and abroad. Labor will invest in education, training, skills and innovation, building Australia’s national infrastructure, and promoting the health and welfare of the community, so Australians benefit from the opportunities created by trade. While the benefits of trade liberalisation are significant, they can come at a cost to sectors, workers and regions that are disadvantaged by structural change in our economy. Particularly in the short-term, adjustment support is needed for some sectors, workers and regional communities to ensure that they too are raised up, not left behind, by economic change.

86. Labor acknowledges the benefit of economic growth in developing countries, while noting that these benefits have not been shared fairly in many economies. More equal economic growth will create decent jobs, lifting people out of poverty, giving them economic independence and supporting human rights. Labor is committed to trade policies that are consistent with Australian values of justice and equality, community views and the interests of developing countries.

87. Labor supports the open, rules-based, multilateral trading system under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation. Multilateral trade agreements have been shown to deliver larger economic and social benefits than regional or bilateral preferential agreements. A rules-based, multilateral system, underpinned by core and enforceable labour and environmental standards, provides a framework for fairness and equity and is the most effective means to ensure governments around the world do not resort to universally damaging protectionism.

88. Labor will oppose low-quality piecemeal trade agreements in favour of fair and transparent multilateral agreements. When multilateral trade negotiations are not making satisfactory progress, Labor will consider high-quality regional or bilateral trade agreements that are in Australia’s national interest and that support the multilateral trading system. Trade agreements must be consistent with Australia’s social and economic values, be based on widespread consultation, provide for appropriate minimum and enforceable labour and environmental standards, take account of social and economic impacts and allow sovereign governments to make decisions and implement policies in the interests of their citizens.

89. Labor supports trade and investment liberalisation through the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. APEC is a driver of regional economic integration and Labor will take an active approach to its role in the region’s economic architecture. APEC has a key role in promoting economic reform behind the border throughout the Asia–Pacific region and will promote these efforts. Labor will endeavour to strengthen APEC’s role in mobilising support for the WTO’s Doha Round. Labor will also support India’s ambition to join APEC. Australia should engage in the
emerging regional trade and investment architecture under the auspices of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific.

90. Labor will work to:

- Secure a successful conclusion to the World Trade Organisation’s Doha Round that brings certainty to the international trading system and progress for free trade, especially for developing economies;
- Provide leadership to the Cairns Group and seek reductions in agricultural subsidies and protection;
- Secure reciprocal new market access for all of Australia’s economic sectors;
- Address non-tariff ‘behind the border’ trade barriers such as excise tax arrangements, standards, customs procedures, subsidies and other restrictive measures which impede Australian exports;
- Reduce the costs to business of engaging in trade and taking part in global value chains through trade facilitation reforms; and
- Reduce the cost to business of accessing preferential treatment under bilateral trade agreements by ensuring such agreements have standardised and minimal administrative burden country of origin and other rules.

91. Labor will ensure Australians are informed about trade negotiations and will undertake full community consultation before entering new agreements.

92. Labor will:

- Ensure that on commencing negotiations for all trade agreements, a document is tabled in Parliament setting out priorities and objectives, including independent assessments of the economic, employment, regional, social, cultural, regulatory and environmental impacts;
- Ensure that during trade negotiations, industry, unions and community groups are consulted on draft negotiating texts, proposals and requests for review and comment;
- Ensure that once the negotiation is complete, a package will be tabled in Parliament, including the proposed treaty and any legislation required to implement the treaty domestically and a debate is allowed on treaty text as well as implementing legislation;
- Ensure that once a negotiation is complete, a comprehensive social, economic and regional impact assessment is made of the negotiated treaty text, to inform parliamentary debate, community discussion and Joint Standing Committee on Treaties consideration of the treaty;
- Ensure that free trade agreements undergo independent evaluation ten years after ratification to determine the impact of the agreement;
- Ensure developments at the World Trade Organisation, and the positions a Labor Government takes there, are regularly reported to Parliament through the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade;
- Ensure Australian submissions and materials relevant to free trade agreement negotiations and the World Trade Organisation are made public, unless there are commercial-in-confidence reasons, or disclosure would damage our national interest;
Labor in government will implement consultative mechanisms to ensure they are open to, and representative of, business, unions, and environmental and community interests;

- Review the composition of delegations to World Trade Organisation Ministerial meetings, so they include appropriate representation from business, unions and non-government organisations; and

- Advance World Trade Organisation rule changes to ensure immediate publication of dispute settlement decisions, together with short, plain language explanations.

93. Labor recognises the importance of a strong and effective trade remedies system which ensures that overseas exporters do not injure Australian manufacturers, growers and food processors, and undermine jobs, by engaging in unfair and predatory trade practices. Labor will continue to strengthen Australia’s anti-dumping laws and ensure that the Anti-Dumping Commission has adequate resources to enable thorough, timely and accurate investigations, compliance by exporters and importers, and rigorous enforcement of anti-dumping measures. Labor supports the provision of independent advice and assistance for small and medium-sized Australian enterprises and producers.

94. Australia’s anti-dumping system should be further reformed so that it reflects and acts on international developments and exporter behaviour, does not lag behind comparable countries and Labor recognises the need for improved access and assistance for Australian firms, particularly SMEs, through the provision of necessary expertise and information such as import data.

95. It is important that the International Trade Remedies Forum and the Anti-Dumping Review Panel are appropriately resourced and comprise industry representatives where appropriate or those with experience in industry in order to effectively deliver their important functions. Labor will transfer the responsibility for Safeguards investigations from the Productivity Commission to the Anti-Dumping Commission consistent with international best practice.

96. Consumers have the right to know that imported products meet Australian standards for safety and quality. Labor will develop, fund and support an intelligence led, risk-based approach to standards compliance assurance on imported products. This will include new and invigorated processes for sampling, testing, labelling and penalties for false and misleading conduct regarding claims to adherence to regulation and standards. Appropriate governance and regulatory mechanisms will be formed through consultation with governments, unions, industry and other stakeholders.

97. Over 40 million people worldwide are trapped in some form of modern slavery, many of whom are victims of exploitation in global supply chains. Australia has an important role to play in fighting modern slavery. Labor recognises that modern slavery is a hidden problem that will not be discovered without meaningful attempts to expose it. Labor will enforce supply chain reporting requirements, including mandatory reporting requirements and penalties for non-compliance. Labor will also establish an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to lead our efforts to fight modern slavery in Australia and abroad.

98. Increased international trade brings with it the responsibility to promote higher labour standards for Australia and internationally. Labor will support greater cooperation between the World Trade Organisation and International Labour Organisation secretariats on trade and enforceable labour standards. Labor supports and promotes incorporation of enforceable core ILO Conventions and labour standards, as a minimum, in all international trade agreements. Labor in government will seek the inclusion of enforceable reciprocal obligations for countries to adopt and maintain in their laws internationally recognised labour principles, as stated in ILO conventions in all trade agreements. Labor will outlaw importation into Australia of goods or services produced with forced
99. Labor provided the framework for a more level playing field for communities participating in the forestry, timber and forest products sector by delivering legislation and regulations which have the effect of prohibiting the importation of illegally logged wood and forest products made from it, and by requiring due diligence by importers and processors to ensure they source only from forests which are legally harvested. Labor will continue to deliver on this framework by ensuring that importers are complying with the Legislation and Regulations and by taking a risk based approach to monitoring due diligence systems to ensure imported products are not derived from illegal sources.

100. Labor will not allow trade agreements to limit the capacity of the Australian Government to determine immigration policies that promote education and training, permanent rather than temporary migration, local employment and fair employment standards. Labor will ensure future trade agreements do not prevent Australia from effectively regulating temporary migration, including by requiring genuine labour market testing for temporary work visas as well as Australian market wages and employment rights for immigrant workers where genuine skills shortages are deemed to exist. Labor will ensure trade agreements promote recruitment of local labour and protect the wages and conditions of local workers.

101. Labor supports the principle of national treatment so foreign and domestic companies are treated equally under the law. Labor does not support the inclusion of provisions in trade agreements that confer greater legal rights on foreign businesses not available to domestic businesses. Nor does Labor support the inclusion of provisions that constrain the ability of the government to make laws on social, environmental, labour and economic matters in circumstances where those laws do not discriminate between domestic and foreign businesses, such as investor state dispute settlement clauses. Labor sees these provisions as undermining a fair economic playing field, Australia’s judicial independence and the Australia people’s sovereign right to legislate and implement policies in their interest through democratic processes. As such, Labor views these provisions as contrary to the national interest and basic principles of democratic sovereignty and will not accept such clauses in any trade agreements negotiated by Labor in future. Labor will not ask this of Australia’s trading partners in future trade agreements.

102. Labor recognises that Australia is a party to Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) clauses through existing trade and investment agreements. Accordingly, Labor in government will review ISDS provisions in existing trade and investment agreements and seek to work with Australia’s trading partners to remove these provisions. While this process is underway, Labor in government will work with the international community to reform ISDS tribunals so they remove perceived conflicts of interest by temporary appointed judges, adhere to precedents and include appeal mechanisms.

103. Labor supports current World Trade Organisation rules that allow all nations to determine for themselves the appropriate public-private mix in their health, education, water and welfare sectors and the distribution of government funding within these sectors, and to protect their cultural industries, and procurement and employment policies. Labor will vigorously oppose any trade proposals that would require Australia to privatise its public services including its health, education or welfare sectors, undermine the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, reduce government rights to determine the distribution of funding within these sectors, or remove protection for our cultural industries. Labor will oppose attempts to privatise water services under World Trade Organisation rules. Federal, state, territory and local governments should retain the flexibility to implement
policies to encourage industry development, research and development, regional development and appropriate environmental, employment and procurement standards.

104. Labor will not support the expansion of intellectual property rights, which would extend monopoly patent rights to charge higher prices and would give copyright holders greater rights, at the expense of consumers.

105. The development assistance Australia provides under the World Trade Organisation’s aid-for-trade initiative should support developing countries in establishing skills, infrastructure, regulatory and investment policies to support sustainable growth. We will deliver practical trade-related capacity building programs that improve the ability of developing nations to export, improve their international competitiveness, and engage with the global economy.

106. Labor recognises that trade is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to promote economic growth in developing countries. We will work to ensure that nations throughout the world benefit from open markets and share in global growth. Labor will promote policies to achieve this in the World Trade Organisation, through trade agreements, at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Labour Organisation and other international forums.

107. Increased international trade brings the responsibility to promote higher environmental standards for Australia and internationally. Labor is committed to the goal of sustainable development. Labor will work towards the removal of environmentally damaging subsidies, and promote mechanisms that balance the interests of environmental protection and open markets.

108. Australia has an important role and responsibility at the Asian Development Bank. Labor supports the inclusion of core labour standards in its decision-making, including the roles monitoring mechanism at the Asian Development Bank.

109. A well-balanced Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership offers the prospect of more and better jobs through improved access to member countries’ markets for Australian exporting businesses and their employees. Labor’s position is that the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership must be consistent with the following principles:

- Does not undermine the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and public health initiatives;
- Provides for national treatment — so foreign and domestic companies are treated equally under the law, while not conferring greater legal rights on foreign businesses than those available to domestic businesses;
- Does not require Australia to remove protection of cultural industries;
- Retains the Foreign Investment Review Board and its powers to review foreign investment in the public interest;
- Retains quarantine provisions to reduce the risk of imported pests and diseases;
- Retains the flexibility to encourage industry development including through research and development, regional development and appropriate environmental, employment and procurement policies;
- Contains enforceable labour clauses that require signatories to enforce core labour standards in International Labour Organisation conventions; and
• Contains enforceable environmental clauses that require signatories to meet all relevant international environmental standards, including those in applicable United Nations international environmental agreements.

**Skilled Migration**

110. Labor will adopt a long-term approach when setting annual immigration levels. Australia operates in a global economy with an increasing number of skilled and other workers wishing to migrate to Australia. We will engage with the Australian diaspora to strengthen economic and social ties with other nations.

111. Labor is committed to a range of policies to lift workforce participation and the qualification level of the workforce in response to an ageing population and the demand for higher levels of skill and mobility. Falling workforce participation could pose a serious capacity constraint on economic growth, and Labor will use Australia’s skilled migration program as an important part of the policy response to this challenge.

112. Labor’s immigration planning framework will take into account net overseas migration, its positive and negative impacts on employment and training opportunities for Australian residents, demographic trends and other factors, while responding to current and longer-term economic needs.

113. Labor’s skilled migration policies:

• Will ensure that, as far as possible, skilled vacancies are filled by local workers first;
• Will be informed by ongoing consultation with industry, unions, the education sector and state and territory governments; and
• Will identify emerging skill shortages in particular sectors and complement domestic training policies to fill those shortages.

114. Labor will administer a skilled migration program to:

• Supplement domestic training policies, targeting skills shortages that cannot be filled locally;
• Balance the temporary and permanent skilled visa programs, recognising the increasing numbers of permanent visas granted onshore;
• Meet demand, with greater emphasis on migrants sponsored by employers into jobs where there are demonstrated skills shortages;
• Recognise particular skill needs across and within states and territories and metropolitan, regional and rural communities;
• Encourage skilled migrants to take up jobs in rural and regional locations where there are identified skills gaps;
• Allow Australia to compete internationally for skilled labour;
• Include the necessary tests and checks, and resources, to ensure the integrity of the system by addressing gaps in the skills migration program and recognise the primary right of Australian workers to Australian jobs;
• Ensure that where unions have existing rights to assess applications for imported workers those rights should be retained;
• Include rigorous safeguards to ensure employers have made all possible efforts to fill positions locally in order to protect the primary rights of Australian workers to Australian jobs and ensure migrants are not filling jobs Australians could be undertaking; and

• Protect temporary overseas skilled workers from exploitation.

115. Both permanent and temporary skilled migration are important to sustainable economic growth. Labor prefers permanent skilled migration to temporary skilled migration. Permanent migrants provide a stable, effective and targeted source of skilled workers. They have a greater stake in Australia’s future and in integrating into all aspects of Australian community life. Permanent migrants are less susceptible to exploitation and are more secure in their jobs, so permanent migration is less likely to generate negative impacts on all workers (whether local or migrant), in terms of wages, employment conditions and job and training opportunities.

116. Labor is committed to ensuring that no migrant is permanently temporary. This recognises that many permanent migrants begin their time in Australia as temporary migrants.

117. The skilled migration program should:

• Encourage a balanced approach between independent government-sponsored and employment sponsored migration;

• Provide information, including on workplace rights and responsibilities on arrival to Australia;

• Have the necessary checks to ensure that migrants have the competencies and qualifications claimed;

• Recognise the importance of English language skills for successful economic and social integration;

• Ensure skilled migrations are paid genuine market rates and have the same conditions as Australian workers; and

• Ensure that skilled migrants, if dismissed from their employment, can remain in Australia while any legal challenge to the dismissal is considered.

118. Labor will ensure all categories of temporary workers are not exploited through sham contracting or dodgy labour hire practices.

119. Labor is committed to ensuring ‘whistle-blower’ status for skilled migrants and temporary visa holders who are exploited.

120. Labor recognises that skilled migrants will bring their families to Australia and our policies should ensure that they are able to fully participate in Australian life. This includes access to free public education for children, English language support and work rights for dependents.

121. Labor believes that an independent Australian Skills Authority should be established in legislation. The Authority would include representatives of government, unions and employers, should report to government on skilled migration issues. The Australian Skills Authority should:

• Ensure skilled migration programs provide a benefit to Australia, reflect local labour market needs and provide advice to Government on current skills shortages;

• Project Australia’s future skills shortages;
• Identify circumstances preventing local workers from meeting Australia’s skills needs and provide advice on skill bottlenecks;
• Regularly review the skills shortage lists to add or remove occupations in response to changes in Australia’s skills, job market and regions; and
• Be supported by a dedicated independent labour market analysis resource.

122. Significant numbers of permanent visas are granted to temporary visa holders already working in Australia. Transition to permanent residency status helps move an individual overseas worker onto a more secure footing. Labor will align the permanent and temporary migration programs to facilitate the conversion of temporary visa holders on to permanent visas and citizenship. Labor will strongly encourage employers to sponsor temporary visa holders for permanent residency where the visa holders are working under successful arrangements and have priority skills which are in shortage in Australia.

123. Labor will regulate all Australian employment and industries under Australian law, including those located on the landward side of the outer limits of the territorial sea of Australia, in the Exclusive Economic Zone, or in the waters above the continental shelf. Labor will review the Migration Act with a view to ensuring the definition of the ‘Migration Zone’ encapsulates all offshore Australian employment and industries.

A Fair and Efficient Tax System

124. Labor will deliver a fair and sustainable tax system. This should provide incentives for all Australians to work and undertake productive enterprise, while guaranteeing adequate revenue to fund an activist role of government, including quality public services and a more equal distribution of income and wealth. Public confidence in Australia’s tax system depends on simplicity, transparency, and everyone paying their fair share.

125. Labor will continue our record of tax reform, guided by the principles of efficiency, fairness and simplicity.

126. Principles of fairness include:

• Horizontal equity, meaning that taxpayers on the same income pay about the same amount of tax;
• Vertical equity, meaning that taxpayers on higher incomes pay a progressively higher rate of tax; and
• Intergenerational equity, meaning the amount and mix of taxes paid by the current generation to properly provide for – and not disadvantage – upcoming and future generations.

127. The principle of simplicity requires the number of taxes to be as few, and taxation law to be as easy to understand and comply with, as is practicable. However, not all taxes have the main aim of raising revenue – some are aimed at reducing social harms. Taxes on tobacco and alcohol and are some instances in which taxation is used to internalise a negative externality.

128. Future personal income tax reforms will:

• Remove barriers to investment and workforce participation;
• Support families;
• Work to reduce inefficient taxes and taxes which punish good behaviour;
• Boost savings and make superannuation fairer;
• Preserve and enhance a progressive and fair tax system;
• Minimise high effective marginal tax rates, particularly on those moving from welfare to work and on second income earners in low- to middle-income families;
• Remove opportunities for tax avoidance by wealthy individuals with an approach reflecting the unique settings of the Australian taxation system, such as through better targeting of tax concessions and reducing loopholes that wealthier people use to reduce their tax liabilities and through consideration of measures which require high nett worth individuals to pay their fair share of tax, based on total income, rather than tax avoided through various measures;
• Reduce inconsistencies in the taxation of income from different forms of assets;
• Ensure the tax system does not make housing less affordable for Australian families; and
• Preserve Australia’s financial stability and minimise the potentially harmful effects of excessive short-term financial speculation;

129. Future corporate tax reforms will:

• Ensure corporations – at home and abroad – pay their fair share of tax, while encouraging investment and jobs growth;
• Ensure our corporate tax rate is fair and competitive;
• Enhance the capacity of Australian business and industry to successfully integrate into the global economy, so Australian companies win places in global supply chains, while ensuring business pays its fair share;
• Ensure multinationals cannot unfairly shift profits to minimise tax paid in Australia;
• Provide public transparency and deterrence of the use of tax havens, including procurement policy and guidelines for superannuation funds;
• Enhance transparency of tax payable, including the public release of information about where and how much tax multinationals pay, and related-party dealings, by large and multinational businesses to preserve confidence in the effectiveness and fairness of our tax system;
• Encourage and reward whistle-blowers who report on tax offenses; and
• Encourage a diversity of voices in tax policy development, including a commitment to community sector representation on the Board of Taxation.

130. All future tax reforms will:

• Ensure there is a sound revenue base for all levels of government;
• Simplify the tax system for individuals and businesses while preventing avoidance activity; and
• Preserve allocative efficiency by minimising distortions to investment and consumption decisions, except where interventions address market failures and serve environmental or social purposes.
131. Labor will support efforts to establish an international agreement to require tax authorities to share information about individuals and corporations suspected of tax evasion or money laundering. Labor supports the growing global trend of requiring oil, gas and extractive industry companies to report publicly on their revenue, profits as well as taxes and royalties paid on a country-by-country basis.

132. Labor will close down loopholes such as those associated with taxation of discretionary trusts, while also reforming negative gearing and the capital gains tax discount where the benefits overwhelmingly accrue to high income earners. Labor will continually assess Government tax concessions to ensure they are fit for purpose, are equitable and don’t risk long-run budget sustainability.

133. Labor will ensure that the Commonwealth Grants Commission properly assesses the costs of providing education, health, police and other essential public services in regional Australia, including reviewing caps on remoteness introduced by the Liberal Government in 2015.

**Housing affordability**

134. Labor is extremely concerned that many Australians, in particular young Australians, are being excluded from home ownership due to spiralling house prices that are outstripping an individuals and families capacity to save sufficient funds for a housing deposit. Tax laws that favour high wealth investors over Australians seeking to purchase a home are significant drivers of the current housing affordability crisis and collapse in home ownership.

135. Recent analysis demonstrates that intergenerational inequality will increase unless steps are taken to ensure that prospective home owners are not crowded out by unsustainable and inequitable tax advantages to wealthy investors. Tax concessions including negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts distort markets for existing housing stock, increase unaffordability and impose a large and unsustainable drain on Commonwealth revenues.

136. Labor will reform negative gearing and capital gains tax on residential investment housing by limiting negative gearing to investment in new housing and halving the capital gains tax discount to 25 percent. These reforms will not operate retrospectively. No current housing investments will be affected by this reform. Labor’s reforms to negative gearing and capital gains tax will also provide an impetus to invest in new stock and will create employment opportunities in the building industry.

137. Limited recourse borrowing by self-managed superannuation funds for housing investment has grown by over 800 percent since 2007. This type of borrowing by SMSFs crowds-out first homebuyers, increases risks of financial system instability and threatens to undermine the integrity of the superannuation system. Labor will further level the playing field for first homebuyers and remove the risks created by this type of borrowing by prospectively restoring the prohibition on direct borrowing by superannuation funds for housing investments.

138. Significant drivers of housing unaffordability are the related and growing incidence of vacant residential investment properties and rapidly increasing numbers of foreign purchases of residential investment properties. While some State governments are moving to introduce vacant property taxes, progress is slow and uneven. Labor will establish a COAG process to co-ordinate and facilitate an efficient and uniform vacant property tax across all of Australia’s major cities. Labor will double the foreign investment application fees which currently apply to foreign investment in new residential property. To deter the acquisition of residential investment property by foreign
buyers contrary to foreign investment rules, Labor will double the maximum financial penalties for breaches of the rules.

139. The private rental market is increasingly being occupied by young, middle income households locked out of the owner-occupier market. Renting in the private rental market is increasingly beyond the means of most low and very low income households. The private rental market is characterised by historically high levels of rental stress. Australia desperately needs more affordable and social rental housing. The community housing sector is providing the only significant growth in the stock of social and affordable housing but is in need of a new financing model. Providing not-for-profit community housing providers with a new source of low-cost, long-term debt financing will help boost the supply of affordable rental housing for low and very low income households. Labor supports the establishment of a bond aggregator to provide community housing providers with access to cheaper, longer term finance for new affordable and social rental housing and will continue to assess how best to deal with the funding gap that makes it difficult for community housing providers to fund housing for the working poor and Social Security recipients. Labor will work cooperatively with state governments to improve transparency and accountability. Labor will appoint a housing Minister and re-establish the National Housing Supply Council to ensure that there is a better assessment of general housing affordability issues, including housing supply. Labor will continue to develop housing affordability policy in a cooperative manner with state and territory governments including initiatives to improve and increase public housing, indigenous housing and the role that inclusionary zoning can play in improving housing affordability across the nation.

Innovation and the Economy of the Future

140. Job creation is the essential objective of Labor’s innovation and industry policy. Government and industry must be partners in the jobs and opportunities of the future, and this partnership must be structured to achieve clear capability, employment, training, research, innovation, local content and export objectives.

141. Labor recognises that the power of technology will affect increasing areas of the economy. We are committed to maximising opportunities for Australians to be employed in secure, high-wage, high-skill jobs. Labor’s innovation policies will provide leadership in adapting the economy to these changes and encourage investment in new areas to provide Australians with the jobs of the future.

142. The development and adoption of new industrial technologies must be directed to the full achievement of human potential. What has been called the fourth industrial revolution does not have to mean widespread job losses or new forms of industrial servitude and dehumanisation. A Labor Government will heed the example set in other advanced industrial democracies where policymakers have demonstrated that it is possible to unleash the opportunities in new technologies while containing the risks.

143. Developments in technology and automation are also changing the nature of work and the traditional employment relationship. Labor will ensure that workplace laws adapt to the transition to new jobs and new ways of working, so that fundamental workplace rights are preserved.

144. Australia today is competing in a global innovation race. To secure our future prosperity, Labor has established a clear aspiration that the nation will devote 3 per cent of GDP to research and development by the end of the next decade. To create jobs in an increasingly competitive and technologically advanced global economy we must invest in the drivers of economic growth by putting innovation, science and research at the heart of industry policy. We must foster a culture of
entrepreneurialism across the economy, from start-ups to established businesses and within the public sector.

145. Labor will reinvest in the capabilities of Australian firms to attract new investments through a suite of measures, including through sectoral approaches. A $1 billion Advanced Manufacturing Future Fund will support innovative Australian manufacturing firms seeking to modernise and move into high-value production, making them globally competitive. The Fund will address the finance gap for small and medium enterprises, by partnering with private finance to reduce the perceived risk in innovative projects, making them more attractive to lenders of private capital.

146. Governments, industry and research institutions should work together to make the transition to a clean energy future, overcome barriers to innovation and commercialisation, and meet the challenges of global competition.

147. Labor in Government will establish an advisory body on entrepreneurial issues (including social enterprise), working closely with key ministers as the Treasurer, Industry and Communications ministers, given the importance of the start-up sector to the broader economy.

148. Labor will foster the use of reliable clean energy, especially wind, solar and hydro power, and to drive industrial expansion will ensure this is supported by the development of storable and despatchable options. The clean energy sector is a key creator of jobs in its own right, and the jobs of the future should increasingly come from industries fuelled by clean energy sources.

149. Labor will transform the Australian economy through science and innovation. Our innovation agenda can re-tool Australia’s industries, re-skill our people and build a new economy based on the latest technologies and advanced manufacturing.

150. Labor recognises that an impediment to early stage innovation and commercialisation is access to capital. Labor will work to remove impediments that inhibit the emergence of diversified sources of capital to support the work of start-ups and established firms. This includes creating effective crowd-sourced funding frameworks to provide further opportunities to innovators.

151. Labor will work with the banking and financial services industry to ensure the emergence and growth of Australian micro-businesses are not impeded by their ability to access to finance. We will look at alternative financing pathways to help turn great Australian ideas into great Australian businesses by partnering with venture capitalists and licensed fund managers to co-invest in early stage and high potential companies.

152. Besides strengthening access to diverse sources of capital, our capacity to achieve these objectives is underpinned by the availability of high quality, relevant and accessible education and training. Through increased knowledge and skills, Australian citizens not only improve their individual work opportunities and living standards, but contribute to a stronger Australian economy and a more prosperous future.

Manufacturing

153. Labor’s agenda for high-quality jobs through innovation includes support for a strong and competitive advanced manufacturing sector. Manufacturing is vital to the Australian economy: manufacturers employ nearly a million Australians in high quality jobs, contribute more than six per cent of Gross Domestic Product and undertake a third of all business research and development.
154. Manufacturing is essential to any advanced economy. Without a strong manufacturing sector, Australia will not have the diverse economic base it needs to overcome our dependence on unpredictable and increasingly volatile commodity prices and to capitalise on future economic growth opportunities and technologies.

155. Manufacturing produces high-value exports, nurtures essential skills and drives innovation across the economy. A dynamic manufacturing sector is an essential feature of a resilient and broad-based economy. Manufacturing productivity sustains activity in other sectors, including advanced service sectors such as logistics.

156. Australia’s manufacturers have long been under severe pressure from currency volatility, which has increased import and export competition for Australian products. More recently, Australia’s manufacturers have been squeezed by high energy costs, which have forced some manufacturers out of business, undermined the viability of others and severely constrained investment in future development.

157. Government has an essential role in promoting industrial growth and the development of Australia's economy. Diverse national manufacturing capabilities are needed to ensure that Australia is not overly exposed to unexpected changes in major industries. De-industrialisation results in relative technological decline, a diminished capacity for innovation, and squandering of new growth opportunities. Once manufacturing capabilities are lost, they may be lost forever and the nation will be poorer as a result. A Labor government will never allow this to happen.

158. With the right policy settings and incentives an internationally competitive, technologically advanced Australian manufacturing sector has a bright future. Our world-class tertiary, science and research sector, highly skilled and innovative workforce, strong intellectual property laws and world class design, engineering and testing facilities mean that the sector is well placed to increase productivity, make more specialised and high value-added products, enter new supply chains and capture niche markets. Australia needs an industry policy focused on these goals so that Australians can be the beneficiaries of new industrial technologies.

159. Manufacturing now matters more than ever in the knowledge-dependent and interconnected global economy. The measures Labor put in place in government encouraged Australian manufacturers to innovate and boost competitiveness, by shifting to high-technology, lower-volume forms of production for niche markets. Australia’s strong reputation in areas such as quality standards, product safety, ethical labour and environmental standards are key competitive advantages that governments have a responsibility to monitor and maintain.

160. In government Labor will revive our innovation agenda and seek to support, maintain and expand Australia’s advanced industrial capacity in automotive manufacturing, shipbuilding, rail manufacturing and other advanced manufacturing industries, like defence, textile, clothing and footwear, medical technologies, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, food, and pulp and paper. We will re-establish Innovation Councils in key industry sectors to ensure a tripartite approach to building the innovative capacity of Australian industry.

161. Manufacturers are experiencing increasing energy cost pressures, both due to rising electricity and gas prices. Labor will end the national energy policy vacuum which underpins a lack of investment in new energy infrastructure and drives rising energy prices, by implementing policies to support the transition to modern clean forms of energy, to deliver affordable, reliable and increasingly clean energy to Australian industry.
162. Labor recognises that developing Australia’s natural gas resources requires sharing the benefits equitably between producers, users and the owners of the gas, the Australian community. Labor is committed to ensuring that the Australian community maintain equitable access to Australia’s abundant gas reserves and receives a fair return on the profits made from extracting our resources, while keeping our resources sector strong and sustainable into the future.

163. Labor recognises that exporting Australia’s natural gas is in the interests of all Australians when appropriately managed and balanced against domestic needs of both households and industry. Labor also recognises the vital role that gas plays in Australia’s energy and industry competitiveness, particularly in manufacturing. Labor acknowledges the key role that natural gas will play in a clean energy future. For these reasons, in government Labor will introduce measures to ensure that there are sufficient supplies of affordable gas for firms using gas as a feedstock in manufacturing processes.

164. The end of passenger vehicle production in Australia does not mean the end of automotive manufacturing in this country. The automotive industry has always been a great repository of advanced manufacturing capabilities, with wide spillover benefits for a range of manufacturing sectors such as defence, mining, renewable energy generation, biopharmaceutical, aerospace materials, building products, food processing and medical devices.

165. Labor supports ongoing co-investment in the automotive industry, particularly in automotive research and development that focuses on the technologies identified in the 2020 Technology Roadmap, which include: autonomous vehicles, electric vehicle technology, alternative fuels such as hydrogen and LPG, intelligent transport systems and telematics, new battery technologies and light weighting.

166. Labor believes in using Australian expertise to contribute to global advances in technology and product design, and will work with the domestic automotive industry to ensure that its 100 years of experience is applied in developing a specialist industry that will manufacture automotive products for strategically chosen niche markets. This transformed industry will integrate high-end, value-adding engineering techniques, knowledge-intensive R&D, and innovative industrial practices.

167. Through the Advanced Manufacturing Future Fund Labor will give priority to automotive component makers who are looking to enter new supply chains or markets, or are seeking to diversify and develop new products.

168. The automotive and shipbuilding industries are crucial if Australia is to retain and expand its advanced manufacturing capacity. Labor will act to prevent the loss of the existing skills and capabilities in these industries. We will pursue every opportunity to attract new investment in the automotive industry, and work with Australia’s shipbuilders to tender competitively for new contracts.

169. A strong shipbuilding industry is vital to Australia’s long-term strategic interests as well as being a source of innovative advanced manufacturing capabilities. Without a shipbuilding industry, this country would be dangerously dependent on potentially unreliable overseas suppliers. A Labor Government will develop a national shipbuilding plan to ensure the continued role of Australian shipyards in the construction of new vessels and sustainment of existing vessels. This plan will implement procurement strategies for naval and other government maritime vessels that substantially reduce the risk of shipyard closures and the loss of crucial capabilities.
170. Labor will establish an Australian Space Science and Industry Agency to provide leadership for Australia’s space-related activity and harness the strengths of our space research and industry sectors. Globally, commercial space activities are growing by almost 10 per cent annually and now represent 76 per cent of the $420 billion global space economy. Australia’s share of it is only 0.8 per cent. A strong space industry sector will create new manufacturing and service industry jobs, diffuse advanced technology throughout the economy and will safeguard our space and satellite based infrastructure necessary to a functioning society and economy.

171. A Labor Government will develop a plan to ensure that the $46 billion in expected investment in public rail projects over the next decade will create local jobs and maintain strategic skills and capabilities in rail manufacturing. Labor understands that taxpayers’ dollars in public projects should be used to develop and strengthen Australian capabilities and industries rather than relying on overseas manufacturers. Labor’s plan will bring government, industry and union representatives together, to strive to reduce the risk to manufacturers and supply chain firms from fluctuating market demand. Labor wants Australia to have a strong rail manufacturing industry that can provide high-quality rolling stock for this country and the wider world.

172. Labor recognises the specific pressures facing Australia’s crucial textile, clothing and footwear (TCF) industries. These industries employ over 30,000 Australians in the formal sector and many thousands more in the informal sector as home-based workers. They maintain valuable skills and capabilities, and underpin regional economies around the country.

173. Labor will accelerate the transformation of the textile, clothing and footwear sector by supporting the development of new products and processes, targeting opportunities in ethical production and the high-tech, high-value end of the market. The conditions of support to textile, clothing and footwear companies will be designed to ensure sustainable employment outcomes, ethical labour and environmental standards, and maintain capacity and build skills.

174. Labor will improve opportunities for Australian textile, clothing and footwear manufacturers in government tenders and will require all companies that tender for textile, clothing and footwear contracts to hold Ethical Clothing Australia accreditation. Labor will support the important work of Ethical Clothing Australia and work with agencies to extend requirements for ethical labour standards to companies tendering for government contracts that source their textile, clothing and footwear contracts from offshore.

175. Labor will support and assist TCF workers who lose jobs in the industry with an appropriate level of support for programs and services such as a non-means tested training allowance, training in English language and literacy, customised support for training and job-seeking, and funding for community-based organisations to advocate on behalf of redundant workers.

176. Labor recognises the importance of clear and consistent policy measures and strong intellectual property laws, which encourage business investment in Australia. The medical technology, pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors, which employ tens of thousands of Australians, comprise some of the most innovative and export-driven businesses in the country. To ensure that these companies continue to invest in Australian jobs, investment attracting measures, such as the R&D Tax Incentive, are essential. Labor will establish an ongoing industry consultation process to facilitate advice to government on the development of forward-looking policy in the sector.

177. More than 320,000 people and 30,000 businesses are engaged in food and grocery manufacturing sector, with over 40 per cent of staff located in rural and regional areas. Labor understands that we must invest in this industry to preserve and enhance its reputation for food quality and safety and
to enhance its global competitiveness. A Labor Government will particularly seek to support food manufacturers striving to enter expanding markets in Asia. Food manufacturers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, will be one of the two priority areas for assistance from Labor’s $1 billion Australian Manufacturing Future Fund.

178. Labor will continue to support Australia’s sustainable pulp, paper and fibre industries, through both innovation programs and government procurement policies. Labor recognises that good procurement choices should always seek to achieve value for money, which cannot be decided solely by comparing purchase prices. Any sensible procurement decision will take into account the impact of the decision on communities and the broader economy. Australia has huge opportunities to expand its fibre and advanced materials sectors, comprising textiles, clothing and footwear production, furniture manufacturing, timber and wood products processing, and paper products manufacturing as well as production of newer materials such as carbon fibre, light-weight materials, bio-products and advanced polymers. Labor will work with these industries to attract investment opportunities, and to increase access to finance through the Advanced Manufacturing Future Fund.

179. In order to maximise Australian industries’ competitiveness in global markets, the federal government must work in partnership with state and territory governments, industry, businesses, unions, and research centres to lift productivity, improve workforce skills, foster innovation and collaboration, enhance competitiveness, and overcome barriers to growth, by, for example, improving access to investment finance and overseas markets.

180. Through measures such as the Advanced Manufacturing Future Fund Labor will address the historic underinvestment in too many manufacturing sectors and will look to models like the successful Clean Energy Finance Corporation, to improve access to finance. By partnering with industry and private finance providers, a Labor government will help ensure manufacturers are able to make the investments needed to over time to transform their operations and take advantage of new advanced manufacturing opportunities.

181. Small and medium businesses need independent advice to help boost their productivity, lift management skills, and bring new products to market. Labor will re-establish networks and programs to enhance collaboration between industry and researchers so Australian firms benefit from cutting-edge research and new technologies.

182. Labor will continue and strengthen Australian Industry Participation Plans (AIP Plans) for public and private procurement and restore the requirement for all tenderers to complete and implement an AIP Plan. Labor will ensure that the quality of the plans submitted is a key relevant factor in value for money decisions made about the tender and that compliance with the Plan is monitored. Australia needs a more diversified economy that is not entirely dependent on commodity exports, sustaining high-skill, high-wage jobs, so we need to be clever in our purchasing. This is true of private purchases and even more for government procurement, because governments’ buying power extends throughout the economy. Labor will ensure that the Australian Industry Participation Authority is adequately resourced, and that the thresholds for Australian Industry Participation Plans are set at appropriate levels. Labor will establish an Australian Industry Participation Board pursuant to the Jobs Act.

183. Labor will strongly advocate for Buy Australian programs and initiatives. Labor will adhere to a national interest test for government procurement policy by considering whole-of-life costs, rather than purchase prices alone, and ensure procurement policies take into account the direct and indirect economic benefits of buying locally, including estimated taxation revenues, employment opportunities and industrial capability as detailed in the recent changes to the Commonwealth
Procurement Rules. This will be supported by requirements to collect all relevant data, not enter trade agreements that would undermine local procurement, provide clearer guidelines for establishing economic benefit, wider dissemination of procurement guidelines within the public service.

184. Labor recognises that Australian industry has a responsibility to act ethically both domestically and globally. Labor will legislate to ensure Australian enterprises’ domestic and global supply chains are transparent and do not breach State and International Labour Organisation labour standards, international human rights, anti-slavery, child labour and human trafficking laws.

185. Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments have a crucial role in the application, monitoring, setting and enforcement of effective building standards that keep the public safe. In recent years, an over-emphasis on privatisation and deregulation has seen a marked deterioration in these standards, culminating in the widespread use of dangerous materials. Labor will implement a suite of measures to improve the fire safety of Australian buildings and prevent the use of dangerous non-conforming and non-compliant building products. This will involve a ban on the importation of flammable cladding, an overhaul of national licensing regimes, the establishment of a Building Industry Licensing Authority and a tougher penalties regime to deter fraudulent, false or misleading claims.

186. The threat of asbestos continues to put Australian workers at risk, as our enforcement agencies struggle to prevent the product entering the country. Labor will review both the penalties for the illegal importation of asbestos and relevant legislation to address the issues preventing the enforcement of the current asbestos ban with the aim to close loopholes and improve the capacity of prosecutors to obtain convictions against entities and individuals importing asbestos.

187. Labor will reinvigorate and maintain the Building Ministers’ Forum, restoring the Minister for Industry – the senior Minister – as the Chair. Australia needs nationally consistent building standards, which are fit for purpose, enforced, and maintain high standards in the building and construction industry.

Science and Research

188. Science and research are indispensable in an advanced industrial civilisation. Australia’s national interest depends heavily on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, both for a better understanding of our world, and for their application to the good of the nation. We cannot assume that prosperity will follow just because we are Australian. As a country we need to make choices about where we invest our scarce scientific resources to secure our future.

189. Labor will develop a strategy to grow and sustain Australian science that is both long-term and enduring. Our strategy will focus investment in national science and research on four pillars: areas of national need such as the impact of climate change on our agriculture, industry, energy supply, and regional and rural Australia; Australia’s comparative advantages; Australia’s capacity to contribute to international scientific endeavours; and support for the curiosity of scientists working at the cutting edge of any field.

190. Labor has established a clear aspiration that the nation will devote 3 per cent of GDP to research and development by 2030. To create jobs in an increasingly competitive and technologically advanced global economy, Australia must invest in scientific and research infrastructure, our scientific and research workforce, our world-class research universities and publicly funded research agencies, and develop a culture of excellence and internationalisation.
191. Australia has remarkable strengths in a range of scientific and research fields. Nations must, however, focus investment on national imperatives and comparative advantages. Labor will focus investment in science and research on within the four pillars. The present priorities including food, soil and water, transport, cybersecurity, energy, resources, advanced manufacturing, environmental change and health, will be assessed against those pillars. Labor will engage the innovation system – universities, researchers and industry – to focus national investments on meeting key challenges within these areas.

192. The nation needs advanced research, and the conduct of advanced research requires research infrastructure. The more sophisticated the infrastructure, the greater the potential for breakthrough research. Australia’s research infrastructure system is a significant high-skill, high-wage employer in its own right, as well as generating many blue- and white-collar jobs in its supply chain and in the communities around facilities. Providing essential infrastructure for Australian researchers is primarily the responsibility of the Government. Labor will deliver the research infrastructure Australia needs to prosper in the 21st century.

193. A strong research workforce is vital to Australia’s prosperity in the knowledge economy, but global competitive pressures are driving relentless competition for research talent. Labor remains committed to supporting Australia’s best and brightest researchers throughout their careers. We will continue to work collaboratively with researchers and the business community to ensure Australia has the research workforce we need to reach our innovation goals. Labor will maintain a migration system that allows Australia to attract the best and the brightest from around the world.

194. Women are underrepresented in many STEM fields, particularly in mathematics, physics, engineering and ICT; in industry sectors such as construction and transport; and in senior positions in these fields. Impediments to women in STEM have deep societal, cultural and institutional roots, and no single strategy can entirely plug the leak. Australia’s future wellbeing and advancement will be built upon a STEM literate workforce: to succeed, this workforce must fully engage women. Labor will support long-term strategies to eliminate gender bias at all levels of professional science.

195. Labor will foster a diverse research workforce and improve research training opportunities for early career researchers from all backgrounds. Labor will encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to pursue research careers, help to retain talented women researchers in laboratories and as research leaders, and promote closer involvement by industry in research training.

**Australia’s Research institutions**

196. All Australia’s research institutions work in the national interest. They contribute in different ways whether they are national icons like the CSIRO, universities, or smaller, specialised agencies. They will be the engines that enable Labor to deliver its strategy for national development.

197. Australia’s publicly-funded science and research agencies should be properly resourced to support their critical contribution to society, productivity, industrial capacity and economic growth. Australia’s regional and rural science capabilities, including within publicly-funded research agencies such as the CSIRO, are essential.

198. Researchers in universities and publicly-funded research agencies create the knowledge that powers Australia’s innovation system. They perform the basic research that underpins future discoveries. They give us the means to manage our unique natural heritage, not only by protecting our environment but also by creating new jobs in biodiversity, conservation and ecotourism. They undertake vital work in the humanities, arts and social sciences that helps us to understand the
world around us, and to build a stronger and more resilient society. Labor is committed to maintaining government investment in basic research across all disciplines, recognising that the market rarely provides incentives for the private sector to invest in such research.

199. Labor will pursue the objectives of focusing research investments within our four pillars, ensure research funding adequately reflects the full cost of research and to maintain globally competitive success rates in grant funding. Incentives in university funding should encourage researchers to engage with end-users, including industry, to improve the impact of their research for industrial applications and the public good.

200. Australia’s public research sector must pursue excellence. Universities and publicly-funded research agencies must be responsive to national strategies and to the communities that sustain them. Labor supports mission-based compacts to encourage universities to pursue diverse missions, based on their strengths. Labor will invest in smaller and regional universities to develop their research capacity in areas of strategic capability.

201. Labor will always defend our researchers’ integrity and independence. Science and research must be free of commercial influence and political interference. The previous Labor Government restored the independence of the Australian Research Council, ensured the independence and autonomy of researchers working in our publicly funded research agencies and our universities. Labor will build on this record to develop a Science Integrity Charter across the Federal public sector.

Science for Australia’s Future

202. Labor will develop and implement a national STEM strategy, consistent with advice from the Office of the Chief Scientist, which recognises the urgent and vital role of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for national advancement, and jobs growth across all existing and future industries.

203. Labor will give Australian scientists and researchers opportunities to collaborate and compete on the global stage. The great leaps of the past century were made possible by scientific experiments on a massive scale, far beyond the resources of any one nation. Australia should contribute our research strengths to international collaborative missions such as the Square kilometre Array, European Molecular Biology Laboratory, the European Southern Observatory, and the International Ocean Discovery Program. Labor will support researchers from all disciplines to collaborate with their colleagues abroad, encounter new ideas and form and maintain valuable research networks with the best minds on the planet.

204. The active enthusiasm and support of the community is essential to the success of the Australian research enterprise — including its ability to reach out effectively to industry and the public sector. Labor will support a national STEM engagement strategy to bring the transformative power of science and research to every corner of the nation, including promoting Questacon’s vital role in education and promoting citizen science.

205. Rigorous evidence-based policy advice is essential. Labor supports science advisory mechanisms and the engagement of the Learned Academies in providing expert advice to the Australian Government. Labor will ensure publicly funded research agencies are represented on all relevant advisory bodies and councils, including those in the industry and innovation portfolio.
206. Australia’s research efforts should reflect the imperatives and opportunities of climate change, including the development of clean technologies and protecting our natural assets. Recognising the environmental importance, economic value and unique vulnerability of our tropical regions and marine environment, Labor will promote research in these critical fields.

Industry, Science and Research Collaboration

207. Governments and industry have a mutual obligation to invest in the jobs and opportunities of the future. As a part of our goal to devote 3 per cent of GDP to research and development by the end of the next decade, Labor will preserve the Research and Development Tax Incentive, and recognises its value to drive investment in innovation through the taxation system. The R&D Tax Incentive is critical to Australia’s ability to remain globally competitive by encouraging firms to develop their ideas in this country.

208. Labor will develop measures to improve and complement the Research and Development Tax Incentive that will increase collaboration between universities, publically funded research agencies and industry, as well as increasing co-investment in innovative manufacturing.

209. Labor will put Australia’s researchers in the front-line of our industries. The Commonwealth Science and Industry Research Organisation (CSIRO) is critical to this goal. Labor recognises the immense value publicly funded research agencies such as CSIRO, the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation and the Australian Institute of Marine Science deliver when they collaborate with governments and industry, using their research and innovation capabilities to help create the jobs of the future.

210. Labor will use proven programs, such as the Cooperative Research Centres program, to build new collaboration between researchers and end-users. Australia’s prosperity does not only derive from direct commercial outcomes. Labor will restore the public good aspect of the Cooperative Research Centres program; re-open the scheme to social and cultural innovation from the humanities and social sciences, and remove rules preventing existing CRCs from applying for new funding.

Strengthening the services sector

211. The service sector employs four out of five Australians and accounts for three-quarters of our GDP. A strong and efficient service economy is crucial to Australia’s long-term economic prosperity and ability to take part in the global services economy. The economic transitions in the Asian region away from investment driven growth to more consumption driven economic activity, means there are challenges and opportunities for Australia’s services sector. Unlike mining and resources, Australia does not have a natural comparative advantage in providing services. This is why Labor will work hard to build promote further engagement in our region so our services sector can prosper and grow delivering well paid Australian jobs.

212. Growing the Australian services sector will be critical to the future living standards of Australians, and the best way to achieve this is to promote service exporters into the growing markets in our region. Sixty per cent of Australia’s services exports go to Asia. Asia is the growth-engine of the world and Australia’s geographic location and political relationships in this region give us a comparative advantage. To help grow our services exports, Labor will draw on our capabilities and knowledge base, such as our large connected Australian based Asian diaspora, while also looking to improve Asian literacy and cultural understanding.
213. Australia needs high skill, quality jobs in the domestic services sector. Businesses that provide the services essential to consumers in a modern industrial society — such as financial, retail and personal services, transport, communications, information technology, data management, legal, medical, scientific, engineering, construction, education, tourism, healthcare, hospitality and leisure services — are vital to Australian prosperity. They access services export markets in their own right and compete with imported services on cost and quality, and improve our ability to compete on the international stage by making export initiatives in other sectors more competitive.

