



EMILY's List Australia

## Target the Message: Gender Learnings from the Federal Election Campaign 2019

Executive Summary of submission to the Australian Labor Party's Federal Election Review 2019

*'I was amazed that clever people couldn't find simpler ways to explain complicated policies.'*

2019 ELA Federal election survey respondent

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## 1. Introduction

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EMILY's List Australia purpose is to assist progressive Labor women to be elected to Parliament and is intrinsically linked to the success of the Australian Labor Party. As our impact analysis of Labor Governments over the past 10 years has shown, when ALP women MPs are in government, the outcomes for all Australians and especially for women, are improved. When Labor fails, women are directly impacted in ways that dramatically affect their economic and social wellbeing.

Once again, we make this submission to the Australian Labor Party review of the 2019 Federal election campaign in the hope the party will learn from errors, build on the strengths, and prepare for the next election to place the party in a winning position. Whilst there have been significant advances on the suite of policies for women and arguably the 2019 Labor election campaign presented the most comprehensive platform ever, the party continues to underestimate and under resource campaigns that communicate directly to women and therefore win their vote. In many instances, the story that needs to be told to convince a woman to vote Labor is the same story that will persuade men too.

In past reviews we have noted that Labor was unable to communicate the significant improvements to women's lives that would be achieved with our policies as opposed to those of the Coalition. This lack of communication was evidenced once again during the 2019 campaign

We have noted in previous submissions to election reviews that Labor missed the opportunity to promote positive reforms in an organised and strategic fashion through existing women's and feminist movement networks and via social media. The 2019 campaign continued this disappointing trend.

In part, we see this failure due to the lack of diversity, especially women, in leadership positions in the National Office of the ALP and in senior positions responsible for analysing and integrating polling and other data into a comprehensive campaign plan. The long term male to male, factional patronage into senior organising positions, with little transparency or openness in appointments to ensure the greatest level of expertise is engaged, has led to a homogenous "groupthink" which is failing Labor.

We need more women in these positions, and we need more people of diversity and difference – white, Anglo men are not the only sources of knowledge in the party of campaign expertise.

We also note our disappointment, that even in the structure of this Campaign Review, the party has failed to see the benefits of having women share equally in the review leadership and analysis of what went wrong during the campaign. While we respect the leadership of both Jay Weatherill and

Craig Emerson, not having an eminent Labor woman on this panel is short sighted and risks an incomplete analysis. Further, we note that the Review Panel has only two women in a panel of six National Executive members, making representation of this committee inconsistent with the ALP's own Affirmative Action Rules.

### **1.1 The EMILY's List Success Story 1996-2019**

EMILY's List Australia ("ELA") is a financial, political and personal support network for progressive Labor women candidates. It is the only network of its kind in Australian politics and has been significant in raising the level of representation of ALP women across state, territory and federal parliaments. EMILY is an acronym and stands for Early Money Is Like Yeast – it makes the dough rise. The organization was founded on the belief that early campaign money is the most important support a candidate can have when heading into an election. ELA is based on EMILY's List USA, which identifies talented Democrat women and supports them for election with funding, campaign advice, skills and information.

Since its inception in 1996, ELA has helped 267 women MPs to be elected into parliaments around Australia. In addition, we have supported another 288 unsuccessful candidates.

In order to appeal to a women's membership base which existed both in and outside of the party, the decision was taken by the founders of ELA to form an NGO independent, but aligned to the Australia Labor Party ("Labor"). ELA helps Labor remain representative of the community by continuing to support and elect women to parliament and to appeal to progressive women voters – not necessarily members of the party – by engaging them via traditional feminist and women's organizing principles.

### **1.2 Submission Methodology**

The following submission has been prepared with the knowledge and expertise of the ELA Staff, volunteers and National Leadership. The submission is based on:

#### **1.2.1 Membership Survey**

Between 18 July – 3 August 2019, ELA polled its membership utilizing online survey tools about the Federal Election 2019 Campaign. In addition to the statistical information, we also asked women to provide comments on the campaign. Those anonymous comments are spread throughout the submission.

### **1.2.2 Expertise in narrative and gender-based campaigning**

EMILY's List prides itself on applying cutting edge and gender-based and other campaigning strategies and policy development techniques to shape its work. ELA's submission is influenced by the work of cognitive linguist, Professor George Lakoff, whose book *Don't Think of an Elephant* has revolutionized progressive politics in the US, heavily influencing Barack Obama's election campaign and subsequent Presidency.

