Q5: Inadequate and unpredictable funding for family and domestic violence services limits the capacity of specialist agencies to respond to the urgent and ongoing needs of those affected. Would your party support the implementation of guaranteed, long-term funding for family violence services, delivered through a dedicated Commonwealth funding stream?

Yes,

Further information (if relevant):
A Shorten Labor Government will provide funding certainty to the organisations delivering the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. Labor’s commitment of $65 million over six years will ensure 1800 RESPECT, Our WATCH and Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) can continue their critical work in tackling the scourge of family violence. Labor established the National Plan in government to provide a comprehensive approach to the prevention of violence against women and to improve coordination between the Federal Government and the States and Territories. The implementation of the National Plan was always going to result in more women seeking support and it is critical that these services can continue to support women as demand increases. We will also provide an initial investment of $70 million for front-line community legal services, a national safe at home plan, perpetrator accountability and $88 million in a new Safe Housing program to increase transitional housing options for women and children escaping domestic violence. We are also committed to commissioning a National Crisis Summit within 100 days of coming to government. A national crisis summit on violence against women is required for the Federal Government and the States and Territories to agree to urgently implement coordinated judicial and social services reform within their areas of responsibility to better deal with family violence, including funding options and mechanisms. Further details are available at www.100positivepolicies.org.au.
Fair Agenda note:

The ALP has clarified that:
Labor gives bipartisan support to the funding in the 2016 Budget which will implement measures as part of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. Labor’s policies as announced in relation to family violence are in addition to this Budget measure.

In regards to the Women’s Safety Package, Labor is not currently aware of the status of the initiatives or amount of program funding already spent against the individual measures outlined in the package. If elected, Labor will review the status of the measures and consult with States and Territories and other key stakeholders before determining the roll out of the measures in the package.
Q7: The Family Violence Prevention Legal Services provide specialist and culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but are currently limited to just 14 locations. Would your Party provide the funding needed to ensure national coverage -- estimated at an additional $28 million annually?

Partial,

Further information: Labor will commit almost $50 million to front-line legal services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, to ensure women suffering from family violence get legal support. The aim of this is to ensure, at least, that women facing court have access to appropriate legal services. Labor will provide Family Violence Prevention Legal Services with an additional $4.5 million to build capacity within their organisation and services.

Q8: Community Legal Centres provide vital free legal advice to people experiencing family violence. The top two areas of work CLCs do nationally are family law and family violence related. Would your Party commit to reverse the scheduled $34.83 million cuts to CLCs between 2017-2020, and provide additional funding?

Yes,

Further information on any additional funding (if relevant)
Labor will commit almost $50 million to front-line legal services, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, to ensure women suffering from family violence get legal support. The aim of this is to ensure, at least, that women facing court have access to appropriate legal services. More information is available at www.100positivepolicies.org.au

Q9: Would your Party provide additional federal funding to expand perpetrator responses and intervention such as men's behaviour change programs, estimated by No To Violence to require an additional $37 million of federal funding annually?

Partial yes,

Further information:
Labor developed the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010-2022) in government and we continue to give bipartisan support for the actions arising from the Second Action Plan (2013-2016) focused on National Priority 4: Improving perpetrator interventions. This includes measures to: - Improve the evidence base on perpetrator interventions, with a focus on reducing recidivism and a better understanding of high risk groups. - Finalise and set national outcome standards for best practice perpetrator interventions. - Build capacity to implement national outcome standards for perpetrator interventions and improve the quality and quantity of perpetrator interventions. We have also committed an additional $8.4 million in perpetrator mapping to look at the interactions across family violence, law enforcement, justice, child protection and related systems to help identify opportunities to prevent violence through information sharing. A Shorten Labor Government will work with the States and Territories to identify areas of need and best practice in perpetrator responses and intervention and build on existing programs underway at the state and territory level.
Q10: Our Watch is the National Foundation for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and their Children. It oversees and leads the implementation of the national strategy to prevent violence against women. Does your Party support the provision of long term, core funding of Our Watch of $5 million annually until at least 2022 (the final year of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children)?

Yes,

Further information: A Shorten Labor Government will provide funding certainty to the organisations delivering the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, including Our WATCH. Labor’s commitment of $65 million over six years will ensure 1800 RESPECT, Our WATCH and Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) can continue their critical work in tackling the scourge of family violence. Labor understands we also need to keep working towards stopping violence before it occurs. To achieve this, we need cultural change. That is why we created Our WATCH through the National Plan to build awareness and help create a society where violence is not tolerated.