214. Australian consumers increasingly receive services from off-shore locations unknowingly. Where services are provided from off-shore locations, this should be disclosed so consumers can make informed purchasing decisions. Country of origin disclosure legislation for services should grow and Labor will work with the industry and unions to strengthen disclosure requirements that protect consumer’s personal information.

215. Service sector employers, in banking, communications and information technology in particular, have pursued off-shoring as a way of reducing costs. Employees and communities have felt the impact of this trend for a number of years. Labor believes all service sector businesses have a responsibility to support and promote new and better Australian jobs, creating opportunities for local employment as they grow their operations.

216. The service sector is, and should remain a significant growth area for Australian exporters. Although services exports have been growing faster than goods exports, trade in services still represents only a fifth of our total trade. Australia’s top service exports - education, tourism, financial services and professional services (which includes management advice, engineering, R&D, legal and accounting services) – are diverse and face differing challenges.

217. Service businesses that derive their profits from the Australian community should contribute economically and socially. Labor will deliver a service industries strategy led and developed by a representative task force. The strategy should focus on innovation and identifying capabilities that exist in the Australian economy that can provide the basis for a globally competitive services sector. The objective should be for Australia to establish itself in the global traded services economy. Implementation of the strategy will require:

- Stronger linkages between universities, industry bodies, training institutions business, unions, state and federal governments;
- Improved skills through training and other targeted skills development initiatives;
- Clusters, networks and mergers in parts of the Australian services sector through;
- Encouraging leaders in the services sector capable of creating a globally competitive and productive sector;
- Recognising that many successful businesses integrate services with manufacturing activity;
- Better infrastructure with internationally competitive costs;
- Effective roll out of the NBN to build competitiveness and productivity and strengthen the regional job market;
- Better capabilities in data management;
- New market linkages into the global services sector;
- Ensuring the reduction of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers are a key focus of international trade agreements;
• Greater investment from companies who can build an international presence for Australia; and
• Marketing and branding of Australia’s key services sector capabilities.

218. Labor opposes the widespread use of sham contracting in the services sector. Sham contracting is the deliberate or reckless misclassification of the working relationship as a contract for services instead of a traditional employment relationship. This misclassification results in knowing or reckless behaviour designed to result in workers being denied employment benefits and protections, including superannuation entitlements. Labor will strengthen the laws that prohibit sham contracting.
Chapter 3: Building Australia’s future

The contemporary challenge

1. Australia’s vast island geography presents significant infrastructure and service delivery challenges. Well-built, well-serviced and well-connected cities and regions are essential if we are to overcome the tyranny of distance and ensure Australia realises its full potential. Infrastructure matters.

2. In the highly competitive, globalised world of the 21st Century, the prices consumers pay, the profits businesses make, the quality of life people enjoy and the export income that’s generated will more than ever depend on the adequacy and quality of a nation’s roads, railways, sea and air ports, electricity grids, and telecommunication networks.

3. Australia needs nation building national governments to provide the vision, leadership and investment to get things done.

4. The changing global economy presents new opportunities and challenges across many sectors in Australia’s cities and regions. Technological progress, urbanization, migration, trade, climate change and the growth of the middle classes in the Asia Pacific will affect the scale of, demand for, and type of new projects and programs that government invests in and supports.

5. Inequality is a growing problem in Australia and across the world. Australia’s governments must work together to ensure that access to opportunity and jobs is not determined by someone’s postcode, birthplace, race, gender, religion, age, sexuality or disability status. Labor recognizes that access to good jobs through provision of quality infrastructure can help to level the playing field.

6. Australia is a highly urbanised nation. More than four in five Australians living in urban areas. Australia needs a government that will lead on urban policy and support productive, sustainable and liveable cities to maintain and improve our quality of life, and lift our global competitiveness so that Australia remains a first-choice destination for investment, tourism and education.

7. Transformative, large-scale infrastructure projects which are essential to building our nation may impact on existing communities, including traditional owners. Government must ensure that projects are selected on merit, properly planned, fully transparent and work to minimize any negative impact on communities while maximising benefits.

8. Australia’s economy is diverse and economic priorities differ across industries and through-out regional, urban, coastal and remote Australia. State, territory and local governments play a critical role in delivering infrastructure and essential services, and in improving productivity. Coordinating three levels of government across eight states and territories requires national leadership.

9. Regional Australians face unique challenges in accessing quality government services and in creating sustainable economic opportunities. Regional Australia requires a coherent framework that is fully integrated with mainstream economic, social and cultural policy, promotes regional prosperity and opportunity, and ensures its contributions are recognized.
Labor values

10. Labor builds our nation. Past federal Labor governments had the vision to build the transcontinental railway, the Snowy Hydro Electricity Scheme and to invest in massive urban infrastructure that provided running water to many Australian homes for the first time.

11. During the global financial crisis, federal Labor’s economic stimulus and investment in the future produced a period of nation building, creating new opportunities in modern communications and the transportation of people and goods, lifting long-term productivity and competitiveness, and generating economic prosperity.

12. Labor has its origins in regional Australia. Federal Labor understands regional communities and historically, has introduced innovative regional development policies and invested in the infrastructure that have allowed regions to prosper.

Labor priorities

Transport Infrastructure

Principles – Merit

13. Labor is committed to evidence-based policy.

14. Nationally significant infrastructure projects should be prior-assessed by Infrastructure Australia, based on a business case, a cost-benefit analysis and other objective criteria.

15. The assessed contribution of projects and regulatory settings to national productivity will be a key factor in infrastructure decision-making.

Mode Neutrality

16. Often there are competing options for eliminating bottlenecks in our logistics networks and reducing traffic congestion in our urban communities, spanning road, rail, intermodal, aviation, maritime and active transport. Labor will take a mode-neutral approach, with projects offering the highest economic, social and environmental returns to be prioritised

Proper Planning

17. Investment in new infrastructure involves choices and long-term vision. It also requires timely consultation with affected communities by the appropriate level of Government, generally the states and territories. Planning must be efficient and open, without being rushed or out of sequence, to get planning and delivery right, first time around.

18. Australia needs to separate short-term electoral cycles from longer-term infrastructure planning and delivery cycles, via strong institutional frameworks, providing a clear ‘pipeline’ of projects and initiatives.
Safety and Security

19. The safety and security of passengers, workers and the general public is a paramount consideration in transport investment, planning, and operations.

20. Labor supports strong domestic and international transport safety regulation and oversight, and will prioritise agency resourcing and implementation of world’s best practice in safety regulation.

21. Labor will prioritise security operations at our international ports and airports, including offshore installations and resource relevant agencies, and regulate operators, to manage security risks.

Fairness

22. Projects and initiatives supported by a Federal Labor Government will incorporate fairness – that is, all states, territories, cities and regions are entitled to a share of national funding, based on project merit.

Consultation

23. The community is entitled to understand and debate the reasons for government decisions. Few new infrastructure projects are free of costs in affected communities, while often the benefits are spread beyond the immediate community where they are built. Labor will consult with the community in a timely way when projects are being planned and delivered.

Transparency

24. Assessed project business cases should be released, and details should only be withheld where this would genuinely risk taxpayer value-for-money.

Social Inclusion

25. Labor will strive to eliminate all barriers to access for people with disability to all forms of transport and public infrastructure.

26. Labor will promote social inclusion, including greater connectivity between residential communities and jobs centres.

Skills, Jobs and Workforce

27. Labor will support a well-resourced public and private sector infrastructure workforce, whose rights are respected. Australians rely on these workers to deliver quality services, procure and operate infrastructure.

28. Our investment in their skills and job security and respect for their rights at work is necessary to our community and our economy. The public sector should attract and retain the technical and business capability to represent taxpayer interests when infrastructure deals are being negotiated.

29. Infrastructure planning and delivery is a key area requiring jobs and skills development planning for the future. Labor supports processes to forecast and plan for skills development across the
infrastructure chain, including project planning and assessment, project management, technical, trades and operational expertise. A clear pipeline of projects will aid skills planning.

**Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change**

30. Climate change will affect our cities, regions, coastal and inland areas differently. New infrastructure will need to be built to withstand extreme weather events and additional and strengthened infrastructure will be needed to deal with sea level rises, particularly in built up areas. Labor recognizes the challenges posed by climate change and will give special attention to infrastructure projects which help affected communities and industries deal with change.

31. Our transport system needs to operate in harmony with the environment. Labor supports evidence-based measures to manage noise, air and water impacts from transport infrastructure, motor vehicles, trains, aircraft and ships.

32. Australia needs careful management of shipping impacts on the Great Barrier Reef and other sensitive marine environments. Labor will monitor and adjust its policies to ensure the health and survival of the Great Barrier Reef for the long term.

33. Labor understands the need to cut pollution from transport and will implement a national approach to do so, including in passenger vehicles, public transport, sea, rail and road freight and in the air. Labor will support the transition to a clean transport system with the necessary infrastructure planning and investments.

**Institutional Arrangements**

**A National Infrastructure Agenda**

34. Labor will provide leadership and coordination to increase nation-building investment in Australia’s nationally significant infrastructure across the transport, energy, water and communications sectors.

35. Labor will maintain and enhance a clear national framework to support long-term planning for Australia’s nationally significant infrastructure needs.

36. Labor will work closely with State, Territory and local Governments, via the Council of Australian Governments, to provide leadership and federal support for agreed projects and initiatives.

37. This framework includes identifying, prioritising and redressing inadequacies in Australia’s nationally significant infrastructure, and identifying the best projects to address those inadequacies. The framework will also identify appropriate regulatory reform to ensure efficient use of existing infrastructure, and to remove obstacles to infrastructure planning, financing and delivery.

**Infrastructure Australia**

38. Labor will properly resource Infrastructure Australia so it can provide independent, evidence based advice to governments on measures that will improve the way they assess, priorities, finance, build and use the infrastructure required to drive growth and productivity in the 21st century.
39. Labor will break the nexus between the electoral cycle and the investment cycle by placing Infrastructure Australia at the heart of the federal government’s investment decision-making process.

40. To attract and guide greater public and private investment in the nation’s infrastructure, Infrastructure Australia will be required to maintain a long term, transparent pipeline of projects assessed as offering the highest economic, social and environmental returns.

**Major Cities Unit**

41. Labor will establish a Major Cities Unit within Infrastructure Australia. It will be tasked with identifying opportunities where federal leadership and infrastructure investment could assist states, territories and local councils build more productive, liveable and sustainable urban communities including growth areas.

**Financing**

42. Project financing instruments will be determined on a case-by-case basis to preserve value for money. Federal Labor will work as appropriate with the States and Territories, local government and the private sector, to finance priority projects.

43. Labor supports innovative approaches to financing projects, including public private partnerships, tax incentives, concessional finance, government guarantees, transport oriented development, value capture and seed funding via grants or availability payments. Labor will investigate and remove any unnecessary impediments to these. Labor will ensure maintaining infrastructure quality, the public interest and labour standards are relevant criteria in choosing financing methods.

44. Labor supports superannuation funds investing in infrastructure projects when this aligns with the best interest of superannuation fund members. Labor will investigate, and remove, any unnecessary impediments to appropriate investment of this kind, whilst ensuring high standards of accountability and governance.

**High Speed Rail**

45. High Speed Rail would significantly transform our longer distance travel options. Many nations already have high-speed rail, connecting major cities with fast surface transport.

46. High Speed Rail along Australia’s east coast, from Brisbane to Melbourne, would transform the future of cities and towns along the corridor, in effect bringing regional centres much closer to our major cities in travel time. This can create new possibilities for living and working, and substantially increases the stock of land close to major centres of employment. It can provide new opportunities for businesses beyond our major cities, and greater choice in long distance travel.

47. High Speed Rail is a transformative project. It is likely to be built in stages, and their sequence will be subject to the economic viability of the project and funding availability. Analysis shows the long-term benefits considerably outweigh the costs, including offering a possible pathway to lower or zero emissions regional and interstate travel.
48. Labor will establish a High Speed Rail Planning Authority as a statutory body, and engage with the Queensland, NSW, Victorian and ACT governments, local government and the rail industry, to begin the vital work of corridor preservation and advancing the project.

Priority Investment Programs

49. There are particular transport infrastructure needs across the community. This is reflected in specific programs focused on these needs. Labor will fund targeted national programs, including:

- Nation building investment in projects including public transport, freight rail, intermodals, air and sea ports, and roads;
- Urban and regional development and renewal programs;
- Strategic infrastructure corridors;
- Roads to Recovery – assistance to councils to maintain and upgrade local roads;
- Black Spots – remove dangerous blackspots on local roads;
- Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity – rest stops for truck drivers, safe loading and uncoupling;
- Bridges Renewal – repair and upgrade bridges; and
- Transport Development and Innovation projects.

50. Labor will support renewal and where appropriate, expansion of Australia’s existing rail and road infrastructure.

51. Labor will invest in projects in remote communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Public Transport

52. Good public transport improves economic opportunity, social inclusion and is good for the environment.

53. Labor will make funding available for public transport projects, including urban passenger rail and rapid transit infrastructure.

Active Transport

54. Labor encourages walking and cycling as forms of transport. There are considerable benefits for individuals and the community as a whole from a healthier, more active, more included population.

55. Labor will require active transport to be considered in land transport projects. Labor will support road safety initiatives for cyclists and pedestrians and higher cycling and walking rates.

56. Labor will implement and build upon active transport initiatives including the National Road Safety Strategy and National Cycling Strategy, including standardising data for fatalities and serious injuries, by transport mode, across jurisdictions.
Road Safety

57. After decades of decline the road toll is again heading in the wrong direction. Tragically, more than 1,200 people died on our nation’s road each year, with tens of thousands more injured and scarred for life.

58. Labor will work with unions, employers and experts to eliminate incentives for truck drivers to work long hours and adopt unsafe driving practices in order to make a living. The ‘Safe Rates’ regime that Labor implemented in Government was delivered safe, sustainable rates and conditions, as well as supply chain accountability. Tragically, the incidence of road fatalities involving trucks has increased since the RSRT was abolished by the Liberal Government highlighting the urgent need for a body to tackle these critical issues.

59. Labor will establish a National Office of Road Safety, a dedicated unit within the Department of Infrastructure charged with improving data collection, promoting best practice research, and leading the development the next ten-year National Road Safety Strategy, which will commence in 2021.

Regional Australia

60. Labor will provide specific programs for regional Australia including region-specific policy programs for parts of regional Australia experiencing accelerated growth and for parts of regional Australia are facing significant challenges. These programs will help communities build sustainable, resilient, inclusive economies.

Aviation

61. Labor’s priority in civil aviation sector is safety. Labor will support and resource the Civil Aviation Safety Authority to ensure the safety of workers and travelling public.

62. Labor supports a strong aviation industry with a secure Australian workforce.

63. Aviation plays a large part in connecting Australia to the world and linking our towns and cities, as well as servicing the needs of regional and remote communities. It is also a key factor impacting international and domestic tourism. Where new gateways are approved, Labor will provide timely support through Federal agencies such as customs and security.

64. Labor developed Australia’s first ever comprehensive National Aviation White Paper (2009) which recognised safety and security are critical for the travelling public, and investment in well planned airports and a strong domestic market and general aviation sector are crucial for the long-term future of aviation in Australia.

65. Labor supports ownership provisions to keep majority ownership and governance of Australian international airlines in Australia.

66. Labor opposes allowing foreign airlines to fly domestic routes in Australia, in creating an uneven playing field for Australian aviation employees and operators. Such plans potentially undermine the employment of Australian aviation employees and could dilute the profitability of Australian carriers already operating in a very competitive market, as well as diminishing the viability of the Australian aviation industry.
67. Labor is committed to ensuring, as a matter of fairness and equal treatment, that any flying of passengers within Australia (from an Australian port to another Australian port) should occur under Australian employment laws.

68. Labor acknowledges and values the unique skills, knowledge, expertise and professionalism of Australian aviation employees, and, particularly considering the risks inherent in air travel, supports their rights to safe workplaces, and fair wages which acknowledge their skills, expertise and substantial contribution to Australian aviation.

69. Labor acknowledges the unique challenges facing women in aviation, and commits to promoting the advancement of women within the breadth of employment positions throughout the industry.

70. Labor supports including labour standards in Air Transport Agreements. Labor supports fair and equal remuneration of aviation workers within the Australian and New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement region. Labor will take steps to ensure the intent of this platform is given effect on Australia’s airlines however they are structured.

71. Labor sees safety in aviation as paramount, and supports the Civil Aviation Safety Authority’s work for safety and compliance, as well as effective safety regulation across the industry.

72. Aviation activity must be the priority on airport precincts. Labor will not allow other economic activity to inhibit aviation at these sites.

73. Labor will develop an integrated Sydney Aviation Plan to provide for Sydney’s future airport needs. Labor supports a second airport for Sydney to serve the needs of the region and drive economic activity. Labor will ensure the operation of a second airport improves economic activity and job creation in western Sydney and minimises environmental impacts, including by having night time fly free zones over communities. Labor will maintain the cap and curfew at Kingsford Smith Airport and implement the long-term operating plan maximising take-offs over water.

74. Australia needs a revitalised, strong Australian-flagged shipping industry with a secure workforce. Maritime cabotage remains an important policy objective for Australia. This is important for economic security, environmental protection, and national security reasons. Shipping is an important national strategic industry. Maintaining a domestic shipping industry is critical for an island nation. Ships are efficient, require no built infrastructure for navigation and are the least energy intensive of all freight transport modes.

75. Over 99 per cent of trade to and from Australia is carried by ship. Australia has the fourth largest shipping freight task in the world. With the expansion of Australia’s commodity trade, international shipping is becoming busier. Cruise shipping is also growing rapidly, delivering more international tourists to Australia, and around the coast. Labor supports a strong Australian-flagged shipping industry with a secure Australian workforce. This is important for economic security, environmental protection, and national security reasons.

76. Coastal shipping remains an important domestic freight mode competing with road and rail. Ships play an important economic and strategic role in the operation of the Australian economy. They are an important part of the domestic freight market; they are an essential link in manufacturing supply chains, they transport people and support tourism; and provide maritime services like towage and dredging around the coast. Coastal shipping requires port access and quality linkages to land.
transport infrastructure. Labor recognises the key role that shipping plays in helping to secure Australia’s liquid and gas energy trade and will work with industry to ensure that Australia maintains on its general shipping register sufficient bulk liquid/gas ships to support continuity of petroleum and gas supply, and exports of LNG.

77. Labor will deliver policies to revitalise the Australian shipping industry including improved corporate and seafarer taxation incentives, regulatory and workforce development measures to provide a level playing field for Australian shipowners to employ more Australian seafarers, and to attract related functions to develop an industry cluster.

78. Labor will foster Australian shipping and jobs, without closing the coast to international ships as many comparable nations have. Labor will build on its domestic shipping regulation by removing loopholes favouring use of foreign temporary licensed ships in coastal trade at the expense of Australian ships. Labor will ensure that in order to create a level playing field in a competitive domestic market, where domestic cargo volumes can sustain a suitable Australian ship, there is certainty that Australian ships will have preferential access to such cargo under efficient arrangements overseen by an independent industry body that will supervise the licensing of ships, supported by legislated criteria the industry body will be required to consider in recommending ship licenses. This approach is intended to provide incentives for new investment in Australian ships and maritime skills. Labor will also ensure that taxation measures to encourage investment in ships are internationally competitive.

79. Labor will review the implementation of new national maritime safety legislation to ensure that standards for vessel crews, qualifications, and safety management systems have not been undermined, and that consistent and robust safety standards and systems prevail. Vessels operating in high risk industries such as towage, dredging, offshore oil and gas, bunkering, ocean-going passenger vessels, coastal trading vessels and large aquaculture vessels must continue to be regulated under the *Navigation Act*. The process through which minimum safe crewing and qualifications are determined must be clarified and made more transparent. The *Navigation Act* must give AMSA the powers to take a holistic view of maritime safety that includes work processes and safety systems.

80. Labor will review Australia’s maritime security policy settings to close any gaps or weakness in the maritime supply chain, including the interface with flag of convenience shipping. Labor will establish a permanent standing group with members from the state police forces, the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau to liaise, communicate, share information and facilitate investigations of deaths or suspicious deaths including disappearances from international vessels in Australian waters.

81. Labor will re-establish and fund a Maritime Workforce Development Forum to develop a contemporary maritime workforce development strategy.

82. Labor will review the national freight strategy and national ports strategy to ensure all freight transport modes are able to compete on fair terms so the competitive advantages of each mode can be utilised to provide the best and most cost-effective supply chain solutions to freight users. Labor will consider establishment of a National Freight Industry Innovation Council to be tasked with overseeing the implementation of the national freight, ports and shipping strategy.

83. Labor will maintain its support and oversight of International Labour Organisation and International Maritime Organisation conventions, codes and recommendations.
84. Labor will support and resource the Australian Maritime Safety Authority’s work on safety, rescue coordination and compliance.

Transport Regulations

85. Labor will provide national leadership and work with the states and territories to continue the modernisation of the laws regulating the transport industry. This will free up the movement of interstate trade, improve safety outcomes and boost national income.

86. Labor recognises that use of smart infrastructure solutions and new technologies can heighten productivity of existing infrastructure to at much lower cost than a new project. The use of smart infrastructure will be considered as part of the planning process for all new and existing projects.

87. Emerging technologies, such as autonomous and zero emissions vehicles, remotely piloted aircraft systems and artificial intelligence, will soon become commonplace. This development will benefit our society in terms of greater safety, enhanced productivity, less congestion, fewer carbon emissions and a better quality of life. However, it will also create challenges. Labor will work with other levels of government, as well as industry, to retrain affected workers and ensure regulations protect the rights and welfare of Australians.

Australia’s Cities: Productive, Liveable, Sustainable

88. Australia relies heavily on productive cities for national prosperity. Most of Australia’s population and businesses are in urban areas and our cities are hubs of economic activity that link Australia to the global economy.

89. Creating liveable cities attracts the best and brightest from around the globe, creating value for our economy, diversifying our culture and increasing the attractiveness of investment. Liveable cities are underpinned by efficient social, health, education and transport infrastructure, but also green parks and recreational spaces, amenity and accessible environment and water ways.

90. Rapid growth and development is creating larger cities, resulting in significant challenges including urban congestion, energy and water consumption, increasing spatial inequality and environmental degradation. Labor will strive for sustainability and equity in high growth outer urban areas with long-term plans to address these challenges.

91. The national government has a distinct responsibility in leading and coordinating urban development in a growing nation. We will build on the proud record of the Whitlam, Hawke-Keating and Rudd-Gillard Governments, which led a national effort to make our cities more productive, liveable and sustainable.

92. Labor will refocus the federal government on cities policy by:

- Appointing a Minister for Cities;
- Updating the National Urban Policy;
- Establishing a Major Cities Unit within Infrastructure Australia;
- Reconvening the Urban Policy Forum;
- Publishing annually the State of Australian Cities Report, and;
• Reviewing the lessons learned and potential benefits of international best practice in City Deal-type arrangements in effectively delivering and incentivising more productive, liveable and sustainable cities consistent with the National Urban Policy goals.

93. Labor will work with the Council of Australian Governments, the private sector and the community to improve governance structures and develop integrated long term strategies to improve infrastructure funding, land use planning, housing affordability, settlement patterns and social cohesion, action on climate change, environmental sustainability and restoration, and urban congestion.

94. Labor will work with states, territories and local government to:

• Invest in properly integrated transport systems involving public transport and roads;
• Invest in active transport solutions which connect with public transport, education and employment hubs closer to where people live;
• Improve housing affordability through the use of urban planning, land supply and incentives;
• Drive alignment of funding for smart and sustainable urban infrastructure;
• Align greater housing density with public transport corridors;
• Encourage best practice urban designs outlined in Creating Places for People: An Urban Design Protocol for Cities;
• Promote jobs growth in outer and middle ring suburbs. This could be through direct investment, for example investing in research precincts around universities and hospitals, through consideration of incentives for the location of business, and supporting innovative funding models for local governments in high growth areas; and
• Coordinate federal government policy and federal government work with states, territories and local government to support connectivity and productivity through fibre-to-the-premise National Broadband Network.
• Earlier integration of water, wastewater and stormwater into urban planning to improve overall (including health and liveability) outcomes for our cities and regions.
• Incorporate action on climate change into major urban strategic plans (mitigation and adaptation)
• Facilitate the transition to renewable energy by supporting urban innovation and green urban growth e.g. net zero carbon and liveable precincts.

95. Our cities present a significant opportunity to help meet our commitments to keep global warming below 2 degrees and ease the transition to a low emissions future across the economy. Labor will work with and across all levels of government and industry to realise the potential to reduce our emissions through our buildings, infrastructure and our cities by incorporating renewable energy, water sensitive urban design and integrated public transport systems.

96. A high level of mobility is necessary to unlock the economic potential of cities – so diverse and specialised skillsets can be brought together. This requires a shift towards establishing industry and employment hubs outside CBDs, strong land use planning and investment in transport infrastructure. Labor will provide national leadership and work with state, territory and local governments and the private sector to deliver this.
97. The rapid growth and outward expansion of cities over the last 50 years has created significant congestion on urban roads, lowering quality of life and reducing family and social time; issues which can be addressed through job creation in outer suburbs and growth corridors as well as through increased investment in infrastructure.

98. Safe, clean and efficient public transport in our major cities is critical to addressing the economic, environmental and social problem of urban congestion.

99. The digital transformation of businesses and government services can be supported by smart cities, which are data-driven and responsive. Embracing these new open technologies will allow more integrated, productive and sustainable asset delivery, operation and service delivery. Labor will provide national leadership in converging and aligning smart cities service provision on federally funded projects; working across governments to support the implementation and scaling of smart city or community technologies; developing a workforce skilled in smart city or community technologies; encourage entrepreneurs and the startup community to develop solutions to urban challenges by linking with Labor’s digital economy strategies; and investing in innovation in areas such as transport, freight and the future of work in cities.

National Broadband Network

100. Labor builds the infrastructure of the future. The National Broadband Network is the biggest, most important infrastructure project in Australia’s history allowing us to dramatically improve our productivity, service delivery and revolutionize how and where we work, learn and live.

101. Labor is committed to ensuring that all Australians get fast, reliable and affordable broadband, no matter where they live or do business. Wholesale prices should be the same, whether people live in the city or the bush. Broadband should not be more expensive for those who can least afford it.

102. Labor is committed to ensuring consumers remain at the core of its communications policy, and for Australians to have a good lived experience over the National Broadband Network.

103. Labor will hold the Liberal Government to account for the roll out of a second rate NBN, and work to deliver for all Australians a network that is fast, reliable and affordable.

Local Government

104. Local government is the level of government closest to the community and is responsible for a vast range of social and cultural services, as well as the provision of infrastructure including:

- Social services such as childcare, aged and home care, affordable housing, social and community and health services; along with arts and culture;
- Environmental services such as coastal management, improved waste management, energy and climate responses;
- Water efficiency and improved catchment and water resources provision;
- Community infrastructure including sports grounds, swimming pools, parks, community centres and tourism facilities; and
- Regional planning, economic development and emergency services.
105. Labor is committed to partnerships with local government to improve local community services and infrastructure. Labor will help local government innovate in management and construction of social and community infrastructure to deliver benefits and opportunities for local communities.

106. Local government needs a secure economic base from which to deliver important services that benefit local communities and allow economic growth. Labor will:

- Provide funding through the ongoing Financial Assistance Grants with appropriate indexation of these payments so local governments can grow;
- Provide long term funding certainty to local governments recognising the important role it plays in communities across Australia;
- Support funding for local government-maintained roads;
- Establish a mechanism to consult directly with local government to ensure it has strong and direct relationship with federal government;
- Work with local government to improve efficiency and financial sustainability of local governments;
- Ensure local government has a voice within Infrastructure Australia and in Regional Development.
- Participate in a range of programs to provide direct funding to local government.

107. Labor supports recognising local government in the Australian Constitution.

108. Labor will work with local government to make our urban and regional communities more liveable and environmentally sustainable, including urban and regional planning, development assessment and approval processes.

109. Women’s representation in local government — as Mayors, Councillors, and General Managers — remains unacceptably low. Labor will work with local government to increase participation by women, Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all aspects of local government. We recommit to reaching the goals of the 50 50 vision of Councils for Gender Equity to achieve enduring equality in local government.

Tourism

110. Tourism will be a key driver of jobs and economic growth in Australia over coming decades. Labor will restore tourism to the heart of Australia’s economic narrative, recognising its importance as a super-growth sector for local jobs and the economy.

111. Labor will refocus the government on tourism policy by:

- Appointing a Minister for Tourism;
- Supporting Tourism 2020, Australia’s first national strategy to enhance growth and competitiveness in the tourism industry. Labor will also liaise with industry to develop a Tourism 2030 strategy;
- Reviewing and progressing “A National Business Events Strategy for Australia 2020”;
- Maintaining tourism as a national investment priority;
• Investing in tourism infrastructure including airports, ports, roads, public transport, digital connectivity infrastructure and convention centres, and;
• Supporting taxation arrangements conducive to the industry’s growth.

112. Labor recognises the critical role Tourism Australia plays in showcasing Australia to the world. Labor will work with the local, state and territory governments across Australia as well as Tourism Australia to appropriately resource and coordinate domestic and international marketing and promoting of Australia. This will ensure Tourism Australia is well placed to continue to grow visitation, while also re-engaging with the domestic tourism industry.

113. Visitor visa reform is needed to maintain and grow Australia as a competitive tourism destination. Labor will also adopt new technologies to enhance the visitor experience from start to finish, ensuring we do not fall behind other countries in this digital age.

114. Robust tourism data is essential for investors, government and business. Labor will provide adequate tourism and travel forecasting and research services so that accurate data informs long-term government and industry investment.

115. Labor recognises the threat of climate change to Australia’s prized natural assets. Labor will support sustainable tourism and protect and promote Australia’s environmental and cultural heritage, working with industry to identify practical strategies to achieve this.

116. Labor will appropriately target assistance and advice schemes to include tourism operators, most of whom are small businesses. This includes supporting industry-delivered programs which focus on capability and capacity-building.

117. Tourism underpins the economy of many smaller towns and cities throughout regional Australia, playing a pivotal role in creating jobs and growth opportunities in local communities. Labor recognises that sectors such as agritourism, nature-based tourism, cultural and Indigenous tourism as well as business event tourism are niches that drive regional tourism growth. Labor will seek to grow regional tourism in a number of ways, including through greater investment in infrastructure as well as domestic and international marketing to encourage regional dispersal and longer stays.

118. Tourism and events are a rewarding career path for many Australians. Labor will encourage education and training to upskill already employed staff, as well as industry-based accreditation programs and address tourism and events skills shortages as highlighted by the industry, including skilled migration. To assist in achieving this, Labor will deliver a nationally recognised formal training package based on agreed industry standards, including appropriate training and safe work policies with career options, appropriate recognition in wages of training and productivity outcomes, in co-operation with governments, industry and unions.

119. Australia is home to the world’s oldest living culture. Labor recognises the significance of this history and will enhance tourism employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in conjunction with appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative bodies, fostering tourism to build a wider understanding of the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry

120. Australia’s agriculture, fishing and forestry sectors have played a key role in national economic development throughout our history. They have generated a large share of Australia’s wealth, helped shape our culture and identity, and underpinned the establishment of rural and regional communities throughout the nation.

121. In the century ahead of us, our agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors will retain a major role in creating wealth and jobs in rural and regional Australia, and generating export income as we seek to capitalise on growing global food demand.

122. In addition to creating new export opportunities in commodity markets, a Labor Government will work with the sector to secure high-value, premium markets in pursuit of higher and sustainable profitability.

123. A Labor Government will set clear Government guidance for investors to attract the domestic and foreign capital the sector needs to grow to its full potential.

124. Much of the responsibility for land, water and animal welfare management lies with State Governments. A federal Labor Government will rebuild cooperation and coordination with the States and Territories in order to secure effective and uniform agriculture policy.

125. A Labor Government will engage in a whole of government approach, pursue evidence-based policies and embrace market approaches to lift productivity, reduce unnecessary regulation and improve natural resource allocation to encourage more sustainable and efficient land and water management practices.

126. Our farmers are being challenged by a changing climate. A Labor Government will work with the sector to improve climate adaptation programs and promote the embrace of renewable energy opportunities.

127. Australia’s biosecurity system underpins our key competitive advantage and our agriculture reputation as a producer of clean, green, high quality and safe food. A Labor Government will protect that reputation by adequately resourcing our biosecurity system, developing stronger shared responsibilities and cooperation by all levels of governments, industry bodies, exporters and importers, farmers, miners, tourists, our research bodies and the community.

128. Labor is committed to building adequate supply chains and telecommunications infrastructure and investing in research, development, innovation and extension.

129. A Labor Government will take a whole of government and a whole-of-supply-chain approach to food and fibre policy including the encouragement of the embrace of new digital technologies. To meet our aspirations, we need to produce productivity gains from paddock to market.

130. Workforce shortages are a big challenge for the agriculture sector. Labor is committed to quality and fully resourced education and training systems and to provide the workforce our employers need to succeed.

131. Labor will improve access to domestic and international markets for Australian agriculture, fisheries and forest products and press hard for the inclusion of commodities which have faced the greatest
resistance from our trading partners, working in collaboration with states and territories to address state-specific market access issues and opportunities.

132. Innovations of agricultural biotechnologies, such as GM crops, are important in making Australian farming more productive, competitive, environmentally sustainable and improving financial returns at the farm gate. It is essential Australia maintains an independent, scientific and evidence-based regulatory system for GM crops to ensure the safety and the access by farmers of such innovations whilst respecting any GMO moratorium of a State or Territory.

133. Labor will develop comprehensive forest and fisheries strategies.

Minerals & Resources

134. Labor will develop Australia’s natural resources through a competitive minerals, resources and energy industry, backed by quality infrastructure links, which grow export-oriented jobs for our modern economy.

135. Australia’s minerals and resources and industries and those who work in them generate a large share of Australia’s export revenue, support regional economic development, provide employment directly and indirectly and improve the living standards of the entire community; they also create wealth and opportunity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

136. To lift the social, environmental and economic contribution made by minerals, resources and energy industries’ to Australia, Labor will:

- Ensure Australian resource industries pay their fair share of tax and royalties;
- Promote the sound sustainable development of Australia’s energy resources, taking into account domestic industrial, home and community needs and the need to ensure security of domestic energy supplies including gas, coal and electricity through market-based measures which encourage investment and support properly functioning gas and electricity markets;
- Promote opportunities for Australian companies and workers to enter the global supply chains of multinational resource companies
- Encourage the development of low emission technologies, re-use and storage technologies;
- Encourage downstream processing of minerals, resources and energy products, and, through public and private investment, the infrastructure necessary to achieve this;
- Facilitate the commercialisation and export of minerals-related services and technology;
- Create an efficient national energy market to enhance Australia’s natural advantages in downstream minerals processing for domestic and export markets;
- Support modern maritime engineering excellence in export gas production, including the involvement of Australian engineering and industry within the supply chain; and
- Ensure that assessing freight networks is included in Infrastructure Australia’s scope of work.

137. Labor will ensure mineral development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ land proceeds consistently with Labor’s land rights and native title policy, improves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employment, business, education and training opportunities, and lifts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ community development and self-determination opportunities.
Uranium

138. Labor recognises that the production of uranium and its use in the nuclear fuel cycle present unique and unprecedented hazards and risks, including:

- Threats to human health and the local environment in the mining and milling of uranium and management of radioactive materials, which demand the enforcement of strict safety procedures;
- The generation of products that are usable as the raw materials for nuclear weapons manufacture, which demands the enforcement of effective controls against diversion; and
- The generation of highly toxic radioactive waste by-products that demand permanently safe disposal methods.

139. Labor accordingly will allow the mining and export of uranium only under the most stringent conditions.

140. In relation to mining and milling, Labor will:

- Ensure the safety of workers in the uranium industry is given priority. Labor has established a compulsory register for workers in the uranium industry that includes regular health checks and ongoing monitoring. The register is held by an independent agency and will be subject to privacy provisions;
- Ensure that Australian uranium mining, milling and rehabilitation is based on world best practice standards, extensive continuing research on environmental impacts and the health and safety of employees and affected communities, particularly Indigenous communities;
- Ensure, through public accountability mechanisms, that the Australian public is informed about the quality of the environmental performance of uranium mines;
- Foster a constructive relationship between mining companies and Indigenous communities affected by uranium mining; and
- Prohibit the mining of uranium within national parks under International Union for Conservation of Nature protected area category 1A, category 1B, and category 2, and listed world heritage areas.

141. In relation to exports other than to India, Labor will allow the export of uranium only to those countries that observe the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), are committed to non-proliferation policies, and have ratified international and bilateral nuclear safeguards agreements. Labor will export uranium only to countries that maintain strict safeguards and security controls over their nuclear power industries.

142. In relation to India, an important strategic partner for Australia, commitments and responsible actions in support of nuclear non-proliferation, consistent with international guidelines on nuclear supply, will provide an acceptable basis for peaceful nuclear cooperation, including the export of uranium, subject to the application of strong safeguards.

143. In addition, Labor will work towards:

- Strengthening export control regimes and the rights and authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA);
• Appropriate international responses to violations of existing safeguard commitments;
• Limiting the processing of weapon usable material (separation of plutonium and high enriched uranium in civilian programs);
• Tightening controls over the export of nuclear material and technology;
• Universalising of the IAEA additional protocol making it mandatory for all states and members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to adhere to the additional protocol as a condition of supply to all their transfers;
• Criminalising actions of individuals and companies that assist in nuclear proliferation;
• The development of an international guarantee of nuclear fuel supply to states foregoing sensitive nuclear technologies;
• Revising the NPT to prevent countries from withdrawing from the NPT and passing a new resolution in the United Nations Security Council addressing the penalties for withdrawal from the NPT;
• Encouraging all nuclear states to join the NPT;
• Reserving the right to withhold supplies of uranium permanently, indefinitely or for a specified period from any country that ceases to observe the non-proliferation safeguards and security conditions applied to Australian uranium exports to that country, or which adopts nuclear practices or policies that do not further advance the cause of nuclear non-proliferation;
• Supporting the maintenance and enhancement of international and Australian safeguards to ensure that uranium mined in Australia, and nuclear products derived from it, are used only for civil purposes by approved instrumentalities in approved countries that are signatories to the NPT (with the exception of India) and with whom Australia has safeguard arrangements; and
• Seeking adequate international resourcing of the IAEA to ensure its effectiveness in undertaking its charter.

144. Labor will progress these commitments through diplomatic means including the re-establishment of the Canberra Commission to re-invigorate Australia’s tradition of middle power, multilateral diplomacy. In doing so, Labor believes that as a non-nuclear armed nation and a good international citizen, Australia can make a significant contribution to promoting disarmament, the reduction of nuclear stockpiles, and the responsible use of nuclear technology.

145. Labor will:
• Vigorously and totally oppose the ocean dumping of radioactive waste;
• Prohibit the establishment of nuclear power plants and all other stages of the nuclear fuel cycle in Australia;
• Fully meet all Australia’s obligations as a party to the NPT; and
• Remain strongly opposed to the importation and storage of nuclear waste that is sourced from overseas in Australia.
Northern Australia

146. Northern Australia, the part of Australia north of the Tropic of Capricorn, makes a vital contribution to the national economy, particularly through its resources, agriculture and tourism industries. That is why Labor established the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum to collaboratively advance the sustainable development of the north. Northern Australian communities are richly diverse, existing in unique and fragile natural environments and exposed to the impacts of ongoing climate change.

147. Northern Australia has significant social service needs and economic infrastructure requirements. Labor will remove policy and other obstacles for future investment in infrastructure. Labor will encourage sustainable development in Northern Australia that protects the region’s natural environment, its water resources and its many social and cultural assets, while harnessing its potential, including greater use of renewable energy sources. Appropriate investment in water, energy, and transport and communications infrastructure is critical to the future development of Northern Australia.

148. Labor acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the traditional custodians of the land and today are major landowners in Northern Australia making them key partners for Northern development. Labor will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities in Northern Australia to address systemic disadvantage, ensure quality education, housing and basic services, and enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take advantage of employment opportunities.

149. Labor will work with state and territory governments, industry, local government and the community to identify further opportunities for investment in Northern Australia.

External Territories

150. Australia needs special arrangements between the Commonwealth and the External territories tailored to the particular needs and circumstances of each territory.

151. Labor will maintain and improve the legislative framework for self-governing territories and laws and services for the non-self-governing territories to deliver good governance.

152. The potential of our external territories and their people will be best realised when they have:

- Fair and equal opportunities similar to those in Australian states and mainland territories;
- A diversified economy based on the diverse strengths of their populations and environments;
- Economic, social and cultural development appropriate to the needs and circumstances of each territory;
- Governance arrangements that are equal, fair, and sustainable and reflect islanders’ desire for real decision-making power, responsibility and a level of autonomy; and
- Access to all protections under Australia’s Human Rights Framework, including economic participation and workplace rights, and human rights, including for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex Australians and Australians with disability.
Chapter 4: Tackling climate change, securing our energy future & addressing our environmental challenges

The contemporary challenge

1. There is no longer any credible or serious scientific doubt that human induced climate change represents a massive risk to Australia’s and the world’s prosperity. As a result, taking meaningful action on climate change is urgent, both at home and as part of ongoing international efforts. Labor understands that taking strong action on climate change is needed both to mitigate the risks and impacts of climate change on Australian society and economy, and to take advantage of the opportunities transitioning to a low pollution economy represent for workers, businesses and Australian prosperity more broadly. Labor will ensure Australia implements a comprehensive climate change and energy policy that will reduce carbon pollution in line with the Paris Accord goal of limiting global warming to less than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, while also taking full advantage of the economic and other opportunities this transition represents, including in creating new industries, boosting the efficiency and competitiveness of existing industries, modernising energy systems and ensuring an just transition for all Australians.

2. Labor understands Australia is particularly vulnerable to climate change. As a continent that largely encompasses both hot and dry, and tropical zones, Australia is exposed to more damaging climate change impacts than most other developed countries. In Australia, 2017 was one of the five warmest on record, while globally the four hottest years on record have all occurred in the last four years. Climate Change harms our water security, coastal development, infrastructure, agriculture and health. The environmental consequences translate directly into economic and social costs, with the most vulnerable paying the highest price. The longer we delay taking action, the greater burden we place on our children and future generations, and the harder and more expensive addressing climate change will be.

3. Australia needs credible and effective national policy leadership to deliver a clean energy future, to mitigate dangerous climate change and to ensure Australia is well placed to thrive in a low carbon global economy. This is Labor’s long-term plan to reshape and modernise our economy and cut carbon pollution. Labor will transform Australia’s economy to safeguard its growth over the coming decades and to position Australia as a renewable and clean energy superpower to reap the greatest possible benefits from new and advanced technologies and industries. Australia’s economy needs to remain competitive globally, and Labor’s policy framework will ensure Australia works cooperatively with our international trading partners and protects the competitiveness of Australian industry as we transition to a low carbon pollution world.

4. The world’s biggest economies are all taking major steps to reduce carbon pollution and invest in new, cleaner technologies. The World Bank’s 2017 State and Trends of Carbon Pricing report found around 81 countries include forms of carbon pricing mechanisms as part of their climate change policies to meet their Paris Targets. By the end of 2017, between 20 and 25 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions were covered by carbon pricing mechanisms, with the largest scheme being China’s national Emission Trading Scheme, which commenced in 2017. The cheapest, most effective way to address climate change is to put a legal cap on pollution, underpinned by market mechanisms that let business in different sectors work out the best way to operate within that cap. There also need to be strong sector specific policies to support the transition, like strong support for renewable energy development and generation, laws to curb land clearing emissions and frameworks to transition our transport systems.
5. The transition to a low pollution economy will affect workers and communities and Labor understands this transformative period carries both opportunities and uncertainty for workers. Labor will put in place policies to maximise the jobs growth from this transition, while ensuring jobs in the clean economy provide security, decent wages and conditions. Labor will not only address the challenges and risks that need to be managed, but will pursue all opportunities to modernise our economy, build more and better jobs and build a future that is healthier, more equitable, more prosperous and ultimately sustainable.

6. Australia’s energy system is desperately lacking a national policy framework that can support the transition to clean energy while ensuring reliable and affordable energy. Labor will address this policy vacuum, in a way that is consistent with providing affordable and reliable energy, as well as meeting international climate change agreements and basic standards of fairness, both to existing workers and future generations. Labor will reform energy markets to ensure they perform as efficiently as possible and deliver the transition Australia must make.

7. Broader environmental issues and environmental protection remain critical to Australia’s future. This includes protecting our biodiversity and our treasured lived environments. Labor understands that the environment isn’t an impediment to our prosperity, it’s an asset that underpins it. By identifying, protecting and managing our natural as well as our built and cultural heritage, we conserve a valuable asset and ensure these places are experienced and enjoyed by future generations. Open and transparent environmental management systems are essential for effective decision making, monitoring, assessment and reporting of environmental performance and outcomes.

**Labor values**

8. Labor understands that Government has an essential role in securing Australia’s economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

9. Reflecting the broadly held view of the Australian community, Labor accepts the science of climate change. Understanding that Australia needs constructive, inclusive debate and evidence-based policy, Labor policy is informed by scientists, economists, environmental and climate stakeholders, farmers, business, industry and governments. Our consultation has been and will continue to be thorough and comprehensive and our policy is based on the views of the experts and the community. Labor is committed to innovative approaches to tackle climate change and our collective energy challenge.

10. Climate change requires a global response to keep global warming to well below two degrees Celsius, in line with the Paris Accords. Labor takes the strong view that Australia should play a leading role in global efforts against climate change: in our national economic interest; in the interest of security in the world and in our region; in the interest of the health, safety and wellbeing of our people; and in the interests of our unique natural environment. As one of the biggest polluters per capita in the developed world, Australia will do its fair share, in line with the advice from the world’s leading scientists and in cooperation with our global partners. Australia is well positioned to play a leading international role to address climate change and its impacts, especially in our region.

11. Labor recognises and supports the passion of local environment conservation and health groups and the invaluable contribution they make to protecting and preserving Australia’s environment and the wellbeing of all Australians. These groups play an important role in mobilising government
action on local environmental issues and are critical, active participants in broader national conversations on issues such as climate change.

12. Protecting Australia’s rich and unique biodiversity is essential to our nation’s environmental protection intentions. Labor will take a brave, concentrated and proactive approach to genuine ecological sustainability. Labor will strengthen the legal framework (currently provided by the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act) and improve the policy architecture that underpins environmental protection in Australia.

13. Labor will deliver a robust and integrated system of environmental management. Labor will develop improved environmental law and a strong, well resourced, science based, independent environment and institutional structure to build on Australia’s best-practice environmental governance. It will reflect Australians’ expectations that environmental protection is essential and ensure an effective and efficient national approach to the management of matters of national environmental significance.

14. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people provide valuable guidance, knowledge and advice in preserving Australia’s environment through their connections to land and sea country. Labor will work with Traditional Owners to ensure sustainable use of Australia’s natural resources. Labor will ensure that the knowledge and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are central in environment protection laws, programs and policies

**Labor priorities**

**Creating a clean energy future to renew our energy systems and address climate change**

15. Effective national energy policy which addresses the imperatives of climate change action is critical to Australia’s growth and prosperity for future decades. This action needs to begin now. Labor will not leave the burden to the next generation.

16. The renewal of our energy systems is needed to address the ageing asset base of electricity generation, which is becoming increasingly unreliable and fast approaching end of life. Labor will ensure sufficient investment in new generation occurs to replace inevitable future asset retirements, as well as ensure affordability, reliability and pollution reduction goals.

17. As one of the world’s biggest polluters per capita in the developed world, Australia must reduce its carbon pollution, both to meet international obligations and to ensure a fair economic transition that doesn’t pass on the imperative to cut pollution to future generations. Labor will ensure Australia plays a leading role in global efforts to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and to mitigate the already unavoidable impacts of ‘locked in’ climate change.