Lakoff's theory that the progressive vision is gendered feminine, while the conservative vision is gendered masculine resonates for obvious reasons for ELA. However, it is an important one for both women and men of the Australian Labor Party to come to grips with. ELA believes that Lakoff's work, when applied to an Australian audience, would help Labor develop a strong, consistent narrative in which to win multiple elections. Currently, Jacinda Ardern model of leadership – which positions care, compassion and wellbeing at the centre of her government's narrative - is resonating deeply with people around the world as an antidote to the populist “strong men” in power in the US, UK and Russia. In the 2014 election, ELA produced gendered based material for candidates in marginal seats focussed on “care” as an overarching narrative for Labor women. We believe it still provides a narrative framework for Labor. While we continue to urge the ALP to invest in an understanding of the gendered nature of deep political framing, to date we have seen little evidence of this cutting through in national campaigns.

### **1.2.3 Gender-based campaign techniques**

Our submission is also informed by observations of the importance of digital campaigns in winning the women's vote. We have over 20 years' experience with supporting women's campaigns, so we know what work in the Australian setting. In 2012, EMILY's List National Co-Convenor observed in Women's Agenda that Obama's re-election campaign adeptly used three techniques online to win the women's vote – the political visual, the celebrity endorsement and gender mainstreaming of women's policy. Since then, we have advocated for dedicated gendered expertise in state and national campaigns for Labor.

EMILY's List Australia pioneered the concept of “Women Calling Women” phone banking. We developed the idea that women voters would want to hear from other women about the issues that mattered most to them, developing tailored conversations using our Gender Gap Research to assist women and men candidates to talk directly with Australian women in ways that would register deeply with them. We are pleased that Women Calling Women has become a strategy adopted by

some state/territory Labor offices to lift targeted engagement with women voters but have become concerned that many conversation scripts seen during 2019 lacked detailed gendered tailoring informed by gendered electoral research.

In 2019, we encouraged our candidates to try another style of gendered based campaigning – kitchen table conversations/or community house parties. Ged Kearney, EL endorsed member for Cooper, used the kitchen table conversations to establish an authentic grassroots structure to organising in her electorate during the 2018 Batman By-Election. This technique has enabled Ged to transform a marginal Green v Labor seat into a very safe Labor seat in little under 18 months. In late 2018-2019, we began training ELA endorsed candidates and their campaign teams in the techniques of running this style of grassroots campaigning, which has also been used successfully by Independents in the seats of Indi and Warringah.

#### **1.2.4 Gender Gap Research**

Finally, EMILY's List Australia's submission is informed by our Gender Gap Research, the polling of undecided women voters in marginal seats in the 2019 Federal Election. In 2019, we focussed on three seats - Dunkley, Dickson and Gilmore – sharing polling transparently with the candidates and/or their campaign teams. We are proud that two of the three seats targeted with our Gender Gap Research transformed from Liberal Held to Labor seats. This was a significant achievement in an otherwise difficult landscape for Labor seat victories. Both Dunkley and Gilmore saw a swing above the national average towards Labor, while in Dickson, Ali France managed to reduce the state swing of 4.34 against Labor to only 2.9%.

Since our polling first began, we have held a total of 46 focus groups across the country, giving us a very clear idea of what women want from Labor governments, particularly in unheld marginal seats. Our current and historic data shapes our views about ALP policy development and campaigning. ELA has championed qualitative data over quantitative for some time, believing that the ALP would derive far better research by listening closely to small groups of undecided voters, sectored by attribute and interest (initially women, but the model could be extrapolated to assist policy development and messaging with other groups of target voters).

For the purposes of this report we rely on the quantitative research of Dr Shaun Ratcliff and Simon Jackman of the Australian Co-operative Election Survey as evidence of the likely gendered nature of electoral results. Until the completion of data from Australia's longest election research project, the

Australian Election Study, conducted by the School of Politics and International Relations at the Australian National University, we remain sceptical of assertions from any party that they “secured the women’s vote in 2019”.

A lot of criticism has been levelled at quantitative polls during the 2019 Federal Election. Since the election, we note there has been speculation about the gendered nature of the vote and the impact of women on the election result, with the Coalition claiming to have secured a return of the women’s vote in the last weeks of the campaign (an observation made conveniently two days before sexual assault allegations by Coalition staffers were revealed in the press).

Regrettably, there is insufficient public data on the gendered nature of polling intentions in the lead up to the poll. If the ALP received sex-disaggregated data on polling intentions it did not share this with ELA or any EL endorsed candidates. In terms of public polling, Essential Media did not provide public sex-disaggregated data on federal voting intentions or preferred Prime Minister and neither did Newspoll. In the absence of this publicly accessible data it has been difficult for us to extrapolate anything from the quantitative data available.

## 2 Recommendations

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EMILY’s List Australia recommends that the Australian Labor Party:

1. Full retention of women’s and gender-based policy positions and develop a strategic communication plan to win government
2. Invest in EMILY’s List Australia’s Gender Gap Research, the private qualitative polling of women, by women, for women in unheld marginal seats, a minimum of six months prior to every Federal Election. Use all data obtained from the Gender Gap Research to test women’s policy announcements, inform policy launches targeted to appeal to women voters and develop gender-based campaigning on these issues in partnership with EMILY’s List Australia and National Labor Women’s Network activists.