Q11: Would your Party support investment to build the capacity of practitioners in community groups, government, organisations and key sectors to ensure they have expertise in the prevention of violence, and are able to expand the reach of current primary prevention activities?

Yes,

Can you please detail your policy in this area: Labor supports the continued investments through the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. We understand violence against women and their children is an issue that impacts the whole community. We understand the need to build upon the momentum in the Australian community to reject inequality and violence and to drive a change in attitudes and behaviour. Since its inception under Labor, the National Plan has had a strong focus on preventing violence by raising awareness, engaging the community and building respectful relationships in the next generation. To date, significant work has been undertaken to establish strong foundations that will drive primary prevention over the life of the National Plan. This includes establishing Our WATCH, delivering and evaluating respectful relationships education, and delivering The Line, an innovative social marketing campaign aimed at changing young people’s attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence. Actions in the Second Action Plan include:

- Supporting communities to prevent, respond to and speak out against violence, through local government, businesses, community and sporting groups, schools and key institutions.
- Improving media engagement on violence against women and their children, and the representation of women experiencing violence, at a national and local level.
- Taking the next step to reduce violence against women and their children by promoting gender equality across a range of spheres, including women’s economic independence and leadership.
- Supporting young people through The Line campaign and by addressing issues relating to the sexualisation of children.
- Building on the findings of the respectful relationships evaluation, to strengthen the design and delivery of respectful relationship programmes, and implement them more broadly.
- Incorporating respectful relationships education into the national curriculum.
- Enhancing online safety for children and young people.
Q12: Would your Party implement a policy to place domestic violence specialists in family court registries to undertake risk assessments at the very earliest stages of a case and provide recommendations on interim care arrangements for children?

No policy,

Further information on your policy:
Labor agrees the capacity of the judicial system, including family law, is critical as part of the solution to prevent family violence and better support those experiencing it, together with the role of critical services, prevention and efforts to increase understanding of the causes and responses. It’s why Labor is committed to commissioning a National Crisis Summit within the first 100 days of coming to Government that will specifically examine the range of ways to build capacity in this area, including: - Strengthening the way in which the legal system currently operates with respect to family violence, and any implications for legislative and administrative reform. - Improving training arrangements for state and federal magistrates and judges to better respond to and manage family law and family violence cases. - Prioritising the safety of women and children in the court environment, including better court access and support facilities for families in the form of improved court security, child care and support for litigants navigating the system (through the courts and family mediation centres). - Coordinating best practice approaches to the critical role performed by police in all jurisdictions in responding to family violence and providing immediate support for those affected. A summit on family violence is required for the Federal Government and the States and Territories to agree to urgently implement coordinated judicial and social services reform within their areas of responsibility to better deal with family violence and enable stakeholders, victims, survivors and their families to openly lay down the key policy challenges and priorities. Labor will continue to consider further reforms to build capacity in the family law system in consultation with the courts, police, legal services and families. Underpinning Labor’s approach is a belief that the family law system must protect those at risk of violence, the best interests of children are a paramount consideration in family law disputes and litigation is a last resort. When in government, Labor amended the Family Law Act to protect children and families at risk of violence or abuse by prioritising the safety of children in parenting matters, including harmful behaviour in the definitions of “abuse” and “family violence”. This reform also required family consultants, family counsellors, family dispute resolution practitioners and legal practitioners to prioritise the safety of children, placing additional reporting requirements on certain parties to provide evidence to courts. Historically, we also strengthened the capacity of the Family Court system by supporting the establishment of Family Relationship Centres to provide confidential advice and to enable separating families to achieve workable parenting arrangements outside the Court system. We expanded support for financial counselling and family relationship services to support vulnerable families experiencing and
escaping violence, and commissioned the Productivity Commission to report on Australia’s system of civil dispute resolution, with a focus on the costs constraining access to justice and equality before the law. Labor also established the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010-2022) to drive the first long-term, strategic response to family violence which has led to national reforms including progress towards inter-jurisdictional recognition of domestic violence orders. Labor welcomes continued bipartisan support for the National Plan.

Q13: Would your party amend the Family Law Act 1975 to introduce legislative protections to stop a victim being directly cross-examined by their abuser?

No policy,

Further information:
Labor will have more to say about this during the campaign.

Q14: In 2012 a Co-Ordinated Family Dispute Resolution pilot which incorporated specialist domestic violence lawyers and social workers into the Family Court system was tested in a number of locations, and was highly successful at ensuring the best interests of children were met in matters. Would your Party ensure the national roll out of this model?

Other,

Further information:
Labor will consult with stakeholders before any further rollout of this model nationally.