18. Labor is committed to the goal of limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees and will ensure Australia’s contribution to the task is fair and based on the best available independent scientific advice. Labor accepts the advice of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which suggests this will require advanced economies to approach net zero emissions by mid-century.
19. Labor will:

- Put climate change at the heart of our commitment to deliver jobs, innovation and investment to build a prosperous, safe and fair Australia;
- Work with the business community and others to introduce legal limits on carbon pollution that lets business work out the cheapest and most effective way to operate within pollution caps. Labor’s cap on carbon pollution will be based on robust independent advice and reduce over time in accordance with Australia’s international commitments;
- Develop a comprehensive plan to address the inevitable turnover of electricity assets and progressively decarbonise Australia’s energy sector, particularly in electricity generation. Labor policy will be informed by our commitment to reinvigorate and grow Australia’s renewable energy industry, encourage energy efficiency and invest in low carbon energy solutions;
- Work to undo the damage that the Coalition Government has done to the renewable energy sector, and be ambitious in growing the renewable energy sector beyond 2020 by adopting policies to deliver at least 50% of our electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030;
- Ensure that all members of the Australian community, including renters, apartment dwellers, people on low incomes and people in regional and remote communities are able to access the benefits of energy efficiency and clean energy;
- Restore integrity, independence and capacity to the environment and climate change portfolios and relevant science agencies;
- Work with the transport and built environment sectors to ensure these sectors play an active role in cutting carbon pollution;
- Work with the land sector and other stakeholders to store millions of tonnes of carbon in the land through better land and waste management; and
- Adopt post-2020 pollution reduction targets, consistent with doing Australia’s fair share in keep global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius. Labor will base these targets on the latest advice of national and international bodies such as the independent Climate Change Authority and the IPCC.

20. Since 2014 there has been no restraint on releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere in Australia. A legal cap on carbon pollution underpinned by a market mechanism creates a powerful incentive for all polluting businesses to cut their pollution, by investing in clean technology or finding more efficient ways of operating.

21. Labor will pursue policies aimed at taking advantage of lowest cost abatement options across the economy. This approach means reform at a sectoral level is necessary to transition to a clean energy future. Sector-specific policies will include policies to lower pollution in: the energy sector, the manufacturing sector, the transport sector, the mining sector, the built environment sector and the land sector. Policies will also support the uptake of energy efficiency measures across sectors, because the most efficient way to avoid carbon pollution while boosting competitiveness is often to lower energy waste.

22. Labor understands that electricity is an essential service and that high electricity prices are a first order cost of living issue for millions of households and businesses across the nation. Labor acknowledges that an over emphasis on privatisation in the energy sector rather than the interests of consumers has contributed to high electricity prices, especially for the most vulnerable members of the community.
23. Labor acknowledges that community and publicly owned energy systems will have a critical role to play in the energy transition. Labor will support the ongoing development and deployment of community and publicly owned energy systems through a clear, consistent and comprehensive national energy policy framework.

24. Labor will create a vibrant, clean technology industry in this country and pursue the enormous future job opportunities in new technologies and clean energy. Labor understands that these opportunities are not limited to the generation of electricity, and include the up and down stream supply chains that develop around a strong renewable industry, as well as the technical and engineering expertise that a strong renewable energy sector promotes.

25. Labor understands the importance of prudent disclosure and management of climate change related financial and other risk, for both the private sector and government. That is why Labor will work with regulatory agencies, businesses, unions and other stakeholders to ensure issues of climate risk disclosure and management are not neglected as we transition to clean energy and meet our international obligations to tackle climate change.

26. Labor understands that significant economic transitions like the transition to clean energy must be well managed, to avoid leaving impacted workers and communities behind. Ignoring the impact of transition on those heavily affected can create regions of sustained economic and social disadvantage, robbing many Australians and their communities of their full potential and a share in Australia’s broader prosperity. That is why Labor’s policies to support industry and jobs will focus on regional workers and communities at the front line of the transition to a sustainable low pollution economy.

27. Growing diverse regional economies in areas such as the Latrobe Valley, the Iron Triangle, Collie District, Bowen Basin, Surat Basin, Lithgow, the Illawarra and the Hunter Valley is necessary to make the transition to a low pollution economy while ensuring this is a just transition for affected workers and communities. These communities and their traditional industries have underpinned our national prosperity and have been the source of jobs for generations of Australians. Labor will work with communities, unions and industry to develop a comprehensive regional development approach which supports the transition of workers to new jobs, existing industries to a low pollution future, as well as the growth of sustainable new industries, technologies and practices.

28. Labor will work collaboratively with workers, employers, communities and local and state government to develop a full suite of policy measures to assist regional transition, including to support worker redeployment, boost regional infrastructure investment, and lift regional competitiveness and job growth in all its forms—from production and maintenance, through to research, design and development.

29. Labor will work with communities, unions and industry to develop a comprehensive approach to support the growth of sustainable new industries, technologies and practices which secures justice and new sources of prosperity and jobs for workers and communities. Labor will draw on international experience and world-leading policies, as well as the recent experience of the Latrobe Valley, to further enhance clean technology, investment and employment opportunities for Australians.

30. Labor will support the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency to be as effective in delivering on their goals as possible. Labor established these agencies in 2012 and together they have helped drive rapid growth in renewable energy and energy
efficiency technology development in Australia. Labor wants to see these agencies continue their work.

31. Labor understands that climate change is a scientific reality, and accepts the central place of scientific advice in informing climate change policy. That is why Labor will restore a robust and independent Climate Change Authority to provide scientifically based advice and recommendations to help shape future policy directions, both at the local, national and global level.

32. Labor will support high carbon emitting industries to become more energy efficient and reduce emissions, while safeguarding their competitiveness as they transition to a low pollution economy.

33. Labor will work with states, industry and unions to ensure training and skills programs are available for workers wishing to build skills in energy efficient technologies and transition to new, clean energy or low pollution industries.

34. Parts of Australia are experiencing the effects of climate change, right now. Helping communities adapt to a changing climate is essential to Labor’s long term plan to address the issues arising from reduced water and other resources, rising sea levels, warmer average temperatures and more frequent and intense extreme weather events.

35. Labor will work with the states and territories and local councils and community organisations to identify and address their vulnerability to climate change.

36. The emerging technologies in reducing carbon pollution from the transport industry, such as high-speed rail, the use of alternative fuels and electric vehicles, can deliver significant reductions in Australia’s total carbon emissions, as well as modernise our transport systems, improving the competitiveness and efficiency of the Australian economy more broadly.

37. Australia needs to reduce transport related carbon emissions to meet the economy wide goal of net zero emissions by 2050. Labor will

- Develop a national approach to accelerate a fair transition to a decarbonised transport sector;
- Implement as a matter of priority its commitment to light vehicle emission standards to reduce emissions and save vehicle users fuel costs;
- Increase demand for zero or low emission vehicles through supporting public and private fleets to transition to low or zero emission vehicles, with an emphasis on local manufacture where possible;
- Establish appropriate national standards and policy for support infrastructure for low or zero emission vehicles;
- Ensure all relevant policies (including industry support and tax policies) encourage as far as possible the transition to decarbonized transport, having regard in particular to equity for lower and middle income people;
- Ensure that transitions to an electrified transport sector are supported by a rapidly de-carbonising electricity sector;
- Support policies to recognise the value of the relatively low emission intensity of sea freight, rail freight, public transport and active travel; and
• Develop strategies and standards to decarbonize heavy vehicles including road and rail freight, as well as maritime and air transport.

38. Labor will introduce national vehicle emission standards. Transport emissions make up 18 per cent of Australia’s total emissions. Making significant reductions will greatly assist Australia achieving its global emissions reduction obligations. Labor will model its measures on international jurisdictions that have been operating successful frameworks in this area.

National Environmental Law

39. The Australian government has an enduring responsibility to protect matters of national environmental significance. Labor has a proud history of national environmental protection laws. These have been instrumental in protecting Australia’s greatest natural treasures for decades. Labor will not support handing approval powers under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 to state and territory governments and will terminate any arrangements that give states these powers.

40. Labor will develop new frameworks for truly national protection and management of Australia’s natural resources to enshrine federal leadership in proactive and systemic protection of our environment, and deal with today’s and future threats such as climate change. This will include:

• A root and branch reform of federal environment laws
• Ensuring that the knowledge and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are central in environment protection laws, programs and policies;
• Strong, well resourced, science based, independent environment institutional structure with strong legislative and financial basis to proactively protect environmental assets, regularly report on progress on actions and outcomes and provide policy leadership and compliance functions;
• Deliver clear management, governance and decision making structures and responsibility that are transparent, efficient and streamlined, relating not only to development applications but also priorities for proactive protection;
• Consistent standards and adequate data for decision making;
• Efficient and certain regulation including streamlined environmental assessment processes;
• Reinstating the principles of democracy, respect and protection of rights for civil society involvement in environmental matters;
• Fair and efficient management of Australia’s environment as a foundation for ecologically sustainable jobs;
• Enhancing biodiversity for the benefit of current and future generations; and
• Resilience in the natural environment.

41. Labor will create a land clearing trigger in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 and/or successive framework, in the context of a comprehensive response to land clearing and climate change. Labor will also consider a National Parks trigger to protect Australia’s system of National Parks.
National and World Heritage

42. Australia has international obligations to protected World Heritage Areas, and areas subject to international treaties such as Ramsar sites. Human activity such as mining and oil drilling, as well as urban and commercial developments near World Heritage Areas, Ramsar and similar sites, can affect these areas. Labor commits to using the full extent of its legislative powers, including call-in powers under the EPBC Act, to ensure these international obligations are met.

43. The federal government is responsible to provide adequate heritage protection for Commonwealth properties of heritage significance. Our World Heritage Areas require coordinated management. Accordingly Labor will work with Traditional Owners as well as the States and Territories to create better governance structures and management programs.

44. Labor will support the investigation and nomination of areas suitable for future listing led by traditional owners in cooperation with in cooperation with traditional owners, state and territory governments and other stakeholders.

45. Labor will support traditional owners to pursue resolution of outstanding Cape York tenure issues and, if consent is granted, subsequently pursue World Heritage listing for appropriate areas of Cape York, recognising the importance of federal leadership and the consent of traditional owners.

46. Labor will support traditional owners to pursue World Heritage listing for the Kimberley, recognising the importance of federal leadership and the consent of traditional owners.

47. Labor will work to include cultural values in all National and World Heritage listings.

48. Labor does not support mining or other resource extraction in national parks and World Heritage areas.

Securing the health of the Great Barrier Reef

49. Australia is renowned for its incredible natural beauty. The Great Barrier Reef is part of Australia’s national identity. A healthy Reef ecosystem is significant to our culture, environment, society and economy.

50. The Great Barrier Reef supports many industries employing tens of thousands of Australians and is enjoyed by millions of domestic and international visitors each year. The survival of the Reef is dependent on the decisions of the Australian Government, industry and communities today.

51. Labor will fight to save the Great Barrier Reef by addressing climate change, increasing ocean protection in the Coral Sea, improving water quality, strengthening our environmental laws and protecting the biodiversity of species and ecological habitats in the Reef.

Protecting biodiversity and natural resources

52. Labor’s new framework of environmental laws and institutions will oversee and deliver a federally led, comprehensive approach to biodiversity and conservation across tenures. The current regime is failing to protect the health of Australia’s environment.
53. Labor will protect Australia’s biological diversity through a national system of comprehensive adequate and representative parks and reserves, while using education, regulation and incentives to achieve ecologically sustainable use elsewhere in the landscape.

54. Labor will work with state and territory governments and landholders to develop, resource and implement threat abatement and recovery plans for threatened species and ecological communities, while preventing clearing that will have a significant impact on threatened ecological communities and critical habitats for threatened species.

55. Labor will improve Australia’s preparedness to prevent and combat new invasive species that threaten the environment and work with state and territory governments to develop new tools and biological controls to reduce the impact of established pests and diseases.

56. Labor will work to ensure national environment funding programs and other volunteer and community programs like Landcare support local sustainable agriculture, conservation and environmental priorities as well as contributing to national priorities to improve biodiversity and resilience. Community groups and volunteer networks play a role in raising awareness of local environmental issues and creating community momentum. Labor will support local and state based conservation councils and Environmental Defenders Offices.

57. Labor will cooperate with the states, territories and landholders to achieve a net increase in Australia’s vegetation cover, to improve its management and to end broad-scale clearing. Funding of state, territory and landholder projects will be conditional upon appropriate clearing controls being in place.

58. Labor recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ knowledge is central to an environmentally and socially sustainable Australia. Almost half of Australia’s reserve system is managed by indigenous traditional owners. Indigenous Australians are important land managers and custodians of our environmental assets.

59. Labor will:

- Support employment programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work on and manage country, particularly through expanding long term support and recognition for the highly successful Indigenous Ranger and Indigenous Protected Area programs;
- Support new opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly those in remote and regional communities, to participate in a low carbon economy through initiatives such as carbon farming;
- Support Australians who live in remote communities reliant on diesel fuel for electricity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to transition their use to low-carbon alternatives such as solar; and
- Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ involvement in land management, including through national parks, tourism and state forests.

60. Labor will properly manage and protect our wetlands and will promote and honour Australia’s obligations under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

61. Labor will improve the social, economic and environmental benefits that flow from the sustainable management of Australia’s forests.
62. Labor will continue to support the implementation of the conditions of the Tasmanian Forestry Agreement (TFA) as a future pathway for the forestry industry in Tasmania. This includes providing resource security for the iconic special timbers industry, under agreed terms. Labor supports this as a broad industry plan to achieve the outcomes intended from the TFA.

63. Labor will support internationally recognised forest certification with robust governance arrangements which sets best practice, transparent, consistent and objective standards in sustainable forest management, chain of custody and labelling, and requires employers in the industry to uphold acknowledge, respect, sustain and support the principles and rights at work as defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) based on the eight ILO Core Labour Conventions.

**A cleaner environment for living**

64. The Australian community wants to live in a clean and healthy environment and Labor will empower Australians to achieve that goal. Labor is committed to making Australian urban areas and cities clean and sustainable. This is ever more important as climate change creates the “heat island effect” and our urban rivers and corridors face increasing pressure from waste and pollution. Labor will enhance health and well-being as well as biodiversity by working with other levels of government to deliver more urban plantings and wildlife corridors, waterway restoration and replacing hard surfaces with soft.

65. Labor will support the advocacy and action of non-government and community organisations to protect our environment and heritage.

66. Labor will support the development of industries that minimise resource consumption, waste and pollution generation and provide leadership in waste policy and programs.

67. Labor will work with state and territory governments to coordinate a national approach to waste, including plastics and other sources of waste in marine environments. This will capture the economic opportunities of a harmonised and strategic national waste reduction and recycling policies that include appropriate waste-to-energy technologies, and be informed by the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

68. Labor will strictly control pollutants and toxins in the environment, including the minimisation of the production, import and use of harmful substances, the development of alternative technologies and, where possible, the elimination of harmful substances.

69. Nations are responsible for the appropriate disposal of hazardous wastes generated within their boundaries. Labor will fulfil Australia’s obligations to control trans-boundary movements of hazardous waste.

70. Labor will improve air quality and avert the serious health risks air pollution represents, particularly by promoting national air quality standards and monitoring, reporting and control of air pollution.

**Building energy capacity**

71. Among Australia’s greatest economic strengths is the extent and diversity of its natural energy resources, energy infrastructure and energy technology. Australia is both a globally important producer of established sources of energy, including coal, gas, oil and condensate, and has world-
class renewable energy resources and developer of sustainable energy technologies. Labor will ensure the development of these resources in a way that is consistent with our obligations to tackle climate change, and safe guards the prosperity that being a large energy supplier underpins.

72. In recent years, Australia’s natural advantage in both old and new energy sources has been severely undermined by a lack of national energy policy that is consistent with climate change objectives. This has led to reduced investment, higher prices, decreasing reliability and growing carbon pollution.

73. Labor will end the national policy uncertainty that has undermined our energy affordability, security and the transition to clean energy, and will implement policies to modernise our energy markets and institutions, rejuvenate our energy infrastructure and secure the reliable energy that Australian prosperity rests on.

74. Labor recognises the importance of and the community concern about coal seam natural gas from shales and tight formations. Labor will take action to ensure this is sustainable, science-based and safe, managing environmental impacts and ensuring sustainable local economic activity. Labor will ensure the industry operates at the highest environmental standards and will ensure the coal seam gas industry assesses and manages environmental and other impacts, including on water reserves and co-existence with other agricultural activities, and engages constructively with affected landholders.

75. More efficient, diverse and clean energy supplies will increasingly enhance Australia’s capacity for the downstream processing of minerals and other natural resources and more competitive manufacturing generally, providing employment benefits and the ability to ensure secure domestic gas supplies. Taking advantage of the full clean energy supply chain, to grow jobs and industries, is crucial if we are to maximise the benefits of transitioning to a clean energy economy.

76. The continued development and application of new technology to improve the economic efficiency and environmental sustainability of energy production and consumption, including waste-to-energy technologies, is vital to Australia’s long-term international competitiveness.

77. Labor will work with state and territory governments, industry representatives, and unions on a strategic national approach to the future development of energy transmission and distribution planning and investment, including by supporting the development of Renewable Energy Zones.

78. Labor will encourage greater efficiency in the production, transmission and use of existing energy sources by:

- A concerted ongoing effort for greater use of clean and renewable energy sources and enabling technologies in domestic, transportation and industrial energy consumption through demand management;
- Consumer education programs, product standards and energy efficiency labelling schemes to encourage energy efficiency and consumer purchase of energy efficient products; and
- Encouraging energy audits for the industrial, commercial, transportation and residential sectors to inform users of their relative energy efficiency and how this can be improved.

79. Major opportunities are emerging in new and renewable energy technologies within the global energy market. Labor will:
• Support public and private sector research and development in innovative energy technologies and low-carbon technologies that are cleaner and more efficient;
• Encourage Australian development, manufacture and commercialisation of renewable energy technologies and low-carbon technologies, including in up and down stream supply chains, for both domestic and export markets; and
• Encourage local and foreign investment to increase Australia’s renewable energy technology and low-carbon technology manufacturing capability.

80. Labor’s national energy industry policy will integrate the need to improve energy efficiency, abate greenhouse emissions and encourage development and commercialisation of new Australian energy industries, including renewable and sustainable energy technology.

81. Labor will protect household consumers through the transition of the national energy system, through access to competitively priced energy, improved regulation of the national energy market and viable dispute resolution mechanisms. We will ensure consumers are the focus of energy sector reform and that network investments and costs are appropriately funded and fairly paid for by network users.

Preparing primary industries for the impacts of climate change

82. Australia needs a sustainable agriculture sector. To guarantee our food security and capitalise on the ‘Dining Boom’ both here and overseas, Australia’s agriculture sector must ensure farming practices are focused on the best and most efficient use of our limited natural resources. Climate change, including prolonged droughts of increasing frequency make this issue vital.

83. Increasingly, investors and consumers alike demand environmentally sustainable farming practices and respect for animal welfare standards.

84. As well as helping to cut carbon pollution, carbon farming can increase resilience to climate change, protect our natural environment, and increase farm profitability and food production. Increasing carbon storage in agricultural soils improves soil health and productivity.

85. Labor will ensure that carbon farming will provide new economic rewards for farmers and landholders who take steps to reduce carbon pollution through facilitating the development of new crediting methods and market opportunities.

86. Biodiverse revegetation will help restore degraded landscapes, provide biodiversity habitats and corridors, and help to address salinity, protect livestock and reduce erosion.

87. Labor supports Landcare and the uptake of sustainable farming practices and improved natural resource management.

Managing our water assets

88. Addressing Australia’s long-term water issues requires national leadership.

89. Responsible management of water assets requires action on climate change, wise water use, secure water supplies and support for healthy rivers.
Labor will address the long term problems of over allocation of the water resources of the Murray-Darling Basin and the neglect of the health of its iconic rivers and wetlands. The problems facing the Murray-Darling Basin and other river systems will be exacerbated by climate change.

The Murray-Darling Basin is one of the most significant river systems in Australia with considerable cultural, social, environmental and economic value. Decades of over-extraction left many areas of the Basin close to collapse during the drought of the early 2000s.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan helped realise the ambition of a healthy working Basin which supports healthy rivers, strong communities and sustainable food production. Over 2,100 gigalitres of water have been recovered for the environment. This water is already delivering environmental benefits in providing environmental flows to wetlands and floodplains across the Basin.

Labor supports the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, which will keep the mouth of the River Murray open nine years out of ten and enable the export of salt and sediment from the system. Within legal and physical constraints, the Plan will return enough water to the Basin to protect key environmental sites, including the Ramsar wetland sites. Australia needs continued progress to new Sustainable Diversion Limits as the Plan is implemented. By continuing to purchase water from willing sellers and investing in water savings, Labor will improve the health of our rivers and facilitate an early transition in anticipation of lower Sustainable Diversion Limits under the Basin Plan.

Labor supports the Murray-Darling Basin Plan being implemented in full, this includes delivering 450 gigalitres of additional water for the environment and removing constraints so environmental water reaches the parts of the river where it is needed.

Implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan requires mechanisms to ensure compliance. Any illegal extraction of water compromises the interests of economic and environmental stakeholders, and the effectiveness of the plan overall in protecting both environmental and productive assets.

Labor expects Commonwealth and State entities to exercise their compliance obligations fully, energetically and in a timely manner and will engage the Basin states to secure the integrity of the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

Water is vital to regional and rural communities across the Murray-Darling Basin. That is why Labor is committed to continuing support for effective water efficiency projects in the Basin to help rural and regional communities improve the efficiency and productivity of water usage.

The implementation of the Murray Darling Basin plan requires robust data and science. Labor recognises that accurate metering data on river flows, as well as improved understanding of flows on the floodplain is critical, along with analysis of the way plants and animals respond to watering. Labor will continue to invest in science and modelling that accurately describes the way water moves within the Basin system, and records and measures the impact of actions taken under the basin plan.

By improving irrigation water management practices and on-farm water use efficiency, and by modernising our irrigation infrastructure, this investment will enable more crops to be grown with less water. This approach will boost regional economic and employment opportunities in the Basin, and help underpin the future prosperity of irrigation communities.
100. Labor recognises the excessive burden of current duplicative reporting requirements on water use in the Murray-Darling Basin. Labor will lift this burden from basin communities by moving to a common reporting format.

101. Labor recognises that urban water is integral to the productivity, liveability and health of Australia’s cities and regional communities. Clean, safe, affordable drinking water, together with clean environmental and recreational waters enhance the quality of life of all Australians and contribute to economic growth.

102. Climate change means we need to use water more wisely in our cities and diversify our urban water supplies and infrastructure so we reduce our reliance on rainfall and safely manage floods and other extreme weather events. Labor will support initiatives to improve water security for Australia’s cities and towns, support for investment in wastewater recycling, desalination, stormwater harvesting and efficient water infrastructure.

103. Labor will support research and commercialisation of new technologies in improved water efficiency, desalination and water recycling.

**Marine and coastal protection**

104. Labor will achieve our marine ecological, economic and social objectives in an open, integrated, participatory and planned manner. Labor will use modern, best-practice public processes like marine spatial planning involving stakeholders in a transparent way, to create and establish a more rational, adaptive and strategic use of marine space and the interactions between its uses, including Australia’s comprehensive and world leading network of marine reserves.

105. Labor recognises that:

- Australia is responsible for managing the third largest area of ocean on the planet;
- Australians have a strong connection with our oceans, their biodiversity, pristine beaches and unspoiled coastlines; and
- Protecting Australia’s oceans for future economic growth in marine industries, tourism and trade is of great importance.

106. Labor has a strong record of protecting Australia’s oceans, including the Whitlam Government’s establishment of the nation’s first marine reserve to protect the Great Barrier Reef and the former Labor Government for establishing Australia’s Marine Reserve Network; the largest network of marine protected areas anywhere in the world.

107. Labor condemns the Abbott - Turnbull Government for taking the biggest backward step in ocean protection in history and cancelling the management plans for the Commonwealth Marine Reserve Network and for participating in intergenerational theft by failing to protect Australia’s oceans for future generations. Labor will continue working with stakeholders to ensure the ongoing protection of Australia’s unique and diverse marine species and ecosystems and ensure best practice and sustainable management of Australia’s marine industries. Labor is committed to implementing management plans for the Commonwealth Marine Reserves and Sanctuaries Network put in place by the former Labor Government.
108. Labor recognises the importance of Australian waters to recreational fishers, commercial fishing industry, tourism and for its conservation value. Labor is committed to adequately protecting Australian waters from the risks of overfishing and from the use of super trawlers.

109. Labor is particularly concerned about the potential for localised depletion and its environmental and recreational impact. Labor will prevent the operation of all super trawlers in Australian waters, unless a thorough assessment against the most up-to-date science can verify such operations will not undermine small pelagic fisheries and recreational fishing spots.

110. In Australian waters and throughout the world’s oceans, Labor will encourage protection for iconic marine species like whales, dugongs, turtles and sharks, and will promote the conservation and research of key bioregional health indicator species.

111. Labor is committed to protect Australia’s waters from the risks associated with the use of super trawlers. Labor will ensure all super trawlers are thoroughly assessed using the most up-to-date science, thereby protecting our oceans and our recreational fishing spots.

Environmental diplomacy

112. Labor will re-establish Australia as a cooperative and engaged participant in international efforts to address climate change. Labor played a leadership role in developing effective international climate policy and Labor will return Australia to its position as one of the most attractive countries to invest in clean energy and climate change mitigation actions.

113. While the rest of the world has moved towards taking meaningful action on climate change, Australia has regrettably fallen behind after the winding back of Labor’s historic climate policies. Labor will ensure Australia works cooperatively with our major trading partners and the rest of the international community on climate change action. Labor is committed to working within Australia’s region with vulnerable developing countries to adapt to climate change. Labor will help Australia’s neighbours, primarily in the Pacific and Timor Leste to prepare for and adapt to the effects of climate change.

114. Protecting the global environment is a vital foreign policy objective, as environmental degradation contributes to social and political conflict and undermines regional and international security.

115. Labor will consider ways to ensure greater transparency and accountability in extractive industries to ensure mining, oil and gas revenues are used for economic development and poverty reduction in resource rich countries.

116. Existing international environmental protection regimes need to be strengthened and new arrangements developed to address emerging issues. Labor will lead in multilateral forums that consider issues of environmental protection and sustainable development. Labor knows that inclusive programs deliver sustainable results in both developed and developing countries. Ensuring that traditional owners as well as the entire community are included in program design and implementation will be a priority.

117. Labor will work to further strengthen the Antarctic Treaty System with particular emphasis on enhancing environmental protection.

118. Labor will drive diplomatic engagement with like-minded nations on international instruments to better protect the world’s oceans.
119. Labor will work through international forums to address unsustainable fishing practices worldwide with the establishment of protected areas a particular priority. We will energetically seek to combat unsustainable, illegal and unregulated fishing in the Southern Ocean and work to strengthen the law of the sea to improve sustainable ocean management.

120. Labor remains firmly opposed to all commercial and scientific whaling, and will vigorously pursue all options to implement Australia’s objective of a worldwide ban on whaling. Labor is committed to ensuring Japan adheres to the landmark ruling in the International Court of Justice against Japan’s Antarctic ‘scientific’ whaling program.

121. Labor is committed to ensuring Australia’s continued commitment to international climate finance, in line with the shared international goal of mobilising public and private funds to assist vulnerable communities address climate change.
Chapter 5: Decent jobs with fair pay and conditions

The contemporary challenge

1. Since 2016, Australia has experienced record low wage growth. The incidence and coverage of enterprise bargaining has reduced, and award reliance has increased. Australia’s unemployment and underemployment rates are too high. Our unemployment rate remains higher than in many comparable countries; long-term and intergenerational unemployment is a particular blight on some Australian lives; and some regional and suburban communities are marked by far higher rates of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, than the rest of the country. Too many Australians work part-time or are in casual employment because they cannot find permanent or full-time work.

2. Work is too often hard to find, and insecure. Corporations are shifting risk to workers or avoiding workplace obligations through otherwise legal arrangements such as franchising, outsourcing, subcontracting, and the use of labour hire. Workplace laws must keep pace with the growth of the gig-economy and other forms of on-demand work. The rapid pace of technological change and automation are changing the nature and types of jobs across the economy. We must make sure that Australians have the skills and training needed for the jobs of the future.

3. Inequality in Australia is growing. Labor will pursue a range of positive measures in government to tackle inequality and will target expenditure towards creating jobs, opportunities and tackling disadvantage wherever it occurs. Australia needs to create jobs with the fair pay and conditions which are essential to higher living standards and a more equal economy.

4. Australia is a fair wage country in a low wage region. Competitive external pressures on our economy create an argument for some to cut Australian wages and conditions. This would be bad for confidence and demand, damage economic growth, and put Australian on a race to the bottom on wages and conditions. Australia’s fair wage system and higher minimum wage lessens inequality in Australia and when workers receive a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work, they can invest in the future for themselves and their families. Australia can only ultimately succeed by being better, not cheaper, than our competitors in the world.

Labor values

5. The Australian Labor Party was founded to improve the lives of working people. Early Labor governments worked with trade unions to transform working conditions and lift living standards in Australia. Every Australian should have the opportunity to develop the skills to adapt to changes in the economy. Every person who can work should be given that chance. Our economy needs more working people, and many people want more work. We need to find a way to meet these complementary needs.

6. Fairness in the workplace is fundamental to Labor values. Adapting to change must never be an excuse to erode hard-won working conditions. Insecure work is a particular threat to those conditions. Protecting the rights of working people to ensure every worker has access to decent wages and working conditions will always be essential to Labor’s purpose. Working people have to be able to join together to bargain collectively for improvements to their lives.
7. Improving work-life balance, enabling time for parenting and family life, is part of Labor’s modern vision for work. So is leading Australia’s transition to a high-skill, high-wage, diverse and sustainable economy. So too is seizing the opportunities of longer lives and giving Australians greater choice and control over work as they age.

8. A secure, meaningful job is a fundamental source of self-respect and identity, providing dignity and belonging and fostering social inclusion.

9. All employees are entitled to a strong safety net of fair, relevant and enforceable minimum standards, including through legislation, the award system, and minimum wages. There is a right to equal pay for work of equal or comparable value. Employees undertaking the same work in the same workplace or as part of the same workforce should be afforded the same entitlements.

10. Labor believes in the necessity of superannuation to fund a decent retirement.

11. Labor believes in increasing workforce participation. Government should provide unemployed Australians with the support they need to transition into meaningful work.

12. Pregnancy discrimination should be eliminated – helping parents to take time off to care for their new baby is in the community interest. Paid parental leave helps new parents stay connected with the workplace when they take time off to care for a baby, and it helps employers retain skilled staff. Childcare and parental leave remove barriers to work for parents and improve productivity and participation for the economy.

13. Government should support people to balance their work and family life, including flexibility for employees to combine work and family responsibilities. People should have the choice of common leisure time on weekends and holidays. People should be able to take personal leave for caring responsibilities. There is a right not to work excessive or unsociable hours, and to be adequately compensated for this kind of work.

14. Labor believes in safe and socially inclusive workplaces which do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. Labor believes in improving wellbeing and productivity through safe, socially inclusive workplaces, that value diversity and are free of discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. Labor is committed to workplace laws which protect workers against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status. No worker should be subject to bullying or harassment in the workplace.

15. Education and training is necessary to social mobility in Australia and the lifelong acquisition of skills and knowledge creates the opportunity for individuals to improve their living standards and for the nation to grow and prosper. Investing in skills and training, infrastructure, innovation and entrepreneurship creates jobs.

16. Government should protect workers from unfair dismissal, from labour market risk not of their own making, and from discrimination in obtaining and keeping employment. Labor believes in international labour standards and their effective implementation in Australia.

17. Every workplace injury is preventable. Industry, employers, trade unions and workers should be supported to reduce workplace risk, hazards and injury and to achieve the highest standard of workplace safety. If a worker is injured at work, on the way to work, or as a result of the negligence of their employer or a third party, their rights to both statutory no fault benefits and common law
compensation should be respected and protected, and workers must be fairly compensated. The dignity of injured workers, and their rights to be compensated for their injuries, should be protected. Injured workers must be rehabilitated and helped to return to work in a meaningful role.

18. Employees have fundamental democratic rights to representation in the workplace, to freedom of association, to collectively bargain and to organise and be represented by their union. Employees are best represented in their workplace through membership of their relevant trade union. Unions and union delegates give employees a voice at work, create harmonious and productive workplaces, facilitate workplace change, resolve disputes as they arise, improve occupational health and safety, and improve ongoing training opportunities.

19. Australia’s trade unions, the legitimate representatives of the workforce, should be fully consulted and involved across a range of industrial, economic and social issues.

20. Labor believes in the right to collective bargaining in good faith, which means that parties must have a genuine intention to make an agreement, to exchange all relevant information, and to facilitate communication between all participants during the process. To that end, Labor believes that truth in bargaining will be assisted by a disclosure framework, with appropriate safeguards, for information that is relied on in denying a workforce claim during negotiations.

21. Balance in the workplace is achieved through an independent umpire, acting in the national interest, who can ensure the fair and effective resolution of disputes and the fair application of workplace laws. Australia’s workplace relations system should balance the needs of business with the important social and economic need of creating and sustaining good, secure jobs. Workplace relations laws should promote harmonious and productive relationships between employers and employees. Labor believes workplace relations laws should reduce inequality, promote fairness, job security, good wages and working conditions, and employment growth.

22. Labor believes all employees and employers, in every workplace, are entitled to the same basic rights and responsibilities. Government should be responsible for providing practical, quick and low-cost assistance to help employers and employees understand their responsibilities.

23. Labor will adhere to these values in Government as an employer and in Government procurement.

**Labor priorities**

**Transition to work**

24. Labor will help more people participate in the workforce through a combination of active labour market programs, support, incentives and responsibilities. Labor will create an effective employment services system based on evidence of what works to help people achieve sustainable and meaningful employment and to help employers meet their labour and skill needs. Labor will ensure the integrity of employment services, in the interest of job seekers, business and taxpayers.

25. Labor will improve employment opportunities and support for disadvantaged job seekers including young people, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability and the long term unemployed, older Australians and retrenched workers. Labor recognises the importance of the transition from school, university and vocational education into employment.

26. Labor will help people who live in places where there is intense disadvantage to participate in employment.
Improving participation for parents and carers

27. Labor will help people manage their work and caring responsibilities through paid parental leave, rights to unpaid parental leave of up to two years, the right to request part-time work, or other flexible work arrangements, including an effective right of review for unreasonable refusals of their requests, and the right to work reasonable but not excessive hours.

28. Labor is committed to the goal of ensuring that parents have access to 26 weeks of paid parental leave, as the internationally recognised best-practice benchmark. Labor is committed to the goal of 26 weeks at full pay plus superannuation through a combination of government and employer contributions.

29. Labor will deliver affordable, quality childcare and before and after school care, and will consider changes to taxation, superannuation, work and industry arrangements to support this.

30. Labor will ensure flexible working arrangements accommodate unpaid caring work, without discrimination, financial or otherwise. Labor will ensure the right to request changes to working arrangements to meet caring responsibilities, including an effective right of review for unreasonable refusals of their requests, is equitable for all employees and maximises access of employees to arrangements that suit their needs. Labor will deliver effective support for transition to work when caring responsibilities change, including education and training.

Improving participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

31. Labor is committed to ensuring the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce is engaged in fulfilling employment with the standard conditions and wages afforded to other Australian workers.

32. Labor is committed to halving the gap in employment outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians by 2018, supporting 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to find and sustain a job by 2018.

33. Labor will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve employment opportunities and the job readiness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whether they live in urban areas or remote communities. Labor will ensure participation programs in remote communities focus on skill-formation and are not a substitute for real employment.

34. Labor will support procurement opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ businesses and otherwise supporting the growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business sector. Labor will work with communities and businesses to develop economic, employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including in remote communities.

Investing in Skills and Social Mobility

35. Labor will help Australians acquire the skills they and the labour market need now and in the future.

36. Labor will work in partnership with employer, union and professional representative bodies to deliver high quality training to equip people with nationally recognised and transferrable skills for current and emerging employment opportunities; improve productivity, make our workplaces
internationally competitive, and improve job satisfaction and employment prospects. Effective industry and government co-investment models should upskill existing workforces, including in language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

37. Apprenticeships and traineeships should deliver for the individual and industry, for young people and for mature-age workers. Labor will work with state and territory governments to ensure we have a strong and responsive TAFE system, as the principle provider of vocational education and training. Labor will ensure high quality training is delivered regardless of whether the provider is private or public sector.

38. Labor will protect vulnerable individuals from unscrupulous practices in the training sector and there will be appropriate consequences for such improper conduct. Labor will provide training opportunities to Australians who are vulnerable to unemployment.

**Jobs with decent pay and conditions**

39. Australia needs a modern award system that is relevant to the workplaces of the 21st century, is accessible to employers, workers and unions, addresses the particular needs of workers in different industries and occupations and is responsive to changes in industry and market standards. Modern awards need to provide an effective and up-to-date safety net and must allow for improved test case standards, both within and across awards.

40. Labor stands for a workplace relations system that provides safe jobs, secure jobs, fair reward for all and dignity at work by providing workers a voice and rights at work. Where economic pressures create unsafe or unfair outcomes Labor will seek tripartite solutions to address the concerns across industries and across supply chains.

41. Labor will work with State and Territory Governments to achieve a national minimum standard for long service leave to form part of the National Employment Standards. Labor will work with state and territory governments to ensure consistent treatment of public holidays, including the issue of Easter Sunday and the treatment of Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day where they fall on weekends.

42. Australia needs wage levels for apprentices and trainees to fairly balance a living wage with incentives for employers to train the next generation of skilled employees. Labor will promote better skilled and secure jobs through industry driven workforce development research and planning and the establishment of a tripartite government agency as an authority on workforce development policy advice and to conduct skills and workforce research, including into the quality and security of jobs and the future working life in Australia.

43. Labor is committed to a minimum wage that will maintain or improve the relative living standards of low paid workers.

44. Labor supports labour market programs that provide a supportive training environment, constructive work experience, post-placement support and tackle barriers to employment, such as education, poverty and mental health issues.

45. Labor will address the gender pay gap, including by requiring the Fair Work Commission to take into account the principle of pay equity when conducting periodic reviews of modern awards, and by ensuring that equal remuneration provisions in the Fair Work Act deliver for low paid women. Labor will take measurable action and will update Parliament each year on Australia’s progress.
46. Labor will regulate and educate employers to promote equal opportunity, gender pay equity and work and family balance. Labor will improve gender pay equity including through effective data collection from business by government. Labor will enact an equal pay for equal or comparable work strategy underpinned by legal and reporting obligations. Labor will act to bridge the gap in women’s retirement incomes.

47. Labor will work with State and Territory Governments, employers and unions to facilitate the portability of entitlements including through industry-wide schemes:

48. Labor believes in equal representation government of superannuation boards and opposes the mandating of independent directors.

49. Labor believes that a practical industry-based system for selecting default funds in modern awards should be overseen by the Fair Work Commission with input from employees, employers and experts.

50. Labor will support employers and unions to develop working time arrangements that are consistent with employees’ preferences and needs and that will reduce excessive working hours and maximise employment creation.

51. Labor understands that penalty rates compensate workers for working excessive or unsociable hours. Labor will reverse the cuts to Sunday and public holiday penalty rates, and will amend the Fair Work Act so that awards cannot be varied to cut workers’ take home pay.

52. Labor will ensure the workplace relations system reduces the incidence of underemployment and insecure work. Labor will strengthen the laws that prohibit sham contracting. Labor will set an objective test for determining when a worker is a casual. Labor will protect labour hire workers. Labor will ensure enterprise agreements are agreed to by a representative cohort and will prevent the unilateral termination of enterprise agreements.

53. Labor understands that the growth of the ‘gig economy’ and information technology platforms will have both positive and negative impacts on the way that Australians work. Labour is committed to ensuring that gig economy platforms and other forms of working are not used to circumvent the safety net of wages and entitlements, or to undermine workers’ rights to collectively organise and access their union.

54. Labor recognises the deleterious impact of poor quality and insecure employment on the immediate health and safety of workers and the overall negative effects on the health, including the mental health, of the community. Labor is committed to making job quality a central social policy objective, including improvements in labour market control and social protections and services.

55. Labor will protect vulnerable seafarers in the coastal trade and promote fair labour standards in the Australian shipping industry.

56. Labor recognises the disadvantaged position of outworkers in the Textile, Clothing and Footwear sector. Outworkers require specific regulatory protection in order to control the exploitative conditions under which they are employed and ensure they are deemed to be employees and receive all employee entitlements including superannuation.
57. Labor acknowledges the unique issues that confront fly-in, fly-out workers and recognises those deserving of particular attention including the health and wellbeing of workers and their families. Labor is committed to working with State and Territory governments on those unique issues regarding minimum standards across the fly-in, fly-out industry.

58. Labor recognises the physical toll on men and women employed in physically rigorous occupations that leads to earlier than average retirement ages. In this context, Labor supports exploring the introduction of early access to preserved superannuation accounts for these workers.

59. Labor will work with employers, unions and community organisations to remove obstacles to the employment of people with disability and to ensure that people with a disability receive a fair wage.

60. Labor will address corporate practices which circumvent workplace laws. Labor will prevent transfer of business, corporate restructuring, phoenixing, labour hire, insourcing or outsourcing arrangements, termination of agreements, unrepresentative agreements and sham independent contracting to be used to avoid obligations in the Fair Work Act, an award or a collective agreement. Labor will extend, where appropriate, responsibility for compliance with workplace laws to corporations who are the economic decision makers, including franchisors and along the supply chain. Labor will introduce a Modern Slavery Act.

61. Labor will increase penalties for employers and related entities who systematically underpay and exploit workers. Labor will ensure that the Fair Work Ombudsman has the resources necessary to focus on detection and prosecution of serious contraventions of the Fair Work Act by employers.

62. Labor will consider the issues around the regulation of paid and unpaid internships to ensure a positive culture that promotes learning and development opportunities while avoiding negative impacts and exploitation.

63. Labor will not seek to reduce industrial obligations or terms and conditions through Government outsourcing.

64. Labor will protect notice of termination and redundancy pay as a basic employment right. Labor will protect employee entitlements from the risk of company and market failure with a Fair Entitlements Guarantee that includes redundancy pay (up to four weeks per year of service), annual leave, long service leave, notice, superannuation and unpaid wages. Employers should be obliged to make proper provision for employee entitlements. Labor will develop further mechanisms to protect workers’ superannuation in the event of corporate collapse.

65. Labor will introduce an improved ranking of employee entitlements relative to other creditors, ensuring employers and directors meet their responsibilities, and ensure any burden placed on taxpayers is reasonable. Labor will amend corporations law to strengthen the recovery of employee entitlements including prohibiting corporate and director conduct which has the consequence of preventing recovery. Employee creditors and their representatives should also have the capacity to directly recover employee entitlements.

66. Labor will support the work of the International Labour Organisation, particularly within our region, to improve international labour standards and champion respect for internationally recognised workplace rights.
67. Labor supports Australian jobs. Labor supports genuine testing of the Australian labour market before temporary overseas labour is engaged and will act on this commitment in government. Labor acknowledges that temporary overseas workers are vulnerable to exploitation and that this exploitation also affects Australian workers by undermining their wages and conditions. Labor is committed to ensuring that migrant workers have access to adequate information on their workplace rights.

68. Labor is committed to supporting businesses that recognise the importance of creating jobs in Australia. Labor will work with workers, unions, the community and industry to adopt strategies and policies that keep jobs local.

Safety at work

69. Labor supports the right of every worker to a safe home, community and workplace. Labor stands against family violence. Labor is committed to introducing 10 days paid Domestic Violence leave as a universal workplace right in the National Employment Standards.

70. Labor will advance its workplace safety agenda through Safe Work Australia, the national body coordinating and facilitating Australia’s Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) strategy. Labor is committed to ensuring the best outcomes are achieved consistently across the departments, agencies and regulators Australia-wide that have OHS responsibilities and functions. Labor will ensure tripartite oversight of workers’ compensation and workplace safety.

71. Labor will work with employers, unions and the States and Territories, consistent with principles which have been developed by State and Territory branches of the ALP, to restore dignity and support for injured workers who have suffered as a result of the erosion of their rights and benefits.

72. Labor is committed to improving Comcare to ensure it is an effective regulator and that injured workers get fair and adequate compensation for their injuries or illness, and are rehabilitated and helped to return to work in a suitable role. Labor will oppose any changes to Comcare to allow employers to exit other Australian Workers’ Compensation schemes, thereby undermining the viability of those schemes. Labor does not support any move to outsource or privatise Comcare.

73. Labor is committed to the retention of the Seacare scheme of workers’ compensation and occupational health and safety for Australian seafarers as an independent authority operating under Commonwealth legislation. Labor is committed to improving safety in the national stevedoring industry, in particular supports the implementation of improved regulation of stevedoring safety.

74. Labor will work cooperatively with employers, unions and States and Territories to develop a national regulatory framework for Occupational Health and Safety and Workers’ Compensation in the shipping, offshore oil and gas, and stevedoring industries to eliminate regulatory uncertainty and dual jurisdictional involvement. In particular, Labor will act to harmonise occupational health and safety laws covering seafarers and offshore oil and gas industry workers covered by sector-specific OHS laws. Labor is committed to ensuring that International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions to which Australia is a signatory are restored in the offshore oil and gas sector to which Australia is a signatory. Labor will improve workplace safety in high risk sectors including on farms, fishing vessels and in forests with farm organisations, unions and governments; through research, raising the profile of safety issues, codes of practice, and where these means fail, appropriate regulation. Labor will protect owner-drivers and employees in the road transport industry by maintaining safe rates, conditions and payments
systems for employees and owner-drivers; covering all parties in the transport supply chain; and by a strong and effective education and enforcement regime.

75. Labor recognises the impact of asbestos on the health of those who are exposed to it, and the legacy that it will leave. Labor will protect the community from exposure to asbestos-related disease, in cooperation with states and territories, by improving asbestos awareness, and management and removal of asbestos from the built environment. Labor will work towards a full world-wide ban on the mining, manufacture and use of asbestos, to be implemented and oversighted by tripartite international processes and to ensure ongoing protection and support is provided to victims of asbestos-related disease and their families and to ensure people are protected from asbestos and asbestos related diseases.

76. Labor will provide the highest level of protection to the community, workers and the environment from chemicals by ensuring the efficient and timely assessment of all chemicals; by requiring safety data to be complete, up to date and comprehensive (including nano forms of bulk chemicals). Labor will facilitate a coordinated toxic use reduction policy through the establishment of a tripartite chemicals coordinating body charged with developing and monitoring strategies across multiple agencies to decrease the toxic load on people and the environment. Labor supports “green chemistry” industry initiatives that encourage companies to improve their products and processes to minimize the generation and use of hazardous substances.

77. Labor recognises that firefighters’ workplace is an unpredictable, volatile and dangerous workplace and is to be recognised as a high risk occupational in health and safety legislation. Labor believes in achieving the highest level of workplace safety and that workers’ right to a safe workplace should be enshrined in legislation. Labor recognises that that firefighters face extraordinary hazards and the importance of a regulated requirements of safe crewing on the fireground which includes the principle of two-in two-out.

78. Australians are increasingly encountering nano materials in the workplace and everyday life. Labor understands there are legitimate concerns about the potential health, safety and environmental impacts of particular nano materials. We will take a whole-of-government approach to ensuring Australia’s regulatory framework is responsive to new developments in the application of nanotechnology and new evidence on nanotechnology risks. We will continue to encourage and support research into the safety of nano materials and the ongoing development of nanotechnology measurement standards for regulators and industry. Labor will promote public participation in decision making on nanotechnology policy and engage with unions to effectively address potential work health and safety risks.

79. Labor is committed to ensuring that restructuring cannot be used as a method to abrogate responsibility for workplace injuries, illness and death. Labor considers that such directors should be held responsible in such circumstances.

**The right to organise, collectively bargain and be represented**

80. Labor will protect employees’ right to access union representation at work in reasonable locations at appropriate times. Labor will ensure delegates are able to organise and effectively represent employees, including paid training leave. Labor will work with trade unions and employers to ensure due respect for workers’ rights to join a union without hindrance or discrimination, and using modern payment methods.
81. Labor recognises that the right to organise and be represented are protected under international law and is committed to adopting all relevant international labour treaties and conventions.