3. Ensure all quantitative polling used by the ALP is sex-disaggregated and shared with candidates to enable tailoring of gendered messaging during campaigns. Consideration should also be given to sharing results of sex-disaggregated data with EMILY's List Australia's National Committee and/or CEO and Co-Convenors and/or the National Labor Women's Network.
4. Prioritise Winning the Women's Vote in all aspects of digital and other campaign material. Build on the gendered digital and other campaign material developed by EMILY's List Australia between 2010-2019 to ensure that there is well targeted, highly visible gendered campaign material, events and social media in 2022
5. Increase the numbers of women in campaign decision-making & campaign staffing, particularly the hiring of women staff with high levels of knowledge and experience developing, implementing and evaluating gender-based campaigns. In particular, ELA recommends the ALP ensure equal numbers of men and women are hired as Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries in National and state/territory offices.
6. Improve communications and relationships between National Secretariat, Parliamentary leadership and EMILY's List Australia through greater transparency and regular joint meetings through a National Gender-Based Campaign alliance
7. Develop a National Strategic and Operational Plan for implementing the National Labor Platform and Organisational Reform Recommendations, to be piloted with women's policy area in the current ALP National Platform.
8. Conduct all National Campaign Reviews in accordance with the ALP's Affirmative Action commitments, including in the appointment of chairs and committee members.
9. Develop a resource kit to assist women and men to communicate the importance of, and increase multi-party support of, reproductive freedom for women in Australia.
10. Meet with the ELA leadership to discuss improving the support for candidates from culturally diverse backgrounds and the report of the 2019 Julia Gillard Internship to be released September 2019.

## 3 Review of the EMILY's List Australia's Federal Election Campaign 2019

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Every federal election, EMILY's List Australia helps progressive Labor women win seats in Parliament. In 2019, EMILY's List supported 54 progressive Labor women with fundraising, training, mentoring and Gender Gap Research. In addition, the organization provided support with gender-based campaigning, by assisting with women calling women phone bank scripts, sourcing women volunteers to undertake campaigning activities and gender based digital campaign material to promote the achievements of Labor, particularly EMILY's List MP's, to women voters. However, due to limited resources, our capacity to support individual candidates and undertake broad based gender-based campaigning was far limited than in previous years. As the numbers of women ELA supports increases, the likelihood of our capacity to fill the gap in the ALP's lack of gender-based campaign materials diminishes.

### 3.1 What ELA did to support progressive women candidates

In 2019, ELA provided support to progressive Labor women during elections in 5 key ways.

#### 3.1.1 Fundraising

EMILY's List Australia raised two categories of money for its 36 endorsed candidates in un-held seats and 18 endorsed candidates in held seats.

- **Early Money** ELA provided early money to candidates in marginal seats to enable them to get a head-start on the campaign trail. This money was raised from donors and through other income generating activities such as events.
- **Directed Donations & Targeted Fundraising** In addition to Early Money lump sums, ELA also raised funds for women candidates directly from members of the public, via its website. These donations, known as "directed donations" are collected by EMILY's List via an online donation functionality. 100% of all these directed donations raised online go to candidates with ELA paying the processing fees.

#### 3.1.2 Training

In 2018, EMILY's List ran "*Winning the women's vote*" training for both state and federal candidates in Victoria in Melbourne and Morwell. In 2019, training was conducted for candidates in Queensland and the ACT, with another session in Corangamite for campaign teams. The training

was designed to assist candidates, campaign managers and campaign volunteers with the skills they would need to run an election campaign.

### **3.1.3 Mentoring**

ELA allocates mentors to each candidate when requested. We match an experienced current or former MP, unionist or community campaigner with first time candidates ensuring there is practical and personal support for each of our women. Mentors and candidates receive a copy of the information booklet 'Mentoring with EMILY' which includes case studies of previous mentoring relationships.

In 2019, 25 first time candidates were matched with ELA mentors, and 2 candidates running for a second time had informal mentors with sitting ELA members. Most mentor matches provided mentoring support via phone, text messages and emails, with each mentor spending an average of 6 hours direct contact with their candidate, less for those candidates who were endorsed close to the election. Several mentors also provided many more additional hands on support with their candidate during the campaign.

During the campaign ELA maintained regular contact with the mentors to ensure mentoring was going well and at the end of the campaign an evaluation was undertaken to assist improvement for the next election campaign. As previously determined for past elections, mentoring was seen to have been a valuable addition to the campaigns and suggestions for improvement mainly related to the importance of matching mentors with candidates as early as possible to ensure time to build a supportive relationship.