Q15: Right now family violence is not legislated as a relevant consideration when the Family Court determines a property settlement. In 2001 The Family Law Council advised the Attorney-General to amend the Family Law Act 1975 to require courts to consider family violence when determining a property division. Would your party implement this recommendation?

No policy,

Further information:
Further reforms to family law in relation to family violence will be considered as part of the National Crisis Summit.

Q16: Family Report Writers are professionals (such as a social workers or psychologists) who are responsible for preparing reports to the Family Court on matters related to children’s best interests. These reports are often very influential in Court decisions, and can have dangerous implications if they do not recognise or take into account family abuse or violence. Would your party establish a national accreditation and monitoring scheme for all family report writers; with mandatory training on domestic violence, cultural competency and working with victims of trauma?

Other,

Further information:
Labor will continue to consider further reforms to build capacity in the family law system in consultation with the courts, police, legal services and families. Underpinning Labor’s approach is ensuring our belief that the family law system protects those at risk of violence, that the best interests of children are a paramount consideration in family law disputes and litigation is a last resort. When in government, Labor amended the Family Law Act to protect children and families at risk of violence or abuse by prioritising the safety of children in parenting matters, including harmful behaviour in the definitions of “abuse” and “family violence”. This reform also required family consultants, family counsellors, family dispute resolution practitioners and legal practitioners to prioritise the safety of children, placing additional reporting requirements on certain parties to provide evidence to courts. Historically, we also strengthened the capacity of the Family Court system by supporting the establishment of Family Relationship Centres to provide confidential advice and to enable separating families to achieve workable parenting arrangements outside the Court system.
Q18: The World Health Organisation recommends that the minimum period of exclusive care for optimal maternal and infant health outcomes is 26 weeks. The current paid parental leave system was introduced in line with recommendations from the Productivity Commission and allows an eligible parent to top up the minimum government provided leave (of 18 weeks at the minimum wage) with additional leave they have negotiated into their employment arrangements. It has recently been proposed that cuts be made to this paid parental leave system, reducing the amount of government provided leave available to a new parent if their employer also provides paid parental leave. Would your party vote to protect the current paid parental leave system?

Yes – We would vote to protect the current paid parental leave system, and oppose any diminution to the current system.

Further information on your policy (if relevant): In 2011, Labor delivered Australia’s first national paid parental leave scheme. Since then, more than 730,000 families have been given extra support to spend more time at home in the critical early months of their child’s life. Labor’s paid parental leave scheme gives eligible new parents 18 weeks’ pay at the national minimum wage. This is a modest and affordable scheme that appropriately targets assistance to women on low and middle incomes. About 75 per cent of parents receiving Labor’s paid parental leave scheme are on incomes of between $10,000 and $70,000 a year. Malcolm Turnbull’s election promise to cut paid parental leave shows how out of touch he is with middle and working class families. Labor will protect paid parental leave for young families. Under Labor’s policy, each year 80,000 families with new babies will be as much as $11,800 better off than they would be under the Liberals.

Q19: The Senate Standing Committee on Economics recently recommended that the superannuation guarantee* should be paid on the Commonwealth Paid Parental Leave system. Would you support this change?*The Superannuation Guarantee requires employers to contribute a percentage of an employee’s earnings into a superannuation fund.

No

Q20: On average women retire with approximately half the level of retirement savings of men. The Senate Standing Committee on Economics recently recommended that the concessional superannuation contributions of lower income earners not be taxed at a higher rate than their ordinary income, through the retention of the Low Income Superannuation Contribution beyond June 2017. Do you support the retention of the LISC or similar mechanism?

Yes,

Further information on your policy: Labor has had a plan on the table for more than a year to put Australia’s retirement income system on a sustainable footing by targeting superannuation tax concessions to those who need them most. We’re pleased to see the Abbott-Turnbull Government has backed away from its earlier commitment to abolish the Low Income Superannuation Contribution (LISC), instead, introducing a virtually identical measure in the 2016 Budget called the Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset (LISTO). This is a big win for Labor and for Australians with an adjustable taxable income below $37,000. Labor has fought hard for this policy.
Q21: The Senate Standing Committee on Economics recently recommended that the Australian Government amend the Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992 to remove the exemption from paying the superannuation guarantee in respect of employees whose salary or wages are less than $450 in a calendar month. Would your Party support removing that exemption?