82. Labor will promote and ensure good faith bargaining in workplaces including by developing guidelines on good faith conduct in negotiations to allow access to and assistance from the independent umpire to resolve disputes.

83. The Fair Work Act has not adequately facilitated multi-employer collective bargaining. This is a particular issue for those industries where employees are low paid and where they lack industrial power. Labor is committed to improving access to collective bargaining, including where appropriate through multi-employer collective bargaining.

84. Labor believes that bargaining for multi-employer and multi-agency public sector agreements should be facilitated.

85. Labor will include unions alongside business, community and other appropriate interests in constituted boards, committees and consultative bodies that provide advice to the government. Labor will work with trade unions and employers to ensure employees have access to adequate information on their workplace rights, including their right to join a union and relevant industrial agreements, as well as occupational health and safety and other employment information at the commencement of their employment and on an ongoing basis.

86. The capacity of employees, employers and unions to communicate through websites, email and social media on industrial rights and concerns should be protected.

The workplace relations system

87. Labor will ensure all workers, employers and unions have equal access to assistance from the independent umpire to resolve award, NES and agreement disputes by arbitration where disputes cannot be resolved through discussion, conciliation or mediation. Labor is committed to providing parties with access to arbitration for intractable disputes.

88. Labor will retain the Fair Work Commission and the Fair Work Ombudsman ensuring understanding of and compliance with workplace laws. Labor will deliver effective, low-cost, informal and prompt resolution of disputes through the Fair Work Commission, the Fair Work Ombudsman and small claims procedures in the courts.

89. Labor will provide a balanced and effective compliance regime, which will provide procedural and substantive fairness to all parties in the construction industry. The appropriate body to regulate registered organisations is the Fair Work Commission, with serious contraventions of regulatory laws by registered organisations referred to ASIC for investigation and prosecution. Labor will abolish the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

90. Labor will work with State Governments to develop a truly national workplace relations system for the private sector.

91. Labor will ensure that all public sector employees who must, under Section 44 of the Constitution, resign their employment to stand for the federal parliament, are able to resume that employment, or, if not possible, employment paying no less than the former employment, after the relevant election, if they are not elected.
Chapter 6: New opportunities for an ageing Australia

The contemporary challenge

1. Australia’s population is undergoing a profound change: our people are living longer than ever before. Each year, more people reach Age Pension eligibility age than reach working age. This longevity is a result of advances in health, technologies and lifestyles. While this demographic shift creates some challenges, it is a historic achievement and offers social and economic opportunities for the nation. Labor celebrates this – we do not see longer lives as a problem or a burden.

2. Older Australians want to contribute to the Australian economy and society through business, education, employment and volunteering. Australians want active, happy, healthy and productive lives in retirement and should be supported to do so. Governments have a responsibility to ensure older Australians get the support, security, care and services they need.

Labor values

3. Longer lives are a social and economic asset to be celebrated and harnessed. All Australians deserve respect, dignity, security and choice as they age.

4. Australian communities should enable older Australians to lead healthy, secure and productive lives. Labor will provide support and services to older Australians including housing assistance, public transport and community infrastructure.

5. Older Australians’ contribution to our national prosperity and economic development should be recognised. They deserve honour and support in their continued contributions in employment, volunteering, caring and the community. Labor will remove barriers to those older Australians who choose to continue working and will provide better and more flexible work environments for older Australians. It is important to acknowledge that older Australians make an important contribution as mentors in business and community life.

6. Labor recognises that age discrimination is a growing problem in Australia. Labor will work with the State and Territory Governments to improve protections and reduce barriers for Australian workers.

7. Labor created the pension and we have protected it for more than 100 years. Labor built universal superannuation. We will always ensure Australia’s post-retirement income system is strong and sustainable, giving older Australians the financial support and security, they deserve.

8. Older Australians in physically demanding jobs, those working in industries in transition, and those who have been out of the workforce for an extended time face extended periods of unemployment and underemployment well before they reach Age Pension age – leading to seriously depleted financial resources as they age. Labor will protect their right to a dignified retirement.

9. Older Australians are entitled to affordable, accessible and high quality aged care services that are delivered by a professionally trained, accredited and dedicated workforce. Australia has the skills, talents and abilities to protect and grow aged care services.

10. Older Australians should have fast, reliable and affordable broadband access to connect with family and friends, employment and business, and where appropriate, health and other services.
Labor priorities

11. As reflected in the Housing Chapter, Labor will invest in a Safe Housing Fund to increase transitional housing options for older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness.

12. As reflected in the Health Chapter, Labor acknowledges the important interaction between the acute and aged care sectors when it comes to the delivery of care for older Australians. Labor acknowledges there is a high cost of care for older Australians in the acute and sub-acute settings. Labor is committed to ensuring older Australians receive the best care in the most appropriate health care settings.

13. Labor is committed to addressing the prevalence of elder abuse. Older Australians should be free from the atrocities of elder abuse and neglect, intentional or unintentional. They should also be free from fear of physical, psychological, emotional, sexual or financial abuse.

14. Labor supports nationally consistent retirement village legislation, with stronger consumer protections. This is what the public expects and it is a priority that Labor will progress with all levels of Government.

15. In Government, Labor made the aged care system stronger, more sustainable, more transparent and easier to access through its Living Longer, Living Better (LLLB) reforms. Labor remains committed to implementing these reforms.

16. Labor is committed to helping the growing numbers of Australian experiencing dementia.

17. Labor will:

- Ensure older Australians can participate to their full capacity and potential in the economy and in community life;
- Improve the wages and conditions, skills, professional development and career advancement of older Australians;
- Emphasise wellness, independence and increased choice for older Australians to choose the type of care they want;
- Expand health care services in the community, at home and in residential aged care;
- Support educational programs to give older Australians modern information and communications technologies;
- Support older Australians to reskill as they transition through phases of work and into semi-retirement and retirement;
- Support the unique needs and challenges faced by older Australians in regional, rural and remote areas, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, those from LGBTIQ communities and with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds;
- Improve and enhance legal protections, consumer protections and financial security for older Australians;
- Address discriminatory perceptions of older Australians which may hinder their social, cultural, religious and economic participation;
- Promote respect for older Australians;
• Expand quality palliative care and increase awareness and uptake of advanced care plans to provide Australians with better control and choice over end of life planning; and
• Determine the true cost of care through independent research and in consultation with key stakeholders, including unions, providers, consumer advocates, academia, and government.

18. Labor is committed to ensuring good quality and safe working conditions and environments, and investing in a stable, secure, accredited and professional aged care workforce.

Retirement Incomes

19. By 2050 there will be approximately four times as many 80 year olds as there are today and twice as many 65 year olds. There will be 2.7 people in the workforce for every person aged 65 years or older.

20. Older Australians deserve to share in Australia’s rising community living standards and to live with dignity and financial security in retirement. Labor will lift retirement incomes fairly and take pressure off the Age Pension. Labor will provide a strong and sustainable pension system. Labor will maintain a strong pension indexation to reflect the rising cost of living and broader community living standards.

21. Labor believes in pursuing proactive policy settings in superannuation and financial services that improve retirement incomes, particularly for women and low and middle-income earners. Labor also acknowledges the financial disparity particularly faced by older women who may be without superannuation or retirement savings.

22. A highly skilled, ethical, professional financial services industry is essential for the financial well-being of older Australians. As many Australians as possible should be able to access high quality and affordable financial advice, particularly when making decisions about their retirement incomes and care requirements. Lifting the standards for financial advice will encourage more Australians to undertake retirement planning. Labor supports strong consumer protections to uphold the best interests of older Australians in the provision of financial advice. Labor will encourage the development of financial products that maximise income streams for older Australians in retirement.

Ageing and Aged Care Services

23. Australia’s aged care system should give older Australians:
• A high minimum standard of quality care;
• The right to fair, sustainable, quality care services appropriate to their needs;
• Greater range, choice of support and care arrangements, and control over who provides these, the mix of support and care services, and the terms on which they are provided;
• The ability to easily navigate the aged care system in order to obtain the care they need;
• Equity of access to services for different population groups;
• Open and transparent information and data on facilities, services and staffing; and
• Increased accountability of tax payer funding provided to all aged care facilities and services, including not-for-profits and private providers.
24. Our aged care system should be underpinned by a highly qualified and well paid workforce capable of meeting the needs of older Australians.

25. Policies for older Australians should promote independence, wellness and the continuing contribution and active involvement, with their friends, families and communities.

26. Labor is committed to ensuring older Australians accessing residential aged care services have consistent access to a high minimum standard of quality care so to avoid a two-tier system of care.

27. All older Australians have a right to safe and secure aged care services, whether they are delivered in the home or in a residential facility.

28. Many Australians, as they age, come to rely on the support provided by the aged care sector with services ranging from low level home support to residential care. Labor will work to further ensure that older Australians are able to align services with their needs and preferences, acting on the principle of ‘consumer directed care’ and Labor’s LLLB aged care reforms.

29. Labor recognises the many benefits of in-home and consumer directed care and strongly supports the increased choice and flexibility for all Australians in the care they receive and the environment in which it is delivered. Labor is committed to working with stakeholders to help ensure that the aged care workforce adapts sustainably as consumer directed care becomes a larger part of the aged care system.

30. Labor will take into account demographic changes and rural and regional supply challenges and ensure the supply of quality aged care services meets current and future demand.

31. A large proportion of older Australians want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Labor will provide Home Care Packages to help older Australians who choose to remain independent and in their own homes, close to their family and community, wherever possible.

32. Labor will listen to residents of aged care facilities, Home Care Package recipients, their families, friends and loved ones, the aged care workforce and other interested parties about the quality and nature of care and through greater consumer participation in the accreditation system, maintain a strong and robust complaints process.

33. As they age, LGBTIQ people deserve care and support that reflects their diversity. Labor will ensure that policies in relation to ageing take into account the needs of people with different sexual orientations, gender identities and intersex statuses, including by building on Labor’s previous LGBTIQ Ageing and Aged Care Strategy.

34. Labor recognises the need to provide culturally appropriate aged care, including strategies that address:
   - The propensity of older Australians from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds experiencing dementia to revert to their first language;
   - The need for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to maintain contact with their culture and country; and
   - Discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex senior Australians. Accordingly, Labor has amended the Sex Discrimination Act to cover sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status, removed exemptions to this law in aged care facilities.
and implemented strategies that recognise the special needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex senior Australians in aged care facilities.

35. Labor recognises the profound grief, suffering and loss experienced by members of the Stolen Generations as a result of forced removals and other past government policies. Accordingly, Labor will provide appropriate aged care services that take into consideration their particular needs.

36. For Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants, the impact of childhood experiences in institutions and children homes is ongoing. These ‘care-leavers’ have special needs in aged care services and deserve an aged care system that is responsive and appropriate for their needs.

37. Preventive health measures and vigilant care are necessary to reduce chronic illnesses among older Australians and ensure they remain as healthy as possible.

Quality Aged Care Workforce

38. The aged care services sector workforce performs valuable work providing care, support and services that enable older Australians to live rich and fulfilling lives. Labor recognises that care staff, including personal care and support workers, and nurses, deserve to be well paid with access to appropriate/proper career paths. Aged care workers deserve a quality, professional, safe, stable and secure work environment. There will need to be a tripling of the aged care workforce in the next 30 years to provide a high standard of living and care for the growing proportion of older Australians needing care.

39. The workforce requires access to ongoing professional education and training, development and support in the context of the ongoing aged care reforms, with a focus on re-ablement, wellness and the uptake of technology.

40. Labor recognises the aged care services workforce offers and increasingly diverse range of career and work opportunities. Along with nursing, health and care workers, the sector needs to attract arrange of professional and specialist workers including those in allied health, information technology and communications, innovation, design, architecture, investment and financial planning, to ensure Australia remains at the forefront of aged care service provision.

41. Labor will work with the sector to develop and implement an aged care workforce strategy to improve career and training pathways, improve skills development, improve management, workforce planning, supervision and wages. In addition, Labor will seek to promote aged care services as a secure industry for employment, with increasing investment, development and career opportunities, as a result of the ageing population.

42. Labor acknowledges the importance of proper regulation to ensure that Australia’s aged care system is world leading in its approach to safety, skills and training. Labor will seek to create a nationally consistent pre-employment screening process in consultation with key industry stakeholders. This regulation scheme will mandate minimum qualifications requirements.

Dementia

43. The growing incidence of dementia is one of the biggest health challenges of the 21st century, in Australia and across the world. It is now the number one cause of death amongst women in Australia and the second leading cause of death overall.
44. Dementia should not be considered a normal part of growing old. Dementia is a serious and debilitating condition with enormous economic and social implications.

45. Labor supports the advances made by Australian researchers, scientists and practitioners to find a cure for dementia. Until then we must focus on prevention, quality care and support for those living with dementia now.

46. Labor is committed to making Australia the best place in the world for people living with dementia. People living with dementia should have access to quality care, services and support so they can stay connected to their communities and remain independent for as long as possible.

47. Labor will ensure better understanding and awareness of dementia by the general public so that people with dementia and their families feel less isolated and alone.

48. Labor will focus on supporting, empowering and including people living with dementia so that they can participate and remain active members of their community. Labor will support local communities to improve dementia awareness, build dementia-inclusive communities, fund education and training programs and provide appropriate support programs for people living with dementia and their families.

49. Labor recognises that dementia is not solely an age related condition and that attention needs to be given to younger onset dementia and the need for purpose specific facilities outside of residential aged care.

50. Labor understands that building our capacity to address dementia in primary care will facilitate a more timely diagnosis and entry point to services, support more cohesive integrated support planning throughout all stages of the disease and improve the welfare of Australians who are affected by dementia.

51. Labor acknowledges that encouraging a wellness and preventative approach to dementia will ensure the preventable risk factors for dementia are more widely recognised and addressed through chronic disease management.
Chapter 7: A world-class education for all Australians

The contemporary challenge

1. The global social and economic challenges we face in the 21st century mean the need to build a smart Australia is more urgent than ever. Education is the great enabler, not only to give our industries the knowledge and skills they need to innovate and prosper, but also to promote social mobility and social harmony.

2. Our education system must prepare a new generation of Australians for emerging jobs and the jobs of tomorrow. Yet today too many students, particularly from disadvantaged communities, are not reaching their educational potential. Too many children still have their future determined by their postcode, class and financial situation.

3. Education is essential to each Australian reaching their full potential, and is crucial to building our national prosperity. For Australia to prosper we must develop world-class education and training institutions and be one of the most highly educated and skilled nations on earth. This requires investment and improvement in education at all levels: early childhood, the primary and secondary years, vocational education and training and higher education.

Labor values

4. All Australians have the right to a high quality education, regardless of their social background. The greatest gift Australia can give all our children is an excellent education — one that helps them find their passion, make the most of their potential and be well equipped to live life and participate in the workforce.

5. Parents and carers are the first educators of children, and critical brain development occurs in the first 1000 days from conception to age two. Labor will work with states and maternal and child support services to support parents in this critical period, to ensure more young Australians get the best possible start to life.

6. Quality education in the early years is crucial for a child’s development and reducing social disadvantage. Early childhood education should be universally available, affordable and of the highest quality.

7. A strong and well-performing school system is the best opportunity we have to make the most of our strengths and to tackle disadvantage, giving all young people a solid foundation for the future.

8. Every student in every school should get a quality education that meets their individual needs. Real choice in school education means making sure every local public school is a great school, that parents feel confident sending their children to.

9. Every Australian in every community should have access to free, secular, high quality government schooling and government policies should enable this. Adequate public funding is necessary for quality public education and training.

10. Greater equality in educational outcomes is important for strengthening social inclusion and promoting opportunity. Neither background nor disadvantage should be a barrier to educational achievement for any child.
11. Labor will make our schools, early education centres and education institutions more transparent and accountable.

12. The right to education includes the right to an environment free from bullying and harassment, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, anti disability bullying and harassment.

13. A quality post-secondary education system is a crucial driver of participation, improved productive performance and international competitiveness. TAFE has been the key contributor to social inclusion and civic participation. Labor will not shift the costs of vocational education and training onto students. To deliver the high-skilled workers and citizens of the future, engaged in lifelong learning, vocational education and training or higher education must be a national priority. Our vocational education system must be a strong and viable option. It must not become a residual system. Labor will ensure TAFE (Technical and Further Education – is at the centre of our vocational educational and training system providing opportunity to working class Australians.

14. Labor will ensure access to higher education is based on talent and hard work, not on a student’s bank balance or family income. We will never support policies to reduce access to higher education for students from low-income, regional, or disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds.

15. Australia needs excellence in all aspects of higher and tertiary education from teaching and learning, to research and engagement with industry and the community. Universities and TAFEs are critical drivers of social and economic wellbeing within their regions, and are essential to ensuring Australia’s future prosperity. As public institutions, universities and TAFEs must work with governments to address the national interest and ensure our nation continues to build prosperity in a rapidly changing world. This includes ensuring that TAFE is recognised alongside the university sector as a critical part of the post-school system.

16. Labor will create opportunities for career-enhancing learning and life-long learning in older age through our post-secondary education system.

17. Education and training is essential to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ disadvantage and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Labor will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities and families to develop and implement education and training access, attendance and outcomes in order to close this gap.

**Labor priorities**

**Early Childhood: The best start for every child**

18. Early childhood education and care is a priority for Australia’s economic and social interests and a priority for families.

19. Australia should expand affordable, high quality, integrated early learning and care programs. Early education and care programs should meet the learning and development needs of individual children, including children with disability. Early intervention programs for children at risk, and children with extra educational or developmental needs, are particularly important. Labor in government will maintain the universal access to preschool and kindergarten program, and will improve it by considering options to ensure all children get this opportunity, such as increasing the number of hours available.
20. High quality learning and development experiences in the first five years of life are critical to children's cognitive and non-cognitive development. This includes play-based learning. Quality early childhood education and care has a proven link to life outcomes. As a result, learning and development should be at the centre of our system of early childhood education and care. Creating this 21st Century early childhood education and care system is the responsibility of all levels of government.

21. Investing in the early years has long term economic and social benefits. Quality early childhood programs offer a strong return on investment through reduced expenditure on later interventions, and are necessary to a skilled and productive workforce. Early childhood education and care is the first step in lifelong learning and enrichment.

22. Expenditure on early childhood education and care in Australia is currently below the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development average. Labor is committed to improving quality standards and availability so Australian children do not fall behind those in comparable countries.

23. Labor recognises the fundamental role that parents and guardians play in a child’s education. Labor will work with states and territories to facilitate the provision of community education programs to support parents and guardians in this role.

24. Quality early education in the years before school leads to higher levels of student achievement. This is particularly the case for vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Kindergarten and preschool is a shared responsibility of the federal and state and territory governments, and Labor will work with the states and territories so all children have access to this important opportunity.

25. Accessible and affordable early childhood education and care is essential for parents, especially women, to return to the workforce. To achieve this, Labor will:
   - Provide high-quality early childhood education and care options that are flexible, accessible, affordable and convenient for parents;
   - Ensure government funding promotes both quality care outcomes and workforce participation; and
   - Support employment and education participation by providing families without of school hours care options that are flexible, accessible and affordable.

26. Cost should not be a barrier to early childhood education and care for Australian families. Labor will target assistance to alleviate income and location disadvantage in early childhood education and care. Labor will also work to ensure that government funding supports service delivery and reducing costs for families.

27. Early childhood education and care is one of the most valuable careers for our nation’s future. Quality early education and care can be provided only by a highly skilled, professional and well paid workforce. Labor supports improved wages and conditions for educators, and acknowledges parents alone cannot afford to meet this increased cost. Quality education for children should be supported by quality training for educators which meets strict quality controls.

28. Historical barriers to genuine enterprise bargaining in the early childhood education and care sector have resulted in low wages for skilled childcare professionals. These include the predominantly female workforce, multiple small sites of employment, limited community recognition of the work and the high responsibility placed on the workforce, making industrial action difficult.
29. Labor will continue the implementation of the National Quality Framework and continue to review quality measures based on the latest available evidence and data.

30. Labor will:
   - Support the professional development of early childhood educators;
   - Maintain minimum qualifications required of educators;
   - Support staff-to-child ratios that enable educators to develop secure attachments with children;
   - Actively plan to meet changing workforce needs, including the need for more degree-qualified Early Childhood Teachers; and
   - Properly regulate any new federal programs to deliver flexible forms of care, or care in the home, to protect quality standards and educators' wages and conditions.

31. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children should receive quality, culturally rich early education and care services. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be encouraged and supported to train as early childhood educators.

**An excellent education for every student, in every school**

32. Universal, high quality school education is a necessary condition of social justice, prosperity and opportunity. No student should miss out on achieving their potential because of the means of their family, where they live, or the school they attend.

33. Every Australian child in every community should have access to high-quality, universal, free, secular government schooling. Our public schools are among our nation’s most important institutions, and it is a fundamental responsibility of governments to ensure they are adequately resourced to deliver an excellent quality education.

34. Every child can learn. Each child has varied strengths and development needs, and each should make good progress in their learning. All schools should be funded to meet the varied needs of each and every child.

35. Our school system should foster collaboration and cooperation amongst teachers and schools, not competition. Teachers and school leaders need the time and resources to be lifelong learners themselves, continually evaluating the evidence and adopting the evidence based practices that work best for the children in their classrooms.

36. Labor will work to implement a properly funded national needs-based and sector-blind school funding model consistent with the original Review into School Funding recommendations that ensures disadvantaged schools get the biggest funding increases in the shortest time. We will work with the states and territories to ensure all schools operate at a resource standard that meets the needs of their students.

37. School education is too important to Australia’s future prosperity to be solely the responsibility of individual states and territories. All students have the right to attend high quality, well-resourced schools, and the federal government has a central role in ensuring both quality and equality. Schooling is the shared responsibility of the states and territories, and the federal government.
38. Equity in education is essential for social inclusion. Every student should have the teaching and learning resources needed to achieve their best. This requires targeted needs-based investment to overcome disadvantage, including for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability, students with limited English, and students in rural and remote areas. It also requires resources and strategies to ensure that gifted and talented children are nurtured and challenged and provided with an environment which allows them to get the best out of their abilities.

39. Labor will work cooperatively with the states and territories to increase school funding and ensure this drives evidence-based reforms that lead to higher academic achievement and better teaching and learning. Federal investment in schools should always be transparent and accountable and subject to all schools in all sectors meeting national standards in curriculum, teaching and learning.

40. Labor strives for each generation of students to achieve more than their parents. Australian students should be among the very highest performing in the world, not only in academic achievements, but in their social, personal and emotional development and their creative abilities.

41. Australia needs an independently determined national curriculum, free from political or commercial influence. National student assessment and reporting should be carried out independently. The curriculum should prepare students to be healthy, active and engaged citizens, equipped with the academic and life-skills they need to succeed in the workforce and further education. The curriculum should also support vocational education and training in schools.

42. All students benefit from completing Year 12, and Labor will work to continue improving Year 12 retention rates. To achieve this, Labor will help schools offer programs which meet the aspirations and interests of all students, including Vocational Education programs. There should also be alternative pathways to complete Year 12, because all young Australians – including those not in the school system – deserve the opportunity to complete school education or its equivalent regardless of their circumstances.

43. Ensuring the best evidence-based practices are in place in schools, and that we improve our knowledge base about what works best in school education, is critical to the future success of our school system. Labor will invest in school education research and support states, schools systems and schools to integrate the best evidence-based practices that suit the needs of their students.

44. Developing skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics is strategically and nationally important. Labor will support our schools to encourage more people to study and teach science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, and to lift competency standards.

45. Labor will support primary and secondary teachers to undertake professional development in science, technology, engineering and maths, with a focus on coding and programming. We will encourage new and recent science, technology, engineering and maths graduates to continue their study and become teachers. Under Labor, more qualified teachers will be able to connect with young Australians and engage them in the science, technology, engineering and maths disciplines that will drive the jobs of the future.

46. Labor will work with the states and territories to ensure that primary and secondary students across Australia are taught computer coding, to give every child the opportunity to learn to read and write the global language of the digital age. Labor will also support the upskilling of educators and provide resources to develop and promote innovative ways of teaching coding in Australian schools.
47. The work of principals, teachers, and support staff in educating the next generation of Australians is invaluable. Principals, school leaders and teachers should be supported and valued— with the skills, resources and development opportunities they need to teach every child. Labor will work to lift the status of the teaching profession, and support improved practice and continued professional development for all educators.

48. The support and value of education that parents and carers hold for education is a critical element in the success of our school system. Labor will work to include and involve all parents and carers, in partnership with schools, to help children value education and make the most of their opportunities.

49. Maintaining the highest standards in initial and continuing teacher education is urgent and important. Universities have a responsibility to ensure prospective teachers are of high academic ability, receive a quality education, and are properly supported throughout their studies. This includes ensuring all students have access to substantial and meaningful practical classroom experience.

50. Education support workers and non-teaching support staff do important work contributing to schools. These workers should be directly employed by the states and territories to ensure a cohesive and integrated education community.

51. Labor supports a mandatory Indigenous Studies component as part of all teachers’ pre-service training. Labor will work with teacher educators and the teaching profession to ensure all teachers have a good understanding of Indigenous education issues and the knowledge to work effectively with Indigenous communities and families.

52. Labor believes our schools must be safe environments that enable all students to learn – including same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students. Labor will continue working with teachers, students and schools to tackle bullying and discrimination, ensuring a safe place for LGBTI students to learn by properly resourcing inclusion and anti-bullying programs and resources for teachers. Labor will continue to support national programs to address homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersexphobia in schools. This includes ensuring gender diverse students are able to express the gender they identify with, including through preferred name and dress.

53. Children should have access to school uniforms that support learning, play and comfort and are suitable to the school environment including sun safety.

54. Parents have a right to choose non-government schooling. Non-government schools should be supported by public funding that reflects need and is consistent with the creation of a diverse and inclusive society.

**Students with Disability**

55. All children should have the skills and opportunities to participate in society. Children and students with disability should have access to the same education and vocational opportunities as all Australian children and students.

56. All children and students with a disability should be recognised as learners, and given every opportunity to discover and fulfil their learning potential or to participate in the workforce or any other path they choose. Labor will invest to improve educational outcomes and promote inclusion for all children, particularly those with disability.
57. Labor will ensure the National Disability Insurance Scheme provides early intervention services for children with disability so they can learn and develop to their full potential.

58. Labor is committed to needs-based school funding so our schools and teachers are equipped to meet the needs of students with disability. Labor will work with states and territories to see needs-based funding for students with disability become a reality for all children with disability, right across Australia.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians**

59. High quality education is critical to Closing the Gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Australia should ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people get the same opportunities as others.

60. More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are attending school than ever before and there have been significant improvements in statistics like the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children completing Year 12. However, current levels of school participation and attainment remain unacceptably low and below the level for non-Indigenous children.

61. Labor remains committed to Closing the Gap in early childhood education; school attendance; reading, writing and numeracy achievements; and Year 12 completion.

62. Labor will work to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get early childhood education, as evidence shows the benefits of early education extend to improved school results and life outcomes.

63. Labor is committed to needs-based school funding so our schools are equipped to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to improve educational attainment and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This includes working with states and territories to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators.

**Strong transitions from school to work or training**

64. The transition from school to work, training or higher education is a crucial time in every person’s life. Students who do not make a successful transition face the prospect of diminished opportunities and the heightened risk of unemployment and social exclusion throughout their adult life.

65. Labor is committed to improving the post-school transition for young Australians. This includes:

- Strengthening vocational education in schools;
- Ensuring TAFE can provide opportunities for young Australians to re-engage in the education system;
- Working with employers to create more opportunities for young people to develop technical and work skills while completing Year 12;
- Working with vocational training organisations develop pathways to employment and training for students who experience a disability;
• Improving the status and professional standards of career education professionals so all students get appropriate and useful information about a wide range of career options;
• Ensuring school equips students with financial literacy, including an understanding of taxation, superannuation and personal finances; and
• Building aspiration for undertaking post-secondary education.

66. Governments should do all they can to encourage young people to stay at school, and developing a range of learning pathways within and alongside schools is crucial. Students who leave school before Year 12 should be supported in their transition to the world beyond school.

The vocational education and training system of the future

67. Labor will deliver a high quality and responsive training system to meet national skills needs, ensure students are receiving the skills they are training for, and contribute to social well-being and economic growth. Labor is proud of the critical role played by the labour movement in building the TAFE and vocational education and training system.

68. Labor will establish a once in a generation National Commission of Review which will examine all aspects of Australia’s post-secondary education system. It will examine and make recommendations about how our vocational and higher education systems address the country’s economic and societal needs. The Review will commence with an inquiry into the structure of the vocational education and training system, including curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, funding and quality assurance. Critically, it will examine the role of TAFE – which Labor has committed will be at the centre of Australia’s future vocational education system.

69. No one should be excluded from access to vocational education and training as a result of financial disadvantage, course costs, fear of debt or regional disadvantage. Labor will ensure that the vocational education system does not shift costs onto individual students, acting as a significant disincentive for low income families and students to engage in lifelong learning to access skilled and well paid jobs.

70. Quality in all of its aspects should be at the centre of the national training system. Confidence in the national training system, its individual programs and the quality of its graduates should be the highest priority for government. As governments and individuals invest in training they have a right to expect training to be of a quality and standard that will lead to employment or relevant further study.

71. The competitive vocational education and training market has resulted in significant market failure, resulting in the exploitation of students and the taxpayer, by many for-profit training providers. The cherry picking of low-cost, profit-making courses and low quality training provision, has resulted in financial pressure and reputational damage to the vocational education sector. In many cases this has resulted in the loss of skills and experience through cost-cutting, outsourcing, corporatisation and privatisation in a vain attempt to maintain TAFE as a viable competitor in a distorted profit oriented industry.

72. Labor will restore public TAFEs as the major provider in the vocational education and training system. Labor will allocate at least two out of every three dollars raised of public vocational education funding to public TAFE. An effective skills and training system relies on the availability of a strong and responsive public sector provider. Private providers face inevitable conflicts that do not apply to the public provider and public funding to private providers has led, in too many cases,
to exploitation of students and profiteering at the expense of the taxpayer. The ability of vulnerable individuals to get vocational and further training should not be lost because of the poor availability or affordability of courses. TAFE is the provider most capable of delivering the broader economic and social imperatives of governments. Labor will work with state and territory Governments to ensure the TAFE system is capable of delivering its responsibilities as the central provider of publicly funded vocational education and training.

73. Labor will work with the states and territories to provide ongoing guaranteed TAFE funding and design a funding model to ensure that government funds are allocated to TAFEs in order to prioritise quality training and education across Australia to all who require it. Labor believes that this will improve educational outcomes and the productive performance of Australia, particularly in rural and regional areas.

74. Labor is committed to policies to support effective life-long learning. In the emerging economy, the post-secondary education system is critical to the ability of all Australians to participate in retraining and renewal of qualifications. Many students now seek vocational skills and knowledge as a value-add or an alternative to their university degree. Labor will work with TAFE and universities to develop coherence, recognition and effective pathways between the sectors.

75. Labor supports access and equality in the vocational education system. The vocational education and training system most often provides education and training for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular through public TAFEs. All Australians, regardless of their life circumstance, must be given the opportunity of a post-school education and to complete a pathway to work or further study.

76. Labor will ensure our vocational educational and training system:

- Is a national student-centred system with robust qualifications providing transferable skills and knowledge that provide life-long pathways to work and further study;
- Gives workers who are in businesses and industries facing restructuring broad-based and relevant vocational education to secure new employment and a career path, at the earliest possible time;
- Links vocational education and training strategies with industry, regional and innovation development policy and is developed in cooperation with industry, unions, professional bodies and educators, based on advice directly from communities of interest at the local level;
- Is informed by well-developed research on skills for the future and their contribution to international competitiveness, participation, improved productive performance and innovation to support quality skill acquisition, recognition and labour mobility;
- Has quality assurance in all aspects of recruitment, delivery and assessment, and a requirement for strong student protections and complaints mechanisms, both internal and external to the training provider;
- Is accessible to people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, people from culturally and linguistically diverse and other students from non-traditional backgrounds, and people seeking ‘second chance’ education;
- Is affordable and available to meet the needs of new workers, workers that are retraining, young people and industry participants;
• Supports TAFE to deliver its multiple roles including as adult educator, innovation partner, training provider, community resource and careers adviser;
• Creates a responsive, rigorous system of well-resourced and appropriate flexible delivery methods, integration of work and learning experiences, and recognition of prior learning;
• Has environmental sustainability skills included in relevant curriculum and qualifications;
• Provides an affordable, flexible adult and community education entry points to education and training, including language, literacy and numeracy programs;
• Recognises and supports quality teaching through professional teaching qualifications and standards for TAFE teachers; and
• Has transparent governance, funding and performance supported by an efficient, comprehensive and independent regulation system.

Boosting apprenticeships and traineeships

77. Australia has been well served by our internationally recognised traditional trades apprenticeship system. Apprenticeships have been the backbone of our skilled trades and technical workforce and have provided a valuable and rewarding career for millions of Australians. Approximately 1.6 million Australians have a trade and technical qualification, with many using this qualification to advance into further technical, managerial and leadership positions. The success of the system is improved when there is a genuine partnership between government, business, trade unions, TAFE and other trusted training providers. Because of these links and the focus on quality on-the-job and off the job training, the apprenticeship system is a critical pathway to well-paid employment with particular importance in rural and regional Australia and areas with high youth unemployment. Its viability as a training and employment pathway has also seen the successful growth of mature-age apprenticeship schemes.

78. In more recent times the development of the parallel pathways of traineeships has been an important addition to this form of training. Traineeships should be an important and viable pathway for the employment sectors not covered by traditional trades.

79. A modern and sustainable apprentice and traineeship system needs to adapt to the changing structure of the workforce and to seek opportunities to improve the form, structure and duration of training without undermining the strength and value of the qualification. The diversity of Australia’s workforce is an important strength, and should be reflected in and supported by the apprentice and traineeship system. Apprentice and traineeship pathways should be open to people from diverse backgrounds and promote opportunities for broader representation of both genders in traditional and non-traditional trades and occupations.

80. An increased emphasis will be placed on providing trades and traineeship opportunities to indigenous Australians. A Labor government will also work to ensure that gender stereotypes are challenged in relation to entry into trades and occupations. For example, women should be encouraged to enter into manual trades such as construction and metal work and men should be encouraged to enter into traditionally female dominated occupations such as early childhood education and nursing.

81. Employers of all sizes should be encouraged and supported to invest in apprentices and trainees. The success of the dual system in Germany is driven by a business culture that training is an investment and not a cost. In order for apprentices to succeed, governments should pursue opportunities for the creation of apprentice and trainee places in government, and as a result of
government contracts. Labor will ensure that 1 in 10 jobs on all Commonwealth priority projects and Government Business Enterprise projects will be targeted for an apprenticeship or traineeship.

82. Government, business and unions need to engage effectively and collaboratively to encourage quality skill acquisition, greater participation, and successful completions. Labor will support the transition of young people as well as adults into apprenticeships through quality pre-apprenticeship and adult entry apprenticeship programs.

83. Apprentices and trainees are recognised as a vulnerable group in the workforce. There are unacceptably high rates of employer non-compliance with apprentice and trainee employment entitlements. This exploitation undermines the value and quality of the apprenticeship system. Labor will work with business and unions to eradicate exploitation of apprentices and trainees.

84. Labor will:

- Expand participation in apprenticeships into new industries, new cohorts and new locations, while safeguarding the quality of apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Establish and implement minimum national standards and ensure that contracts of employment and contracts for training are implemented to protect apprentices and trainees;
- Support quality programs and higher skill levels so public funding and incentives are directly linked to the level of a business’ training effort, the completion of quality outcomes and the development of future skills needs;
- Ensure all apprenticeships and traineeships deliver full qualifications consistent with the national qualifications framework;
- Ensure qualifications promote a combination of work and structured on-the-job training;
- Ensure an appropriate balance of on and off-the-job training, including in regional and rural Australia;
- Support the role of quality, not-for-profit group training companies, recognising their special capacity to enhance opportunities in sectors such as resources, major projects and for small and medium businesses; and
- Continue to review and provide appropriate incentives, especially for small businesses in regional settings – payments and support programs – to build employer and apprentice investment in quality apprenticeships and traineeships.

Higher education

85. Australia needs a strong, sustainable, affordable and accessible public higher education system that will prepare graduates for an economy based on knowledge, skills and innovation.

86. All Australians, regardless of their background or where they live, should have the opportunity of higher education.

87. Higher education is important in shaping a fairer, more socially inclusive society. Labor in government will commission a once in a generation review of post-secondary education. This Review will sets targets including in the following area:

- Increasing the number of students from a low socio-economic background, regional areas and other underrepresented groups in higher education;
• Closing the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ participation and retention in higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff; and

• Improve access to university to more students with disability through innovative programs to support universities ensure equal access.

88. Labor will ensure future funding for Australia’s public universities is driven by the national objectives, while reflecting broader student demand and recognising the importance of meeting public good and labour market needs. Labor will ensure research activity is linked more deliberately to social impact and university engagement with community and industry. The Australian government is making a big public investment and Labor will work with the university sector to pursue the national interest. Because the jobs of the future will increasingly require literacy in science, technology, engineering and maths, Labor will provide incentives for more capable students – particularly women - to study these critical disciplines at university Labor will also ensure that we encourage the best and brightest Australians in to the teaching profession.

89. Universities also have a responsibility to support all students to succeed in their studies and to graduate with the skills and knowledge they need for a rewarding career in the workforce. Labor will tie funding to outcomes to encourage universities to provide practical, industry based work placements for students and improve university to industry links. Labor will encourage universities to build entrepreneurship education and training into a wide range of programs, helping to boost the innovation capability of Australian business enterprises and the wider community.

90. Labor is committed to excellence in higher education. Universities should be accountable for maintaining quality standards in both teaching and research. The community expects that, as self-accrediting institutions, our public universities provide students with a positive education experience. Transparent entry standards, regulation of quality, better public reporting and external verification are also necessary to protecting the reputation of public universities, the value of an Australian qualification, and our ability to attract international students to study in Australia.

91. Higher education improves the quality of our lives by fostering higher learning. The pursuit of knowledge is an important end in itself, and Labor will protect the autonomy of public universities and the essential principle of academic independence.

92. Labor will ensure universities are accountable for public funding and work in partnership with the federal government to deliver outcomes in the national interest. Labor will introduce national interest thresholds for university funding agreements that ensure universities align their resources to their areas of strength and strategic interest to help the sector as a whole more effectively address our national priorities and needs.

93. There are clear differences between public universities and other higher education providers. Labor opposes the privatisation of higher education and will not undermine public universities in the name of contestability, efficiency or deregulation.

94. A one-size-fits-all approach to higher education that does not recognise the particular needs of specific universities and their communities simply does not work in the best interests of the nation. Regional universities hold the key to unlocking a new future for the regions, helping to create new businesses and a re-skilled workforce. Policy and programs must be tailored to better meet the needs of regional Australia. Labor will address the inequality that exists in university attainment between the regions and major cities.
95. Labor supports strong, effective oversight of the international education sector, with the protection and welfare of international students at its core, through a risk-based regulatory framework, independent scrutiny and quality assurance. Recognising the mutual benefits of international education, Labor will also improve opportunities for Australian students to study abroad.

96. Labor strongly opposes the deregulation of fees, or the introduction and use of full fee degrees for undergraduate award courses in Australian universities.

97. Labor strongly supports a fair and equitable student contribution and income-contingent loan system. These ensure greater participation in tertiary education by allowing students to defer the cost of their studies until they are earning a decent income. Australian students make a significant contribution to the cost of their education. Labor will ensure student contributions do not create financial disincentives to study, and that students who take out income-contingent loans have adequate consumer protection.

98. Education costs and financial pressures on students act as a barrier to participation in tertiary education. Labor supports a strong, sustainable and targeted system of student income support that provides more help to Australian students who need it most. Students who do not have the means to support themselves during their university study will be provided with adequate support.

99. Labor strongly supports student involvement in the management of their university communities and in university decision-making processes and will support elected staff and student representation on university councils. It is important a minimum guarantee of funding is made available for student-run services and independent advocacy. Labor will support students in the creation of democratic, student-run representative bodies and safeguard the right for students to voluntarily organise themselves on campus. Good student amenities and services like early childhood education and care, health services, counselling, advocacy, entertainment and sporting facilities are vital to university participation and the quality of students’ experience on campus and should be securely and adequately funded.

100. Flexible and online delivery can improve university teaching and learning, including through technologies and community spaces that support learning for disadvantaged students. The purpose of these should be to improve the student experience, while maintaining academic rigour and ensuring qualifications offered through these technologies meet appropriate quality standards.
Chapter 8: A health system for all

The contemporary challenge

1. Health is critical to the quality of life of all Australians. Health affects everything we do – our standard of living, our employment, our relationships and how we participate in the social, cultural and economic life of our country.

2. Labor supports the World Health Organisation definition that health is ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’. It is a fundamental human right.

3. Investing in the best possible start to life and in prevention, early detection and control of physical and mental illness – and particularly chronic disease – has significant gains for the wellbeing of individuals and communities across Australia.

4. Social and economic inequality are major drivers of ill health in Australia, requiring coordinated and sustained input and investment from different sectors to improve the health of all Australians. This includes the health sector but also the education, employment, housing, social services and other sectors.

5. Health outcomes and access to health care are unequal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Labor is committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Close the Gap in life expectancy and other indicators of health and wellbeing.

6. Increasing rates of chronic disease and illness are placing greater demands on our health resources. New treatments and technologies offer improved health and quality of life for many, but require significant public and private investment. The complexity of contemporary health care itself, and the complexity of a national system for health care in a federation, requires constant improvement and innovation.

7. Australia’s future depends on our ability to adapt our health care system to best meet the needs of all Australians, deliver care in a culturally safe and equitable way, strengthen our health workforce and place patients at the centre of health care.

8. The resources required for good health rely on a strong economy, but good health is crucial to Australia’s future economic strength. Good health boosts productivity and improves workplace participation – a healthier country has a stronger economy, as a more equitable society leads to better health for all. A strong and inclusive health system, based on the principle of universal access to health care, is a major competitive advantage for Australia.

Labor values

9. Labor believes that our health care system must be:

   • **Universal** – Labor created Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Together they form our unique universal health insurance scheme that has seen Australians achieve some of the best health outcomes in the world. Medicare is essential to our vision of a fairer Australia. The core principle of Medicare is universal access to health care;
• **Affordable** – A fairer and more equal society is one in which all Australians are able to access high-quality and affordable health care, including preventive care and any necessary treatments and medicines, decided on health care need, not their capacity to pay or where they live;

• **Accessible** – Labor will ensure our health care system is a truly national one by working to improve access to the full spectrum of quality health care for Australians living in regional, rural and remote areas, and to overcome other barriers to access;

• **Equitable** – Strong action on the social, economic, environmental and cultural determinants of health is crucial to achieving more equitable health outcomes. A fairer and more equal society requires this, particularly among Australians who live in regional, rural and remote areas or who belong to populations experiencing disadvantage or marginalisation. This is especially true for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, recognising that culture and strong identity are key determinants of good health, and that our health care system must be culturally safe and free of racism;

• **Everyone’s responsibility** – Australia’s health care system is the responsibility of all levels of government with the involvement and support of the community, the not-for-profit sector and health professionals. This relies upon co-operative, transparent and accountable arrangements driven by the best available evidence;

• **Public** – Only a strong and properly resourced public health care system, supported by other sectors, provides the opportunity for all Australians to reach their full potential. Labor has an unshakeable commitment to an excellent universal public hospital system and will oppose any moves to privatise public hospitals or their functions. The public health care system should be complemented by a strong and sustainable private health care system. Both provide individuals with choices in health care and contribute to Australians’ good health. Greater coordination in the operation of health systems would improve continuity of care and health outcomes; and

• **Supportive of our workforce** – Doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, health support workers, community workers and others work tirelessly to care for Australians. They, along with consumers and related workers, should have more opportunities to engage in constructive dialogue about innovation of our health care system so that it provides the best possible conditions for the health workforce as well as patient-centred care. All health workers have the right to organise collectively and for their union representatives and professional leaders to contribute positively to a high quality health care system.

**Labor Priorities**

**Promoting wellness, preventing disease**

10. Health promotion and disease prevention, along with early detection, are essential to combating the rise of preventable chronic diseases.

11. Labor believes that everyone has a role and responsibility in creating a healthier society, including by helping to develop environments where healthy choices become easy choices.

12. Alongside addressing the social determinants of health and chronic disease risk factors, Labor will:

   • Recognise that pre-pregnancy and pregnancy care are essential to the health of future generations and should be accessible to all women;
• Work with families to help give children the best possible start in life, including encouraging healthy habits for life, reducing obesity and promoting safe environments and physical activity;

• Promote immunisation and work with the primary care sector to develop local solutions in those areas and populations where vaccination remains low;

• Consider geographic and other inequalities when allocating resources to address poor health status;

• Recognise the range of poor physical health outcomes that result from poor mental health and work to improve mental health outcomes for all Australians;

• Address the problem of alcohol dependence and misuse, especially risky drinking amongst at-risk populations, as well as long term chronic disease implications such as cognitive deterioration and cancer;

• Take strong action to educate people, particularly young people around the dangers of illicit drug use and support harm minimisation;

• Continue world leading policies to reduce smoking levels, particularly among groups that continue to smoke at higher levels;

• Provide greater opportunities for health professionals, particularly in primary care, to provide advice and support to people about improving their lifestyles, in order to improve health outcomes and reduce hospital admissions;

• Invest in infrastructure that facilitates health and strengthens community leadership and participation;

• Make it easier for people to make healthy choices easy choices through improved food labelling, including through the Health Star Rating system, and other interventions;

• Support and encourage evidence-based health promotion and population health literacy as an important part of improving public health outcomes, including by helping people better manage chronic conditions;

• Undertake tailored, culturally relevant and appropriate health promotion and health literacy programs to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, those from non-English speaking backgrounds and others to ensure all Australians have the best chance at a healthy life;

• Invest in health and medical research that furthers our ability to prevent and manage chronic conditions; and

• Work with all levels of government to promote a ‘Health In All Policies’ approach in recognition of the social, economic, cultural and environmental determinants of health and the need for cross-portfolio interventions.

13. Labor accepts the science and expert evidence that climate change poses the greatest threat to human health and wellbeing this century. Australians are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of a changing climate. Strong action on climate change will both prevent poor health outcomes and promote healthier lifestyles. Labor will develop a National Strategy on Climate Change and Health.

**Strengthening Primary Care**

14. The stronger our primary care system, the better Australia’s health outcomes are. Primary care is the frontline of our health care system. It includes general practitioners, nurses, midwives, allied
health professionals and others, all of whom provide the best possible care for millions of Australians in the community every day.

15. A strong primary care system which includes a focus on protection, health promotion, disease prevention and early detection of those at high risk is critical to addressing chronic disease and putting Australia in the best position to meet our future challenges.

16. Under the Liberals primary care has been devalued, undermined and had its funding cut by billions of dollars.

17. Labor will strengthen primary care, in particular the care provided through general practices in collaboration with other parts of the primary care system. Labor will:

- **Better integrate primary care** with other parts of our health system, including working with general practices and other primary care providers to enhance multidisciplinary team-based care and improve pathways between hospitals, primary care and associated services such as residential aged care, disability, palliative and mental health services;

- **Ensure primary care remains affordable** by supporting Medicare patient rebates that preserve universal access whilst appropriately rewarding quality primary care and maintaining bulk-billing;

- **Improve access to primary care** through:
  - Incentives for primary care professionals to work in regional, rural and remote areas;
  - Promoting the appropriate use of TeleHealth services, including through Medicare funding;
  - Expanding and better coordinating after-hours GP care and GP and nurse practitioner care for those in community and residential aged care;
  - Requiring health services to be provided in a culturally safe environment for the benefit of patients and staff;
  - Recognising that Australia’s health care system relies on effective pathology and diagnostic imaging services to detect, diagnose and treat disease, and maintain policies to support and expand access to these services; and
  - Supporting Aboriginal Medical Services.