*"I really appreciated the support from EMILY's List, as a first time candidate it was a tough but worthwhile learning experience and when I truly felt that no one cared about the campaign I was running, EMILY's List were there with early money and personal support, which was invaluable. I'd add that the staff and women involved in EMILY's list should be thanked for the support that they give to women candidates - it REALLY makes a difference"*

*"I caught up with (the candidate) on election night and she was very positive about her whole experience as a candidate, and especially appreciative of the EL support both financially and having a mentor - someone to talk to and learn from. Importantly, she is very keen to continue on with her community activism and Party activities so that's great and I hope I can continue to support her in that"*

### **3.1.4 Campaign Support**

ELA provided campaign support to women in a myriad of ways. We did all the usual activities – letterboxing, phone banking, polling day leafleting and scrutineering. But we also did other things – pastoral care, emails and SMS’s of encouragement, sharing of Facebook events and activities, promotion via Instagram and Twitter, helping draft media releases, sourcing volunteers and advising on ‘house meetings/party’ style of campaigning. As noted in previous reviews, we are a shoulder to cry on, a safe space to vent. Frequently, we help women where National and State Offices will not. Further, ELA continues to provide support to candidates – including those who are unsuccessful - long after the campaign is finished, providing women with messages and gifts of appreciation for their hard work on the campaign trail.

The training was expanded this election to include the experience of Ged Kearney’s ‘house meeting’ style of direct engagement with voters in their homes or any place they chose to gather. Based on this successful style of campaigning during the Batman by-election in 2018, candidates who implement this approach have reported success in gaining support in the forms of campaign volunteers, donations and votes.

### **3.1.5 Gender Gap Research**

Finally, a very important aspect of our support to candidates was our Gender Gap Research (“GGR”), the private polling of undecided women voters in marginal seats on the issues important to women. ELA has been doing this research since ELA began 23 years ago and this methodology of women only groups has now become the standard technique. This research is shared with the candidates and the Party leadership. This transparent sharing of research outcomes distinguishes us from the Party which often leaves the candidate in a frustrated state of limbo.

EMILY’s List’s GGR is conducted by a reputable pollster in marginal seats where ELA endorsed women are candidates. The research is designed to draw out issues important to women, which they might not otherwise reveal in a combined gender setting. EMILY’s List believes that it is important to enable women to speak freely with other women about policies that are important to them in order to fully appreciate the best way to communicate with women voters.

Our Gender Gap Research is more than just targeted, qualitative polling in marginal seats. ELA prides itself on rigorous, intellectual analysis of data, cross-referencing ideas obtained from constituents with Labor philosophy, cutting edge linguistic and marketing techniques, before beginning to sell policy to the broader electorate.

Our research, which includes recommendations for policy and campaigning synthesized by EMILY’s List leadership, is confidential and provided only to the Parliamentary Labor Leader, National and State Secretariats and our women candidates. Our commitment to confidentiality and Labor means that not even ELA members who are the main donors, see the full results.

In 2019, our GGR was conducted in Dickson (QLD) and Dunkley (VIC) in June 2018 when there was possibility of a Sept/Oct 2018 election, and in Gilmore (NSW) in March 2019.

<b>SEAT State</b>	<b>Dickson QLD</b>	<b>Dunkley VIC</b>	<b>Gilmore NSW</b>
<b>ALP Candidate</b>	Ali France	Peta Murphy	Fiona Phillips
<b>Margin</b>	<b>- 1.6%</b>	<b>+1.4% post redistribution</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>
<b>Sitting member</b>	Peter Dutton (Lib)	Chris Crewther (Lib)	Ann Sudmalis (Lib)
<b>AEC Demo Rating</b>	Outer Metro	Outer Metro	Regional
<b>% of Population Female 18+</b>	50.6%	51.7%	50.7%

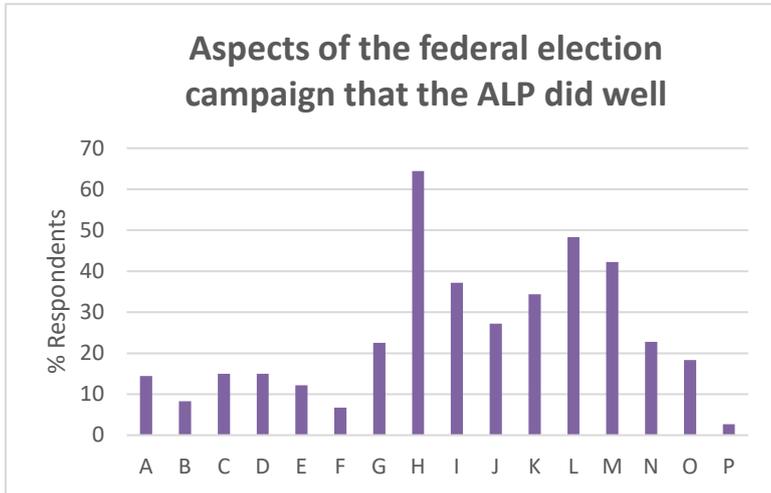
ELA provided a copy of this material to the Leader of the Opposition and met with the office of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to share the research results. It was also presented to several Shadow Ministers. In addition, the polling informed all the training sessions provided to EMILY’s List endorsed candidates and private briefings with the candidates in the three targeted seats.