No,

Further information on your policy (if relevant): It is a quarter century since Labor introduced Australia’s compulsory private savings system and our superannuation system is the envy of the world. We are proud to have created a system which has given ordinary workers the opportunity to enjoy a higher standard of living as they age. However, the system is not perfect. As the Abbott-Turnbull Government’s own Financial System Inquiry has found, 10 per cent of Australians receive 38 per cent of the superannuation tax concessions. That is more than the combined benefit of the bottom 70 per cent of Australians. The Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia have estimated that a small group of 24,000 retirees receives an annual payout from superannuation of more than $216,000 per year, all of it tax free. That’s why Labor has announced policies that ensure the sustainability of the retirement income system in a way that delivers fairness and enables Australians to maintain a comfortable standard of living in retirement. By contrast the Liberals’ chaotic and retrospective changes announced in the Budget threaten to undermine confidence in the superannuation system as a whole. Labor’s priority is to implement our proposed reforms to ensure the fairness and sustainability of the superannuation system. At this stage Labor does not have any plans to adjust the superannuation guarantee exemption thresholds.

Q22: Will your Party invest in measures to support women’s participation in traditionally male dominated industries?

Yes,

Further information on your policy (if relevant): Labor has a range of policies that will lift opportunity for women in the workforce, including higher education reforms that will increase the number of students completing their studies by 20,000 graduates a year from 2020 and offer 2000 students a year at university a start-up year at university to develop and commercialise their own enterprise. With women representing only 20 per cent of engineering and related technologies enrolments and 14 per cent of information technology enrolments, boosting the representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degrees is a priority. Labor will also offer 100,000 STEM award degrees over five years, with half of those award degrees going to women. Upon graduation the entire HECS-HELP debt will be written off. Australia has a chronic shortage of women graduating with computer science or coding skills. This lack of diversity will affect our ability to innovate as a nation as we are unable to meet our demand for information and communications technology (ICT) skills. Labor will launch Girls into Code, a $4.5 million grants program to support organisations that promote, encourage and inspire girls to learn code. Labor also has a two-part plan to upskill teachers as an urgent priority, and create a pipeline of future STEM qualified teachers to join the teaching ranks. Labor will establish a five-year STEM teacher training fund that will support 5,000 primary and secondary teachers a year to undertake professional development in STEM disciplines. Coding and programming will be a key focus of this program. The training fund will ensure the upskilling of around 25,000 existing STEM teachers in primary and secondary education, with these teachers taking their new skills straight to the classroom. More information can be found at www.100positivepolicies.org.au.
Fair Agenda Note: ALP HQ have been in touch to update their response to full yes.

Updating their explanation to:

“By continuing the current system we continue the current activity test - which means all children get 24 hrs (2 days) subsidised care by definition.

Under Labor’s plan we will take pressure off the family budget, help grow the economy by keeping more parents in work and ensure that all children continue to have access to two days of vital early education.”
Q24: Would your Party support removing or reducing entitlements to Family Tax Benefit Part B from single parents when their youngest child turns 13?

No,

Further information (if relevant):
No. Labor has always supported targeting family payments to low and middle income families through means testing. But we will not continue the Abbott-Turnbull Government’s deep and unfair budget cuts. That is why Labor will reverse the cuts to family payments. At the same time, we will put forward responsible and fair amendments to the family payments system. Consistent with our approach in government to reasonable means testing of payments, Labor will: - Not proceed with the new baby bonus and $5 weekly increase to Family Tax Benefit Part A. - Reduce the Family Tax Benefit Part A Supplement by 50 per cent for families with incomes greater than $100,000. - Continuing the existing threshold freezes to 2019-20. This means that Australian families will be better off under Labor: - A couple with a single income of $85,000 and two children in primary school will be around $1,300 better off each year under Labor. - A sole parent with income of $65,000 and two children in high school will be around $3,000 better off each year under Labor. - A couple with income of $110,000 and three young children will be $300 better off each year under Labor.

AGE 7: Reproductive rights

Q25: Do you have a party position on matters relating to a woman’s legal right to terminate a pregnancy?

Yes,

Further information:
Yes. To improve reproductive health for all Australians, regardless of sexuality or gender, Labor will: - Provide universal access to fertility advice and control programs and promote advice on the safe use of contraceptives; - Support the rights of women to make decisions regarding reproductive health, particularly the right to choose appropriate fertility control and termination and ensure these choices are made on the basis of sound psychological and medical advice; - 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; and - Enforce the ban on the cloning of human beings. According to Labor’s National Platform, the matter of abortion can be freely debated at any state or federal forum of the Australian Labor Party, but any decision reached is not binding on any member of the Party.
Fair Agenda note:

When asked for clarification ALP noted that ‘the question of whether a caucus decision is binding depends on the particular question that is before the parliament.’ If the question is about ‘abortion’ members of the caucus will not be bound, per the platform.

Therefore they cannot give a definitive answer about a hypothetical vote.