- **Promote innovation and quality in primary care** through:
  - Assisting primary care to identify those who are at high risk of developing chronic disease and prevent disease and avoidable hospital admissions;
  - Continued development, uptake and use of e-health records;
  - Investing in primary care infrastructure to allow more services and training to be delivered within general practice and other primary care settings;
  - Encouraging continual professional development for health professionals, particularly in rural, regional and outer metropolitan areas of need;
  - Cutting red tape that unnecessarily takes health professionals away from treating patients;
  - Recognising the importance of collaboration between GPs, community pharmacies and other primary care providers, and encouraging opportunities and funding systems for them to work together more effectively;
o Maintaining Medicare access for nurse practitioners, midwives, allied health professionals and other primary care providers;

o Improving MBS compliance to address waste and fraud, including by using available data to improve the detection of improper payments;

o Investing in primary care research and data collection including improving the collection and reporting of primary care performance data in a nationally consistent manner; and

o Maintaining and expanding the role of Primary Health Networks to build a stronger primary care system.

Access to other specialist care

18. In addition to our general practitioners, Australia has other highly skilled specialists working across both the public and private health sectors. Our specialists provide world-leading care in public and private hospitals and the community; they participate in and lead clinical research, and teach and deliver care both at home and internationally.

19. Labor is concerned many Australians, especially in regional, rural and remote areas, are unable to access or afford the specialist care they need. To address this Labor will:

- Work with health care organisations to improve access to specialists including providing incentives for specialists to work in regional, rural, remote and outer metropolitan areas of need;
- Support the ‘hub and spoke’ model to facilitate regional and rural hospitals becoming part of training networks with metropolitan and larger regional hospitals;
- Provide opportunities for other specialists to consult within general practice settings in the community;
- Support the use of telemedicine for appropriate specialties and clinical trials;
- Create new opportunities for specialists to work with nurse practitioners, midwives based in the community, allied health providers and others;
- Continue the development, uptake and use of e-health records and other systems that improve the coordination and integration of care;
- Expand opportunities for undergraduate and specialist training, including supporting regional training programs with a focus on generalist specialities; and
- Ensure that consumers provide informed consent to the cost of specialist care prior to treatment and improve transparency of specialist fees and out of pocket costs.

A hospital system that works

20. Australia has a high-quality public hospital system. It is available to all Australians free of charge through Medicare and state and territory government support. It is complemented by a private hospital and health system supported through private health insurance, government rebates and individual contributions.

21. Australia needs continued innovation of the hospital system, anticipating increasing demand in coming years due to higher rates of chronic disease and longer lives.
22. Government is best placed to deliver a strong and accessible public health care system focused on person-centred care and positive health outcomes.

23. In addition to investing in health promotion, disease prevention and primary care to keep people well and out of hospital, Labor will improve our public hospital system by:

- Providing long term sustainable public hospital funding that promotes innovation and quality of care;
- Working with states and territories, through the Council of Australian Governments, to improve hospital services, with a focus on preventable re-admissions, elective surgery and emergency department waiting times;
- Ensuring access to public hospital services is based on clinical need, not capacity to pay or insurance status;
- Improving coordination across other health and aged care services to optimise care and reduce unwarranted hospital admissions and readmissions;
- Building capacity of supporting clinical services to ensure they maintain their role in the delivery of high quality public health care;
- Supporting health system research which can identify sustainable models of health care and innovative approaches to treating and managing disease;
- Working with state and territory governments and regional, rural and remote health services to provide access to care as close to home as possible;
- Expanding the use of technology, including the delivery of digital health systems where appropriate, that allow people to ensure their health information is available for both their hospital and primary care practitioners;
- Working with states and territories to ensure speedy evaluation of new technology and to introduce new, cost-effective technology that improves health care; and
- Educating high-quality staff to work in public hospitals.

24. Labor recognises that both public and private sectors play critical roles in Australia’s world-class health system. While governments have sole responsibility for managing the public health system, they also support a strong and sustainable private health care system. Labor will:

- Ensure public and private health services complement other and promote opportunities for collaboration;
- Encourage private hospital innovation and quality improvement;
- Improve transparency of cost and quality information for consumers and clinicians;
- Retain patient choice and good clinical decision-making as an essential feature of health care;
- Support a private health insurance system that is sustainable and provides value for money for Australian consumers. In particular, Labor will improve the value and affordability of private health insurance for Australians, without compromising public health funding, and work to address unreasonable out-of-pocket payments;
- Ensure the benefits of private health insurance rebates are available to Australians who need them most and working to maintain and enhance participation in private health insurance, particularly by young people; and
• Work to ensure that Australia pays no more than necessary for health care inputs such as prostheses and pharmaceuticals, while ensuring affordable access to world-class technologies.

25. Labor will improve transparency and accountability in our hospitals, both public and private. This will ensure:

• Hospital performance data is reported in a transparent and nationally-consistent manner;
• Hospital safety and quality reporting is conducted to the highest international standards and shared with the right people;
• Clinicians are supported to improve interpretation of outcomes through high quality audits and registries; and
• Australians get the information they need to make informed choices about their health care.

Access to medicines

26. The PBS was first introduced by the Chifley Labor Government and has provided Australians with free or subsidised medicines for over 65 years. It has contributed significantly to the good health outcomes Australians enjoy. It is underpinned by the National Medicines Policy.

27. Labor’s reforms in partnership with the medicines industry have ensured the sustainability of the PBS to this point. However, over the next decade many of the new medicines that are expected to become available will be more specialised and targeted, increasing pressure on government resources and the PBS to ensure Australia does not miss out on new medicines at the same time as maintaining a robust and system for entry. This is especially so for cancer and other medicines that treat life-threatening illnesses.

28. Labor will protect and strengthen the PBS to ensure that it can fund breakthroughs in medicines for all Australians who need them and respond to future challenges.

29. Labor will ensure all Australians get affordable and timely access to essential medicines through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

30. Labor will ensure that equitable access to medicines is not undermined by international treaties.

31. Labor will ensure the safety of medicines available in Australia and support measures that encourage their safe use. Measures that streamline the registration and listing of new medicines, while maintaining world-class safety and quality, will also be supported.

32. The National Medicines Policy and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme are underpinned by the community pharmacy network and pharmacists, who are medicines experts. Primary care innovation should include better utilisation of this infrastructure and workforce.

33. Labor recognises that clinical trials give Australians access to world-leading treatments and drive innovation in medicines, and will support measures to maintain and expand clinical trials and patient access to them.
**Palliative Care**

34. Palliative care is an important part of the aged and health care systems. Labor believes that individuals nearing the end of their lives and their families should be able to access the highest standards of palliative and end-of-life care, whether they are at home, in residential aged care, in community or acute facilities or institutions.

35. Labor believes each individual should be given the opportunity to plan for the final stages of life and be given appropriate personal control of the types of medical treatments and interventions they receive during this period. Labor will expand the availability of advance care planning, ideally through tools such as the My Health Record and residential aged care inductions, and work toward harmonisation of advance care planning laws.

36. To maximise quality of life until the end Australians must be supported to talk about their values, wishes and preferences for care at the end of life. Labor is committed to promoting community awareness about palliative care and advance care planning to encourage families to discuss the wishes and preferences for the final stages of a person’s life. Labor is also committed to promoting better support for clinicians and other care providers to build their communication skills so that all are competent and confident in encouraging, facilitating and conducting conversations about end-of-life care preferences.

37. Labor recognises the particular end-of-life care needs of populations such as children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTQI communities and people living in rural and remote areas.

38. Labor is committed to ensuring culturally safe practices at end-of-life are applied, including reflecting this diversity in end-of-life care services and recognising the role trauma can play in the end-of-life experience.

39. Labor believes palliative care is core business for aged care and will, in conjunction with states and territories, support the availability of high quality palliative and end-of-life care across aged care, including within people’s own homes, enabling older Australians to have a good death, better support their families and carers during the dying and bereavement processes.

40. Labor believes that investing in community palliative and end of life care and supporting the families and carers of Australians who are in the end stage of their lives is essential to achieving better end of life outcomes.

41. Infrastructure development within the health system will include consideration of palliative care requirements.

42. Labor believes people must have dignity and choice at the end of life. This requires a health policy discussion to determine whether current end of life care practice reflects the community’s preferences not only in terms of where they wish to die, but when to die. Labor recognises that some states have legislated in this regard. We also recognise that current Commonwealth legislation acts as an impediment for the territories to legislate in respect to these issues.

**Embedding innovation, quality and safety in health care**

43. Labor will:
• Build the architecture needed for health care innovation in preventive health, primary care, community health and hospitals with a focus on improving quality and safety;

• Strengthen cooperation on health care innovation between governments by reintroducing evidence-based incentives and targets into Commonwealth/State funding agreements that give priority to access and quality and safety of health care provision;

• Ensure that health innovation includes a focus on making our health care system culturally safe and free from racism;

• Seek opportunities to ensure the health system integrates care across all levels of the health system, the aged care and disability systems, and all life stages to enhance physical, mental and social health and wellbeing;

• Strengthen the primary care system to ensure improved coordination and identify gaps in service delivery, with a view to addressing unmet need, preventing avoidable hospitalisation and setting supportive environments that provide opportunities for health promotion, disease prevention and injury prevention;

• Create more opportunities for consumers, health care professionals and other key stakeholders such as health and medical researchers to participate in improving our health care system;

• Collect and use data to encourage a focus on health outcomes and value-based care; and

• Invest in public health and medical research and its translation into practice.

Investing in public health and medical research

44. Labor has a proud record in HIV, and recognises that bipartisan national leadership in partnership with peak community organisations, clinicians and researchers has prevented a generalised epidemic.

45. HIV notifications, however, remain too high. Labor is especially concerned that HIV notifications have steadily increased among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and are now double the rate of other Australians. Notwithstanding these challenges, Australia has an unprecedented opportunity to end HIV transmission. Labor commits to the United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, which provides the global framework for action on HIV, including through the UNAIDS Fast-Track 95-95-95 targets to end the HIV epidemic. Labor’s commitment to making HIV history will include restoring the capacity that the Liberals have cut from HIV peak organisations; funding new efforts to promote HIV prevention, testing, and treatment in ‘hidden populations’; and ensuring affordable access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) via the PBS.

46. Labor also recognises the important contribution that Needle and Syringe Programs have played in the prevention of HIV and other blood-borne viruses among people who inject drugs, and the importance of maintaining these services in order to prevent transmission.

47. Australia has long boasted some of the best scientists, researchers and medical pioneers in the world. The successes of our researchers — both as individuals and as part of organisations — have meant less disease, better treatment and improved quality of life for Australians.

48. All Australians benefit from health and medical research, particularly when that research is translated into improved health care, aged care, or better prevention strategies to address chronic disease risk factors such as diet, alcohol, tobacco and physical inactivity. Our national economy also benefits as research findings lead to the development of innovative new industries and better
health outcomes. Research needs to be embedded throughout the health system and actively involve all health professionals.

49. Health and medical research improves the safety, quality and effectiveness of programs and services. Translating research findings quickly and efficiently into changes in clinical practice is one of the keys to improving patient outcomes and reducing wasted spending. Health and medical research sits at the core of all health system improvements and research needs to be embedded throughout the health system and actively involve all health professionals.

50. Labor will enhance Australia’s reputation as a world leader in high quality, innovative research and development activities. We will actively support research excellence and translation through funding streams including the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Medical Research Future Fund. We will provide support for research that addresses the growing health burdens facing the nation and that builds on our scientific capability. While encouraging business and not-for-profit funding for health and medical research, we will also ensure an ongoing commitment of public funding, including for:

- Health systems research;
- Discovery and early stage research;
- Genetic research;
- Research led by and focussed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- Research on determinants of health and the conditions they cause;
- Preventive health measures and policy interventions to promote health; and
- Conditions or diseases less amenable to treatment by drugs and medical devices, or areas that do not attract commercial interest.

51. Labor will enforce the ban on the cloning of human beings, consistent with NHMRC and other expert advice.

**Investing in digital health**

52. Labor recognises the crucial role information and communications technology plays in health care by improving coordination and reducing duplication to deliver better health outcomes.

53. To drive better use of information and communications technology in health, Labor will:

- Continue to build the digital health record system while ensuring appropriate privacy and security protocols protect consumers’ rights;
- Educate all Australians on the benefits of an electronic health record that will improve the coordination of care, eliminate duplication, and reduce the likelihood of errors;
- Work with health care professionals to disseminate health and related education via technology and increase utilisation of digital health, including uploading of required data;
- Integrate digital health records with hospital, pathology, diagnostic imaging, aged care, medicine compliance and other clinical systems, and where appropriate, seek to deliver more health care solutions into people’s own homes;
- Work with states and territories to introduce electronic health records and integrate them with national systems including the My Health Record;
• Prioritise interoperability so that information can be shared across our health care system;
• Expand the rollout of TeleHealth services for specialist care where the efficacy is already proven; and
• Encourage processes to facilitate better information sharing between patients, health providers, hospitals, pharmacies and insurers.

The health workforce

54. Australia’s health care system relies on a highly skilled, trained, educated and supported health workforce.

55. All efforts should be made to ensure there is an adequate supply of appropriately and well-qualified doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, community and health support workers, aged care workers and other health professionals in all parts of the nation, including a vibrant health and medical research workforce, so all Australians can get the health care they need where they need it.

56. Labor will:
• Restore a national approach to health workforce planning, including better co-ordination across the training pipeline, to ensure an appropriate supply and targeted distribution of Australia’s health workforce and better transition into practice;
• Improve access to training in regional, rural and remote Australia and encourage a wider availability of places for new graduates across health professions;
• Expand Australia’s health workforce where shortages exist — by educating and training more doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals and community and health support workers and better using the skills, expertise and experience of existing health professionals;
• Strengthen the capacity of the health workforce by investing in generalist pathways and team-based models of patient-centred care, preparing Australia’s health system for future demands;
• Support the physical and mental health of our health workforce and ensure their personal safety at work is a priority across the entire health system;
• Encourage diversity at all levels of the health workforce;
• Increase the numbers of and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of the health workforce, with an ambition to achieve parity across all professions; and
• Ensure that cultural safety training be provided to staff as part of the accreditation process for health services.

Doctors

57. Labor will:
• Recognise the unique and vital role general practice plays in our health care system and encourage more medical students to pursue general practice;
• Ensure Australia educates and trains enough doctors with the right skills, including general practitioners with advanced skills training, to meet the needs of patients throughout the nation;
• Provide incentives and programs to increase the numbers of doctors in remote, rural and regional Australia;
• Work to improve the retention of doctors in the workforce and in the study of medicine;
• Deliver high-quality training facilities for general practitioners and other specialist training; and
• Work to increase the numbers of doctors and other health providers who provide high quality treatment for mental health conditions.

Nurses and Midwives

58. Nurses and midwives make up over half of the health workforce. They play a critical role in the health care system.

59. Labor supports expanded education, training and employment opportunities for nurses and midwives throughout the health care system. Labor will:

• Provide nurses and midwives with the clinical education, training, opportunities and support they need to expand their valuable role;
• Address existing and emerging nurse workforce challenges with particular focus on areas of anticipated workforce shortage, including by making sufficient university and vocational education and training places available to nursing and midwifery students;
• Expand and support the primary care nursing workforce, ensuring there is an appropriate staffing and skills mix and where appropriate support the expanded role for nurse practitioners via access to Medicare and the PBS;
• Drive national consistency in nurse workforce education and role utilisation and development;
• Improve nurse workforce attraction and retention; and
• Build nurse workforce leadership capacity to support workforce development and health service reform.

Allied and other health professionals

60. Allied health professionals are critical to good health outcomes for the community. They undertake significant work, both in their own right and in multi-disciplinary teams, across primary, secondary and tertiary care.

61. Labor will:

• Provide allied and ancillary health professionals with the clinical training they need, including through adequate supervised practice placements;
• Facilitate research to identify and address gaps in allied health service delivery, particularly in regional, rural and remote communities;
• Better integrate allied health professionals into local primary care services; and
• Make sufficient university and vocational education and training places available for allied health professionals across the nation.

62. Labor recognises that public health and health promotion professionals play a key role in prevention, protection and health promotion and will support their training and work.

Community and health support workers

63. The community health workforce includes a range of professions who work across the health spectrum. They are often the first point of call for patients, particularly for vulnerable population groups. Labor recognises the contribution of this sector and will work to ensure they are included and valued as part of the health system.

64. Health support workers do important, valued work in our hospitals and in the health community. Without the contribution of these workers, the health system could not function properly.

65. Labor supports fair pay and conditions and dignity at work for health support workers. Labor will support these workers and their unions to ensure our high quality public health care system is maintained.

Addressing health inequality

66. Labor recognises the substantial evidence that creating a more equal society is the most important factor in enhancing health, and believes in national leadership to improve the health of all Australians. Health is an important determinant of equity and health inequalities must be tackled across the whole of our community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

67. In 2008 Labor initiated a national partnership between federal, state and territory governments to address the shameful gap in life expectancy and health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians. The annual Closing the Gap address to Parliament is our national report card on progress in achieving Closing the Gap targets in health. Unfortunately, progress has been too slow and our commitment needs to be renewed.

68. Labor’s approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ health is built on:

- A commitment to Closing the Gap targets;
- An evidence-based approach to policy and programs that establishes clear targets and accountability mechanisms;
- A commitment to fully implement the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan and Implementation Plan, which set out the strategy for meeting those targets;
- An understanding that healthy lives are heavily influenced and determined by the social, cultural and economic determinants of health and easy access to culturally safe health care;
- Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and the importance of cultural competency within the health care system;
• A commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and community controlled health organisations to improve health outcomes, noting the positive impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led health and related services have; and
• A commitment to address systemic racism and ensure the entire health system is equipped to provide safe, culturally responsive and effective health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

69. In Government Labor will focus on:

• The social and cultural determinants of health;
• Building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led research, evidence, translation, evaluation and monitoring capability for stronger impact;
• Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership;
• System-wide changes that embed cultural safety and responsiveness across the health system and remove racism and other structural barriers to health access and outcomes;
• Implementing programs that underpin a healthy start to life;
• Preventive health, by addressing the social, economic, environmental and cultural determinants as well as specifically addressing common risk factors such as tobacco use, alcohol misuse, poor diet and physical inactivity, including amongst young children;
• The impact of incarceration on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, including for the families of those incarcerated;
• Mental health and wellbeing, with specific regard to addressing the unacceptable tragedy of suicide, particularly amongst young people;
• Addressing diseases with a high prevalence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, such as vision loss, otitis media, acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease, as well as emerging diseases such as HIV and sexually transmitted infections;
• Cultural safety within the health workforce, increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care professionals, and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations; and
• Improving coordination between public, private and non-government health care providers, including Primary Health Networks and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health services.

Regional, rural and remote health

70. Australians living in remote, rural and regional locations typically have poorer access to health services, higher out-of-pocket medical expenses, poorer health outcomes and a lower life expectancy than those living in metropolitan and urban centres.

71. Labor will:

• Develop a new National Rural Health Strategy;
• Improve access to health care, including using telemedicine and other infrastructure platforms where appropriate;
• Address barriers to people in remote, rural and regional communities getting maternity, mental health, dementia and palliative care services, including by providing services where people live or nearby wherever possible;

• Act to reduce the rate of suicide in rural communities, especially among young people and particularly young men, young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and young lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender and intersex people;

• Take account of the needs in remote, rural and regional Australians in dealing with alcohol and other drugs;

• Build on Labor’s record in cancer care and improve survival rates for remote, rural and regional Australians;

• Increase the number of health professionals working in remote, rural and regional areas, including through:
  • Promoting opportunities for medical, nursing, midwifery and allied health students to be educated and trained in regional, rural and remote communities and encourage them to return to those areas once their education and training is completed;
  • Promoting opportunities for medical graduates to remain in regional, rural and remote communities by supporting regional specialist training programs with a focus on generalist specialities;
  • Ensuring medical, nursing, midwifery and allied health workforce planning for remote, rural and regional communities recognises geographically specific health workforce shortages;
  • Improving workforce data quality in regional, rural and remote communities to inform workforce strategies;
  • Working with local governments, Primary Health Networks and GP groups to develop community-specific models for GPs and other specialists to practice in areas of shortage;
  • Supporting a national rural generalist pathway and program to ensure people living in regional, rural and remote communities have access to health services which align with community needs; and
  • Ensuring adequate governance of health services for remote, rural and regional communities, particularly in primary care settings.

Women’s Health

72. Australia needs better health outcomes for women, and targeted policies to help ensure the health system is more responsive to their needs. Labor will:

• Recognise that gender inequality is a key determinant of poor and unequal health outcomes for women and encourage all health services to be gender responsive – not just those targeted to women;

• Update and implement the National Women’s Health Policy;

• Take account of the needs of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, including the provision of culturally appropriate health services;

• Support women’s ability to have control over their own fertility, including women with disability, by ensuring that women and girls have access to the sexual and reproductive health services they require across the life course;

• Improve services and choices in health care available to women;
• Support the important role of Breast Screen Australia as well as other cancer treatment and support services and research;

• Encourage greater investment in gender-specific research to identify differences and disparities in health and care;

• Continue and extend efforts under the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children;

• Recognise the many health needs of women across their life span and ensure that attention is given to unique women’s health conditions such as endometriosis and ovarian cancer, that have in the past attracted little public investment; and

• Ensure those experiencing eating disorders – which affect all age groups and genders but are most prevalent in women – have access to evidence-based early interventions and treatments and work to address social and cultural norms that contribute to body image concerns among young women.

Maternal and child health

73. Interventions to improve the health of mothers and their babies can have a profound lifelong impact. Labor will:

• Provide leadership on a National Maternity Services Plan that meets the needs of all women in Australia;

• Promote healthy lifestyles before and during pregnancy, including addressing risk factors including alcohol and tobacco use;

• Promote maternal and child nutrition, including support and encouragement of breastfeeding;

• Implement policies to address peri-natal mental health and to improve prevention, early detection and support services for pregnant and new mothers;

• Improve the information available to mothers about the options available for childbirth regardless of income or geographical location and ensure access to available options including birthing on country programs where appropriate;

• Support the ability for midwives to maintain access to Medicare and PBS services;

• Ensure access to continuity of care models for pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period;

• Deliver special programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and babies, to reduce mortality rates and improve health;

• Support programs to increase the proportion of children born at the right gestational age and a healthy birth weight; and

• Concentrate and coordinate efforts across the first 1000 days of a child’s development.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex health

74. Labor recognises that "minority stress"—the effect of being subjected to pervasive prejudiced attitudes and language from childhood on—generally leads to higher rates of mental illness and suicide in LGBTI communities. Language that children are exposed to from childhood that is derogatory causes LGBTI people to experience poorer general and mental health outcomes.
75. Labor recognises that as a result of this and other factors, LGBTI people have specific and unique health needs.

76. Labor will:

- Address the particular health needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people, working in partnership with these communities and LGBTI health peak bodies;
- Continue to support LGBTI health and mental health peak bodies including intersex-lead organisations to provide support to intersex persons and their families and advocate on intersex issues;
- Require that medical professionals through professional development maintain a strong understanding of health issues specific to LGBTI individuals and communities in order to prevent misinformed and misappropriated medical treatments and procedures;
- Support programs to prevent suicide, and for improved mental health, for high risk groups, including LGBTI Australians;
- Provide better for the needs of young LGBTI Australians, particularly in rural, regional, outer urban areas and within indigenous and ethnic communities;
- Continue to ensure that Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme implement anti-discriminatory policies for LGBTI Australians and that same sex couples and their families are not discriminated against in their access to or use of Medicare or the PBS; and
- Work to break down barriers to social inclusion for all LGBTI Australians.

77. Labor acknowledges the right of all Australians, including patients with gender dysphoria, transgender and gender diverse people, to live their gender identity. For many, this includes accessing specialist health services and for some people can involve gender affirmation surgery. Cost should not be a barrier to accessing these services. Labor commits to removing, wherever possible, barriers to accessing these services. This should materialise in a focus on creating fair, equal and affordable access to medical care and treatments relevant to trans and gender diverse Australians.

78. Labor recognises parents of intersex children can be pressured to surgically intervene on their children if they don't receive medically correct advice, information or support about how to parent an intersex child. Deferral of non-necessary medical intervention on infants and children with intersex variations until such times as the person concerned can give informed consent should be supported. Labor commits to promote and support an informed consent model for accessing medical transition.

Men’s health

79. Australia needs better health outcomes for men. Recognising men are generally worse at seeking care when it is needed Labor will:

- Update and fully implement the National Male Health Policy, including an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male health policy with a focus on valuing young men;
- Develop and implement policies to improve male mental health and prevent male suicide, particularly in rural areas;
- Support policies to address the gap in life expectancy between males and females;
• Implement policies and programs to reduce the incidence of prostate and bowel cancer, including the continuation of bowel cancer screening, and support prostate and bowel cancer treatment, support and research; and

• Consult with the relevant communities about the specific health needs of gay and bisexual men, and men who are transgender or intersex, and about the provision of culturally appropriate health services, and ensure their appropriate resourcing and promotion.

**Senior Australians’ Health**

80. Longer lives present both opportunities and challenges for our health care system. Senior Australians face distinct health challenges and conditions that require targeted care and support.

81. Labor will:

• Promote healthy, active ageing and social inclusion and provide greater opportunities for senior Australians to control their own health care and treatment choices;

• Ensure greater coordination across the system to ensure senior Australians receive the highest quality of continuous care;

• Support improved consumer education and self-management to help people better manage their chronic conditions;

• Ensure senior Australians are supported to make informed choices about their care; and

• Work to improve access to health care in aged care facilities.

**The Health of People with Disabilities**

82. The National Disability Insurance Scheme provides opportunities for people with disability to participate more fully in work and the community.

83. People with disability experience many health challenges and their experiences of the health care system can be fragmented and discriminatory. This often includes denial of the care they need when and where they need it.

84. Labor will:

• Promote and support appropriate health screening and preventive health care for people with a disability;

• Better integrate the care provided to people through the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Medicare; and

• Improve access to health care services including mental health services and medical devices for people with disability not eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

**Young people**

85. Young people have specific health needs. Addressing the physical and mental health needs of young people can improve their educational outcomes, employment prospects and social engagement, which also benefits the broader community. Labor will:
• Place a particular focus on young people’s health needs, including addressing physical and mental health needs, providing culturally sensitive and age appropriate services, providing impartial and confidential health advice, ensuring the privacy of health records, delivering evidence-based drug and alcohol prevention programs, sexual health services and promoting a healthy lifestyle;

• Adopt an integrated health-based approach to youth mental health and suicide that works with existing community structures, including addressing depression, coping with stress, body image, eating disorders, neglect, abuse, drug and alcohol problems, access to firearms, bullying, issues with social media, homophobia and other forms of discrimination; and

• Recognise the need for age appropriate residential care facilities for those with major disabilities requiring respite or long term residential care.

Health priority areas

Tackling chronic disease

86. Levels of chronic disease, such as dementia, cardiovascular disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, asthma, hearing and vision loss and kidney disease are largely preventable and correlate strongly with socio-economic status in Australia, disproportionately disadvantaging poorer communities both economically and with regard to health outcomes. Chronic disease has become the leading cause of preventable death in Australia and one of the greatest challenges facing our health system, responsible for 90% of all deaths and 85% of the burden of disease.

87. Labor will address the chronic disease challenge by:

• Targeting the causes of chronic disease, particularly in economically disadvantaged and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, by working with local government, Primary Health Networks and the primary health care sector more broadly;

• Improving access to primary health care multi-disciplinary teams and exploring and trialling innovative models for management of chronic disease, including coordinated case management, involving the community and not for profit sectors where appropriate;

• Supporting early detection of those at high risk of developing chronic disease and ensuring they are well managed, including self-managed, to prevent disease onset and avoidable hospital admissions;

• Leading the world in action to reduce rates of smoking, particularly among groups that continue to smoke at higher levels such as people with mental illness;

• Developing preventive health policies and solutions, including those that focus on obesity and physical inactivity;

• Addressing substance abuse issues and their impacts on chronic disease management;

• Responding to the escalating social and economic issue of chronic pain by working with the states and territories and the health sector to empower consumers and health professionals to access and provide best practice pain management and reduce unintended consequences of over reliance on medications; and

• Responding to chronic life-limiting conditions such as chronic heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, renal and liver disease, dementia, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease and HIV/AIDS with palliative care interventions where appropriate.
Improving mental health and suicide prevention

88. It is estimated one in five Australians experience mental ill health every year. Mental ill health can vary in complexity and severity. Mental ill health can also be persistent or episodic in nature.

89. The latest ABS figures reveal around eight Australians die from suicide every day.

90. Labor is committed to reducing Australia’s heartbreaking and confronting suicide rate by focusing on research, improving data collection and access to evidence-based services that targets those most at risk.

91. We support the establishment of evidence-based care for any Australian with or at risk of an eating disorder. To achieve this Labor will focus on how health providers can provide early intervention initiatives, appropriate treatment as well as enabling sustainable recovery.

92. Labor acknowledges the mental health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are significantly higher than those of other Australians.

93. Labor also acknowledges the LGBTIQ community has higher levels of psychological distress than do their heterosexual peers.

94. Regardless of where older Australians live, whether that be at home or in a residential aged care setting, mental health services must be available for everyone that needs them.

95. A strong primary health care system with universal provision of GPs, community health care and other primary health services is an integral component of the support provided to people experiencing mental ill health or at risk of mental ill health.

96. Labor will build on its strong legacy of investments in mental health and remains committed to long-term mental health reform. We will focus on the delivery of a more integrated, cross-sector and whole-of-government mental health care system which is centred on evidence-based, early intervention and prevention as well as the provision of more intensive and better coordinated support services for people living with mental ill health.

97. Historic reforms like Labor’s National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will help to achieve better outcomes for people with severe, complex and persistent mental ill health by helping them get timely support and access to appropriate services.

98. Labor will place a focus on providing psychosocial support for those people living with episodic mental ill health who will not be eligible for the NDIS. This will ensure vulnerable Australians are provided with a safety net of community-based services that may be at risk of falling through the service gap. Mental health services should be less crisis-driven and more preventative and recovery-driven. Supporting people to participate in the community, particularly through employment and education should be a key feature of Australia’s mental health system.

99. Investing in community mental health services and support for families and carers of Australians living with mental illness is critical to ensuring all people who are suffering from mental illness get the resources and the information they require, from early intervention to recovery, including the most effective care and support options.
100. Labor will:

- Lead and promote reform of Australia’s mental health service system;
- Continue to support awareness activities that break down the stigma around mental ill health.
- Work to ensure that when a vulnerable Australian puts their hand up for help that there are appropriate and relevant mental health services for them to access;
- Develop and deliver policies and programs to support and promote good mental health and wellbeing and to encourage Australians to seek mental health care early;
- Ensure people experiencing mental ill health can get more and better co-ordinated services, both clinical and non-clinical, and improve the lives of the most disadvantaged and socially excluded;
- Target support to people who need it most including young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people, and those living in socio-economically disadvantaged communities that are currently underserviced;
- Provide more support for mental health services in rural, regional and remote areas to improve equality of access for communities across the country;
- Build the capacity of Australia’s mental health workforce so people can get mental health services when and where they need it;
- Help to prevent and address homelessness among people with mental illness;
- Improve support for people with mental ill health to participate in the workforce;
- Provide respite and support for family members and carers of people with mental ill health;
- Break down barriers to seeking care by reducing the stigma around mental health through ongoing public education activities; and
- Monitor the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme to ensure people continue to get support for mental illness at an appropriate level.

101. Labor continues to support the need for a strong independent agency to ensure there is effective monitoring, assessment and reporting on the mental health system in a way that provides greater transparency and public accountability.

Reducing the burden of drugs and alcohol on our communities and health system

102. Labor will respond to the harm caused by alcohol and other drug misuse with prevention programs, early intervention, effective treatment and harm minimisation policies. Labor is committed to evidence-based policy for dealing with alcohol and other drug related harm.

103. Labor will:

- Support implementation of the National Drug Strategy including support services, harm minimisation, demand and supply reduction, law enforcement and national and community campaigns and interventions;
• Support implementation of a National Alcohol Strategy that includes a focus on evidence-based measures to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms, including alcohol related violence;
• Strengthen work to limit alcohol advertising to children and work with state, territory and local government to reduce children’s exposure in other settings;
• Recognise comorbidities around mental illness and alcohol and drug misuse; and
• Re-establish a national policy focus on addressing the impacts of alcohol and other drugs on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

**Improving oral health**

104. Dental health is important to overall general health and strongly linked to socio economic status. Labor recognises the importance of addressing the dental health needs of all Australians. The lack of appropriate dental care for many disadvantaged Australians represents a significant gap in the provision of universal health care. Labor believes universal access to dental care is a vital component of ensuring a healthy, productive nation. Labor’s Child Dental Benefits Scheme, which has now seen millions of services delivered to children, was a significant step forward in this process.

105. Labor will:

• Improve the delivery of dental services in Australia and work with the states and territories to reduce public dental waiting lists;
• Enhance and promote the CDBS to achieve better oral health outcomes for children; and
• Develop a plan to deliver fairer access to dental care with the long-term goal of universal dental access. This plan will prioritise the expansion of the provision of dental care to the most vulnerable in our community.

**Improving sexual and reproductive health services**

106. To improve sexual and reproductive health for all Australians, regardless of sexuality, disability or gender, Labor will:

• Develop a national sexual and reproductive health strategy for all Australians;
• Work with states and territories to improve the accessibility, legality and affordability of surgical and medical terminations across Australia, including decriminalisation in all states and territories and the provision of abortion in public hospitals;
• Work with states and territories to implement safe access zones for women seeking termination services and the staff of those services, to protect their health, safety and welfare;
• Support universal access to modern contraceptives and promote advice on the safe use of contraceptives, particularly by improving awareness and uptake of highly effective long acting reversible contraceptives;
• Support the rights of women to make decisions regarding reproductive health, particularly the right to choose appropriate contraceptives and termination and ensure these choices are made on the basis of sound psychological and medical advice;
• Support improved uptake of the HPV vaccine;
• Support improved access to STI screening, management and treatment; and
• Support research into the causes of infertility and work to ensure access to assistive reproductive technology programs is not determined by economic circumstances or any form of discrimination, whether on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status.

107. Labor will support and promote the importance of education to empower Australians to make safe, informed decisions about sexual and reproductive health.

108. Labor is committed to making sex education inclusive of all sexualities and gender identities. Labor will ensure the sex education curriculum is kept up-to-date and reviewed regularly by both non-government organisations and experts working in LGBTI health.

Building Australia’s role in global health

109. Labor has a strong track record when it comes to foreign aid investment. Supporting access to safe and affordable health care is important for Australia’s foreign policy because it promotes health and wellbeing in the region, and thus economic growth.

110. Labor will:
• Continue to invest in global health programs and projects in developing countries in our region;
• Support surgical education, training and workforce development to reduce the shortage of trained and skilled national clinicians in the region, which reduces countries’ capacity to deliver health care to their populations;
• Support the development of health care infrastructure in the region;
• Continue to be an active participant and supporter of the World Health Organisation; and
• Continue to support the important role that the Sustainable Development Goals have in improving health internationally and domestically.
Chapter 9: A fair go for all

The contemporary challenge

1. Fairness is at the heart of Labor’s purpose. The rapidly changing nature of our families, our economy and our labour market demand new approaches to achieve a fair society.

2. After a quarter-century of continuous economic growth, inequality is at a 75-year high. Nearly three million Australians live below the poverty line, and hundreds of thousands of Australians are unemployed. The mining investment boom is over and established manufacturing industries are in decline, while technology is driving the creation of new industries. Old jobs are disappearing, making way for new jobs that require new skills. Increasing casualisation and the rise of the ‘gig’ economy mean that secure, full-time jobs are hard to find, especially in some regions of Australia.

3. For all the success Australians have achieved, the rewards are not as widely spread or as fairly shared as we would like. A long period of economic growth has lifted incomes for many people. Yet poverty and disadvantage remain acute and entrenched in some parts of Australia. Understanding the complex causes of social exclusion and disadvantage is essential. People can get trapped in a spiral of disadvantage caused by family circumstances, low expectations, poor housing, unemployment, age, illness or discrimination. When a location has a high level of more than one type of disadvantage, it can have a compounding affect. A child’s earliest years fundamentally shape their life chances, and being born into a disadvantaged area can be detrimental to their chances throughout life. Certain groups are more likely to experience disadvantage and social exclusion, including jobless families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTI people, people with mental illness or disability, new migrants and refugees, and people experiencing homelessness.

4. Around the world, the Global Financial Crisis and its aftermath have dramatically shifted the discussion about the policies we need to build stronger economies and fairer societies. Issues that were once seen as more moral rather than economic challenges – rising unemployment and reduced living standards, increasing inequality and eroding social mobility, persistent poverty and disadvantage – are now central to global economic and social policy debates. There is now a widespread consensus that for economic growth to be robust and sustainable it must be inclusive. It must improve living standards and opportunities for everyone. It is now beyond doubt that inclusion is a prerequisite for stronger economic growth rather than a consequence of it.

5. Labor firmly believes government is responsible to ensure secure jobs and living standards are protected. Labor will develop policies to protect and expand decent, secure jobs, prepare Australians for the jobs of the future and improve living standards.

6. A strong social safety net is central to alleviating poverty and reducing inequality. Australia has one of the most well-targeted social security systems in the world. It is affordable, it is sustainable, and it must be fair. Labor will fight the Conservatives’ campaign to demonise social security recipients.

7. Our social safety net is critically important and it should never be undermined. It needs to be adequate and to adapt to the changing labour market. In contrast to the Conservatives’ approach, Labor policy must address the complex causes of disadvantage.
**Labor values**

8. What Australians have long called ‘the fair go’ is at the heart of Labor’s identity and the centre of our vision for the nation.

9. Fairness is essential to all our policies. We will work tirelessly to ensure every Australian has the opportunity to share in our national prosperity. This means developing policies and providing services which improve the lives of our most disadvantaged citizens and ensuring no Australian is left behind. It also means addressing inequality and all the social and economic costs of that inequality.

10. First Nations’ peoples have a special place in our nation as Australia’s first peoples and as custodians of the oldest continuing cultures in the world.

11. First Nations’ peoples experience particular disadvantage when compared to other Australians. Labor will work in partnership with First Nations’ peoples to achieve the change they aspire to, for themselves and for their children, including Closing the Gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ disadvantage in Australia. This commitment is underpinned by Labor’s support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes the right to self-determination.

12. Ongoing gender inequality and high rates of family and domestic violence is a barrier to the creation of a more just and equal Australia. Labor recognises that achieving gender equality and preventing violence against women and children is a national priority that requires enduring commitment from governments. Labor will act against the exploitation, including sexual exploitation, of women and children, either in Australia or overseas.

13. Affordable and secure housing is essential to wellbeing, participation and inclusion. All Australians should get safe, affordable and appropriate housing throughout their lives. Addressing homelessness a high priority for Labor.

14. Families are essential to our communities and our society, and should be supported to give their children the best opportunities in life. This includes a strong family payments system that alleviates child poverty by helping low and middle income families meet the costs of raising children.

15. Labor recognises that families come in many shapes and sizes, including families headed by same-sex couples, and that their needs are diverse too.

16. Labor believes that people with disability have the same rights as all Australians to participate fully in all aspects of social, cultural, economic and community life. Australians with disability should be supported and actively encouraged to make sure that they can have full choice and control over their lives.

17. A creative nation is a productive nation. Australians need to engage in a range of activities, including artistic, cultural and sporting activities, to have a fulfilling life. The arts and creative industries are fundamental to Australia’s identity as a society and nation, and increasingly to our success as a national economy. Labor will ensure Australia’s cultural sector—incorporating all aspects of arts, cultural heritage and the creative industries—has the skills, resources, and resilience to play an active role in Australia’s identity and future. Our creative industries are important to the wellbeing and fulfilment of Australians; they contribute to social cohesion and are increasingly important to our economic success, driving innovation and lifting productivity.
Consistent with its proud history of support for the arts, Labor will develop and champion innovative and forward-looking national cultural policy that celebrates Australian art and stories.

18. Sport improves health and fitness and has the power to bring communities together, crossing cultural, religious and political divides. It teaches self-discipline and teamwork to our children and often is a source of immense national pride.

19. Labor is a party of opportunity for all. All Australians should have the opportunity to work, to learn and to participate fully in family and community life. Spreading opportunity requires growing participation in work and the economy and better support for families to share opportunity with their children. It also requires the broad range of activities and services that make life liveable and fulfilling.

20. Our commitment to social justice means we measure ourselves by our treatment of those among us who are most marginalised. Addressing the root causes of poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion is essential to Labor’s cause.

21. Labor is a party of compassion. Not everyone is able to perform paid work. These Australians deserve respect and ongoing support, including financial support. Carers deserve the same opportunities as other Australians to participate in work and the community, and live a fulfilling life.

22. Labor has always stood for equality. Labor has helped people overcome disadvantage based on class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, cultural background and racial prejudice. We have always pursued the fair go, tolerance and respect. We oppose all attempts to divide Australians by pandering to prejudice. Australia’s diversity is one of the greatest sources of strength in our nation. Our national unity is based on mutual respect, shared values and a commitment to work together to build a stronger Australia.

23. Australia is an inclusive and multicultural country. Labor upholds these values. Immigrants and refugees have made an important economic and social contribution of throughout our nation’s history. Australia’s diversity is a source of national strength and a critical factor in nation building. Labor supports a multicultural society underpinned by Australian citizenship and respect of Australian values and will maintain non-discriminatory migration policies and respect the heritage and customs of migrants.

24. For the Australian people to have confidence and trust in the integrity of our migration system, Labor believes it must be built upon rigorous procedures and processes that protect our national interest and our national borders while also treating individuals with fairness, dignity and humanity. Labor believes in dealing with the complex issue of those seeking Australia’s protection by giving expression to the values of compassion, fairness and generosity. These values are essential to the Australian identity. Labor will treat people seeking our protection with dignity and compassion and in accordance with our international obligations, the rule of law and core Australian principles of fairness and humanity.

25. Citizenship is critical in our culturally diverse society. Australia should encourage all permanent residents to become citizens. Labor’s citizenship process will focus on the principles underlying Australia’s citizenship pledge: Australia’s democratic beliefs and laws, and the rights, responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship. Australian citizenship is a critical part of encouraging participation in the Australian community. Labor will remove unnecessary and unintended barriers to citizenship, particularly for vulnerable groups of migrants.
26. Labor will recognise and protect human rights. This actively helps create a more inclusive society. Labor has a Human Rights Framework to increase community awareness of human rights and to provide greater scrutiny of compliance with our international human rights obligations.

27. Labor recognises the importance of community and public services in helping individuals and connecting people. Community and public services provide essential support to the most disadvantaged in our society. Community and public services meet the direct needs of individuals and create social cohesion in communities. Developing a highly skilled workforce in community and public services, and a strong and sustainable community and public sector, is vital to meeting the nation’s challenges. Labor will work in partnership with these sectors to address complex contemporary challenges.

28. Labor will act against all forms of discrimination, vilification or harassment and harmonise anti-discrimination laws and procedures.

29. Labor supports the appropriate protection of the religious freedom of all people.

Labor priorities

Creating an inclusive Australia

30. Labor is committed to giving every Australian the help they need to access the opportunities society has to offer. Our emphasis is on supporting people to enable them to take up available opportunities for work in order to help them improve their circumstances. It recognises that policies and programs need to work in a cohesive and complementary way to deal with the variety of challenges which vulnerable Australians and disadvantaged people face. It requires sustained action across all levels of government and with the private and community sectors.

31. All Australians should be able to participate in economic and community life at all levels, including through employment, volunteering, community service and education. Social inclusion requires that people have the capabilities, opportunities, responsibilities and resources to participate and are supported to do so.

32. Labor will make sure that people who unable to work or who are unemployed get adequate financial support. Labor will also make sure that people who are looking for work get the support they need to find and keep a job.

33. Labor will make Australia more inclusive. Labor will:
   - Support families and create strong and cohesive communities;
   - Make our economy competitive and strong;
   - Create the opportunities and resources for every Australian to participate in the economy and community life; and
   - Ensure services which are provided to all Australians meet high standards.

34. Disadvantage is often a result of multiple, complex and interconnected barriers to participation. Labor will act on evidence about the causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage. Labor will:
Support families to give their children the best opportunities in life, including a safe home, a good education, positive role models, and help with parenting skills;

- Support people who do not have a source of income from employment to increase the work opportunities available to them;
- Improve the life chances of children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage, including through the National Child Protection Framework;
- Reduce the incidence of homelessness;
- Improve outcomes for people living with disability or mental illness and their carers;
- Close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ disadvantage;
- Break the cycle of entrenched and multiple disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods and communities; and
- Ensure fair services by maintaining front line access to government services in regional and rural Australia.

**Multiculturalism**

35. Australia is a multicultural country. Multiculturalism enriches our economy and our society. Labor knows that modern Australia and multicultural Australia are the same thing.

36. Labor will combat racism and respond to expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength and, where necessary, the full force of the law.

37. A multicultural society delivers social, cultural and economic benefits for all Australians.

38. Labor will ensure government services are more responsive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians.

39. Labor’s policies will celebrate multicultural Australia and reflect the benefits of multiculturalism to our nation, respect our cultural diversity, and harness the economic potential of our people.

40. Labor will continuously improve treatment of newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants as they make new lives in Australia, including:

- Providing practical settlement services, English language tuition, case management where required and encouragement and facilitation for social inclusion, leading to full participation in Australian society; and
- Better employment outcomes for newly arrived refugees and higher employment participation in the long term.

**Fairness**

41. Fairness in Australia is built on five pillars: economic growth, equitable social policy, quality government services, strong families and communities, and working in partnership with all sectors of the economy and community:
• **Economic growth** — making our economy strong and competitive. To improve social outcomes over time and between generations, government economic strategy needs to be inclusive, and deliver full employment with sound fiscal and macroeconomic policy settings;

• **Equitable social policy** — creating the opportunities and resources every Australian needs to participate in the economy and community life. This includes providing an adequate social safety net. It requires adequate support for those who are unemployed, people with disability and carers, people on low-incomes and people marginally attached to the labour market through local skills development, training and employment. Labor knows that people on Newstart are doing it tough. Labor will help people to strengthen their capability, resilience and independence;

• **Quality government services, a strong independent and appropriately resourced public service** — ensuring services which are provided to all Australians are appropriately funded to meet high standards, especially for those Australians who need them most but may have difficulty accessing them. Labor will ensure the quality and accessibility of mainstream services and target the right support directly to the most disadvantaged individuals and communities;

• Labor will build a world-class education system which prepares children for work and life, including through lifting the quality of education in the most disadvantaged areas. Labor will deliver world-class health and community services which improve life outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged and people with disability, including through expanded primary and preventative health services, linking people to the range of supports they need before crises occur, and at critical life transitions. Labor will improve the supply of affordable and accessible housing. Australia must close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in areas including life expectancy, education, health, housing and employment;

• **Strong families and communities** — supporting families to give their children the best opportunities in life and creating strong and cohesive communities, especially in areas experiencing entrenched and multiple disadvantage. Labor will support families to give their children the best opportunities in life through paid parental leave, better quality childcare, and strong and targeted family payments and family support programs. This requires supporting vulnerable families and children at risk by ensuring family support programs focus on vulnerable people, reduce red tape for service providers and ensure payments are spent in the interests of children. Labor will ensure Australians on low or fixed incomes get fair and equal financial products, including emergency relief, no- and low-interest loan schemes, matched saving schemes and financial literacy support; and

• **Partnership for change** — creating new and innovative partnerships with all sectors of the economy and community, so all levels of government, businesses and not-for-profit organisations are working together to build a stronger, fairer Australia. This includes maintaining a strong and sustainable community sector, including smaller, not-for-profit, locally-based organisations that can rally the support of local communities. It requires working in partnership with the community sector and its representatives, including workforce representatives, to develop solutions to our nation’s complex issues, and formalizing the relationship between government and the community sector by building on the National Compact between the Australian government and the third sector. Labor will deliver sustainable funding, driven by best outcomes at a local level that protects a diversity of services which are embedded in their community. Labor will encourage community organisations to work together, and not against one another, to deliver for the most vulnerable members of our society;
• Labor will investigate new models of social enterprise and social investment. We will work with philanthropic foundations and individual donors in areas of national priority like reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and improving child health outcomes. We will effectively coordinate action across sectors to prevent and reduce homelessness; and work together with business to help Australians living with disability and mental illness to participate in work and community life.