## 4 Strengths and weakness of Labor’s election campaign

There are both strengths and weaknesses in Labor’s campaign from a gendered perspective which provide guidance on how to improve both gendered and generic campaigning into the future. Since the Prime Ministership of Julia Gillard and the 2013 and 2016 election losses, campaigning as a woman has gained more attention by the ALP, with an improvement in the development of gender equal policies and campaigning. There was excellent work conducted over a long time by the federal parliamentary women’s caucus to produce the gender equality strategy that was released during the election campaign. However, there is regrettably still a failure of the ALP national campaign team to utilize the expertise, experience and women’s movement connections of EMILY’s List Australia and the National Labor Women’s Network.

#### 4.1 Women’s and gender-based policy development

EMILY’s List members believe the policy development process in the ALP and the final platform presented was particularly strong during the Federal Election 2019 with over 64% of respondents to our survey indicating this was done well.



A	Campaign materials
B	Campaign slogans
C	Fundraising
D	Letterboxing
E	Media - newspapers and radio
F	Media - television advertisements
G	Media - website, Facebook, twitter, instagram
<b>H</b>	<b>Policy</b>
I	Policy announcements
J	Polling booth bunting and materials
K	Polling day organisation
L	Support for the Labor leader
M	Support for your local candidate
N	Phone banking
O	Door knocking
P	Other

Women and gender-based policy development was undertaken in a sophisticated and strong way, making use of existing structures of engagement with rank and file members of the ALP, the federal parliamentary caucus while also enabling women from outside the party to shape results.

The initial steps to developing Labor’s gender-based policy commenced at the National Labor Women’s Conference in 2017 where a range of policy positions were

In particular, we note the following policy positions advocated at this time by EMILY’s List Australia:

- The reinstatement of funding to the Australian Bureau of Statistics to conduct the Time Use Surveys
- Development of a National Gender Equality Strategy building on setting the agenda, supported by funding and measurable targets
- Commit to developing social wealth economic indicators to ensure the value of unpaid care economy is included in measurement of GDP
- Deliver gender responsive budgeting including equal representation of women on expenditure review committees, gender lens on budgeting and gender budget statements

At this National Women's Conference, Sharon Claydon and Emma Husar presented the first "Gender Equality Strategy" consultation forum with ALP women members, a stakeholder engagement process modelled on the Victorian Labor Government's gender equality consultations undertaken in the lead up to the development of Safe & Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy. The Women's Caucus would take the consultations around the country, meeting in more than 15 locations and received 35 submissions.

We commend the Federal Parliamentary Women's Caucus for its collegiate development of a very detailed policy document and its commitment to stakeholder engagement. We also commend the work done to ensure that there were appropriate levels of investment in women's and gender-based policies through the internal budgetary processes of the Labor Opposition.

While there are always areas for refinement and improvement, EMILY's List Australia is incredibly supportive of the policies that were taken to the Federal Election 2019. Our Members have strongly affirmed the suite of women's and gender-based policies taken to the last election and have indicated a strong desire not to see them watered down in any way.

*'The 2019 election campaign presented the best policy reform agenda in decades. I hope the party sticks with it and works better on communicating it'*

*'ALP was brave in its policy platform - it's actually addressed the growing inequality, tax avoidance & was focused on future proofing Australia'*

*"Dont retreat on progressive policies, we need to communicate them and their benefits more clearly"*

*"Just because of the loss does NOT mean Labor should abandon fairer policies"*

*"Stay committed to good, egalitarian policies and stop being wedged. Stand for SOMETHING and people will start trusting the party again"*

However, we would be eager to see further work done to build the National Platform and policy announcements through the development of a strategic and operational plan for marketing these policies to women in the electorate as well as the future implementation of same should we win government.

