



ALP Response Fair Agenda Federal Election Survey

Thank you for contacting the Australian Labor Party and providing an opportunity for us to outline our position on issues of interest to the Fair Agenda membership.

Equality for Australian women is at the heart of Labor's mission. Achieving equality is a test of our national character and an essential building block for national prosperity.

A Shorten Labor Government will put gender equality at the centre of our priorities for government: equality in pay, in opportunity, in leadership and in freedom from violence.

Labor has developed a comprehensive set of policies to drive gender equality. In addition to the positions outlined below, we will:

- Lead a national push to help [close the gender pay gap](#).
- Deliver Australia's first [National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy](#) to make sure all Australian women can access legal, safe, affordable reproductive health services.
- Invest over \$655 million to [boost women's superannuation](#).
- Invest \$4 billion in early education to help families struggling with the costs of child care.
- Deliver policies to support women's [representation in leadership](#).

You can read more about our policies in *Australian Women. Labor's Plan for Equality* available here:

https://www.alp.org.au/media/1819/australian_women_plan_for_equality.pdf

Please see our responses to your questions below.

Funding for Family Violence Services

Long term support for specialist services

A Shorten Labor Government will make a record Commonwealth investment of over \$660 million in the Fourth Action Plan to reduce violence against women and their children, more than doubling current funding to help meet unmet demand and commit to long-term change. Labor's additional funding is focused on meeting unmet need for frontline services so women and children escaping violence can access the support they need.

Labor is also committed to a new 10-year National Plan to provide sustained national leadership and certainty to the sector, and to working with state and territory governments through the Council of Australian Governments to drive national action.

Labor knows specialist women-led family violence services across Australia play an important role, particularly in facilitating a holistic approach to supporting women and their needs when escaping family violence. Labor will prioritise funding to these organisations for this purpose. Labor will promote sustainability and ongoing security for women's services in Australia.

You can find more detail about our commitments to end violence against women here: <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/preventing-family-violence/>

Boosting funding for legal services

Labor will deliver an extra \$21.5 million in funding for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services. This will make dedicated legal support available to First Nations women in new locations in urban, rural and remote areas and provide a much-needed boost in areas where women are currently being turned away because of inadequate funding. This funding will be provided as part of a \$90 million Preventing Family Violence Legal Services Fund.

Labor will deliver an historic boost in funding to Community Legal Centres.

Labor has committed \$20 million in additional funding for Community Legal Centres around the country, in addition to \$42.5 million for the vital family violence legal assistance delivered as part of Labor's Family Violence Justice Fund, and \$120 million for financial rights legal assistance.

The National Association of Community Legal Centres, the sector's peak body, will receive \$4 million to strengthen its leadership and advocacy role for the sector.

Collectively, this represents the largest funding boost for Community Legal Centres since Labor was last in government.

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver \$21 million in extra funding to double the number of Specialist Domestic Violence Units and Health Justice partnerships. This will mean an additional 18 Specialist Domestic Violence units and five extra Health Justice Partnerships – providing specialist support to women in hospitals, health services and in the community.

Funding prevention initiatives

Labor will invest around \$130 million in prevention initiatives under the Fourth Action Plan, including an additional \$62 million in community-based prevention programs and grants for frontline services.

These grants will be available for programs delivering perpetrator responses and interventions, including men's behavioural change programs, case management, fathering programs and other specialist interventions.

The grants will also support frontline services, building the capacity of practitioners to ensure they have expertise in the prevention of violence.

Labor established three national bodies to prevent and respond to violence against women, ANROWS, OurWatch and 1800RESPECT, and will maintain the national apparatus needed to drive cultural change and inform future responses.

Delivering national leadership

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver a new 10-year National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, set a target to reduce rates of family violence, and make prevention of family violence a national priority through the Council of Australian Governments.

Labor will also establish a National Advisory Group to guide the development of the National Plan – restoring the government advisory panel axed by the Liberals.

Labor will work closely with the sector on the development of the new Plan, which will also include dedicated national strategies for First Nations women, women with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse women and LGBTIQ people.

Safe housing

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 is a high priority for Labor.

Domestic and family violence is one of the major causes of homelessness in Australia. Labor will deliver measures to provide safe housing for women.

In November 2018, Labor announced \$18 million for Safe at Home Grants to help people affected by violence stay safe in their own home.

Labor will invest in an \$88 million Safe Housing Fund to deliver transitional housing for women and children escaping violence, older women at risk of homelessness, and young people exiting out of home care.

A Shorten Labor Government will also launch a national refuge build, doubling the Liberals' funding for refuges and emergency housing, with an extra \$60 million to deliver new refuges, upgrades, accessibility improvements and better facilities for children across the country. At least \$20 million of this investment will go to improving Aboriginal controlled refuges and safe houses.

To support long-term affordable housing, a Shorten Labor Government will build 250,000 new affordable rental properties, helping thousands of women and children escaping violence find long-term affordable housing to rebuild their lives.

Labor will also address over-crowding in remote Indigenous communities with a \$1.5 billion, ten-year investment in housing. Over-crowding is a leading contributor to Indigenous homelessness.

Labor's new ten-year National Plan will include dedicated strategies to address the needs of First Nations Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse people, LGBTIQ people and people with disability.