Human rights

42. A Human Rights Framework that reflects our international obligations is necessary to deliver our commitment to fundamental rights across social and economic policies. We are committed to promoting awareness and understanding of human rights, supporting the international human rights instruments to which Australia is a signatory, and properly funding and supporting the Australian Human Rights Commission, an independent agency that plays a critical role in our society. Labor will adhere to Australia’s international human rights obligations and will seek to have them incorporated into the domestic law of Australia and taken into account in administrative decision-making and whenever new laws and policies are developed.

43. Labor introduced a Human Rights Framework that:

• Invested in a comprehensive suite of education initiatives to promote a greater understanding of human rights across the community;
• Through the National Action Plan on Human Rights required that each new Bill introduced into Parliament is accompanied by a statement of compatibility with our international human rights obligations; and
• Established a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to provide greater scrutiny of legislation for compliance with our international human rights obligations.

44. Labor will:

• Consolidate federal anti-discrimination laws into a single Act to remove unnecessary regulatory overlap and make the system more user-friendly;
• Review legislation, policies and practices for compliance with the seven core UN Human Rights treaties to which Australia is a party (which are listed in the framework); and
• Review the Human Rights Framework and consider whether it could be enhanced through a statutory charter of human rights or other similar instrument.

First Nations Peoples

45. Labor is committed to the recognition of First Nations peoples in the Australian Constitution. This will be an important step towards a more reconciled nation based on strong relationships of mutual respect. Labor supports meaningful and substantive change to recognise the unique and special place of First Nations peoples and to reflect our nation’s fundamental belief in equality and non-discrimination. Labor is committed to developing a concrete proposition for constitutional recognition – including a Voice for First Nations’ Peoples - in genuine partnership with First Nations peoples as well as building public support for change.

46. The acknowledgement of First Nations people as traditional owners and continuing custodians of country is an important mark of respect and reconciliation at appropriate events, including at the
opening of the Federal Parliament. Labor supports welcome to country ceremonies at significant public events.

47. Labor acknowledges the First Nations status and aspirations of Indigenous peoples, as well as their contribution to Australian society.

48. Reconciliation is an important vehicle for healing and justice in Australian society. Labor will support First Nations peoples, the broader community and corporate and non-government sectors to promote reconciliation.

49. Labor supports mainstream funding and service delivery with a strong focus on positive outcomes for First Nations peoples.

50. Labor will comply with the Racial Discrimination Act in the development of policies relating to First Nations peoples.

51. Labor supports the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration affirms the entitlement of First Nations peoples to all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognised in international law and provides an aspirational framework for future dialogue. Australia’s formal support was welcomed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, key First Nations people, UN experts and the First Nations Social Justice Commissioner. This support underlines Labor’s desire to work in good faith with First Nations peoples, acknowledging our relationship will be tested and evolve over time.

52. Land and water are the basis of First Nations spirituality, law, culture, economy and wellbeing. Native Title and land rights are both symbols of social justice and a source of valuable economic opportunity for First Nations Australians.

53. Labor is committed to building a relationship where First Nations peoples and communities are the architects of their place in Australia and are equal partners with government in the development and implementation of policies that affect their way of life and livelihoods.

54. Land rights and Native Title are property rights under Australian law. Labor will work to accelerate the resolution of outstanding land and Native Title claims in partnership with other stakeholders. Negotiation produces better outcomes than litigation. Land use and ownership issues should be resolved by negotiation wherever possible.

55. Labor supports the statutory recognition of inalienable freehold title under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

56. First Nations peoples have a right to live on their traditional lands. Labor will provide essential services to remote communities.

57. First Nations cultures and languages enrich the nation and are integral to our national identity. Strong cultural identity is essential to the health, social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations peoples. Labor supports initiatives to strengthen the rich and diverse cultural practices, knowledge systems and cultural expressions of First Nations peoples.

58. The National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples is the national peak representative body of Indigenous Australian. Labor will support the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples, which
gives First Nations peoples a forum to express their views and aspirations, and will work with other existing institutions and bodies at the national, state, and regional level.

59. Community control and direct involvement of First Nations peoples in the planning and delivery of programs and services is important. Labor will invest in high performance community controlled Indigenous organisations to deliver the services First Nations peoples want and need.

60. Labor acknowledges the historic injustices of the past committed against First Nations peoples and the need for the truthful telling of Australia’s history and a Makarrata Commission as part of the journey towards reconciliation. This includes the teaching of history and culture of First Nations peoples and their contribution to the Australian story, as well as acknowledging events of national significance.

Closing the Gap

61. Closing the gap in life expectancy, employment, health and education outcomes between First Nations peoples and other Australians is a national priority. Closing the Gap requires enduring commitment from all levels of government and the corporate and non-government sector, and in partnership with Indigenous peoples, to deliver the change they seek.

62. After decades of underinvestment and neglect, major reforms and unprecedented investment should be made in education, health, employment, housing and services, governance and infrastructure.

63. Labor’s commitment to Closing the Gap is evidence-based and includes measurable, open and transparent targets. The Closing the Gap targets are:

- To close the life-expectancy gap within a generation;
- To halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade;
- To ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four years olds in remote communities within five years;
- To halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade;
- To halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rates by 2020;
- To halve the gap in employment outcomes between First Nations people and other Australians within a decade; and
- To Close the Gap between First Nations people and other Australians school attendance within five years.

64. Labor supports developing three additional Closing the Gap targets in partnership with First Nations peoples and organisations:

- To increase participation in higher and further education, by ensuring greater opportunity for Indigenous students to continue their learning in the fields of their choice;
- To improve access to services for First Nations people with disability, by ensuring 90 per cent of eligible Individuals will receive funded support under the National Disability Insurance Scheme by 2020; and
• To address the high rates of engagement of First Nations people, particularly young people, in the criminal justice system, as well as the unacceptably high rates of Indigenous children in out of home care.

65. All governments should be held accountable for their progress to Closing the Gap for First Nations peoples. Labor will coordinate a national approach to achieving the Closing the Gap targets and will work in partnership with First Nations peoples to achieve long-term and measurable improvements with an independent and regular reporting framework, including through the annual Close the Gap Report to Parliament.

66. Labor puts families at the centre of our work to Close the Gap, and will work with First Nations families to give children the best start in life. This requires a comprehensive early childhood strategy for Indigenous children, including wider provision of antenatal care services, sexual and reproductive health services for Indigenous women and maternal and child health services.

67. Indigenous early years services, including the Children and Family Centres, are critical to help families give children a strong start in life so they are healthy, strong in their identity and ready for school.

68. Indigenous women and children suffer more violence than other women. Labor pledges to work in partnership with First Nations peoples to reduce violence against women and children.

69. Too many Indigenous children are in the child protection system. Labor will improve child safety and reduce the number of children entering care. Labor will work in partnership with Indigenous communities to ensure children in care maintain contact with their culture, language and community.

70. Labor will convene a National Summit on First Nations’ Children aimed at addressing high rates of child removal, improving child safety and addressing the large numbers of First Nations’ children in detention.


72. Australia needs to address First Nations peoples’ interaction with the justice system including lower rates of offending and victimisation and better community safety. Labor supports justice reinvestment and the development of a justice target under the Closing the Gap framework to ensure coordinated action, accountability and progress to reduce the disproportionate incarceration rates of First Nations people. Suspicious deaths in custody should also be treated in a manner that maintains public confidence in the justice system.

73. First Nations peoples experience a higher burden of illness, die at a younger age than other Australians and too often do not get adequate health services. Addressing the health status of First Nations peoples requires a comprehensive approach beyond health services to include cultural wellbeing and connection to the land, education, environmental health and employment and training opportunities, as discussed in Chapter 8.

74. Education and training is fundamental to improving employment opportunities and reducing First Nations peoples’ disadvantage. Between 2007 and 2013, Labor increased Indigenous student
numbers in higher education by 26 per cent. It is essential that children go to school each day. Labor will work in partnership with Indigenous communities and schools to support families and children to engage with schooling and improve educational outcomes, as discussed in Chapter 7.

75. Labor will improve job readiness, employment and business opportunities for First Nations peoples to improve employment opportunities through a range of strategies and policy approaches discussed in Chapter 5.

76. Labor delivered the Apology to Australia’s First Nations Peoples, in particular the Stolen Generations. Labor will work in partnership with the Stolen Generations members and their families to comprehensively respond to their needs as a distinct group. Labor supports the Healing Foundation and its work to aid healing in Indigenous communities, and the programs arising from the Bringing Them Home Report.

77. To continue to support healing of Stolen Generations members and their descendants, Labor will deliver compensation to Stolen Generations in Commonwealth Territories; establish a $10 million Healing Fund, to be administered by the Healing Foundation.

78. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Sport – More than Just a Game found sport is vital to positive outcomes in health and mental health, stronger cultural identity and social inclusion. Labor will support First Nations peoples’ participation in sport to contribute to Closing the Gap in First Nations peoples’ disadvantage.

Rights and Opportunities for People with Disability

79. People with disability have the same rights as all Australians.

80. Government should help remove barriers that prevent people with disability from exercising those rights and ensuring they receive the support they need to participate fully in society.

81. Labor will ensure people with disability and their families are not treated like second class citizens, but get equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of social, cultural and community life, and to be free from discrimination in our workplaces, services and communities.

82. People with disability and their families should be supported as individuals to have choice and control in their lives.

83. Services for people with disability should be tailored to individual circumstances to improve opportunities to participate in work and in the community.

84. Mainstream community services should be inclusive and accessible to citizens with disability and their families. Labor will help improve their capacity for this.

85. People with disability are persons before the law. Labor will promote their right to make choices for themselves.

   • Everyone has an equal right to make decisions and to have their decisions respected;
• Persons who need support should be given access to the support they need in decision-making;
• A person’s will and preferences should direct decisions that affect their lives; and
• There should be appropriate and effective safeguards in relation to interventions for persons who may require decision-making support.

87. These principles promote the autonomy and independence of persons with disability, and are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Australia is a signatory to this Convention.

88. Labor will continue to support a strong, independent Disability Discrimination Commissioner to advocate for people with disability affected by discrimination and to proactively engage the community in understanding and contributing to improving the human rights of people with disability.

89. In consultation with people with disability, Labor will improve the range, diversity and quality of services for people with disability, including by delivering income support and employment services; focusing on early intervention, individual and personalised choice and control; and working cooperatively with state and territory governments to expand accommodation options, personal support including in-home support and individualised arrangements to support community participation and inclusion.

90. Labor will improve access to buildings, including dwellings, communications, transport, health care, aids, equipment, recreation, public space, and the justice and education systems, for people with disability and their families.

91. Australians with disability should be assured quality care and support, free of abuse and violence. A Labor Government will establish a Royal Commission into Violence and Abuse against People with Disability to allow people with disability, their families and carers to be able to present their shocking instances of abuse to the highest level of inquiry. They have a right to be heard, to be believed, to seek justice and to live lives free of abuse. Labor will not allow these sickening crimes to be swept under the carpet.

92. Collaboration between people with disability, their families, advocacy groups, the workforce and their unions, and service providers is essential to for high quality support services which enable people with disability to reach their goals and aspirations, and maximize opportunities for full participation and inclusion in the community.

93. People with disability should have every opportunity to participate in employment.

94. Labor will ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability have every opportunity to participate in employment and in the community, and get care and supports specific to their needs.

95. Labor will ensure people with a disability from a linguistically and culturally diverse background are supported to participate in the community.

96. Organisations of people with disability and families should have a strong, united voice to be able to provide advice to government and to strengthen the capacity for people with disability to exercise genuine choice and control over their lives. This is in line with the United Nations convention.
97. Advocacy is essential to support people with disability and safeguard them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Labor will strengthen advocacy within the sector.

98. People with disability and families should be able to choose to become members or to receive advice and support from organisations specialising in a particular disability, as well as from organisations specialising in population groups.

99. Labor respects the roles of advocates for people with disability and family based organisations and will strengthen them to be as effective as possible.

100. Labor will ensure there is a policy agency that will lead and adopt an “Inclusion for All” approach to improve access and inclusion of people with disability to government policy and decision making, including through community education programs.

**National Disability Insurance Scheme**

101. Labor created the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) – the largest ever reform to Australia’s disability support system.

102. The National Disability Insurance Scheme will transform the lives of around 475,000 people with disability, their families and carers, and give people with disability more choice and control over their lives.

103. Labor created the National Disability Insurance Scheme because the existing disability system was completely broken. For too long Australia’s disability support systems failed to provide people with disability, their families and carers with the support they need.

104. Labor created a fully funded National Disability Insurance Scheme for people with disability and will ensure that commitment continues.

105. Labor will ensure that the NDIS delivers on its promise to people with disability and will roll out the NDIS on in full and on time.

106. Labor will ensure the National Disability Insurance Agency is appropriately resourced and supported to develop and deliver high-quality plans for NDIS participants.

107. Labor will create new types of user-led services to ensure people with disability have the choice and control over the services they receive.

108. All Australians deserve to have the peace of mind that if they or a loved one acquires disability; they will get the support and care they need to participate in the community.

109. The National Disability Insurance Scheme is an important economic reform that will create jobs and unlock the productive potential of thousands of people with disability and their carers.

110. Through the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Labor will stimulate innovation and expand services, creating new, skilled job opportunities for Australian workers to meet the expanding demand from people with disability and families.
111. Labor will also work to ensure that job opportunities created through the National Disability Insurance Scheme deliver attractive remuneration, job security and career development opportunities for the disability sector workforce. Retaining and attracting a qualified and experienced disability sector workforce ensures genuine choice and control for people with disability.

112. As the National Disability Insurance Scheme is rolled out across Australia, Labor will support present and future service providers to better attract, develop, train and employ the sector’s workforce.

113. Labor strongly supports the vital work performed by all staff in the sector and will address the capacity, skill and remuneration issues affecting the disability workforce due to the huge expansion of the sector under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Ongoing workforce attraction and retention is necessary to ensure quality care and outcomes for people living with a disability. Labor will work with disability services workers and their unions, service providers and people with disability to develop and implement a disability sector workforce strategy to improve sector capacity and maintain and enhance quality standards. Labor will:

- Enhance skill levels and continue professional development of the workforce, including quality and relevant training;
- Protect and maintain employment standards through the National Disability Insurance Scheme funding mechanisms, with proper regard to relevant industrial instruments;
- Support employment and training models to enhance job security and minimise the spread of casualised and insecure work;
- Develop best practice standards and accreditation of supports in consultation with stakeholders so quality controls are established, maintained and properly funded; and
- Direct funding to client services and limit administrative and brokerage costs.

114. Labor will work closely with the states and territories on the details of the full rollout of the NDIS, based on evidence about high level of need for services across Australia’s cities, regions, rural and remote areas.

115. Labor will ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability fully benefit from the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

116. Labor will invest in disability research. Research, evidence and information are essential to support service innovation, planning and quality, as well as informed choice by National Disability Insurance Scheme participants.

117. People with disability and their families know best what will help them to live full lives as independently as possible in the Australian community.

118. Labor is committed to peer support and will work with people with disability, their families and carers to develop consumer demand and ensure people with disability and families are exercising full choice and control in their lives.
National Injury Insurance Scheme

119. Labor will ensure that the National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) complements the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

120. A person-centred National Injury Insurance Scheme for catastrophic injuries will revolutionise support for people with disability by reducing the large inequities in lifetime care and support that currently exists across Australia.

121. The National Injury Insurance Scheme should be based on the recommendations of the Productivity Commission, covering the four main causes of catastrophic injury which require a NIIS, namely motor vehicle accidents, medical accidents, workplace accidents, and general accidents occurring in the home or community.

122. The only factor that should determine the level of care someone receives is the level of support they require, not the cause of their injury.

123. Labor will work with the states and territories, as well as key sectors and industries, to develop and implement the National Injury Insurance Scheme as a federated model of separate state-based no-fault schemes to provide lifetime care and support for people who have sustained a catastrophic injury.

124. The National Injury Insurance Scheme is critical to a sustainable National Disability Insurance Scheme. It will also aid development of a modern rehabilitation system to provide necessary early intervention for people with acquired disability.

National Disability Strategy

125. The National Disability Strategy is the key avenue for Australia to implement its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

126. Labor will act on the National Disability Strategy’s six priority areas to improve the lives of people with disability, their families and carers:

- Inclusive and accessible communities — the physical environment including public transport; parks, buildings and housing; digital information and communications technologies; civic life including social, sporting, recreational and cultural life;
- Rights protection, justice and legislation — statutory protections such as anti-discrimination measures, complaints mechanisms, advocacy and the electoral and justice systems;
- Economic security — jobs, business opportunities, financial independence, adequate income support for those not able to work, and housing;
- Personal and community support — inclusion and participation in the community, person-centred care and support provided by specialist disability services and mainstream services and informal care and support;
- Learning and skills, early childhood education and care, schools, further education, vocational education, transitions from education to employment and life-long learning; and
- Health and wellbeing — health services, health promotion and the interaction between health and disability systems, wellbeing and enjoyment of life.
127. Labor will work with states and territories to reduce the over-representation of people with disability, particularly people with cognitive impairment, in the justice system, both as victims and offenders.

128. A Labor Government will set the benchmark and lead by example wherever appropriate in demonstrating the value that people with a disability bring to our community through employment, recreational and social participation.

129. The National Disability Strategy will guide Labor’s work with states and territories to bring about change in all mainstream services and programs as well as community infrastructure.

Supporting Our Carers

130. Families and carers contribute valuably to our society. Carers should have rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in economic, social and community life.

131. People who care for sick and elderly relatives and people with disability and mental illness deserve acknowledgement and support for the job they do and their selfless contribution to Australia.

132. Carers take on enormous responsibilities often at both a personal and a financial cost. Many carers experience substantial financial hardship, reduced education and employment prospects, lower levels of health, and anxiety, depression and chronic grief.

133. Carers play an invaluable role in providing care and support to loved ones, and deserve the same opportunities as other Australians to participate in work and the community, and live a meaningful life.

134. Carers need effective employment conditions including transition to work when caring responsibilities change.

135. Labor will consult with carers, their representative peak bodies and service providers to identify and overcome impediments, including inflexible working arrangements and financial and practical support for carers in our community.

Financial Security for People with Disability and Carers

136. The Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment are and should remain an essential part of our social safety net for people who need it.

137. Labor will ensure the Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment are properly indexed, so they keep pace with the cost and standard of living.

138. Labor will fight any attack on the Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment that will leave vulnerable people worse off.

Homelessness

139. Homelessness is a significant, destructive and growing social and economic problem within Australia. It is unacceptable that in a country endowed with significant wealth and opportunity that many of our fellow Australians have nowhere to call home. It is an inalienable human right for all
Australians to have access to safe and affordable housing. There is no greater example of increasing inequality that many of our fellow Australians have to resort to sleeping on the streets, couch-surfing or living in overcrowded, unhygienic and unacceptable housing conditions while many others live in unimaginable luxury and privilege. Homelessness is an outcome of inequality, driven by a significant shortage of affordable, secure, long-term housing. Homelessness affects the whole country; in cities, in country towns, and particularly in remote Australia where many Indigenous Australians continue to live in Third World conditions.

140. Labor is committed to work with the states, territories, business, financial institutions faith groups and other NGOs to substantially reduce homelessness in the short to medium-term. Failure to effectively address homelessness is a failure of government and society and stands in contrast to the ethos of a “fair go.”

141. Labor recognises the causes of homelessness are complex and varied. Homelessness can be a result of:

- Poverty;
- Unemployment and loss of income;
- Wage stagnation, casualisation and ineffective and unequal bargaining rights;
- Alcohol and drug addiction;
- Family and domestic violence;
- Life events such as family breakdown or death of a spouse;
- Mental and physical illness;
- Disability;
- Premature exit of young people from out-of-home care;
- Inadequate support for people transitioning out of prison;
- Inadequate retirement savings, particularly among older women;
- Lack of affordable and suitable rental housing; and
- Discrimination based on race, age, gender or sexuality.

142. Homelessness is a driver of poor health outcomes, exacerbates chronic disease, reduces education opportunities and increases incarceration of vulnerable homeless Australians. Labor acknowledges that reducing homelessness results in substantial long-term savings to government through reduced expenditure in health, education and justice budgets.

143. Labor is committed to reducing homelessness by working with the States, Territories and non-government organisations in a cooperative and accountable manner to:

- Provide funding for stable, affordable and long-term housing, emphasising the principles of ‘Housing First’ which includes recognition that housing is a human right, providing a stable independent home with intensive personalised support and case management to homeless people with multiple and complex needs;
- Expand models of support to end homelessness long-term, and provide increased access to initiatives such as Common Ground and Youth Foyers;
• Increase funding for early intervention and homelessness prevention services through a Safe Housing Fund to increase transitional housing options for women and children escaping family and domestic violence young people exiting out-of-home care and vulnerable older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness;

• Ensure that people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness have increased access to mainstream social services, such as employment including health and legal services;

• Better integrate service provision, particularly through place based responses, and provide sustainable and accessible outreach support; and

• Encourage private sector investment in homelessness support services and affordable rental housing for low-income households, the working poor, Social Security recipients and Australians with a disability.

144. Lack of access to affordable rental housing is a major driver of homelessness. Labor will work cooperatively with the states and territories to ensure that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are prioritised in the allocation of all social housing (public and community) and provision of tenancy support services.

145. Labor will support research and data collection on homelessness to create more reliable and timely data which will help optimise government policies and set targets for the reduction of various forms of homelessness and the expansion of social and community housing.

146. Mental illness is a cause of homelessness, and can be exacerbated as a result of homelessness. Labor is committed to enhancing services to people with a mental health condition or disorder who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

147. In addition, Labor recognises the significant connection between homelessness and people being subjected to discrimination and harassment for being same-sex attracted or transgender and specifically understands the discrimination and exclusion affecting transgender people seeking to access support. Accordingly, Labor will work with affected communities to enhance housing support for LGBTI Australians.

148. Labor acknowledges that young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are at significantly higher risk of homelessness, and commits to support dedicated services aimed at addressing this issue.

**Labor’s National Housing Strategy**

149. Having an affordable, secure and appropriate home with reasonable access to services is essential to financial, social and emotional wellbeing. All Australians have the right to secure, affordable and appropriate housing throughout their lives. Having a genuine chance to live near job opportunities is essential for Australians’ social and economic participation. For too many people, the housing pressures they face are getting worse, not better. Australia is in a housing crisis – a crisis of supply a crisis of affordability and a crisis of suitability and sustainability. Housing inequality is the single biggest driver of intergenerational inequality and requires a range of social and economic policy to provide fair and equitable access to housing to arrest this growing inequality.

150. Tackling Australia’s housing affordability crisis requires national leadership and commitment. Labor will provide that leadership and commitment.
151. Improving housing affordability is a challenge that requires co-operation and complementary policies across all levels of government.

152. A Labor Government will work with the States and Territories to reach a National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) which includes performance and accountability measures. A new approach is needed. Labor will seek to strengthen measures in the current agreement across the housing affordability spectrum, including:

- Planning reform;
- Inclusionary zoning; and
- Accelerated release of state and territory government owned land for housing development. All these areas of reform are critical for lowering the cost and increasing supply of new affordable housing stock.

153. Labor will strengthen the oversight of the housing sector, including appointing a dedicated Minister for Housing and Homelessness whose remit will be to coordinate all aspects of Commonwealth housing policy.

154. Labor will re-establish the National Housing Supply Council with broad terms of reference whose task will be to provide robust, evidence-based, independent advice to government on housing supply and demand, housing affordability issues and progress against benchmarks and targets under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA).

155. The NHHA should bring together a range of policy approaches. The NHHA is the mechanism to commit all governments to joint action on housing policy and reforms including:

- Expanding the supply of social housing, particularly affordable rental housing for low and very low income households and Australians relying on social security payments;
- Delivering more efficient and effective housing, land and infrastructure development;
- Reforms aimed at expanding the not-for-profit community housing sector;
- Better integrating housing and other services to strengthen communities and build safe and healthy neighbourhoods close to jobs;
- Expanding institutional investment particularly from banks, superannuation funds and other financial institutions in affordable housing;
- Working with faith-based institutions to develop a partnership with government that increases access to surplus church land for community housing while ensuring churches maintain title of the land and receive a return on their assets while increasing the availability of land for community housing stock;
- Preventing and reducing homelessness including couch surfing, overcrowding;
- Improving and increasing culturally appropriate housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in remote communities; and
- Addressing the serious shortages of housing for people with disability and ensure that people with disability have choice and control over their housing needs.

156. While the States and Territories are responsible for the provision of public housing, Labor recognises that community housing is the only social housing sector that is growing even though this is at the expense of public housing density. The most important intervention the
Commonwealth Government can make in the provision of social housing is to support growth in the not-for-profit community housing sector.

157. Growth in the community housing sector is slow, uncertain and constrained by lack of policy certainty and lack of low cost, long-term finance. Labor will support the community housing sector through policies that:

- Assist the sector to access long-term, low cost finance at scale through a bond aggregator and a support mechanism that addresses the funding gap which limits the growth in housing stock for low income and Social Security recipients;
- Are durable, long-lived and will survive changes of government;
- Provide ongoing government subsidy to house low income households; and
- Encourage availability of low-cost land and/or redevelopment sites for social housing located close to employment, education, health and other services.

158. Labor will work with banks, industry superannuation funds and other financial institutions to encourage greater private investment in the affordable rental sector. There is an opportunity to develop an alternative investment class that increases housing stock while providing stable, long-term, reliable returns on investment.

159. More households are renting and the rights of renters must be protected. Labor will work with the States and Territories, and tenant representative organisations to:

160. Introduce national tenancy standards for all residential tenancies, including caravan park residents, boarders and lodgers, to ensure tenants’ rights are protected in matters such as eviction, unfair rents, repairs and maintenance, quality of rental accommodation, appeals and bond security;

161. Ensure all tenants have access to affordable, independent review mechanisms for resolving tenancy disputes in relation to evictions and unfair rents, bond or rent disputes; and

162. Support the regulation of tenant databases though stronger privacy protection including independent monitoring of compliance and access to affordable dispute resolution processes.

### Housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

163. Secure, affordable and culturally appropriate housing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, particularly remote communities, is critical to Closing the Gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Safe and secure housing underpins all the other Closing the Gap targets, and therefore access to housing and a reduction in overcrowding will be added to the “closing the gap” indices reported to Parliament.

164. Labor will work with the states and will invest in new housing and in refurbishing existing housing stock to address chronic overcrowding in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

165. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in cities and regional centres, and the housing challenges faced in these communities differ greatly to those in remote communities. Labor will work with Aboriginal owned and controlled community housing providers to deliver accessible, affordable, culturally appropriate and secure housing to meet the social, cultural and economic aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
166. Labor supports the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including in remote communities, to home ownership. Labor will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to support this aspiration and increase home ownership rates.

**Gender equality and women’s rights**

167. Labor has a proud legacy of advancing women’s rights and a long-held commitment to policies that underpin gender equality. Courageous and inspirational women throughout our history have made great achievements for the equality of women and men in Australian society.

168. Much remains to be done to eliminate discrimination, achieve equality and ensure Australian women enjoy the same opportunities, resources and rewards as men:

- Rigid gender stereotypes and social norms limit women’s opportunities and participation in Australian society;
- Women remain underrepresented within civic and corporate institutions, and in leadership and decision-making;
- Women experience unacceptable high levels of harassment and violence;
- Care responsibilities are disproportionately held by women and remain undervalued;
- Women experience economic insecurity throughout their life cycle as they are disadvantaged by the gender pay gap, unpaid labour and the gap in retirement incomes; and
- The impact of gender inequality is compounded for women experiencing intersecting disadvantage and discrimination, including First Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse women, women with a disability, rural and regional women, lesbians, bisexual women and trans gender, diverse or intersex people.

169. Achieving gender equality will require enduring commitment from government, working in partnership with business and the community to close the gender pay gap, reduce violence against women, reach equal representation in leadership and improve health and wellbeing.

170. Gender equality benefits both women and men and leads to a more prosperous and fair society by improving Australia’s productivity and competitiveness, preventing violence against women and strengthening social cohesion.

171. Labor will work to achieve gender equality in Australia through:

- A comprehensive approach to tackling gender pay inequity;
- An industrial relations system to promote pay equity; protect a minimum level of standards for the most vulnerable workers, many of whom are women; and to provide employees access to family friendly conditions such as extended unpaid parental leave, and flexible and part-time work to support people to manage the competing interests of work and family;
- Regulation and education for employers to promote equal opportunity, gender pay equity and work and family balance;
- Policy and law to promote diversity, including through the participation of women on company boards by aiming to increase the representation of women on Australian Government boards to 50 per cent within the first term of a Labor Government;
- Investigating and implementing strategies to combat sexual harassment;
• Working to combat gender norms and stereotypes that harm women, girls, men and boys, including through support for education in respectful relationships;
• Maintaining a fair government-sponsored paid parental leave scheme;
• Improving the accessibility of affordable quality childcare, outside hours school care and vacation care;
• Promoting equal educational and training opportunities for women, particularly for women who have spent time out of the workforce to care for their children;
• Recognising and valuing women’s paid and unpaid work;
• Supporting and encouraging men to take an increased role in care giving and domestic labour;
• Investigating and implementing strategies to improve women’s retirement incomes, including superannuation;
• Providing women with financial literacy and superannuation information and tailoring that information to their needs, having regard to the disproportionate representation of women in part time and casual work and the long-term implications for their financial security and superannuation; and
• Ensuring all employees, including those who worked minimal hours in part-time or casual work will continue to receive compulsory superannuation contributions.

Preventing Violence against Women and Children

172. Addressing family violence must be a national priority. Family and domestic violence will only be prevented by working in partnership with all Australians and requires changing attitudes through teaching respect in our schools, our sporting clubs, our military, our workplaces and the media. It requires confronting and addressing gender inequality which lies at the core of violence against women.

173. Labor in government will prioritise full implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 and will work in collaboration with the States and Territories to evaluate state-specific progress, and to develop a successor to that National Plan.

174. National leadership is required to coordinate judicial and social services reform across jurisdictions to better deal with family violence and sexual violence in a new comprehensive national strategy. Labor will:

• Support victims and survivors of family violence going through court by resourcing community legal assistance including culturally-appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
• Improve the capacity of the judicial system to deal with family violence;
• Deliver more certainty for homelessness services supporting women and children escaping family violence situations;
• Enable women and their children experiencing family violence to remain safely in their current home and community;
• Establish greater perpetrator accountability mechanisms and divert perpetrators from the path to violence;
• Address fragmented responses to family violence;
• Support sound research and ongoing measurement to underpin policy approaches, identify emerging challenges and track progress;
• Deliver primary prevention and early intervention;
• Support victims and survivors of sexual violence through specialist services including targeted prevention of sexual violence;
• Provide culturally competent support;
• Demonstrate national leadership in preventing technology-facilitated abuse; and
• Ensure safety planning resources can be used by domestic violence victims facing reproductive coercion.

175. Labor will consult the many organisations working to address family violence and sexual violence, and will ensure women’s voices are heard in the development and delivery of our strategy. Labor aims to reduce gendered violence by improving how governments work together, increasing support and creating innovative and targeted ways to bring about change, and reduce gender inequality.

176. Labor will:
• Create and maintain the national apparatus needed to drive change culture and inform future responses;
• Maintain a strong focus on the prevention of violence, and the reduction of its incidence;
• Help family violence survivors avoid falling into poverty;
• Ensure policies and programs work for victims and survivors with special vulnerabilities (including migrant women, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and LGBTIQ victims and survivors);
• Support respectful relationships and attitudinal change in our culture, institutions and in individuals, with a focus on young people;
• Deliver innovative services and integrated systems, helping victims to rebuild their lives supported by community-wide responses including specialist services;
• Continue to expand the evidence base; and
• Reduce gender inequality, which is at the core of domestic and family violence.

177. Forced Marriage is an abuse of human rights with disproportionately affects young women and children. Individuals forced into marriage are often denied access to education and employment and can be subject to ongoing domestic violence. Labor will act to prevent this practice from occurring.

Children and Families

178. Every child has the right to a safe, healthy and happy childhood. Labor will support families to give their children the best start in life, and will work to protect children at risk from disadvantage, neglect and abuse. Labor understands that in order to have the best start in life, children need resilient, happy, loving families and communities.
179. Children can become vulnerable when their needs are considered secondary to the priorities of their parents and carers, institutions, governments, cultural and economic interests. All children, regardless of their background, should be valued, respected, and their needs and rights recognised.

180. Labor believes in a holistic approach to early intervention and family support, services and information for families with children, and that services should recognise and empower families to make decisions about the support and service provision they need.

181. Labor understands that the first thousand days of a child’s life forms the building blocks of their future. Labor is committed to supporting families at this critical time through place based integrated health, education and family support services.

182. Labor created the National Child Protection Framework – it represents the highest level of collaboration between governments and with non-government organisations to improve the way agencies, payments and programs interact to support all children, help prevent abuse and better protect children identified as being at risk.

183. Labor will:
   - Prioritise policy approaches that improve the wellbeing of children across government.
   - Listen and learn from the experiences of children;
   - Improve prevention and early intervention through a national, collaborative approach;
   - Deliver more effective responses for children in care and leaving care;
   - Improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; and
   - Attract and retain a skilled professional workforce to improve child protection systems.

184. Labor is proud of the Gillard Labor Government’s establishment of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse which has given a voice to victims and been integral to the healing process. Labor recognises the importance of building on the work of the Royal Commission by implementing measures to make sure that institutional abuse of children cannot happen on this scale again.

185. In responding to the reports of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, a Labor Government will:
   - Work to implement a national redress scheme;
   - Work with state and territory governments, institutions, survivors and victims to address each of the recommendations; and
   - Establish a reporting process to ensure implementation of recommendations and changes being made can be monitored publicly.

186. Australia must respect and understand the experiences of past adoption practices. Labor will work with the states and territories to develop a uniform national system for adoption. This includes harmonisation and best practice for fees, document access and format, as well as support for all families impacted by adoption and procedures for inter-country adoption. These will prioritise the best interests of the child and ensure adequate safeguards against child trafficking risk.
187. Labor recognises the rights of children to the care and the protection of their family of origin and understands the importance of these connections when this care is not possible.

188. Labor recognises that children, both in Australia and internationally, are in need of either adoption, foster or institutional care because of circumstances their families face. We also believe that separation can be prevented with appropriate early intervention and social and economic support for the family.

189. Labor believes that the connection to culture, country and kin is critical to the wellbeing of First Nations Children. We recognise the need for Indigenous led services and recognise that the number of children in out of home care in Australia, particularly First Nation Children, is unacceptably high.

190. Labor will convene a National Summit on First Nation’s Children within the first 100 days of a Labor Government to identify new approaches to reduce the rates of child removal.

191. Labor will develop a national approach to children and the law, which will:
   - Recognise the best interests and wellbeing of the child as a primary consideration;
   - Set standards for court procedures where children are involved as witnesses, victims or offenders;
   - Set standards for support, counselling and rehabilitation services for child victims and offenders within the criminal justice system, particularly as they relate to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse;
   - Support research into causes of juvenile crime; and
   - Continue to support the work of the National Children’s Commissioner.

192. Labor will protect children from exposure to inappropriate material over the internet, at home, school and at other public access points.

193. Labor acknowledges that too many Australian children are living in poverty. In Government, Labor is committed to significantly reducing the proportion of children living in relative poverty.

194. Labor believes that all people should be able to access assisted reproductive technology, to adopt, and to enter into domestic surrogacy arrangements, regardless of relationship status, sex, gender, identity or sexual orientation.

195. Where adoption arrangements already exist between Australia and other countries, Labor will seek to ensure these arrangements are expanded to allow for inter-country adoption by LGBTI parents on an equal basis to cisgender heterosexual people. Where Australia seeks to enter into new inter-country adoption arrangements, Labor will seek to ensure all new agreements treat LGBTI parents equally.

**Young Australians**

196. Australia needs better representation of young Australians in national debate and policy development.

197. Labor will engage with young Australians, including through social media and new technology.
198. Labor will support young Australians to reach their full potential, by investing in education, training and employment to build resilience so our young people can successfully negotiate the many transitions through life.

199. Labor will particularly focus on young people’s health needs, including physical and mental health, drug and alcohol education, the promotion of positive body image and a healthy lifestyle.

200. Australia needs to prevent and reduce the damage being caused by the increased sexualisation of children in the media and popular culture.

201. Street violence can affect Australians of all ages. Labor will work in partnership with young people to prevent street violence and the perceptions of street violence in our community so young people are not disproportionately affected by street violence either as victims or perpetrators.

202. Labor will ensure a national voice for the Australian youth sector by maintaining the Minister for Youth.

203. A Labor Government will ensure the interests of young Australians are represented at the highest levels of government, and work with the States and Territories, business and the community to:

- Address issues faced by young Australians;
- Support young Australians to participate in government and the political process; and
- Combat youth unemployment.

**Support for the Community Sector**

204. Labor supports a vibrant, strong and innovative community sector.

205. The sector makes an enormous social and economic contribution. It provides frontline services to our most vulnerable people including early intervention and crisis support for those at risk of homelessness, escaping domestic violence or who are excluded from their communities. The sector builds the capacity of communities to respond to entrenched and emerging social challenges and create opportunities for the participation and inclusion of all Australians.

206. Support for the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our communities is always best provided in a partnership between the Government and not-for-profit community sector.

207. Labor will develop and maintain a genuine partnership based on mutual respect and trust, providing the opportunity for the sector to have strong voice in the design and implementation of social policy and programs.

208. Labor will create a platform to consider sector-specific challenges, including the uncertainty and loss of capacity caused by caused by recent funding processes, the lack of a clear pathway on regulation, the role of volunteering and innovation in service delivery, as well as the critical role of advocacy in developing and implementing effective policies and programs to achieve real outcomes for those most at risk of social exclusion.

209. Labor is committed to working with the community sector and its workforce representatives to establishing a new model for funding these types of services that better addresses the needs and interests of the people they support and the local communities in which they work. Funding of
community services such as early intervention and crisis support services in our community should be: accessible; sustainable; focus on collaboration rather than competition between providers; support local and diverse service provision; and recognize that not-for-profit organisations are always better positioned than for-profit corporations to provide these crucial frontline support services.

Removing discrimination

210. Labor will enact legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, and the removal of such discrimination from Commonwealth legislation.

211. All people are entitled to respect, equality, dignity and the opportunity to participate in society free of hatred or harassment and receive the protection of the law regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.


213. Labor believes that no faith, no religion, no set of beliefs should ever be used as an instrument of division or exclusion, and condemning anyone, discriminating against anyone, vilifying anyone is a violation of the values we all share, a violation which can never be justified by anyone’s faith or belief. Accordingly, Labor will review national anti-discrimination laws to ensure that exemptions do not place Australians in a position where they cannot access essential social services.

214. Labor will ensure all couples whether married or de facto do not suffer discrimination.

Justice in the community

215. Access to justice is essential to the rule of law and integral to the enjoyment of basic human rights. It is an essential precondition to social inclusion and a critical element of a well-functioning democracy.

216. Labor is committed to ensuring our justice system is fair, simple, affordable and accessible, and based on principles of early intervention to help people resolve problems before they escalate and lead to entrenched disadvantage.

217. People on the margins of society often have the highest levels of interaction with the justice system. Australia’s system of justice should provide security for all Australians, protect property, deter and prevent crime, compensate victims and rehabilitate offenders.

218. Labor supports a charter of rights for the victims of crime based on the United Nations Charter of Victims’ Rights (Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power 1985), and laws providing for victim impact statements, the provision of witness support and information, and standards for the treatment of victims by the criminal justice system.

219. Labor will ensure the Commonwealth’s investigation, prosecution, defence and judicial processes are separate, independent, adequately resourced and appropriately accountable.
220. The independence of the judiciary is fundamental to the rule of law and our democratic society. The courts should be accountable. Labor will ensure judicial appointments are made through a transparent and merit-based process in which all those eligible for appointment to judicial office have the opportunity to be fairly and properly considered. Labor will work with the judiciary to ensure the judicial system is efficient and adequately funded. Labor will work with the courts to evaluate and improve service delivery.

221. Labor will adequately resource and support the leading law enforcement agency of the Commonwealth, the Australian Federal Police.

222. Labor holds that respect by politicians for the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary is integral to our democratic system of government.

223. Labor is committed to the rule of law and basic principles of justice. These principles include that people accused of a criminal offence are not compelled to incriminate themselves; that they are not subject to prolonged detention without charge; that persons charged with a criminal offence are presumed innocent until proven guilty before an independent court; that after being charged, they are informed of details of the charge within a reasonable time; that charged persons are tried without undue delay; that they are given a fair trial including, in the ordinary course, the right to see and hear the evidence against them; that people charged with serious criminal offences are provided with legal representation if they are unable to afford legal representation of their own; that people shall not be found guilty of any crime, the elements of which did not constitute a crime at the time of its commission; that people convicted of a criminal offence shall have the right to appeal against conviction and sentence to a higher court; that no penalty heavier than what was applicable at the time of the commission of a crime shall be imposed on a convicted person; and that evidence obtained illegally, by torture, coercive techniques or by improper investigative practice is inadmissible.

224. Labor will provide national leadership to resource our system of legal aid in partnership with the states and territories. Labor will support general and specialist community-based legal services, clinical legal education schemes and pro bono clearing house services.

225. The legal profession plays a fundamental role in the provision of access to justice. Labor supports the creation of a modern, efficient and accountable national legal services market regulated by an independent body, to achieve full accountability and maintain the independence of the legal profession.

226. Labor acknowledges that law reform is an ongoing process in a healthy society, and we will continue to reform laws and legal system to reflect the traditions, values and aspirations of all Australians, and meet the needs of our modern democratic society. Labor will adequately resource the Australian Law Reform Commission so it can provide independent and comprehensive advice on all aspects of law reform.

**Custody and sentencing**

227. Sentencing should achieve deterrence, punishment, retribution and rehabilitation. Labor supports the just and humane treatment of accused people in custody and offenders in prison. Labor will conform to Australia’s international human rights obligations and strive for world’s best practice in its treatment of prisoners.
Prison is a last resort. Labor supports the appropriate use of noncustodial sentencing options for all offenders. This principle is particularly important for young people, and all effort should be made to divert children from long-term involvement in the criminal justice system. How the criminal justice system treats juvenile offenders greatly influences whether they will re-offend. Labor will take all reasonable steps to ensure minors are not incarcerated in adult prisons.

Labor opposes mandatory sentencing and detention regimes; they are often discriminatory in practice, conflict with the role of the judiciary as an independent arm of government, and have not proved effective in reducing crime or criminality.

Labor supports:

- Efforts to reduce the unacceptably high rates of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and in particular, young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- Special attention to prevent deaths in custody, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the establishment and maintenance of a Custody Notification Scheme;
- Training police and prison officers to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ culture and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ social context;
- Efficient, culturally appropriate legal aid services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the criminal justice system;
- International treaties allowing the repatriation of Australians in overseas prisons;
- Consistency in sentencing with a sufficient degree of appropriate discretion so as to enable sentences to be tailored to the circumstances of each individual case; and
- Programs consistent with victims’ rights, based upon restorative justice. Restorative justice to encourage community spirit and responsibility in the offender and to restore the victim and the community to their pre-offence state of security.

Family law

The best interests of children and their safety should be the paramount consideration in resolving Family Law disputes. Resolving family disputes should focus on counselling and family dispute resolution, with litigation as a last resort. Labor will ensure community-based services such as counselling and family dispute resolution are accessible, affordable and equipped to resolve entrenched disputes.

Labor will develop and implement measures to ease the anxiety and stress of family breakdown. In particular, Labor will ensure:

- The rights of children are paramount;
- There is a just division of relationship property;
- The important and valuable contribution of a partner to family care and homemaking is recognised;
- The Family Law system protects those at risk of family violence or child abuse;
- The particular needs, customs and practices of diverse cultures are appropriately respected;
• Children are not disadvantaged by the structure of their family or by the circumstances of their conception;
• Disputes are resolved in a timely, effective and affordable way; and
• Litigation in the family law court system is efficient and streamlined.

A nation built on migration

233. Labor recognises the economic and social contribution of migrants and refugees throughout our nation’s history. Labor regards Australia’s diversity as a source of national strength and a critical factor in nation building.

234. Australia is, and will remain, a society of people drawn from a rich variety of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Australia is, and will remain, a multicultural society.

235. To support Australia’s multicultural society, Labor’s migration policies will:
• Remain non-discriminatory;
• Respect the heritage and traditional customs of migrants and their children;
• Recognise the importance of all aspects of the migration program, including skilled, family and humanitarian streams;
• Be evidence-based, supported by rigorous research and evaluation;
• Support Australia’s social cohesion by encouraging universal respect for Australia’s democratic beliefs and laws, and the rights, responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship; and
• Consistently oppose those who foster extremism, hatred, ethnic division or incitement to violence.

236. Labor believes that there is an inequity for New Zealand citizens living in Australia under the terms of the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangements (TTTA). Labor believes that there should be consideration given to the permanent residency status and potential citizenship arrangements for New Zealand citizens living in Australia under the terms of the TTTA.

237. Labor believes in dealing with the complex issue of those seeking Australia’s protection by giving expression to the values of compassion, justice, human rights, fairness and generosity. These are values which are at the heart of the Australian identity.

238. Labor will treat people seeking our protection with dignity and compassion and in accordance with our international obligations, the rule of law and core Australian principles of fairness and humanity. Labor will legislate to enshrine our international obligations into Australian domestic law.

239. Labor recognises that, under the Refugee Convention, asylum seekers have the right to seek protection and asylum and that, regardless of the mode of arrival, this is not illegal under Australian or international law. Accordingly, Labor rejects the practice of referring to asylum seekers as ‘illegals’.

240. Labor believes that as a country Australia must not harm people.
241. Labor recognises the importance of family reunion for migrants and refugees as an important part of successful settlement outcomes.

242. The issue of those seeking protection is both a global and regional one. Accordingly, in order to achieve a long-term resolution to the issue, it must be dealt with through international cooperation and not unilateral action. Within our region, Australia must play a leadership role. Recognising the value of a bipartisan approach in this policy area in the past, Labor will work towards a bipartisan approach once again.

243. A fundamental principle in treating those seeking protection with humanity is to provide as much certainty as possible. An aspiration of certainty in all matters around asylum seekers, including the duration of assessing refugees’ claims, must underpin Australian policy.

244. Labor will work to ensure that those in detention facilities are treated with dignity and respect and have access to an appropriate standard of care and substantive access to health and education services while held in immigration detention centres.

**Humanitarian Migration Programme**

**Australia’s responsibility as an international partner**

245. The world is experiencing its greatest humanitarian need since the Second World War with the largest number of displaced persons since that time. Labor believes that Australia should lead debate on the establishment of a best practice framework, including new regional agreements and understandings required to ensure that the Refugee Convention and the international protection system function effectively in this environment. This includes encouraging countries in our region to provide protection to those in need.

246. Labor is committed to the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as the international agency dealing with the world’s response to this humanitarian need. In pursuing Australia’s responsibilities as a civilised and modern nation, Labor in Government will ensure that Australia is one of the leading contributors to the global work of the UNHCR.

247. Australia has a particular responsibility to show humanitarian and protection leadership in South East Asia. Accordingly Labor is committed to playing a leading role in working with South East Asian nations in the region and in particular, in Indonesia to build a regional framework to improve the lives of asylum seekers.

248. To combat people smuggling Labor will engage with Australia’s neighbours to address ‘push factors’ by seeking innovative, effective and lawful solutions to the irregular movement of people through the region. This approach will include multilateral engagement through Australia being a co-chair of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (the Bali Process), and new and deeper bilateral arrangements of a type envisaged by the Regional Cooperation Framework agreed at the Bali Process Ministerial Conference in March 2011.

249. Labor in Government will seek to ensure that appropriate multilateral infrastructure is in place to build a humanitarian regional framework which may include seeking to extend the work of existing multilateral processes.
250. In recognising that addressing ‘push factors’ in transit countries will lessen the need for people to take a boat journey, Labor will work with the UNHCR to help build its capacity in South East Asia to pursue its mandate and assist the region’s asylum seekers.