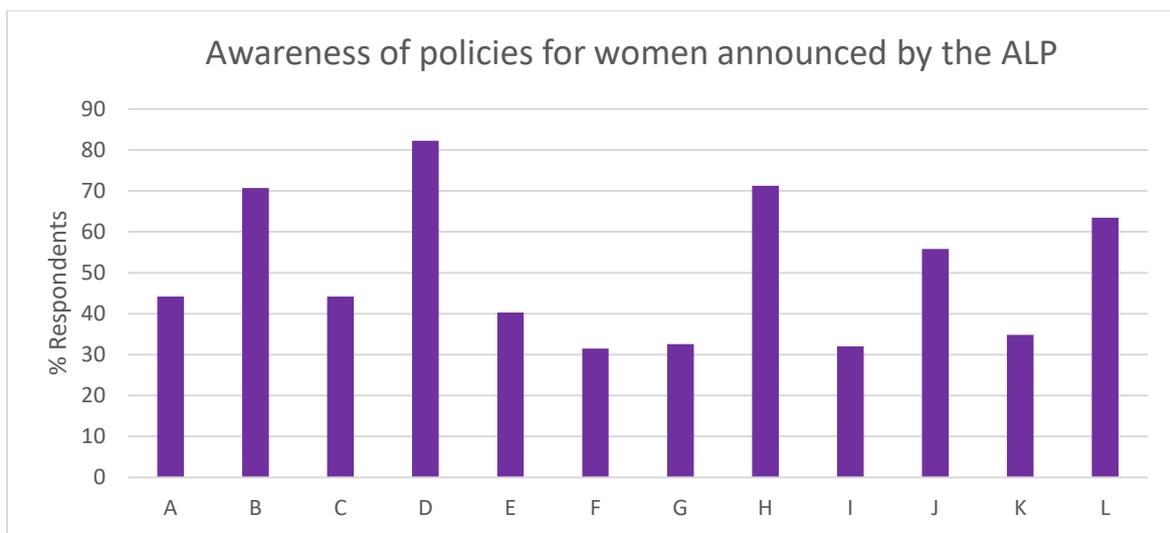
We also note the following areas of potential gender policy development.

- Policies to target older women at risk of homelessness and poverty
- Policies addressing the "juggle struggle" of working men and women balancing family, care and work responsibilities.
- Policies to strengthen responses to family violence, including the introduction of the Violence Against Women Toll and increased investment in prevention

## 4.2 High levels of awareness amongst Labor women of policies

Over the course of the campaign, it is not surprising that there was a high level of awareness of ALP policies that would impact on women in a key area that was also the focus of Change the Rules unions campaign, the restoration of penalty rates. Similarly, the previously announced policy of legislating for 10 days of paid family violence leave. Several promises announced during the campaign that strongly resonated were the preschool program for all children, support for a voice for first nations people and the pay rise for early childhood educators.

Our member survey shows that awareness was lower for more women specific announcements made during the campaign. This indicates that even amongst our biggest supporters, not all were aware of all the benefits an ALP Government would deliver for women and communication with them failed to deliver the messages. Extrapolation to the wider community suggests that there was little awareness of these policies amongst women voters.



A	20,000 Flexible Support Packages for people escaping family violence
B	To legislate for 10 days paid family violence leave in the National Employment Standards
C	To require big business to publish their gender pay gaps and ban pay secrecy clauses
D	Restore penalty rates
E	Pay superannuation on Commonwealth paid parental leave
F	To deliver the first National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for access to legal, safe and affordable healthcare
G	Remove the \$450 a month minimum threshold for superannuation
H	3 and 4 year old kinder and preschool program for all children
I	Increase to 100% the childcare subsidy for low-income families
J	Establish a Voice for First Nations people and a Makarrata Commission
K	A National Strategy for Gender Equality and reinstate the annual Women's Budget Statement
L	20% pay increase for early childhood educators over 8 years

### **4.3 Labor's Women's Policy Launch**

The intermediate awareness level of our survey respondents of the women's policy launch (64%) within a highly engaged section of our supporters indicates that the communication of this campaign event needs to be improved. The event itself in Melbourne was attended by ELA members and promoted widely across our platforms in addition to the ALP however it received very little external media attention in a crowded campaign schedule. It is noted that following this event, further announcements were made in relation to early childhood educators pay. It would have been better to combine these announcements for greater impact on highlighting the full suite of policies. Many respondents were heartened by the policy launch and recorded it as their campaign highlight

*"Women's issues" beginning to just be "issues" because women aren't fringe in the ALP anymore"*

### **4.4 Reproductive Health Care Policy**

Over time, our Gender Gap Research has revealed a consistent trend of uncommitted women voters in marginal seats approving of reproductive choice for women. Our GGR is also consistent with the trends observed in the National Election Study, which show a downward trend in voter support for anti-abortion policies. The ALP's strong reproductive health policies are consistent with the majority of voters in Australia.

So, we are concerned to see some strategic post-election discussions about the impact of anti-choice Christian voters on the election outcome, in particular the impact Cherish Life is alleged to have had in Queensland and in Western Sydney. We fundamentally reject the idea that there are large swathes of uncommitted Christian voters swinging away from Labor because of our reproductive health policy. We do so in the absence of any quantitative or qualitative research that establishes this as fact.