Young people

Labor will pilot Integrated Safety Response services for at-risk families. This approach will co-ordinate services to deliver early intervention to help women and children on the path to safety, and will also support perpetrator behaviour and change programs.

Labor will provide funding through the Fourth Action Plan to deliver targeted prevention programs for vulnerable or at-risk groups, including young people who are experiencing, or at risk of, domestic and family violence.

Labor has also committed \$35 million to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, age-appropriate, respectful relationships education in schools to help young people form healthy, respectful relationships.

ParentsNext

Labor will not continue with the current ParentsNext approach. There's evidence the program is hurting kids and their parents through pointless activities, red tape, and overly punitive measures.

A Shorten Labor Government will put in place new supports for parents and children. We will put the interests of children first and support parents with children under six-years-old to plan and prepare for future study or employment.

Requiring some participation in programs to improve long-term outcomes is responsible. But Labor will take an evidence-based, case-management approach to making sure that improved programs meet the needs of individual families.

Campus sexual violence

A Shorten Labor Government will give a new independent taskforce strong powers to crack down on sexual harassment and assault at universities and residential colleges.

Penalties may be imposed on universities that fail to take serious action to protect their students. In extreme cases the education minister could even withhold government funding.

All universities will have to publish data on sexual harassment and assault to improve transparency and better track progress.

The taskforce will provide policy leadership and advice on evidence-based prevention measures, track action by universities, and recommend ways responses can be strengthened.

Labor's independent taskforce will be chaired by an eminent Australian and made up of experts in sexual assault prevention and response. It will be supported by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, which will have its operations beefed up with a \$1.8 million funding boost.

Workplace sexual harassment

Women experience unacceptably high levels of harassment and violence. Labor is committed to implementing strategies to combat sexual harassment. We will make addressing sexual violence a priority through our new National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children.

Primary Prevention

To end sexual harassment, cultural and societal change is needed in every sector, at every level. Labor is committed to placing a national focus on the prevention of sexual harassment in our workplaces, on our university campuses, residential colleges and online.

Educating children and young people about health and respectful relationships is crucial to shifting attitudes, promoting gender equality and preventing family violence, sexual harassment and assault.

A Shorten Labor Government will invest \$35 million to deliver high-quality, evidence-based respectful relationships education in more than 3,000 Australian schools. Labor will work with the state, territory, Catholic and independent education systems, to ensure schools receive support to deliver best-practice, whole-school programs.

Labor will also create an independent taskforce to crack down on sexual harassment and assault at universities, TAFEs and residential colleges. The taskforce will drive important prevention initiatives to address the underlying drivers of sexual harassment.

Labor will invest more than \$130 million in prevention initiatives as part of the Fourth Action Plan to reduce violence against women.

Addressing workplace sexual harassment

No worker should be subject to bullying, discrimination or harassment in the workplace.

Last time Labor was in government, we amended the *Sex Discrimination Act* to strengthen protections from sexual harassment for students and workers, including protecting workers from sexual harassment by clients.

Labor will work to ensure the *Sex Discrimination Act* and the powers of the Commissioner are adequately protecting women against harassment and discrimination on the basis of gender and family responsibility, and that the Sex Discrimination Commissioner is adequately resourced to do.

Labor strongly supports the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces.

Labor believes the current legal framework and complaints mechanism surrounding sexual harassment should be reviewed to ensure the legal framework keeps pace with community expectations and advances in anti-discrimination law systems in comparable jurisdictions.

Following the announcement of the National Inquiry, Labor wrote to the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to provide our strong support for the Inquiry and indicate several priorities Labor hopes to see addressed as part of the Inquiry. These include:

- Limitations of the complaints process and enforcement of the Act in relation to sexual harassment, including but not limited to:
 - The time threshold for application and termination of a complaint.
 - The powers and capacity of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner.
 - Reliance on enforcement through individuals pursuing complaints.
- Exploring approaches of jurisdictions that supplement their anti-discrimination and harassment law systems with positive duties.

Labor is committed to ensuring that workers experiencing workplace discrimination, or sexual violence and harassment in the workplace are able to address this through a fair, expedient process in the workplace relations system.

The National Inquiry is due to report later this year. A Shorten Labor Government will work closely with stakeholders to take action on the recommendations of the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces when it is released.

Support for people who have experienced harassment

Labor is committed to supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence and harassment through specialist services.

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver \$64 million to the 1800RESPECT phonenumber which provides counselling and support for women who have experienced sexual harassment.

We will also provide an additional \$42.5 million to Community Legal Centres, boosting frontline services that provide legal assistance to women who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

Labor Party Policies

Australians are right to expect that their Parliament should be a leader not a straggler when it comes to preventing sexual harassment.

In 2018, Labor reviewed our existing policies related to harassment to make sure they are consistent with best practice and that everyone we come into contact with as a party is properly protected.

Labor introduced a new interim sexual harassment policy later in 2018 that will be subject to ongoing review to ensure it is working well and delivering best practice protections.

In early 2018, Labor also wrote to the Government's Special Minister of State to ask that the government work with Labor and the cross bench to make sure that protections for political staff meet the best practice guidelines developed by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner when Labor was last in government.

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