251. The phenomenon of people smuggling has a long history arising from the need for people to escape from danger and persecution. Labor also recognises that those who decide to leave a country in perilous circumstances have the right under the Refugee Convention to determine their means of departure. However, recognising the risk to life of people travelling on unsafe, unseaworthy and overcrowded boats often operated by criminal syndicates, Labor supports measures to reduce such journeys by working with regional neighbours and the UNHCR to eliminate any influence that people smugglers may have over vulnerable protection claimants by addressing people smuggling at its source, in countries of first asylum and transit countries.

252. The most significant source country in South East Asia is Myanmar. Labor recognises the enormous political and economic reforms Myanmar has undertaken, but has been deeply concerned by events that have led to the large-scale movement of Rohingya refugees into neighbouring countries, particularly Bangladesh. Labor in Government would prioritise working with Myanmar in the critical task of protecting human rights for all of its people and ensure our aid and cooperation programs with Myanmar are suitably tailored to do so.

253. In pursuing strong regional arrangements Labor will seek to ensure they provide access to protection in countries of first asylum and transit countries to deter secondary movements of asylum seekers through:

- The developing of capacity to improve accommodation, work rights, access to health and education services and other living standards for asylum seekers;
- Expediting the claims for refugee status by asylum seekers; and
- The seeking of durable solutions.

254. Labor in Government will increase the humanitarian intake of refugees to create an orderly pathway to resettlement in Australia for asylum seekers at risk of people smuggling and provide asylum seekers with an alternative to boat travel to Australia.

255. Noting that Pacific Island nations have particular vulnerability to the effects of climate change, and that these nations have expressed a clear desire for Pacific peoples to continue to live in their own countries where possible, and acknowledging Australia’s unique responsibilities in the Pacific, Labor will:

- Support Pacific Islanders to remain in their homelands as the first response to this challenge;
- Work to assist with intra-country relocations when citizens have to be moved from low-lying areas to higher ground; and
- In the event that in the longer term permanent migration becomes necessary for some Pacific Islanders, work in close consultation with the region to ensure that appropriate settlement is achieved.

256. Labor will continue Australia’s contribution to international aid efforts to reduce the risk of displacement and to alleviate the pressing humanitarian needs of displaced persons.
Australia’s humanitarian intake

257. Those found to be owed Australia’s protection under the Refugee Convention, Complimentary Protection or and other international instruments will be given permanent protection under the Migration Act 1958.

258. Those not found to be owed Australia’s protection under the Refugee Convention, Complimentary Protection or and other international instruments will be promptly returned only after any relevant legal avenues have been exhausted.

259. Labor supports the existing definition of ‘serious harm’ and ‘persecution’ including the current risk threshold of the ‘real chance test’.

260. Labor will support a humanitarian migration program that reasonably responds to international humanitarian crises as they arise.

261. In continuing Australia’s generous humanitarian program, Labor will provide appropriate support for the travel and resettlement of refugees and others requiring Australia’s protection.

262. Labor recognises the important role state, territory and local governments play in supporting refugees to settle in Australia. In recognition of this, Labor will facilitate opportunities for business, community groups, individuals and state, territory and local governments to participate in and support the resettlement of refugees through a community sponsored refugee resettlement program.

263. Labor aspires to progressively increase Australia’s government funded humanitarian intake to 27,000 places per year.

264. Temporary Protection Visas place refugees in an ongoing state of uncertainty and prevent meaningful settlement, creating hardship for refugees and denying Australia the benefit of their contribution.

265. Labor in Government will abolish Temporary Protection Visas and transition eligible refugees onto permanent visa arrangements.

Refugee Assessment

266. Labor believes protection claims made in Australia should be assessed and reviewed on the individual merits with procedural fairness ensuring that our international human rights obligations are met. Accordingly:

- The assessment and review of protection claims will be underpinned by robust, efficient and transparent processes that ensure fair and consistent outcomes, including access to review and independent advice;
- The assessment and review of protection claims must be independent and free from any political or diplomatic interference;
- The processing of protection claims must be streamlined to enhance the quality of decision making, to provide more efficient pathways for prompt resolution of visa status and to alleviate the courts’ immigration case-load burden; and
• The Stone Review process will be maintained as an important mechanism for ensuring the fairness of Australia’s security assessment system; and
• Labor will reinstate the Refugee Review Tribunal and abolish the Immigration Assessment Authority.

267. Labor will require the National Security Legislation Monitor to advise on establishing other mechanisms for:
   • Independent review of the adverse security assessments that ensures procedural fairness while recognising that processes may be required to protect intelligence sources and methodology; and
   • The management of those whose adverse assessment is upheld.

268. Labor will explore options other than indefinite detention, including third country resettlement, to deal with refugees with adverse security assessments in a way that does not jeopardise Australia’s national security interests.

269. Reporting on the ‘90 day rule’, which requires that refugee status determinations are concluded within 90 days from the time of application, has been an important accountability measure in ensuring that the Government operates in a timely way in assessing protection applications.

270. Labor in Government will reintroduce the 90 day rule into the Migration Act.

271. The existing fast track assessment process under the auspices of the Immigration Assessment Authority and the limitation of appeal rights does not provide a fair, thorough and robust assessment process for persons seeking asylum.

272. Labor in Government will abolish this fast track assessment process.


274. Labor in Government will reintroduce the appropriate references to the Refugee Convention into the Migration Act 1958.

275. Protection visa applications made in Australia should be assessed by Australians on Australian territory.

276. Under legislation passed by Labor, complementary protection claims should be considered by way of the protection visa framework.

277. Labor will work to ensure that asylum seekers have access to appropriate, independent, government-funded legal advice while working through their claims for protection.

278. In assessing asylum claims where the fear of persecution arises from a person’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer status, the fact that the country the person is fleeing has criminal penalties for engaging in consensual homosexual sex is sufficient of itself to establish that fear of persecution is well-founded, and any assessment of the asylum seeker’s identity and fear must take account of the very different manifestations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,
intersex and queer identity that other cultures, especially ones profoundly hostile to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people, necessarily engender.

279. Labor will ensure that asylum seekers who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer will be assessed by officers who have expertise and empathy with anti-discrimination principles and human rights law.

Settlement of Refugees

280. Australia’s settlement support services are regarded as the best in the world. Labor is committed to maintaining this and accordingly will ensure that sufficient focus and resources are directed to our settlement services.

281. Labor will provide appropriate English language tuition as an essential settlement service which is critical to the achievement of full social and economic participation of refugees.

282. Labor will seek to improve the availability and integration of Commonwealth-funded migrant and settlement services. Labor will ensure settlement service policies are:

- Informed by advice from the Settlement Services Advisory Council, the Settlement Council of Australia and other key stakeholders and the community; and
- Coordinated in partnership with state and territory governments, local governments, community organisations and service delivery providers.

283. Labor is committed to ensuring that services across government for refugees are culturally responsive, universally accessible and consistent with Labor’s social inclusion agenda. Labor recognises and supports the contribution of community groups in supporting settlement outcomes for refugees.

284. Labor acknowledges the positive effect refugee settlement can have on rural locations and the important role these people play in revitalising rural and regional communities. Labor supports the settlement of suitable humanitarian entrants in regional locations with the support of state, territory and local governments and local communities.

Australia’s Border

285. For the Australian people to have confidence and trust in the integrity of our migration system, Labor will fund and maintain robust border security measures that support the orderly processing of migration to our country and protect our national interest and our national borders.

286. Labor will ensure that asylum seekers who arrive by irregular means will not be punished for their mode of arrival.

287. Labor is united in its commitment to prevent further loss of life at sea of vulnerable children, women and men. Labor will:

- Meet its obligations to the maritime principle of safety of life at sea which requires a response to assist in the rescue at sea of vessels in distress;
- Consider introducing further penalties for serious people smuggling offences; and
• Ensure repatriation of crew members who are proven to be juveniles.

288. To support Australia’s strong border security regime, Labor will maintain:

• An architecture of excised offshore places; and
• The non-statutory processing on Christmas Island of persons who arrive unauthorised at an excised place, except where other arrangements are entered into under bilateral and regional arrangements.

289. Labor will take advice from the UNHCR in relation to any arrangements with third countries to ensure that resources and commitments provide appropriate settlement support services to refugees, including health and welfare services. Labor in Government will prioritise establishing durable and suitable third country resettlement agreements.

290. Labor is committed to ensuring there is a strong, independent voice within government to advocate for the rights, interests and well-being of children seeking asylum within the immigration system, including those in immigration detention. Labor will appoint an officer independent of the Department of Home Affairs, backed by the administrative resources and statutory powers necessary to pursue the best interests of those children, including the power to bring court proceedings on a child’s behalf. This will be done without reducing the Minister’s obligations in relation to unaccompanied non-citizen children.

291. Labor will not pay people smugglers to engage in any form of people smuggling.

Immigration Detention

292. Under Labor’s policies, the presumption will be that unauthorised arrivals who enter for the purpose of seeking asylum will, after appropriate checks, be detained only if the need is established.

293. Labor believes that community-based processing is the most reasonable, humane and cost effective approach for supporting asylum seekers while their claim for protection is assessed.

294. Labor’s humane and risk-based immigration detention policies and practices will be guided by key immigration detention principles, namely:

• Two groups will be subject to mandatory detention –
  o All unauthorised arrivals, for management of health, identity and security risks to the community. Labor will strive to ensure this is for no longer than 90 days; and
  o Unlawful non-citizens who present proven unacceptable risks to the community.
• Detention that is indefinite or otherwise arbitrary is not acceptable and the length and conditions of detention, including the appropriateness of both the accommodation and the services provided, will be subject to regular review;
• Detention in an immigration detention centre is only to be used as a last resort and for the shortest practicable time;
• People in detention will be treated fairly and reasonably within the law;
• People in detention will be provided an appropriate standard of care including the provision of health, mental health and education services; and
• Conditions of detention will ensure the inherent dignity of the human person.

295. Labor supports the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Accordingly, Labor’s humane and risk-based immigration detention policies and practices will include a commitment to ensure that after the necessary health, identity and security checks every humanly practical effort will be taken to remove children and their families from immigration detention centres into alternative suitable arrangements.

296. Labor will not detain, process or resettle lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex refugees or asylum seekers in countries which have criminal laws against any of these communities as it makes these places unsafe environments for all of them.

297. Labor will ensure that all Australian Government involvement in detention facilities it operates or funds is subject to transparent, independent oversight. Provisions for this oversight will be reflected in all contracts with service providers. Labor in Government will use its best endeavours to provide for this oversight in any relevant international agreements, including by enabling ComCare to fulfil its regulatory obligation to investigate all serious matters within Australian-funded onshore immigration detention centres and offshore regional processing centres.

298. Recognising the inequities of the policy of charging immigration detainees a daily maintenance rate while in immigration detention, Labor extinguished such detention debts and will oppose any attempts to reinstate this practice.

299. As soon as the reasons for mandatory detention have ceased every effort must be made to remove asylum seekers from immigration detention centres through community detention or the granting of bridging visas with work rights. Means-tested access to migration assistance, along with access to appropriate social services, will be provided while the merits of an asylum seeker’s application are assessed.

300. The provision of services at immigration detention centres will remain with private sector contractors for the term of the current contracts. In evaluating the future form of detention facility service provision the views of all stakeholders, including the relevant trade unions must be taken into account.

301. Labor will legislate to impose mandatory reporting of child abuse in all onshore immigration detention facilities and offshore regional processing centres and work with all state and territory governments to ensure all unaccompanied minor refugee children are covered by the relevant child protection authorities.

**Sport**

302. Labor will encourage a life-long love of sport and entrench sport and physical activity as an essential part of the preventative health agenda. Labor will support opportunity and access to participate in sport and physical activity for all Australians. Sport is vital to physical and mental health, social inclusion, tourism, education, community capacity building, multicultural affairs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, LGBTI affairs, regional development, trade, foreign affairs, and creating cultural identity.

303. Sport is important for social inclusion. Labor will ensure all levels of sport in Australia are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all culturally and linguistically diverse
Australians. Indigenous participation in sport and active recreation will contribute to Closing the Gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage.

304. Labor condemns sexual violence or derogatory behaviour towards women, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex Australians and supports initiatives to eradicate such behaviour. Labor will ensure all levels of sport in Australia are inclusive of Australians who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, transgender or intersex and will:

- Work with all national sporting bodies to deliver gender and violence education programs and challenging prejudice programs, covering homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, for players, coaches, managers and promoters across all sports and levels; and
- Require effective policies and practices to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status (including women athletes with intersex variations), whether affecting participants in sport or their families, or employees and volunteers in the sector, including by making such action against discrimination a condition of Commonwealth funding.

305. Sport and physical activity is essential for the physical and mental development of children. Labor will help young Australians, including young people in regional areas, to participate in physical activity and to compete in recognised sporting competitions.

306. Labor will support women’s participation in sport – from the grassroots level to elite competition – the promotion of women’s sport and efforts to increase its media coverage and profile in Australia. Labor supports greater leadership and mentoring opportunities for women in sport. Labor will support sport for people with disability and establishing pathways for athletes with a disability. Labor will support sport coaches and officials. Volunteers make an invaluable contribution to all levels of sport.

307. Labor will support improved water safety for all Australians, especially children and other vulnerable groups.

308. Labor will support our elite athletes and improve elite pathways, to keep Australia at the forefront of Olympic, Paralympic and other international sport and deliver success on the international stage. Success for Australians in international sport creates role models for young Australians and encourages participation in grassroots sport. Labor will strengthen Australia’s sporting systems and will ensure the Australian Institute of Sport is a world-class facility for elite athletes.

309. Labor will ensure Australia is at the forefront of efforts against doping and match fixing in sport and will provide leadership in the international effort. In partnership with sport.

310. Labor will address the issue of illicit drug use and binge drinking by athletes and in the wider community.

**Arts and culture**

311. Arts and culture are essential to the good life; while a creative nation is a prosperous nation. All people can participate in arts events and education and express their creativity in an array of different cultural forms. Labor will not only support artists, we will strengthen communities and develop a creative culture so Australians are ready for the challenges and opportunities of life. Australia’s cultural institutions play an important role and Labor will support these institutions to
collect, preserve and make available Australia’s cultural heritage. Arts and culture also contribute to innovation and lift productivity.

312. Labor will build on and further develop Creative Australia, the national cultural policy adopted by Labor in 2013.

313. Arts and creativity play an important part in the daily lives of all Australians, and Labor will integrate arts and culture policy within broader social and economic goals. Australia needs stronger links between creative culture and action to lift productivity, spread innovation and strengthen community cohesion.

314. Labor will:

- Ensure what the government supports — and how this support is provided — reflects the diversity of a 21st century Australia and protects and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people culture;
- Encourage the use of emerging technologies and new ideas in new artworks and the creative industries, and enable more people to enjoy and participate in arts and culture;
- Support excellence and world-class endeavour and strengthen the role for the arts in telling Australian stories here and overseas; and
- Increase and strengthen the capacity of the arts to contribute to our society and economy.

315. Australia needs:

- Greater participation of all Australians in Australia’s cultural life, especially in disadvantaged and marginalised communities;
- An active role for public arts and culture programs in schools, in regional communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and throughout our cities and suburbs;
- The Australia Council funded and operating as an independent and expert grant making body which works closely with arts organisations and individual artists;
- Great national collecting institutions able to tour their collections to be open to all Australians;
- The film and television industry supported and funded, encouraging increased private investment, training further talent and assisting market development through Australian local content requirements on free to air and pay television as well as diverse new technologies;
- Australian stories being created and told by Australian performers and crew in Australian film and television production; and
- Strong local markets supporting the Australian music sector.

316. Labor will improve access to local markets and support for independent and emerging artists building overseas careers.

317. The legal framework of copyright is necessary to ensure the income generated by arts, culture and heritage is fairly distributed between the creators and the institutions and entrepreneurs who make it available. A successful copyright framework will support the education, arts, culture, and heritage of Australia by:
• Developing and maintaining a national identity in the Australian creative industries;
• Protecting the intellectual property rights of content creators;
• Supporting new and emerging Australian creative talent;
• Meeting consumer expectations of speed to market;
• Securing the supply and diversity of Australian-produced intellectual property;
• Promoting competitive, sustainable and innovative Australian creative industries; and
• Promoting exports of Australian creative product to foreign territories.

Animal welfare

318. All animals should be treated humanely. Labor will work to achieve better animal welfare and consistent application and enforcement of animal protection statutes by harmonising relevant federal, state and territory laws and codes. Labor will:

• Establish an independent office of animal welfare;
• Phase out cosmetic testing on animals or on products used in the production of cosmetics; and
• Oppose any ‘Ag-gag’ legislation.

Fair and equal government services

319. Labor embraces new technologies to provide convenient, more efficient and more effective delivery of services through the Express Plus apps and the MyGov portal. MyGov now provides citizens with easier, faster and secure access to Medicare, Centrelink, Child Support, DVA, NDIS, PCEHR and ATO. There are currently 5.8 million active MyGov accounts.

320. Human service delivery should be defined by fair and equal government services for all citizens. The design of government services should place the citizen at the centre.

321. Labor will:

• Ensure that government service delivery is appropriately resourced to deliver quality and timely services to Australian citizens;
• Increase the skills and capacity of staff in all areas of customer engagement;
• Maintain a robust, responsive and contemporary digital information system;
• Maintain a network of accessible service centres throughout Australia capable of providing real time performance information to citizens;
• Pursue a Service Delivery Reform agenda to improve choice and standards in delivery;
• Establish an e-citizen’s Charter promoting transparency, accountability and democratic participation;
• Redirect resources saved by digital service delivery to deliver intensive case management programmes for those in greatest need and to ensure digitally excluded citizens are not disadvantaged;
• Integrate, where practical and appropriate, Department of Human Service digital services with other government digital platforms;

• Develop a departmental e-Government research centre laboratory in line with international best practice from within existing departmental resources. The laboratory will conduct research aimed at continuously improving DHS digital service delivery; and

• Protecting the integrity and privacy of the personal records of Australians using government services by keeping all data and processing work associated with the delivery of government services within the public service.
Chapter 10: Strong democracy and effective government

The contemporary challenge

1. There is a desire to improve how we deliver democracy in Australia as Australia’s population, society and economy are constantly changing. We need modern democratic engagement and service delivery systems that better reflect what Australia looks like today and into the future. As communication technologies improve, and social media platforms increase their reach and sophistication, more content is being provided to more diverse audiences. As technology makes government more open, our public services and elected representatives are expected to become more accountable. As our population ages, services will need to adapt to meet the demand for greater choice and control. These changes present new challenges to our democratic processes, our public services, the community and not-for-profit sector.

2. Our public services and institutions are critical to creating the Australia of the 21st century and beyond. Long term planning to fund the public service is necessary. This will ensure the public service can attract and retain the high skilled employees needed to provide high quality policy solutions and better services.

3. Labor has always invested in our nation’s public services and public institutions to serve the common good, achieve broader social democratic goals and give individuals the support they need to fully participate in their community. Labor recognises a strong public service is essential to support the Government. Labor is committed to a strong, capable and adequately funded public sector. Governments must have more than just great ideas; they must competently deliver them.

4. Labor will strengthen Australian democracy and give Australians a real say in shaping our future. Since before Federation, Labor has supported and respected Australia’s democratic institutions, values and the Westminster Parliamentary tradition from which they are derived.

Labor values

5. Australia’s Constitution and Federation need to be modernised to resolve the funding and administrative problems that prevent government effectively dealing with the challenges of today. Our constitutional framework should recognise our role as an independent nation and our federal funding and administrative structures reflect our status as a nation, not as a number of colonies.

6. Government should be transparent and driven by electoral mandate, not hidden and unaccountable. Government should be free of the vested and sectional interests that undermine the ability of government to act in the national interest, whether through donations to political parties, lobbying activities, or restrictions on freedom of information.

7. Democratic and accountable government demands the highest standards of transparency and probity in the conduct of government and public services. It creates a vital role for our public media and broadcasting in informing and educating our citizens. An effective democracy also requires a healthy electoral process and a flourishing civil society.

8. Elections and voting are essential to democracy. Ensuring all Australians can exercise their democratic franchise regardless of social class, race or background is an enduring Labor value.
9. Government at its best is an enabler: providing the necessary regulation and opportunities for achieving our broader social democratic goals. Labor will shape government so it delivers through collaboration and partnership and encourages deliberative solutions to complex challenges.

10. Labor will uphold and strengthen the role of the Australian Parliament as a critical expression of our democracy. Labor will treat the essential role of Parliament and parliamentarians with dignity and respect.

11. Labor’s tradition of nation building extends beyond our essential economic and physical infrastructure. Labor will invest in public services and institutions, the community sector, our national and community media and broadcasting infrastructure. This is necessary to foster a fair, inclusive and well governed society.

12. Labor believes the Australian Public Service should be efficient, high quality, effective and accountable. The public service should be protected from interference from government, the private sector and political parties. Decisions to contract government services externally must be made on a robust, transparent public interest test.

13. Labor recognises that privatisation and outsourcing can threaten quality public services and acknowledges the detrimental social and economic impacts of wide scale cuts and austerity measures on both jobs and services. Labor is committed to investing in public jobs and services.

14. Labor will foster a culture of integrity within Commonwealth public institutions – a culture of openness and honesty, transparency and accountability, with the highest ethical standards and zero-tolerance for corruption. Labor will enhance public confidence in public administration by establishing a National Integrity Commission, and by continuing to support the Australian National Audit Office, the Australian Public Service Commission, the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority, Parliamentary Estimates, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and other integrity measures which help to create this culture of integrity.

Labor priorities

Open and accountable government


16. Labor will continue to promote transparency and accountability by maintaining and promoting a transparent culture across Australian Government agencies and will continue to support robust mechanisms for Public Interest Disclosure, Freedom of Information and mechanisms for receiving, investigating and prosecuting complaints concerning alleged corruption in public office or administration.

17. Labor is committed to observance of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and will establish a National Integrity Commission while also continuing to develop and implement other measures of and implementation of a national anti-corruption plan.

18. Labor will ensure continue to promote Australia’s international engagement on anti-corruption matters, including through active engagement in the Open Government Partnership.
19. Labor established whistle-blower protection in the public sector when last in office. However, there still needs to be whistle-blower protections across the private sector and Labor commits to deliver this.

20. Labor recognises the importance of corruption prevention and education as integrity building measures in addition to corruption investigation, detection and enforcement. Labor will ensure that all bodies that have special powers to inquire, investigate, and make findings in relation to alleged corruption, are required to have regard to the rules of evidence and natural justice.

21. In office, Labor established a Code of Conduct for Ministers and their staff. Ministers, staff and all members of Parliament should follow clear standards relating to their behaviour, contact with lobbyists, receipt of any gifts, and disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest which may affect them carrying out their public duty.

**Government procurement**

22. Labor will promote a procurement strategy to safeguard and grow skills, investment and jobs, under existing international obligations, so Australian businesses can compete locally and internationally and so we can advance our broader economic objectives. As the biggest purchaser of services, the Federal Government has an important role to play to ensure where possible services are sourced locally.

23. Labor will take into account a range of considerations when determining what constitutes good value for money, not just purchase price. Government agencies will not be forced to choose the cheapest supplier whether at home or abroad when that choice would cost taxpayers more in the long run because the products or services on offer are inferior in quality or have high ongoing costs. Agencies will also not be forced to choose the cheapest supplier when this would have detrimental social or environmental effects. Agencies will be required to consider all direct and indirect benefits and costs over the whole life of each product and service, including jobs, skills and investment, along with the performance history of each prospective supplier (including industrial relations, environmental and, where appropriate, community engagement).

24. Labor will ensure industries that derive their business and profits from the Australian community contribute economically and socially into the future.

25. Labor will act to ensure that all Federal Government agencies and associated supply chain uphold the United Nations Free and Equal Global Business Standards of respecting and defending human rights, eliminating discrimination and supporting their LGBTIQ staff.

26. Labor will:
   - Be a model purchaser and deal with people who are fair employers (compliant with industrial legislation, Awards and Agreements, Workplace Health and Safety standards, freedom of association including collective bargaining rights, and superannuation and workers compensation legislation) throughout the life of the contract;
   - Give preference to companies that provide sustainable (i.e. over the life of the contract) employment opportunities for local workers; and
   - Give preference to organisations that ensure the equal and fair treatment of their LGBTIQ employees through fostering positive workplace cultures that celebrate diversity and actively prevent discrimination against LGBTI employees, customers, suppliers and distributors.
27. Labor recognises the importance of both value for money and compliance with government policy and the Fair Work Act in procurement processes. This is why the previous Labor Government introduced the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines requiring that suppliers comply with workplace relations laws.

28. Labor is committed to ensuring that Government procurement decisions are based on ethical as well as value for money considerations and commits to the reintroduction of the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, the Fair Work Principles and the Commonwealth Cleaning Services Guidelines.

29. Labor will use existing procurement mechanisms such as multi-user lists and coordinated procurement, or if necessary introduce a pre-qualification system, to require prospective tenderers to demonstrate their compliance as a condition of the ability to tender. Labor’s changes to the FMA Regulations to allow the issuing of the Commonwealth Cleaning Services Guidelines is an example of the government acting where there is demonstrated non-compliance with the Fair Work Principles in particular sectors. To ensure compliance, this process needs to be transparent, and be subject to oversight by a tripartite body where appropriate. The previous Labor Government established the Productivity Consultative Committee which included representatives of unions, business and the government to advise on areas of concern.

30. Labor will continue Australian Industry Participation Plans for public and private procurement. Australia needs a more diversified economy that is not entirely dependent on commodity exports, sustaining high-skill, high-wage jobs, so we need to be clever in our purchasing. This is true of private purchases and even more for government procurement, because governments’ buying power extends throughout the economy. Labor will ensure Australian Industry Participation Plans are part of the project development stage and not an afterthought.

31. Direct government procurement represents only a proportion of the money the Australian government expends each year. Labor will also examine extending procurement policies (including those that promote good workplace relations outcomes and Australian industry participation) to other areas of expenditure including grants and other funding. Labor will investigate ratifying ILO Convention 94, on the payment of market wages in government procurement, as an additional measure.

32. To further enhance transparency, Labor will ensure agencies keep records of, and make available on request, the details of any sub-contractor engaged by a contractor in respect of a Commonwealth contract for procurement. Labor is committed to the vital role of the public service in implementing procurement transparency and to ensuring recipients of public funding aren’t prevented from public advocacy or the voicing of concerns.

33. Labor is committed to improving opportunities for Australian companies to compete for business through the Procurement Coordinator it established. The Procurement Coordinator will review and advise on practices across government; handle and review complaints; aggregate procurement information and submit an annual report to the government.

34. Labor will use procurement to support the growth of the Indigenous business sector and will urge states and territories to implement similar reforms to their procurement policies.
35. Labor will:
   - Ensure government procurement delivers world-class public services, through fair and open procurement processes free of corruption and discrimination;
   - Ensure that a robust objective public interest test occurs in all cases. The test must take into account economic, social and environmental outcomes, including access to and quality of services, impact on regional areas and on local jobs, privacy provisions, risks and consequences, the protection of workers’ wages and conditions, and the costs and benefits to the public; and
   - Lead on sustainability and ethical procurement practices, including requiring all companies that tender for Government contracts in the TCF industry hold Ethical Clothing Australia accreditation.

36. In its role as a major purchaser of goods and services, government can play a role in fostering Australia’s manufacturing, service and information industries, particularly for emerging industries or companies. For goods or services to be ethically sourced, suppliers must be good corporate citizens who comply with the law in all matters, most notably laws regarding taxation, trade practices, corporations, industrial relations, consumer affairs, environment and immigration.

37. Suppliers are encouraged to support social and community outcomes including efforts to close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s disadvantage, gender equality, supporting people with a disability, gender equality, ensuring the equal and fair treatment of LGBTIQ employees and assisting the long term unemployed to find work.

38. Labor will require:
   - Commonwealth procurement rules and codes to reflect government policy on ethical procurement;
   - Principal suppliers to the Commonwealth to comply with procurement policies by requiring all sub-contractors involved in the principal’s supply chain to the Commonwealth to comply with all materially relevant laws;
   - Agencies not enter into contracts with suppliers who have had a judicial decision against them (not including decisions under appeal) relating to employee entitlements and have not paid the claim; and
   - Agencies seek to confirm a tenderer has no such unsettled judgements through a declaration on the matter from all tenderers.

39. Labor will ensure small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are able to engage in fair competition for government business. Labor will require government officials undertaking procurement to ensure procurement methods do not unfairly discriminate against small and medium enterprises.

40. Labor recognises the crucial role SMEs play in innovation-based jobs and economic growth. Therefore, Labor in government will preference Australian-based SMEs for procurement contracts, noting that such a policy will support Australian jobs and business and is consistent with Australia’s trade obligations.

41. Labor will better coordinate Commonwealth procurement and where it is sensible to do so, consider options to use model terms and conditions to help business and contractors.
A dynamic, effective and modern public sector

42. Crucial to any good government is a professional bureaucracy. We need to refocus the Australian Public Service on what’s most important – quality services for Australians, sound advice to elected representatives, and investing taxpayers’ money in a careful and considered way.

43. The Australian Public Service and the wider public sector have a crucial role to play in shaping the future of our nation. Public services will be properly funded to deliver quality public policy and services, foster innovation, achieve best practice and create quality jobs.

44. The Australian Public Service should be:

- Professional and apolitical;
- Strong, independent and well-resourced;
- Committed to equality and social cohesion as well as economic efficiency;
- Allowed and encouraged to provide frank and fearless advice;
- Accountable for meeting high standards of service delivery;
- Recruited from the brightest and best in the Australian community;
- A model employer including in consultation, internal communication, trade union engagement, and the conditions of employment and opportunities for advancement for its staff, including through continuous education and lifelong learning;
- Subject to democratic oversight through parliament and relevant bodies including the Auditor-General, the Australian National Audit Office, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Australian Public Service Commission;
- Subject to independent administrative review of its actions; and
- A leader in environmental best practice.

45. Labor has always been a strong advocate and protector of the professionalism and integrity of the public service. We will work with the public service and unions to ensure the public service is efficient, effective and responsive to the changing requirements of the Australian people.

Australians want:

- A career public service without partisanship;
- Public service employment principals that are fair and equal;
- A limit on and need for public scrutiny of senior public service remuneration;
- An ethos of public service;
- Relationships between the public service and elected representatives should be respectful and constructive;
- An effective and balanced approach to decentralisation and employment in the public sector can promote jobs in the regions. It should not undermine job security for existing officials; and
- Tangible outcomes where public money is expended.

46. Labor will ensure these principles are reflected in public service industrial relations. Labor will:
• Support a single, unified Australian Public Service by addressing pay inequities through an agreed mechanism to achieve equal pay for work of equal value across the APS;
• Ensure best practice bargaining arrangements including genuine negotiation over pay and conditions, where core APS-wide terms and conditions are negotiated in good faith at a service-wide level and remaining conditions negotiated at an agency level;
• Ensure genuine, good faith consultation on all matters affecting employees in the workplace;
• Facilitate support for the role of trade unions and delegates in the workplace;
• Recognise employees’ rights to access union representation at work at appropriate locations and times in the workplace;
• Take further active steps to deliver meaningful career development for people with a disability employed in the Australian Public Service;
• Establish and maintain agency funding levels commensurate with service delivery and policy development requirements;
• Ensure service-wide productivities are recognised as efficiency gains by Australian Public Service agencies and that these gains are shared between government, employees and the community;
• Ensure secure, comprehensive, service-wide standards and classifications;
• Ensure secure superannuation arrangements in industrial instruments. Labor will maintain at least 15.4 per cent employer contribution to the superannuation of federal government employees, regardless of choice of fund;
• Emphasise training and career development;
• Enable public servants to balance work and family responsibilities;
• Ensure appeal and review rights;
• Encourage direct employment and limiting hiring on a contract basis and the use of labour hire;
• Enable employment mobility across the whole of the public service;
• Provide adequate agency funding across the whole of the APS;
• Provide centrally and fully fund measures to address pay inequities in low-paying public sector agencies with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff;
• Take further active steps to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in the APS and ensuring they have access to meaningful career development and regularly reviewing the effectiveness of those measures in achieving that goal;
• Increase the proportion of people with a disability employed in the APS, ensuring they have access to meaningful career development and regularly reviewing the effectiveness of those measures in achieving that goal; and
• Ensure contracting is not used as a vehicle to cut wages and working conditions for public sector employees.

47. Labor recognises that the 'efficiency dividend' (ED) is no longer an effective public policy measure for generating efficiencies. The ED has had a damaging effect on public sector jobs, service delivery and policy capacity. Labor will, working with trade unions and employees, take meaningful steps to
replace the ED by preferencing genuine targeted efficiencies which will allow Australian Public Service agencies to effectively deliver government services and develop public policy.

48. Too much taxpayer money is being wasted on contractors, consultants and labour hire firms to do some of the work which public servants can, in some cases, do at lower cost. There is no use pursuing arbitrary headcount caps if they build higher contracting costs into the budget and deliver inferior outcomes.

49. Labor recognises the importance of ensuring agency and portfolio reform delivers better services and policy capability. Portfolio savings measures, moves towards e-gov and digital transformation must not undermine service quality, accessibility and public sector capability. This requires ensuring that transformation is delivering real efficiencies before savings take effect.

50. Labor will push for more transparent and regular reporting of remuneration paid to senior executives appointed to Government Business Enterprises and across the Commonwealth.

Workers’ rights

51. Inequality in Australia is growing and is a threat to a fair and inclusive society.

52. Working people have to be able to participate in the democratic process, this is necessary to supporting Australia’s social cohesion.

53. In this context, Labor recommits itself to policy that delivers the principles outlined in Article 2 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights:

- Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable condition of work and to protection against unemployment.
- Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity and supplemented if necessary by other means of social protection.
- Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

54. Labor will coordinate and promote policy development and implementation, with adequate funding, to ensure government services advance these policy aspirations in practice.

55. Labor will work to ensure workers and unions have a strong role to play in policy development and Government decision-making processes.

56. Labor will support the work of the International Labour Organisation, particularly within our region to improve international labour standards and champion respect for internationally respected workplace rights.

Progressing constitutional reform

57. Australia needs constitutional reform to modernise our democratic structures and make our public administration more effective, efficient and prepared to deal with the challenges of the future. First
and foremost, our Constitution should reflect Australia’s status as a parliamentary democracy and an independent nation.

58. Labor supports the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution. The recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution is an important step towards a more reconciled nation based on strong relationships and mutual respect. Labor supports changes to reflect the unique and special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our nation. Labor is committed to developing a concrete proposition for constitutional recognition in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first step to building broader public support for change.

59. Modernising our Constitution also entails a transition to an Australian Republic, with an Australian Head of State, who can fully represent our traditions, values and aspirations as a nation. Labor is committed to holding a referendum to decide whether Australia should become a republic with an Australian Head of State. If the result is yes, Labor will consult with the Australian people, other political parties and the states and territories as to the form the Republic should take. A member of the Labor ministry will promote community debate about the advantages and disadvantages of the various republican models. When a preference has emerged Labor will initiate an appropriate secondary referendum under section 128 of the Constitution.

60. Constitutional reform should be underpinned by popular ownership of the reform agenda, broad political support and effective community education. Constitutional reform should:

- Entrench the principle of one vote, one value for all elections, to ensure equal participation for all regardless of place of residence;
- Allow simultaneous, fixed four-year terms for the House of Representatives and the Senate;
- Prevent the Senate rejecting, deferring or blocking appropriation bills;
- Remove the barrier on election to parliament of a person holding an office of profit under the Crown, provided that office is relinquished on election not nomination;
- Allow all Australian citizens to contest Commonwealth elections;
- Remove racially discriminatory provisions from the Constitution, in particular by amending or removing section 25 and section 51(xxvi) to ensure they cannot be used to discriminate against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people Australians;
- Make clear the capacity of the Commonwealth and the states and territories to work together using the full range of cooperative schemes to achieve harmonised laws and national enforcement regimes; and
- Recognise the role of local government.

61. Labor will use the Council of Australian Governments process to modernise our Federation and improve the delivery of important services in areas like health, education, transport, water, emergency services and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reforming electoral law

62. Labor is committed to the fair, open and transparent operation of our electoral system and to the essential democratic principle that every person should have the right to full participation in it.
63. Labor will ensure all Australians, particularly first-time voters, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people in remote locations and young people, are not excluded from the electoral system.

64. Labor will improve the integrity of the electoral system and, most urgently, restore transparency, openness and accountability to the funding and disclosure regime creating greater transparency and restoring faith in the democratic system.

65. Labor will:

- Ensure the security and integrity of the Australian electoral process is protected from interference from home and abroad;
- Encourage public debate about reform of our electoral laws including enrolment and electoral participation;
- Ensure disadvantaged groups are not excluded from the democratic process;
- Labor will ensure the capacity of Australians to participate in the electoral system is undiminished maximising opportunities for enrolment and involvement in our electoral process for all Australians;
- Remain committed to constitutional reform to allow simultaneous, fixed four-year terms for the House of Representatives and the Senate;
- Continue to build confidence in the system by effectively investigating and reporting all claims of electoral malpractice;
- Commit to advance the cause of making electoral enrolment and voting as quick, simple and flexible as possible, seeking to maximise the franchise consistent with maintaining the integrity of the system;
- Reduce the donation disclosure limit from the current level of $13,200 (indexed to inflation) to a fixed $1000;
- Prohibit the receipt of foreign donations;
- Ban ‘donation splitting’ where donations are spread between different branches of political parties and associated entities to avoid disclosure obligations;
- Ban the receipt of anonymous donations above $50;
- Link public funding to campaign expenditure;
- Introduce new offences and increased penalties for abuses of the political donation disclosure regime;
- Work to develop a system of real time reporting of donations and contributions supported by an administrative funding model;
- Work to harmonise and align disclosure laws across all state and territory jurisdictions, to be reported to and by the Commonwealth; and
- Seek to limit the level of federal campaign expenditure, through the introduction of spending caps.

66. Labor recognises the important role of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) in ensuring the integrity of the electoral system. Labor will ensure the AEC’s independence is respected and protected. Labor will provide the Commission with the appropriate funding needed to meet its
responsibilities. Labor work towards the highly desirable goal of a single national electoral roll capable of serving the needs of states and territories funded and maintained by the AEC.

Ensuring women’s equal place in a stronger democracy

67. Labor will promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes.

68. Labor will promote and support women’s leadership in Australia’s parliaments, governments, senior levels in the private sectors and communities throughout Australia. Labor recognises that the impact of legislation and the allocation of public resources are not always gender neutral and can exacerbate existing inequality. Labor will apply sophisticated gender policy advice and analysis to policy development of the government by:

- Introducing gender responsive budgeting practices, including a Womens Budget Statement;
- Undertaking gender impact assessment on all new policy development; and
- Provide an annual update to Parliament to report on gender equality targets and indicators.

69. Labor will work to ensure equality for women by:

- Introducing a national Gender Equality Strategy to guide whole of government efforts to achieve gender equality;
- Maintaining an active role in international forums to promote the rights of women including institutions formed under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Ensuring the Sex Discrimination Act and the powers of the Commissioner are adequately protecting women against discrimination on the basis of gender and family responsibility and that the Sex Discrimination Commissioner is adequately resourced to do so;
- Supporting women’s representative organisations to participate in policy development;
- Applying sophisticated gender policy advice and analysis to policy development of the government;
- Supporting and promoting womens leaders in all facets of Australian society through a range of regulatory and educative measures;
- Supporting the greater representation of women in all of Australia’s parliaments and local councils;
- Promoting diversity in corporate Australia, including in appointments to boards and at the executive level;
- Adopting a 50 per cent gender diversity target for government boards to be achieved within the first term of a Labor government and 40 per cent for womens representation in Chair and Deputy Chair positions on government boards by 2025; and
- Recognising the particular issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disability, rural women, elderly women, young women, lesbians, bisexual women, trans women, women of
intersex variation, gender diverse or intersex people, and ensuring government policies and programs are funded, accessible and appropriate to their needs.

70. Labor will require as a condition of all federal grants and other financial support to organisations that they perform their contracts in accordance with state, territory and national anti-discrimination laws and fulfil relevant reporting requirements to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

71. Labor will require the public service to be model gender equitable employment practices, including by adopting a target of 50 per cent representation of women in senior public service roles by 2025.

LGBTIQ place in a stronger democracy

72. Australia should be a society that embraces diversity. Labor will support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer Australians and ensure they are safe, valued and respected.

73. Labor recognises that the Yogyakarta Principles - including the 2015 amendments 'plus 10' - application of International Human Rights Law in relation to sexual orientation and gender diversity provide a substantial guide to government in understanding Australia’s human rights obligations to LGBTIQ Australians and their families.

74. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer Australians and their communities contribute much to Australian society.

75. Labor will work with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer Australians and representative groups to:

- Expand integrated advice and support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer Australians, and ensure their engagement in the policy development of government;
- Support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer Australians with particular needs, such as those who are young, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those living in rural, regional and remote Australia;
- Strengthen laws and expand programs against discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex and queer status; and
- Support and engage with communities and stakeholders to provide input into government decision-making.

76. Labor recognises that statistical information about the Australian LGBTIQ community is important for service and policy planning, and also recognises the importance of collecting information in a way that respects privacy, does not inadvertently place people at risk, and does not lead to unintended consequences. Labor will work with expert statisticians within the ABS to ensure statistics are collected sensitively and to the extent appropriate to assist in informing service and policy planning.

77. Labor will strengthen support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer Australians by integrating advice and support services and ensuring they are engaged in the policy development of government.
78. Labor condemns sexual violence, or any derogatory behaviour and harassment towards all people. Labor recognises the harm such actions cause and will pursue policies to prevent discrimination.

79. Labor will:

- Coordinate and promote policy development and implementation, with adequate funding, to ensure government services advance these policy aspirations in practice;
- Strengthen partnerships between the federal government and LGBTI community groups in the delivery of support services for LGBTIQ Australians and their families;
- Investigate establishing a National Gender Centre for support and advocacy for transgender and intersex Australians, which could have an education and training role to promote awareness about transgender and intersex issues to the wider public;
- Support national intersex-led organisations to provide support to intersex persons and their families, and advocate on intersex issues;
- Review documentation requirements, including passports and birth certificates, as they affect transgender and intersex people, to facilitate their equal enjoyment of human rights without discrimination and to promote identification options beyond binary male / female;
- Ensure proportionality in the use of sex and gender markers on official documents so that any presence of such markers fulfils a genuine and proportionate need; and
- Ensure that all people with intersex variations are able to exercise autonomy regarding sex/gender markers, and obtain identification options that match their sex characteristics and/or gender identities, as preferred.

80. Labor will build upon previous legal achievements to implement equality in practice, so every area of policy is inclusive of the needs and interests of all Australians—including lesbians and gay men, and bisexual, transgender and intersex people—without discrimination.

81. Labor will:

- Ensure the impact on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people is considered in developing bills or regulations;
- Respond to the emerging issue of homelessness of trans people, and work to make culturally-appropriate and safe housing available;
- Ensure lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer Australians enjoy equality before the law, and have access to every state institution without discrimination; and
- Establish a Commissioner for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status issues, to work across government and the private sector to reduce discrimination;

82. Labor acknowledges the Darlington Statement as a guide to intersex policy responses.

83. Labor opposes the practice of so-called conversion and reparative therapies on LGBTIQ+ people and seek to criminalise these practices.
Ensuring a voice for young Australians

84. Labor recognises that the voice of young Australians is not adequately represented in the political process and acknowledges that the long-term effects of legislative decisions will be felt most heavily by young Australians.

85. Labor will promote the involvement of young Australians in decision-making processes and encourage the candidacy of young people across all levels of government.

86. Labor will ensure a national voice for young Australia by appointing a Minister for Youth.

87. Labor will establish a National Youth Advisory Body to ensure the interests of young Australians are represented at the highest levels of government, and to assist the Minister for Youth.

88. Labor is the party for young Australians and we should show it. Within six weeks of a federal election Labor will produce materials highlighting Labor’s policy agenda for young Australians.

89. Labor will fight age-based wage discrimination, acknowledging that equal work deserves equal pay.

Australian media

90. The media, are experiencing major change, driven by digitisation, convergence of technology and globalisation of communications and information technologies.

91. Labor will ensure Australia has the regulatory processes and industry structures to support a strong, healthy, responsible and independent media operating in the public interest.

92. Labor supports the National Classification Code to classify content against the standards of morality, decency and propriety accepted by reasonable adults, without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

93. Labor will pursue policies to ensure Australians have a diverse range of information and opinion in Australia’s media. Labor is committed to appropriate Australian content quotas. Labor will ensure advertising is properly regulated and reflects community standards.

94. Labor will ensure Australians will continue to enjoy coverage of premium sporting events on free-to-air television.

95. Labor will adequately resource the Australian Communications and Media Authority and give it sufficient regulatory powers to maintain appropriate community standards.

96. Labor will ensure local captioning in the broadcasting sector to ensure all Australians are able to enjoy television content.

National and community broadcasting

97. Labor recognises that national and community broadcasting provide free-to-receive broadcasting services in the public interest, promote a vibrant Australian culture, and support social and cultural inclusion objectives.
98. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), including National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Television (NITV), are among Australia’s most important public institutions. Labor will properly fund and support Australia’s public broadcasters, to enable them to provide Australians with high quality broadcasting and digital media services, free from political and commercial interference.

99. Labor is committed to the independence of the ABC and the SBS. The ABC and SBS should be maintained as independent and comprehensive national public broadcasters, catering for a diversity of interests in the Australian community.

100. The SBS provides a unique national broadcasting service promoting multicultural Australia, and provides services to Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds which are not delivered by the ABC or the commercial broadcasting sector.

101. Labor will:

- Ensure public broadcasters cater to the needs of urban, regional and rural Australia, providing coverage of local news, current affairs and community activities, including production capacity in regions; provide programs and services relevant to young Australians; produce high levels of quality and distinctive local content; work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to provide services and programs relevant to them and their communities; provide comprehensive coverage of a broad range of sporting and artistic activities;
- Ensure ABC and SBS board members and chairpersons are appointed on merit and ensure a staff-elected commissioner position on the ABC board; and
- Support and promote Australia’s external broadcasters in radio, television and digital platforms, which encourage awareness of Australian values around the world and build closer ties in our region.

102. Labor will keep the ban on ABC advertising and sponsorship in place. Labor will not extend the current advertising quotas on SBS and will ensure SBS remains a properly publicly funded broadcaster.

103. Labor will provide adequate triennial funding to the ABC and SBS so they can deliver quality public broadcasting services.

104. Labor will ensure the national broadcasters are able to exploit the potential of new technology to deliver attractive and innovative content.

105. Labor regards community broadcasting, which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, radio for the print handicapped, LGBTIQ-focused, faith-based, and ethnic and multicultural broadcasting, as an essential component of Australian broadcasting meeting the needs of many diverse communities, and will continue to encourage its growth and development.

106. Labor believes community broadcasting’s access to multiple distribution platforms must be provided on a basis of parity with the national and commercial broadcasting sectors wherever it is practical to achieve; available on a free-to-receive basis; and affordable to community broadcasters.
107. Labor is committed to adequate funding being provided to ensure the effective ongoing operation and development of community broadcasting.

**Vibrant community and not-for-profit sectors**

108. Over the past generation, civic life in Australia has been under threat. Membership of religious organisations, unions and many other community groups has waned. On many measures, Australia has become more disconnected. Australia needs to build stronger community supports and increase social capital. This requires strong, vibrant, independent and innovative community and not-for-profit sectors.

109. Not-for-profit organisations contribute to good public policy, enrich our culture, protect our environment and promote health and wellbeing. Australian charities advocate on behalf of Australian communities including marginalised groups. The work of not-for-profit organisations complements the role of the public sector in the provision of essential services to the community; it should not duplicate or compete with them. The relationship between not-for-profits and the government should be one of partnership and respect.

110. Since its creation, the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission (ACNC) has operated efficiently and effectively, helping charities, donors and taxpayers. Labor supports the work of the ACNC to cut the paperwork burden on charities, and engage with states and territories to reduce duplicate reporting.

111. Labor will ensure the ACNC has the resources and the powers to regulate charities and not-for-profits in line with the expectations of the public and the needs of the sector.