This kind of assertion is not borne out in any of our Gender Gap Research, where anti-abortionists in our uncommitted women voter research groups are consistently less than 10% of any group. Attempts to use the election loss to justify a watering down of the Reproductive Health Policy will be strongly opposed by EMILY's List Australia.

This is not to say that a strong reproductive health policy won't attract its critics or anti-choice campaigners targeting pro-choice candidates. EMILY's List has been resourcing progressive pro-

choice women with information and material to combat anti-choice advocates for 23 years without any assistance from the ALP. This has, at times, meant providing information about reproductive health policy, the electoral insignificance of the anti-choice vote and its overstated impact in election campaigns in Australia, as well as pastoral care to electorate offices of pro-choice women targeted by offensive material, such as dead fetuses and the like.

In that time, the ALP has never produced or resourced the production of pro-reproductive healthcare marketing material. Now that reproductive healthcare is such a significant part of our National Platform, we recommend the development of a resource kit to assist women and men to communicate the importance of, and increase multi-party support of, reproductive freedom for women in Australia. Further, we recommend that these resources also be produced in a range of different languages.

#### **4.5 Campaign Highlights – when communication worked**

Several respondents remarked upon the women’s policy launch, individual candidate launches and the official campaign launch speeches as being their highlights of the campaign. Most highlights involved policy announcements. Pointedly, many respondents commented on Bill Shorten’s response to the attacks made on his mother as a campaign highlight.

*‘Bill Shorten’s announcement of free health care for cancer patients.’*

*‘The way Shorten’s team worked as a team, with Bill Shorten happy to allow his team to speak to their areas of responsibility. I especially liked the launch, which I found inspirational’*

*‘The progressive policy commitments and Bill Shorten’s response to attack from Murdoch Press’*

*‘Leader debates, Individual campaign launches; when Bill was attacked about his mum and he came back emotional and raw’*

#### **4.6 Weaknesses of the campaign**

##### **4.6.1 Failure of communication and to counter negative messages from the Coalition, Clive Palmer and the Murdoch Press**

The fact that most respondents (72%) rated the campaign as ineffective was not surprising. As mentioned above, the majority view of our survey respondents is that the policy platform was right, but the communication of the benefits failed to impact on voters. While it was clear that elements of the media were always going to be campaigning against the ALP, the success of the Morrison led almost solely focus negative campaign against Bill Shorten and the astounding amount of money spent by Clive Palmer also targeting Bill were less predictable. However, the inability of

the campaign to counter the negativity and false claims about policies (eg. Death taxes) was frustrating to many supporters.

Not changing tactics when the “top end of town” and the “us and them” approach failed to cut through and indeed, alienated voters, particularly pensioners, has been highlighted many times over as a fatal error.

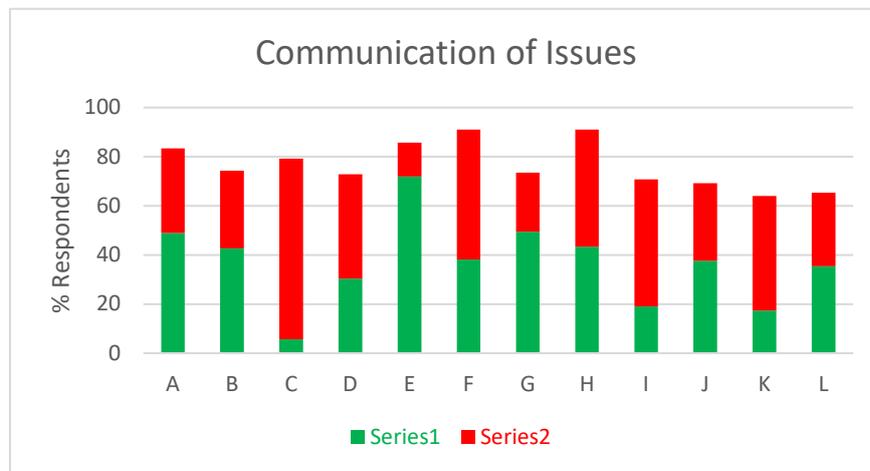
*‘The ALP should have done more to counter Coalition lies about death taxes, etc.’*

*‘Poor or nonexistent responses to lies and false/misleading claims was the main problem.’*

*‘I think the party did not have the processes in place to appropriately respond to new attacks’*

Respondents to the survey rated various issues as being either communicated well or communicated poorly during the campaign. As reflected by their comments, the ALP did well in the areas of health and investment in Medicare, but badly in the retirement planning and superannuation which was mainly due to the franking credits issue, and in the area of cost of living pressures and how ALP policies would address them. This was seen as a failure of Bill Shorten to cut through with messages.