112. Labor will remove inconsistencies and overlaps in the reporting obligations of charities. Labor will develop a single national Associations Act, a consistent national approach to fundraising and other relevant regulatory requirements.

**Australia Post**

113. Australia Post is a critical part of Australian Infrastructure, delivering letters, parcels and services that are critical to Australian Communities and Businesses;

114. Labor will maintain Australia Post in full public ownership.

115. Labor will maintain Australia Post as the sole carrier of the standard-size, letter service and the sole issuer of postage stamps. Flat-rate postal charging arrangements will be protected to ensure universal, equitable to all Australians, metropolitan and regional.

116. Labor will encourage the growth of Australia Post’s services and ensure that Australia Post’s community service obligations provide equitable access to a full range of postal services for all Australians.

117. Labor commits to ensuring community service obligations meet the needs of the Australian people, especially the standard of service on delivery of mail, and commits to have ACCC price over-sight on all letter delivery. Australia Post should maintain appropriate coverage of post office and post box outlets throughout Australia. Labor will ensure that the ownership mix between corporate retail outlets, franchisees and licensed post office’s is maintained.
118. Labor understands that Postal Services are the lifeblood of many rural and regional communities. Labor will work to maintain and strengthen the service offering of Australia Post in rural and regional Australia through Post Offices, including continually improving Australia Post’s service delivery capabilities, and its digital services.

119. Australia Post employs thousands of Australians. Labor will work to protect the jobs of these workers, encourage Australia Post towards direct full time employment rather than contract work, and endeavour to ensure that contractors will not be used to undermine the current entitlements of direct employees.

**Free speech**

120. All Australians have the right to exercise their freedom of speech in a manner that respects the individual and collective rights enjoyed by other Australians and allows others to live free from violence, the fear of violence or the threat of violence.

121. Australia’s anti-vilification laws strike an appropriate balance between the right to free speech and protection from the harm of hate speech. Labor has successfully stood and will continue to stand with the community against attempts to weaken the longstanding protections against racial hate speech in the Racial Discrimination Act.

122. Homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and intersexphobic harassment by the written or spoken word causes actual harm, not simple mere offence, to people who have suffered discrimination and prejudice, and causes particular harm to young same-sex attracted, or gender-questioning and intersex people, and considers such harmful harassment is an unacceptable abuse of the responsibilities that come with freedom of speech and must be subject to effective sanctions. Labor will consider whether current anti-discrimination law provides such effective sanctions.

123. Uniform national defamation laws should provide a proper balance between freedom of expression, freedom of the press, public debate and the protection of the reputation of others. Whistle-blower protection laws, national shield laws to protect journalists, and harmonisation of shield laws nationally, are important protections for free speech.

124. Adults should be free to read, hear and see what they wish in private and in public, subject to adequate protection against persons being exposed to unsolicited material offensive to them and preventing conduct exploiting, or detrimental to the rights of others, particularly women and children. The portrayal of violence and inappropriate content in all forms of media is a matter of concern. Labor will ensure appropriate controls that reflect community standards are in place to classify and protect all Australians, particularly children and young people.

**Freedom of Information**

125. Freedom of Information (FOI) laws are essential to transparent and accountable government.

126. Labor will promote transparency and accountability by maintaining and promoting a pro-disclosure culture across Australian Government agencies.

127. Labor will:
   - Preserve and strengthen the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner; and
• Review the operation of Freedom of Information and pursue further reforms if necessary.

128. Labor is committed to the principles of open government. Labor will to fully participate in the Open Government Partnership and work to strengthen open government principles in the culture and practices of the Australian Public Service.

Privacy

129. An individual’s right to privacy is a fundamental political, civil and human right must be protected. Government should provide a strong regulatory framework to protect people’s right to privacy and ensure the security of their personal information, whether held in the public sector or the private sector.

130. Many services relied on by Australian consumers require them to provide very personal information about themselves to secure those services including employment details, income levels, credit/financial history and circumstances as well as family links.

131. Labor is committed to the principle that Australians retain ownership of their personal information and it is essential that Australians can have confidence that their information is securely stored and accessed and in ways that enshrine their rights as they exist under Australian law.

132. Labor in Government in 2012 substantially updated the Privacy Act 1988 to among other things adopt a risk-based approach to protecting personal information in their possession from misuse, interference or loss, as well as unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

133. Labor is committed to maintaining these objectives in government to ensure that all personal data including health, financial and employment details are equally protected.

134. Labor acknowledges particular community concerns about the offshore storage and access of their personal data. In Government, Labor will continue to review the adequacy of offshore data storage and privacy laws.

135. Labor will continue to work to ensure that the types of agencies with access to the data and purposes for which the data is available are appropriate. We will ensure that the current warrants scheme and the threshold conditions on warrantless access are appropriate and that freedom of the press is protected.
Chapter 11: Australia's place in a disrupted world

The contemporary challenge

1. The current global context is one characterised by disruption – one in which the magnitude and nature of change influences Australia’s strategic, economic and foreign policy interests.

2. This disruption is principally driven by changes in the balance of economic and strategic power, globally and in our region, economic and social inequality, the rise of nationalism and challenges to the liberal rules-based order which has characterised the post war period.

3. In addition, we are confronted by the rise of rogue states and non-state actors, terrorism, refugee flows, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the emergence of additional states with nuclear or improved nuclear weapons, and climate change.

Labor values

4. Australia is a strong and independent nation, an enduring ally, a constructive regional partner and a good international citizen.

5. Australia’s place in the world is defined by our identity and power, and our foreign policy is motivated by our values and driven by our national interests.

6. Australia’s national interests are:
   - The security of the nation and its people;
   - The economic prosperity of the nation and its people;
   - A stable and co-operative strategic system in our region anchored in the rule of law; and
   - Constructive internationalism.

7. Labor believes the pursuit of these national interests necessarily encompasses the expression of Australian values. We deal with the world as it is but we seek to change it for the better.

8. The foundation of the values Australians adhere to is the intrinsic worth and dignity of each individual. We support democracy and democratic practices, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

9. Labor will continue to advance Australian interests and values within the longstanding architecture of Australian foreign policy: our alliance with the United States, our region and multilateralism.

Labor priorities

The security of the nation and its people

10. The first responsibility of an Australian government is to protect the security of the Australian people and the integrity of Australian territory. This imperative is central to Labor’s foreign, defence and national security policies.
11. Labor recognises that newly competitive power relationships are challenging traditional security settings and the rules-based global order. Unresolved territorial disputes and pre-emptive claims to oceanic features give rise to potential flashpoints in our region. Growing military capability in Asia is increasing the potential for regional conflicts. The rise of extremists in the Middle East and Africa, and the export to our region of their perverse ideology, threatens Australia’s and the region’s security and potential prosperity.

12. Labor also recognises that national security imperative encompasses the safeguarding of Australia’s sovereignty. Australia’s democracy and democratic institutions and democratic practices, including the rule of law and freedom of expression, are core to our national interests.

**Cyber-security**

13. Cybersecurity threats to national security, businesses, utilities, individuals, and our political system are another challenge. Labor will ensure that national response capabilities to address cyber-attacks will remain up to date, and our institutional and legal arrangements are flexible and proactive in dealing with fast evolving threats, including those driven by rapid technological change.

**The challenge of terrorism**

14. The growing presence of terrorism in the international arena and threats within our borders pose serious and complex security challenges.

15. Labor will support an integrated, comprehensive regional strategy, including cooperation with and capacity building for local security forces. To be effective, a comprehensive strategy against terrorism must deliver the resolve and operational capabilities to degrade and defeat terrorists and their networks before they present a threat to Australia or cause Australia harm, while promoting justice, the rule of law, genuine peace and inclusive development to counter terrorist narratives. In particular, we must work with our regional neighbours to disrupt the efforts of terrorist organisations to recruit within the region. Australia’s military and security assistance should promote these objectives. Labor will support greater economic, employment and educational incentives for young people across the region.

**Extremism**

16. The emergence and rising global influence of extremist non-state actors is a challenge for all nations, including Australia. Other non-state actors, especially civil society organisations, remain important agents for positive change through advocacy, institutional strengthening and citizen engagement.

17. Labor will address constructively and comprehensively the global and domestic security challenges to the safety and freedom Australians enjoy. Labor will wherever possible seek a bipartisan approach to Australia’s security arrangements – this has been a hallmark of our approach in Opposition, and it will continue in Government. Labor will uphold the rights and freedoms that define us as a democratic nation, living under the rule of law.

18. Labor will pursue new approaches to protect the safety of all Australians and defend our nation’s security. Australians expect transparency and accountability in security and enforcement activities to the greatest extent possible. Labor will always work to ensure that our national security laws include these democratic safeguards, while maintaining the necessary protections required to
ensure successful security and intelligence operations, and protect the lives of those who carry them out.

19. Strong international institutional arrangements should give greater effect to international responses to security threats. Labor will respect and uphold these arrangements. Australia should work directly with regional institutions to strengthen their capacity to deal with challenges facing the region, and ultimately Australia.

20. Labor will build effective partnerships with other countries to respond to common security challenges, including continuing close and deep engagement with the US as our most important security ally, with New Zealand, the UK and Canada as critical traditional partners, and further strengthen our ties with our Asian and other regional neighbours who are vital in ensuring a safe and secure region for us all. Labor will also look to build on cooperative security arrangements with our partners more broadly in Europe and the Middle East.

21. The safety and security of Australians and our economic and social wellbeing requires more than addressing the threat of war, terrorism and the existence of weapons of mass destruction. It also demands climate change action, natural disaster management, action against serious and organised crime including cyber and transnational crime and strong border control.

22. Labor will ensure our police and national security agencies have the powers and resources they need to keep our nation secure and our people safe. Labor will support Australian diplomatic, development and strategic capability to respond effectively to the influence of non-state actors on domestic, regional and global outcomes.

23. As the powers and resources provided to our security agencies increase, so too must the oversight of the Australian Intelligence Community. Labor will enhance existing mechanisms to ensure parliamentary and statutory oversight of intelligence agencies is commensurate with their responsibilities and powers.

Nuclear Disarmament

24. Eliminating nuclear weapons is a humanitarian imperative. Labor has a proud history of advancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation including the Canberra Commission in 1995 and the Rudd Government establishing the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND). A Labor Government will build upon this legacy.

25. Labor will act with urgency and determination to rid the world of nuclear weapons, ensuring Australia plays a constructive role to pursue the aim of nuclear weapon free world.

26. Labor supports strong measures, including sanctions, taken by the international community to force rogue nations, such as North Korea, to comply with international demands to cease development of weapons of mass destruction, come to the negotiating table and agree to a program of denuclearisation. A Labor Government will stand resolutely with our allies in preventing unacceptable threats to our region and to the global community.

27. Civil society and non government organisations in Australia and internationally who form the global movement to secure a ban on nuclear weapons do important work. Labor applauds the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), founded in Australia, for its work in campaigning for the elimination of nuclear weapons.
28. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, Labor welcomes the work by nations to negotiate and agree the Nuclear Ban Treaty. Labor supported the negotiations and regrets that Australia did not participate and was therefore unable to contribute to a constructive and effective outcome of a treaty that charts practical next steps and positively engages nuclear weapons states in doing so. Labor recognises the agreement underscores the international frustration at the lack of progress, and the need to refocus energy, on international efforts to progress nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

29. Labor recognises the important normative value of the Nuclear Ban Treaty. Labor recognise to be effective and constructive, action on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must be universal and verifiable, building on existing safeguards and verification regimes. Action must be practical, cognisant of the contemporary security environment, and be capable of delivering measurable steps towards eventual eradication of nuclear weapons.

30. In Government, Labor will reinvigorate Australia's nuclear arms control and disarmament policies, especially by:

- Working to restore confidence in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;
- Encouraging the nuclear weapon states to progress the implementation of the disarmament obligations under Article 6 of the NPT;
- Strengthening the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty regime;
- Supporting no first use obligations and investigating the possibility of an extended no first use regime;
- Progressing the negotiation of the Proposed Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) aimed at prohibiting the production of fissile material;
- Supporting the strengthening of existing nuclear weapon free zones and the creation of new zones;
- Encouraging nuclear weapon states to make verifiable and irreversible reductions in all categories of nuclear weapons;
- Supporting a nuclear weapons convention to bring all nuclear weapon states into the disarmament process;
- Encouraging states possessing nuclear weapons to mutually reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security policies and reduce the number of warheads on high alert and increase transparency on action to reduce the risk of accidental detonation of weapons.

31. Labor will support the development of a time-bound framework to negotiate practical, legally binding agreements to achieve these objectives and the aspirations of the Nuclear Ban Treaty, drawing particularly on the practical work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

Security Planning and Coordination

32. Australia needs a properly integrated national security policy, continually reviewed and adapted as required to meet changing security threats. Labor will enhance our national security by:

- Re-appointing an appropriately resourced and empowered National Security Adviser, which was abolished under the Coalition Government;
• Creating a strategic policy framework for national security;
• Reviewing the new Home Affairs portfolio arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose, best meeting Australia’s domestic security needs, and make any adjustments where required; and
• Improving Australia’s national crisis management arrangements.

33. Labor will ensure our defence forces, security agencies, police and emergency services are always appropriately resourced and given the necessary powers to respond to the security challenges we face as a nation. Labor will work closely with our neighbours, international allies and international institutions to meet the security challenges posed by terrorism.

34. Labor will always work responsibly and constructively to improve our national security laws and to ensure our security agencies and police can employ the powers they already have, and can acquire such additional powers they may need to meet the changing national security threats we face as a nation. Labor will ensure the powers that our security agencies and police have to fight terrorism and other threats to our national security are consistent with the long-standing values and hard-won liberties that help to define Australia as a democratic nation upholding the freedoms and the privacy of its citizens. Recognising the importance of transparency and accountability measures to safeguard freedoms and privacy, Labor will support the oversight role of entities including:

• The Independent National Security Legislation Monitor;
• The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security;
• The Commonwealth Ombudsman; and
• The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security.

35. Labor totally repudiates the manipulation of fear, sectarianism or racism for political gain and any derogation of the democratic values we are fighting to defend. Australia needs national unity and cohesion to respond to the threat of terrorism. Australia’s counter-terrorism laws and other measures should not divide the Australian community or marginalise any part of it. Australia needs a national approach including engagement with local communities as valued contributors to and core components of our multicultural society, and partnership between Australian governments to address domestic terrorism.

36. The global nature and reach of various terrorist organisations means Australia will increasingly rely on global intelligence exchange as well as support for an expanding range of UN and multilateral measures to combat terrorist financing and outlaw terrorist organisations.

37. Labor will ensure Australia’s cyber security arrangements are able to meet the challenges presented by the electronic environment, which is presenting additional opportunity and vulnerabilities for individuals, business and government, with sophisticated attacks coming from criminal groups and foreign governments.

38. Labor will work with industry to ensure there are sufficient measures in place to reduce the risk of toxic agents that could be weaponised or otherwise used as chemical or biological weapons. We will work to strengthen Australia’s arms control and proliferation measures.
Strength, sustainability and self-reliance in defence

39. The foundation of Labor's defence policy is the principle of Australian self-reliance. Australia’s armed forces need to be able to defend Australia against credible threats without relying on the combat forces or capabilities of other countries.

40. Notwithstanding this commitment to a self-reliant defence policy, Labor recognises the importance of strong bilateral and multilateral defence relationships in providing for Australia’s defence. Where appropriate, Labor will strengthen existing defence ties with our key allies and through the UN, as well as building new and strengthening existing relationships within the Indo-Pacific region.

41. Labor believes in an Australia Defence Force (ADF) that possesses the capability to make contributions to international operations led by Australia’s key allies or the UN that meet Australia’s broader national strategic objectives. Those contributions will be drawn from the forces and capabilities that are developed for the defence of Australia and for operations in our region.

42. Labor will ensure that ADF capability development is directly related to Australia’s strategic interests and that appropriate regular strategic reviews are undertaken with public reports published.

43. Labor is committed to maintaining a strong, modern, and efficiently managed defence organisation that possesses the personnel, equipment and skills that are needed to meet the demands placed upon it by the Australian Government.

44. Labor is committed to achieving and maintaining spending on defence at two per cent of GDP.

Emergency management

45. Labor will provide strong federal leadership to promote an all-hazards approach to emergency management and disaster resilience that ensures prevention, mitigation and preparation to improve response and recovery.

46. Climate change is causing an increase in the number and severity of natural disasters affecting Australia. Labor will strengthen our emergency response capacity and work with the states to ensure capacity meets increasing demand.

47. Labor will implement the National Disaster Resilience Strategy that identifies priority areas to build disaster resilience in communities across Australia.

48. Disaster resilience is a shared responsibility for individuals, households, businesses and communities, as well as for governments. Labor will work with all levels of government to ensure local communities understand potential risks and are capable of addressing them. Labor will support sustained behavioural change and enduring partnerships.

49. Labor will work with Australia's regional neighbours and partners to encourage the exchange of information, the sharing of capabilities and expertise, investments in building resilience including through Australian’s international development program, as well as operational assistance and cooperation during emergency situations. Labor is proud of Australia’s tradition of providing fast and critical support to our neighbours in times of disaster.
50. Mitigation is vital in preventing loss of life and damage to property caused by natural disasters. Labor will work with states and territories to ensure national, state and local disaster plans, strategies and program funding reflect this.

**Natural disasters and local government**

51. Local governments are more often than not the first to respond to natural disasters. Labor sees local governments as a key partner in emergency management.

52. Labor believes local government's important role must be recognised, supported and directly funded, including for clean-up and reconstruction efforts, as well as being part of discussions with federal and state governments in terms of natural disaster funding distribution and mitigation.

**Defence cooperation with Australia's neighbours**

53. Labor is committed to Australia comprehensively engaging with other nations in the Indo-Pacific region, as part of its efforts to foster and preserve peace, prosperity, stability and security in the region. These efforts are fundamental to Australia's own national security.

54. Labor recognises the importance of both bilateral and multilateral defence relationships in achieving security for Australia and creating and maintaining stability in Australia's strategic environment.

55. Security of the Pacific nations is essential for regional security and Australia's own defence. Labor supports the 'Pacific Maritime Security Program', the deployment of Navy personnel, surveillance assets and patrol boats in Pacific Island Countries to protect their sovereignty from threats such as smuggling, illegal, unrecorded and unregulated fishing and terrorism.

56. Labor will ensure that defence cooperation does not contribute to any suppression or violation of human rights or democratic freedoms. Labor will closely monitor the human rights performance of foreign military and security forces with which Australia engages in defence cooperation. A key objective of Australia's defence engagement under Labor will be to promote the professionalisation of military forces, adherence to the rules of armed conflict, and respect for the rule of law and human rights.

**Allied use of Australian facilities**

57. Labor supports the use of facilities in Australia by the armed forces of friendly countries for combined exercises, training and goodwill visits, provided that in times of peace:

- Use of Australian ports by foreign warships does not extend to the home porting of any of those vessels in Australia;
- Staging of military aircraft through Australian airfields or airspace shall only be for such purposes as may be agreed beforehand by the Australian Government;
- No nuclear, biological or chemical weapons may be stored or stationed in Australia; and
- Nuclear powered vessels visit only those ports which have been determined as being suitable for those vessels and provided also that all other safety precautions and conditions that are deemed necessary by the relevant Australian authorities are complied with by the vessels concerned; and, appropriate environmental safeguards are in place.
Defence Industry

The need for an Australian defence industry

58. Labor is committed to fostering a strong national defence industry. This requires a national consensus about the need for an Australian defence industry and a commitment to building this industry on the part of: the major political parties, the Department of Defence, the Australian Defence Force (ADF), other tiers of government, vocational and tertiary institutions, the existing defence industry itself and the relevant unions. In short, the building of an Australian defence industry must become a national mission.

The rational for an Australian defence industry

59. To create this national mission the need for an Australian defence industry must be built upon a clear rationale. Accordingly Labor believes Australia needs a defence industry in order to:

- Provide the ADF with the world’s best capability in order to keep our sailors, soldiers and aviators safe and successful on behalf of our nation;
- Provide Australia with the sovereign capability to maintain and sustain the ADF and all of its equipment;
- Enable Australia to project its strategic weight through an exporting defence industry; and
- Build technological capability and workforce skills within Australia’s broader industrial base.

The world’s best capability

60. Australia’s technical and industrial sector produces excellent high technology products. Our existing defence industry has designed, developed or produced content for land vehicles, surface ships, submarines and aviation which is regarded as the best in the world. Accordingly Labor believes an Australian defence industry producing equipment for the ADF means that Australia’s sailors, soldiers and aviators will be equipped with the best.

61. Labor is committed to cooperative leading edge science and engineering research that brings together industry, tertiary institutions and government that not only secures military capability but drives industry and export opportunities.

Sovereign capability

62. Modern military equipment which Australia acquires is complex and often includes content from around the world. A contemporary view of sovereign capability means being able to maintain and sustain the equipment which the ADF operates. Labor is committed to ensuring Australia has a defence industry which will always be able to provide our nation with this sovereign capability. We will require equipment to be manufactured in Australia to the greatest extent possible.

- Labor believes that greater export opportunities will help to sustain Australian defence industry over the long term and improve our economic ability to invest in superior defence capability.

63. In addition, Labor is committed to identifying areas of critical national capability which are fundamental to maintaining Australia’s defence sovereignty.
Strategic weight

64. Labor believes that having a strong, sustainable, defence industry with the capacity to export is key to building Australia’s regional and global strategic weight.

65. The strategic weight provided by an exporting defence industry complements the role played by the ADF in enhancing Australia’s reputation as a capable and reliable international partner. Labor believes that together, defence industry and the ADF both play a role in seeing Australia be taken seriously.

- Labor will look to develop and implement policies that support the export potential of the Australian defence industry and enhance its global competitiveness. Labor will ensure that all defence exports comply with the relevant legislative requirements and are only made to countries that share Australia’s values, particularly with respect to democratic practices, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Australian industrial capability

66. As a high technology industry, Labor believes in the potential for defence industry to build technological capability and workforce skills within Australia’s broader industrial base.

67. Labor will drive more responsive and efficient procurement processes within the Department of Defence to facilitate a strong, strategic partnership with industry. Fostering and drawing on the innovation and entrepreneurship of Australian companies is a crucial element in achieving this aim.

68. Labor will ensure that the Australian Defence Organisation has the appropriate science and engineering expertise to work with and support defence industry, based on medium to long term requirements.

69. Consistent with Australia’s international obligations, Labor will maximise the participation of Australian companies, particularly SMEs, in defence procurement and services contracts. Labor will support SMEs to ensure:

- They have access to information regarding defence procurement;
- They are more easily able to partner with large defence contractors in major defence contacts; and
- Are not precluded from contracts to supply goods and services to the Department of Defence.

70. Labor will ensure that contractual obligations arising from such arrangements are enforced.

71. Labor will implement initiatives to facilitate the development of the skilled workforce to support a sustainable defence industry, including support for an effective apprenticeship, cadetship, training and education regime. As part of this, Labor will further invest in skilling our defence industry workforce, including mandating skills transfer as part of any major defence projects led by foreign primes, to ensure Australian defence industry is best placed to compete for projects internationally.

72. Labor will ensure that the Department of Defence is a smart buyer, with the capacities and staffing necessary to ensure that the nation’s acquisition and sustainment decisions deliver value for money.
The economic prosperity of the nation and its people

73. While Australia is the 13th largest economy in the world in the world’s fastest growing region, Asia, projections indicate that by 2030, in PPP terms, Australia will rank 23, immediately behind Thailand. Indonesia will rank 5th. The Asian Century continues to hold great economic promise for Australia, rapidly addressing our historic isolation from the centres of global prosperity. But it also creates new strategic challenges, because of profound changes to global power relations and a deeper and more complex exposure to global security threats.

74. Labor recognises the importance of the economic dimension of foreign policy, including and beyond trade. Economic power and economic relationships have strategic weight and influence. Effective foreign policy recognises this fact and should seek to integrate economic and diplomatic objectives and strategies. Diplomacy, trade, development and economic policy are inextricably linked.

75. Australian foreign policy should be deeply engaged with the Australian business community and recognise a global economy that is increasingly characterised by trans-national value chains that cross state borders.

76. Labor will drive growth in the Australian economy by working with the private sector to develop new markets and strengthen existing partnerships.

77. Labor will work within multilateral institutions like APEC and the G20 to promote inclusive and sustainable growth. Complex economic and fiscal challenges like tax base erosion and corporate profit shifting require an internationally coordinated response.

78. Labor will support measures to promote transparency in the extractives industry both in Australia and overseas so countries rich in natural resources benefit from greater economic and political stability.

79. Labor will support International trade and economic initiatives which promote prosperity, inclusive growth, create sustainable and clean energy economies and protect cultural and environmental assets. The Indo-Pacific region should be open to trade and investment and home to transparent, inclusive regional institutions. Labor will ensure that bilateral, multilateral and regional trade agreements advance Australia’s interests and support the rules-based trade system of the World Trade Organisation.

80. Labor will work through international economic forums to create a more stable global financial system and international trading regime.

A stable and co-operative strategic system in our region anchored in the rule of law

81. Labor has long understood the centrality of our region to Australia’s security and prosperity. Regionalism is a key Labor priority.

82. Labor’s priorities for the region include:
   
   - The continuation and development of the liberal rules based order that has underpinned stability in the region in the post war period;
• The centrality of ASEAN as a key platform for regional stability and ASEAN nations as key bilateral relationships for Australia;
• Recognising our special relationship with Pacific island nations in our near region, and our relative position as a major regional economic power, the enhancement of our international development and cooperation programs to support their stability, security and economic development;
• The continued constructive engagement of the United States in the Indo-Pacific; and
• Regional co-operation and engagement.

Constructive internationalism

83. Labor is a strong supporter of multilateralism. We believe Australia, and the world, benefit from an effective multilateral system. We are a founding member of the United Nations, a member of the G20 and an active player in many international institutions. Australia is not a global power but we have global interests.

84. We recognise the many challenges we can only be effectively met by way of international co-operation including: terrorism, climate change, growing economic inequality and many more.

Democracy and human rights

85. Labor supports the freedom of people everywhere to participate in the decisions that affect them and to have the government of their choice. Labor supports democracy as the preferred form of political participation. People have the right to self-determination and a freely expressed and legitimate voice in their government. Labor will support democratic transitions including through electoral assistance and other programs to assist countries seeking to build their democratic capacity.

86. A free press is essential to a democratic society. Labor will promote and defend freedom of political expression, freedom of the press and the rights of journalists, in Australia and overseas.

87. Promoting universal human rights is an essential foreign policy objective. Labor’s diplomatic, economic and international development assistance goals recognise this. Labor will pursue effective human rights diplomacy that supports international and regional security in Australia’s national interest.

88. To give focus to Australia’s commitments on human rights Labor will appoint a Global Human Rights Ambassador, who will have specific responsibility for the advancement and protection of disability, LGBTI, ethnic and religious minority and other human rights.

89. Labor is strongly committed to promoting universal adherence to and implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other key human rights instruments. Labor will ensure all human rights instruments ratified by Australia are observed in domestic law.

90. Labor is concerned about human rights violations wherever they occur. Australia should be forthright about human rights violations overseas. Labor will raise these with the governments concerned including through bilateral representations and formal bilateral human rights dialogues as well as appropriate multilateral avenues. Labor supports stronger international mechanisms and
processes for monitoring human rights violations and will encourage the development of regional
dialogue on human rights issues in our region.

91. Governmental repression of trade unionism is a violation of human rights. Core labour standards
derive from fundamental human rights and Australia should pursue guaranteed respect for those
standards and rights through international treaties. Labor will support programs to address abuse
of labour rights in the Indo-Pacific region.

92. Labor will support neighbouring nations to develop national labour legislation, help partner
countries to ratify ILO conventions, and encourage regional trade union cooperation. Labor will
restore and strengthen Australia’s participation and support for these vital activities. Labor will
support international efforts to eradicate the exploitation of child labour.

93. Labor will encourage Australian companies operating overseas to observe international human
rights standards, including core labour standards, and ensure their operations do not directly or
indirectly violate human rights or inflict unacceptable impacts on local communities and the
environment. Labor will work with Australian trade unions to build the capacity of trade unions in
developing countries through development assistance and training, to complement Australia’s
interests and official development assistance goals.

94. Labor will support the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law
in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and will promote resolutions to support
human rights protections for lesbians and gay men and bisexual and transgender and intersex
people at the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations. Labor
believes that Australia should work first with our Pacific neighbours, our Asian-Pacific Region and
the nations of the Commonwealth in encouraging the repeal laws that are discriminatory. Labor will
actively encourage the repeal of discriminatory laws, especially criminal laws against homosexual
sexual conduct and most urgently against such laws where they impose the death penalty, and will
encourage steps to implement the actions required by the Yogyakarta Principles. Labor will work
strategically to support and assist both local and international civil society organisations in
promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex human rights.

95. It may be necessary and appropriate to impose targeted sanctions against governments that violate
human rights. Labor will work with like-minded nations to formulate and implement these
sanctions in a way which will not be to the detriment of the population of the country in question.

96. Australia should support international initiatives to advance the rights of Indigenous peoples and
address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage. Labor supports the Declaration on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

97. Australia should share our experiences of reconciliation, including the National Apology. Australia
should seek to learn from the experience of other nations in reconciliation, truth & healing
commissions and agreement making with Indigenous peoples. Labor supports efforts to Increase
Indigenous participation in UN forums, including through contributions to the UN Voluntary Fund
for Indigenous Populations.

98. Australia should be a global leader in championing gender equality and the economic, social and
political empowerment of women and girls, and reduce the increasing levels of repression against
women and girls in some countries. Labor will support extending measures which reduce violence
against women and girls to Australia’s Pacific neighbours. Labor will support international
campaigns to end:
• Sexual exploitation of women and children, including sex tourism and trafficking;
• Harmful practices including early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
• Prohibitions on education and paid employment and restriction to access to medical services, in particular sexual and reproductive health services, for women and girls;
• The denial of equal property rights for women;
• The unequal standing of women in judicial and political systems;
• The persecution of rape victims; and
• Any use of rape and sexual torture in war.

99. Australia should oppose forced labour and slavery. Labor will campaign against forced labour and slavery, and for the rights of people in situations of forced labour and slavery through international forums, multilateral and bilateral frameworks and relationships. Labor will provide every possible support and assistance for people in situations of forced labour and slavery.

100. Australia should promote and protect the rights of people with disability, including through the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Labor will improve Australia’s world-leading disability-inclusive aid program to strengthen opportunities for people with disability in the Indo-Pacific region and globally.

101. Australia should be unequivocal in its opposition to capital punishment, wherever it occurs. Labor will strongly and clearly state its opposition to the death penalty, whenever and wherever it arises, and advocate its universal abolition, including through strong regional and global representations.

102. Labor recognises that torture fundamentally undermines human dignity and erodes the moral foundation of any institution, which engages in it. Labor will support efforts to end all forms of torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, in all circumstances.

International law

103. Labor strongly supports the maintenance of a rules based international order, auspiced and supported by multilateralism and the United Nations. Reform of the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council is essential for the UN to respond effectively to international challenges.

104. Labor supports strengthening the United Nations’ capacity in preventive diplomacy and peace building, peacemaking, peace keeping and peace enforcement. This is necessary to respond to significant threats to international security that arise both from longstanding and new conflicts between and within states. Labor supports the UN Security Council’s adoption of the doctrine of international humanitarian intervention known as 'The Responsibility to Protect'.

105. Labor supports the work of the International Criminal Court as a key part of Australia’s ongoing commitment to international criminal justice.

Strengthening our engagement with the countries of the world

106. Labor will strengthen Australia’s ties with the countries of the world. Australia has a large immigrant population, global interests, and cultural ties to every part of the globe, and we have much to gain from improving our cultural and country-to-country relationships.
107. The United States remains our closest security ally, formalised through the ANZUS Treaty, and a vital global partner. Labor will maintain and strengthen Australia's close relationship with the US, a relationship founded on our people's common democratic values and our mutual commitment to international peace and security.

108. The US alliance is critical to Australia's national security requirements in vitally important areas such as intelligence, cooperation on terrorism, defence equipment, and the US' long-term role in underpinning broader stability in the region.

109. Labor supports active Australian participation in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) – an important multi-lateral economic institution which offers a unique opportunity to drive economic growth in our region and improve living standards.

110. Labor seeks to strengthen economic, social, cultural and educational ties with countries including Japan, Korea, India and Indonesia based on mutual respect and a sense of genuine partnership in our own Indo-Pacific region. Labor supports enhanced cooperation through rules-based institutions and opportunities for regional engagement including the PIF, ASEAN, the EAS and APEC. In particular a Labor government will commit resources and pursue closer relationships and cooperation with ASEAN and its members. Deepening of relationships and mutual trust may mean that, one day, ASEAN membership could be a natural step, desired by our neighbours and seen as logical by Australians.

111. The re-emergence of China as a great power and global economic giant is one of the most significant developments of the 21st century. Australia and China share an overarching interest in a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. Labor will build on our long tradition and work to deepen and extend Australia's engagement with China.

112. Labor will ensure that as China grows, Australia is positioned to benefit from this growth while preserving our core national interests.

113. Labor recognises that Indonesia, as one of our nearest neighbours and the world's third largest democracy provides scope for increased trade and economic activity as well as deepening social and cultural ties. Labor will look to strengthen relations with the Indonesian government and provide support to Australian businesses looking to trade with Indonesia.

114. Labor will ensure the languages of the region are taught more widely in our schools as part of Labor’s Future Asia strategy and consistent with the Indo-Pacific focus of our foreign policy.

115. Labor will promote Australia's Interests in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas. Labor will build strong partnerships with individual countries, including where there is a unique and long-lasting relationship as with the United Kingdom and New Zealand, as well as engaging with important regional institutions like the African Union and the Arab League.

116. The Muslim world encompasses more than 1.8 billion people and is important to Australia - in its connection with Australians of Islamic faith; in Australia's key neighbours and partners who are Muslim nations; and because global challenges require shared solutions. Labor will strengthen Australia's links with the Muslim world, including through the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

117. Labor supports an enduring and just two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the right of Israel to live in peace within secure borders internationally recognised and agreed by
the parties, and reflecting the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to also live in peace and security within their own state.

**Australian international development program**

118. Labor supports an aid program of which all Australians can be proud, reflecting Australian values, history of generosity, regional engagement and our national interests.

119. The purpose of Australia’s international development program should be to promote sustainable development and inclusive growth that builds human and social capital, thereby reducing inequality and helping people and nations to lift themselves out of poverty. This serves Australia’s national interests by promoting stability and prosperity in our region and beyond. Labor will address the intractable problems facing developing countries that require global leadership and action, in areas where Australian resources can most effectively and efficiently make a difference. We will focus our efforts where there is greatest need, particularly in our near region, as well as in fragile and conflict-affected states.

120. Labor’s international development program will promote human rights. All people should be able to lead healthy and prosperous lives with shelter, education, food and clean water, health and sanitation, and emergency services support - regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, cultural beliefs, sexual orientation gender identity or intersex status.

121. Labor is committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goal process as a global blueprint to end extreme poverty. The SDGs will guide Labor’s plan for Australia’s international development program.

122. Australia should lead in international development assistance, actively campaigning through international forums, multilateral and bilateral frameworks and our relationships with other countries. Labor will measure our efforts and be accountable against internationally agreed aid and development assistance targets and be able to report on how all of Australia’s work contributes to achievement of the SDGs, both through our international and domestic programs.

123. Labor will rebuild and grow Australia’s international development program and increase Official Development Assistance to internationally accepted levels in a timely manner. Australia should do its fair share internationally, and work with the international community to achieve the longstanding funding targets reiterated by the SDGs. Labor will, over time, achieve a funding target for the international development program of at least 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income.

124. Labor’s international development program will focus in particular on working with regional countries to address the effects of climate change, to foster gender equality, and to improve the health and education outcomes that are essential to the building of human and social capital.

125. Labor will treat humanitarian and emergency response as a priority in Australia’s aid program, and ensure we play a leadership role in securing global contributions to UN and other international appeals for funding, expertise and logistical support to deal with humanitarian emergencies.

126. Labor will rebuild the skills, expertise and credibility in the public service necessary to deliver a high-quality international development program. Labor will also:

- Enable evaluation of Australia’s aid program, including the achievement of its purpose, its overall effectiveness, and growth trends;
Return transparency to Australia’s international development program including via the Parliament with more robust, focussed oversight by a dedicated Parliamentary Committee mechanism; and
Invest in development research and ensure an evidence-based aid program.

127. Inclusive economic growth is the most powerful tool to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. Investment in education and health are necessary to this. Economic growth helps to create jobs, lifts household incomes and generates the government revenues needed to provide key public services such as hospitals and schools.

128. Empowering women will be a fundamental principle of Australia’s aid program for a Labor government and a hallmark of Australian international development assistance. It is one of the most effective tools to improve education for all young women and girls, reduce infant and maternal mortality, improve health - including preventing HIV/AIDS- and promote prosperity. Labor will ensure that at least 80 percent of Australia’s aid investments meet gender equality goals.

129. Education, which must include special focus to ensure the education of girls, gives young people in developing nations the skills to build their own futures and, in time, escape poverty. Better development and delivery of education services is necessary. Labor will support reducing the barriers to children and adolescents attending school - such as child labour, child trafficking, child marriage, early pregnancy, safety to and from school, menstrual taboos and hygiene, the burden of domestic work, community attitudes and teaching practices, and the care provided to adults living with disability. In particular, Labor recognises the unique barriers for adolescent girls that places them at risk and denies them opportunities to reach their full potential. Labor will take action to catalyse girls’ empowerment internationally by:

- Strengthening the focus on adolescent girls in humanitarian responses;
- Supporting gender transformative vocational training and entrepreneurship;
- Increasing opportunities for girls to access ‘in demand’ jobs and run businesses;
- Increasing access to sexual and reproductive rights information and services;
- Working with boys, young men, families and communities to challenge sexist attitudes and behaviours; and
- Supporting girls to be change agents and the next generation of leaders.

130. Labor recognises that without health interventions at an early age, the potential quality of life for individuals is diminished and economic development is undermined. Recognising that health is an area in which Australia can make a real difference, Labor will make health a priority of Australia’s international development program.

131. Labor is committed to ensuring that Australian international development also addresses:

- Climate change and sustainable agriculture, forest and fisheries management, acknowledging the significant impact of climate change and environmental sustainability on exacerbating poverty and inequality.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene because of its critical importance underpinning outcomes in health, agriculture, food security and even education
- Sustainable agriculture, fisheries management and protection and food security initiatives
- Disability-inclusive development a fundamental principle of Australia’s aid program, recognizing the impact of poverty on people living with disability
- Infrastructure and economic development projects in partnership with international agencies and partners.

132. Labor will support good governance, accountability and anti-corruption measures through the development assistance program, particularly in fragile states. Labor believes that the Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10 provide a substantial guide for government to apply in their planning, distribution and implementation of foreign aid in keeping with a high standard of commitment to human rights.

133. Labor will deliver Australia’s overseas development assistance in partnership with nongovernment organisations and find new ways of working with non-government organisations and civil society so that development assistance is well targeted and delivers value for money. Labor sees a balance between public, private and NGO delivery as part of a healthy Australian aid program.

134. Australia should take a leading role in promoting development, security and stability in the Pacific. Labor recognises Australia’s responsibility in the Pacific and the special importance of an ongoing Strategic Development Partnership with our nearest neighbour Papua New Guinea. Labor is committed to maintaining Partnerships for Development with the eleven Pacific Island Government partners, working together to achieve improved living standards for people in the Pacific.

135. Labor will work with development partner nations and other donor countries to improve the transparency and coordination of aid delivery, with a particular focus on engaging China, Japan and other Indo-Pacific regional partners.

Assisting Australians abroad

136. Australia should protect the safety of Australians overseas. Labor will deliver a high standard of travel advice and consular assistance to all Australians overseas.

137. To the extent that receiving governments permit, Labor will ensure consular representatives promptly visit Australians who have been arrested and maintain effective communication between legal representatives and the families of those who have been detained.

138. Australian passports should be at the forefront of passport technology, ensuring people applying for and using passports are doing so legitimately. Labor will ensure Australian passports comply with and establish the highest international standards.

Valuing our Current and Former Defence Personnel and their Families

139. Our Defence Personnel are our Defence Forces greatest asset. They commit their lives, and their safety, in service to our country. In recognition of this commitment, we undertake to support them both during their time in the Australian Defence Force and beyond.

140. Labor believes in order to ensure good outcomes for our current and former defence personnel we must take a holistic view of the individual and their family, not only throughout their service but through transition and into their civilian lives.
141. When an individual serves, their family serves with them. Labor acknowledges the impact military life has on family members and commits to assisting them throughout their loved ones service, and beyond.

142. Labor believes it is critical that government sends a message to our defence force personnel and veterans that their service is valued. Therefore Labor believes it is essential that support continues to be made available to our veterans after they have left defence, including through assistance to help them transition into civilian careers. In doing so, we ensure that those who served our country know their service is valued by the Government and the wider community.

**Supporting our current serving defence personnel**

143. Labor recognises the bravery, courage and dedication of the men and women of the Australian Defence Force. Labor is committed to a defence force which is made up of highly motivated, skilled, well trained, well equipped and diverse personnel who volunteer for service.

144. Labor recognises the essential role civilian employees play in providing and contributing to the Australian Defence Force’s operations.

145. Labor will ensure that Australian Defence Personnel are paid fairly and in a manner that properly reflects the unique nature of military service.

146. All Australians– including defence force personnel – have the right to form, and be members of, professional representative association in respect of their pay and conditions. Labor will allow associations demonstrating a substantial defence force membership the standing right to appear before remuneration tribunals so they can effectively present the situation and views of serving members.

147. Labor believes the diversity in our nation’s defence force is critical to our country’s defence capability

148. Labor is committed to ensuring female military personnel have equal opportunities for career progression and development within the Australian Defence Force.

149. Reservists are a critical component of Australia’s defence capability. Labor is committed to maintaining recruitment and retention of Reserve members and to integrating fulltime Australian Defence Force members and Reserve elements in a total force structure where the different role of all components is properly understood, respected, valued and utilised effectively.

150. Labor will continue to support a modern, dedicated occupational health and safety regime for all personnel, supported by a fair and supportive military rehabilitation and compensation scheme. These arrangements should reflect the unique employment circumstances of the Australian Defence Force, the need to respect the historical approach to injury and illness incurred overseas and the need for firm policies of prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, return to work and income maintenance measures. Labor supports a sophisticated and uniform approach to record keeping which enables incidents in defence to satisfy any future requirements for support from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

151. Labor fully recognises the physical and mental health risks associated with service which can continue into life after leaving the Australian Defence Force. As such, Labor commits to ensuring appropriate support is available both during and after service.
Supporting our defence personnel during transition

152. Labor believes a successful transition from defence to civilian life is vital to ensure the best outcomes for our veterans and their families in the long term.

153. Labor believes we have a duty of care to men and women who have served their nation to make sure they have the best possible chance of success after their time in the Australian Defence Force. By supporting our transitioning defence force members we are ensuring better long term outcomes, avoiding complex social problems which are associated with poor transition such as unemployment and demonstrate to them that we value their service and sacrifice.

154. Labor believes the Government has an obligation to ensure individuals transitioning from the Defence Force do not feel like the gate is shut behind them. We must ensure that those who are able to work are appropriately supported into a meaningful career. And for those whose service has had a greater impact on them, there must be appropriate support services in place for them and their family while they reorient their lives post service.

155. Labor believes that when it comes to mental health of our current and former defence force personnel access to clinical services is critical. However in order to fully support the mental health of our current and ex-serving defence personnel, Labor recognises the importance of financial security, strong social support and connectedness, secure housing, family support, good physical health and fulfilling employment.

Valuing our veterans and their sacrifice

156. Military service involves risk and sacrifice, in exchange for this service and sacrifice Labor believes in supporting our veterans now and into the future. Labor is committed to providing world class care and support to our veterans and their families. In doing so, we honour their sacrifice and demonstrate that we continue to value their contribution.

157. Labor recognises that veterans are a diverse group with varying needs based on their experiences, ages and personal circumstances. As such, it is important that support is tailored to the individual as much as is practical. Labor recognises that the needs of a contemporary veteran can be vastly different to the needs of our older veterans.

158. Labor will retain the current programs of health care for veterans and honour the historic commitment to free treatment for all service-related injuries and disease. Labor remains committed to world-class health care for veterans as offered through the Gold Card, White Card and Orange Card.

159. Labor believes any veteran who is wounded or injured in the course of serving our country should rightfully receive the support they need to continue living a full and productive life. Labor is committed to strong rehabilitation programs in conjunction with financial safety nets which provide support for veterans, their partners and widows/widowers.

160. Labor believes that one veteran who takes their life is one too many and is committed to providing the leadership, compassion and resources to address this complex issue.
161. Labor believes our veterans deserve world class care and support and recognises the potential benefit of alternative therapies such as art therapy and assistance dogs in improving the health and wellbeing of veterans.

162. In addition to Labor’s historic delivery of disability and compensation pension improvements, Labor will continue to review entitlements afforded to our veterans to ensure that they are appropriate for the current needs of our veteran community.

163. The nature of military service is unique and Labor believes veterans deserve a department which acknowledges this and supports our veterans.

164. Injuries and illness resulting from military service has traditionally been assessed in a separate rehabilitation and compensation scheme in recognition of the different circumstances and status of military service. This is reflected in some circumstances by a more generous standard of proof, the lack of any onus of proof and a longstanding commitment to the benefit of the doubt operating in the veteran’s favour. Labor will honour these commitments and the values on which these schemes are based. Further Labor believes an overly adversarial claims process is to the detriment of veterans and their loved ones. Labor believes that service related compensation claims should be processed in a timely, efficient and effective manner that honours their service.

165. Labor will expedite the current program of mortality and health studies and research into past deployments, as well as ensuring that the current processes for future deployments properly deal with health risks in advance, and after return to Australia - particularly with respect to recording keeping. This will ensure we have the best possible information available to assist veterans and their families.

166. Labor recognises the importance of ex-service organisations and is committed to supporting these organisations to provide vital services to veterans and their families. Labor acknowledges the deep camaraderie and support offered by these organisations through their invaluable peer networks.

Supporting our military families

167. Labor believes families are our greatest asset with regards to supporting both current and ex-serving defence personnel. Labor recognises that military family life presents a series of unique challenges and stressors for loved ones.

168. Families play a critical role in supporting our current and ex-serving defence personnel. Often family members are the first to recognise signs and symptoms of poor physical or mental health and help them through the tough times. The critical role families play in supporting our current and ex-serving defence personnel must be recognised and appropriate support provided. Labor is committed to the care and welfare of veterans’ partners and families who may have suffered as a result of the veteran’s service, particularly from the ill health of a veteran, as part of a policy of lifelong care for those injured or affected by their service.

169. Labor will work to address the health and welfare needs of veterans’ families though a development a National Family Engagement Strategy for Current and Former Defence Force Families. Labor will ensure there are adequate programs to assist these families to meet the pressures and demands of military life.
170. Labor recognises the role carer’s play in supporting our former servicemen and women. Labor believes the role these carer’s play is vital and it is imperative that support is available to carers as needed.

171. Military service can impact the whole family; it is for this reason that Labor will undertake health studies into the health and welfare of children of younger veterans, to better establish whether there are any intergenerational health effects flowing from their service.

172. Recognising the importance of education, Labor remains committed to the support available for children of veterans in regards to study.

**Remembering their service and sacrifice**

173. Labor believes in the importance of commemorative events, providing our community and veterans to join together to acknowledge the service and sacrifice of our defence personnel. Labor is committed to supporting the community to commemorate the past contribution of our service men and women to this country.

174. Labor recognises the significance, importance and sacred nature of battlefields where our troops have lost their lives. Where possible, Labor will actively work with foreign governments and other parties to protect and preserve the integrity of significant battlefields where Australian troops have served.

175. Labor believes in a bipartisan approach towards commemorative activity and recognises the importance of educative programs, including under the aegis of the Australian War Memorial.

176. Labor acknowledges and thanks those members of ex-service organisations who work so hard on local commemorative events which give communities the opportunity to come together and reflect on those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service of our nation. In many places, if it weren’t for these dedicated individuals these events would not happen. We thank those dedicated members of the community.