*‘I was amazed that clever people couldn’t find simpler ways to explain complicated policies.’*



*Issues considered by respondents to be communicated well (Series 1) or poorly (Series 2)*

A	A safe and fair community which looks after the disadvantaged
B	A positive and optimistic vision for the future
C	Secure retirement planning and superannuation
D	Properly paid and long-term employment opportunities
E	Investment in health and protection of Medicare
F	A fair and equitable taxation system
G	A quality, accessible and needs-based funded education system from kinder to tertiary level
H	Addressing climate change and a renewable energy future
I	Cost of living pressures and how to relieve them
J	20% pay increase for early childhood educators over 8 years
K	First ever National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy
L	10 days Family Violence Leave as part of the National Employment Standards

#### **4.6.2 Lack of appropriate marketing material to women to promote ALP policies**

Our survey data shows that the policies that had been announced long before the election and key new announcements that attracted broader media attention were more widely known but not the many important policies that were announced during the campaign. There needed to be prepared social media tools ready for candidates to drop in their photos and details, to use to promote the great policies. The most pointed message from our survey respondents is that the policy settings are right, but the communication of the message failed.

*‘Missed opportunity to specifically attempt gender-based campaigning in marginal seats.’*

*‘Lack of tailored material to win women’s vote’*

#### **4.6.3 Lack of targeting the Coalition on failing Australian women**

In comparison with the high level of awareness of some of the ALP women’s related policies, our survey respondents were unaware of most of the limited number of women’s policies presented by the Coalition. Fewer than 25% knew about their Women’s Health strategy and their commitment to 4-year-old kinder, while less than 10% could recall any other policy.

The opportunity to compare and contrast the lack of vision offered by the Coalition and any focus on women’s needs was missed in the Labor campaign messaging. Australian women and their families are massively out of pocket because of the Coalitions policy settings. Their behaviour and attitudes towards women should have been called out more prominently.

#### **4.6.4 Lack of tailored gender-based phone-banking**

Despite the recognition of the success of “Women calling women” campaigning, the scripts provided to candidates during these sessions were the same as the generic phone banking scripts, lacking any gendered tailoring. Where possible, EMILY’s List Australia assisted candidates in adapting the messaging to ensure that women voters received messages consistent with the results of our Gender Gap Research.

These Women Calling Women sessions were commenced with brief training and advice about the significance of winning the women’s vote for Labor. Feedback from participants in The Women’s Organising Network sessions indicated a lack of specific training and support to women participants. The activity centred on asking women volunteers to call women voters without the gender-based data and messaging overlaid onto scripts. This is ineffective in terms of resource allocation and frustrating for the volunteers and fails to do gender-based campaign properly. We are critical of the

decision in 2019 by National Office not to engage with EMILY's List Australia on the development of these scripts, as has been done in the past.

#### **4.6.5 Disorganisation and lack of strategy - last minute assistance in gender-campaigning**

EMILY's List Australia was called on at the very last minute to assist in gender-based campaign support, leaving little time to prepare or coordinate and without any additional resources from the ALP Head Office. On this occasion, we were asked to assist in the promotion during the Mother's Day Weekend of the leader, Bill Shorten, building on the organic online response to attacks on Shorten and his late mother, Ann. ELA Senior Leadership and our Communications Team produced gender based memes to promote ALP policies during the Mother's Day weekend, using the organic hashtag #mymum. The materials were produced with only a 24 hour turnaround of notice.

Mother's Day being held in the middle of the Federal Election Campaign was a significant opportunity for the ALP in the days before and afterwards, however there was little to nothing produced by the party in terms of political visuals or social media memes that would enable the promotion of the suite of family friendly policies developed but the party, nor was there any attempt to produce Mother's Day appropriate letterbox material promoting same. Given Labor's significant policy advantage in the area of family friendly policy development, this was a large missed opportunity to be strategic and proactive, rather than reactive.

There appears to be a very significant gap between the Federal Labor Party Caucus's and rank and file capacity to develop nuanced gender-informed policies focussed on family friendliness and gender inclusivity, and the capacity of the ALP National Office to communicate and market these to women. Once again, ELA draws attention to the mistakes and missed opportunities that occur when homogenous groupthink of male only organisers is engaged in data analysis and messaging.

#### **4.6.6 Other contributing factors to Labor's loss**

One alarming development at the end of the campaign was the unanticipated and unethical attacks and campaign tactics on women from culturally diverse background. Of specific note was the defacing of Shireen Morris's corflutes and the misinformation in polling materials targeting the Chinese community in both Jennifer Yang's and Stella Yee's seats and others. Refer to recommendation number 9. The Greens cavalcade in Queensland on Adani exposed our lack of a clear stance. There is work to be done to evolve the policy position and communication strategy that protects jobs in this transitioning economy