

**New Zealand Labour Party**

# **Policy Platform**

**December 2019**



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# Introduction

The Labour Party Policy Platform is an important document which sets out the Party's values, visions, and priorities for policy.

For new and existing Members, the Platform provides an opportunity to learn where Labour is heading, and what the current thinking is.

Labour Party Members can debate and amend it at Annual Conference each year. This opportunity leads to lively discussion which Members find invigorating and worthwhile.

The high-level Platform is binding on all the Party, and guides the creation of the Manifesto for each election.

The adoption of the Platform marks Labour out as a democratic and participatory party.

**Rachel Boyack**  
**Chair of Policy Council**

# Chapter 1: Labour's values

- 1.1 Labour's values are enduring values. Our Party was formed in 1916 by working New Zealanders determined that the contribution of all people to our nation should be respected and valued. They strove then, as we do now, for a fair share for all, support for the vulnerable, and hope for a better tomorrow.
- 1.2 Significant, progressive social change in New Zealand has been driven by Labour. We are proud of our role in developing a prosperous economy, creating our welfare state; providing universal access to housing, education, and health; delivering fair wages and conditions for workers; promoting human rights; recognising Māori and redressing past wrongs; and taking an independent stance on the world stage.
- 1.3 We recognise that, as a country, we are stronger together. We believe that inclusive, egalitarian communities that support and respect everyone's contributions are the bedrock of New Zealand. We will honour and uphold The Treaty of Waitangi and be good stewards of our environment. We will always govern not only for the people of today, but for future generations. We will be good citizens of the world, promoting peace, justice, and fairness.
- 1.4 Labour believes in the innovative and creative powers of New Zealanders. We believe in their capacity in workplaces, communities, industries, and elsewhere to achieve economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes that are as good as, if not better than, anywhere else in the world.

## **Labour's values are underpinned by our commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi – Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

- 1.5 Labour recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand and affirms Māori as Tāngata Whenua of this country.
- 1.6 The Treaty is the catalyst for the relationship that exists between Māori and the Crown. It established a governance framework for the country (kāwanatanga); guarantees the existing rights of Tāngata Whenua (rangatiratanga); and recognises equal rights for everyone (rite).
- 1.7 Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi accords Māori status as both the Treaty partner and as indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand—a unique position also recognised by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
- 1.8 At the heart of the Treaty are principles consistent with, and complementary to, Labour's values. These include kotahitanga (unity and a common purpose); manaakitanga (caring socially and spirit of reciprocity); whakawhanaungatanga (family, kin ties and

interconnectedness); and kaitiakitanga (guardianship and sustainability). Labour will uphold the Treaty of Waitangi by honouring these core values. These values will guide and enhance our relationship with Tāngata Whenua and drive our commitment to realising Māori potential in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **Labour's values are enduring values**

- 1.9 Today and into the future, we stand for the hopes and aspirations of all New Zealanders to a life of security, dignity, and fulfilment. Throughout our history we have put the needs of people first by ensuring that all New Zealanders have the opportunities to fulfil their potential. We have always supported fairness, inclusion, and prosperity to be shared by all.
- 1.10 The Labour Party's values are based on our founding principle of Democratic Socialism. This is a principle that values social justice, equality, and human rights. It is a principle that values collective rights and responsibility and social inclusion. It supports the role that representative democratic government can play in giving everyone a fair chance at life.
- 1.11 **Equality/ Oritetanga:** Our vision of a just society is founded on equality and fairness. Labour believes that social justice means that all people should have equal access to social, economic, cultural, political, and legal spheres regardless of wealth, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, or social position. Labour says that no matter the circumstances of our birth, we are each accorded equal opportunity to achieve our full potential in life. We believe in more than just equal opportunities—we believe in equality of outcomes.
- 1.12 We value our diversity as a nation. We value that we are all equal before the law and all enjoy the same fundamental rights. We owe each other and our community the same duties, and we are all worthy of the same respect. An equal society is one that is built on inclusion, respect for diversity, and co-operation.
- 1.13 **Opportunity/Whakaritanga:** All New Zealanders will have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents. We want all New Zealanders to share in prosperity, to participate in their communities, and to have the capability to live the life they choose to lead and be supported by the community they live in. Everyone should have the opportunity to play their part in making decisions about New Zealand's future, and everyone's voice will have equal value.

1.14 **Solidarity/Kotahitanga:** Solidarity and whakawhanaungatanga is the value underpinning the social contract that affirms our acceptance of mutual rights and obligations for the good of society as a whole.

Solidarity defines our commitment to a compassionate, inclusive, tolerant, and responsible society. Labour is fundamentally committed to collective rights and responsibilities. We recognise that the human experience is a shared one, and solidarity reflects our common responsibility for the health and wellbeing of our families, communities, workplaces, our economy, and our environment. An essential Labour value has always been people having a fair share of the national wealth.

1.15 **Sustainability/Kaitiakitanga** is the value that will ensure resources are shared fairly across society and in doing so protect the resource base for future generations. We are not just selfishly concerned about ourselves and what we have, but whether our actions are going to leave our children's and grandchildren's generations with the same or increased opportunities. Sustainability is about ensuring economic prosperity within environmental, ecological, social, and cultural bottom lines. It is about development that will deliver good education and health outcomes, secure housing and jobs, access to safe food, clean water, clean air, and secure energy resources.

The most critical sustainability issue is climate change. It poses a severe threat to the planet and to the future of humans and other species. Labour says that climate change must be tackled urgently and effectively, by way of a low-carbon economy in New Zealand and a comprehensive international climate change treaty.

1.16 **Freedom/Rangitiratanga:** To be who we are and to achieve our individual and collective potential. Freedom is a value that includes both the right to fully participate in society and to exercise choice about how we live our lives. Labour recognises that people can only exercise true personal freedom when they have the capability to harness resources so as to participate fully and in the context of a society that establishes strong personal, social, and economic rights for all. The value of freedom also encompasses the responsibilities that we must meet as members of society.

## **Labour's values have shaped New Zealand**

- 1.17 Woven through the record of our five governments are examples of Labour's values in action. They have stood the test of time, but the world has changed. The challenges we face are very different from those we faced in 1916, or those when we first took office in 1935.
- 1.18 Labour will promote a new focus on the state as an enabler of community action and citizen involvement. Openness and transparency will be at the forefront of Labour's approach in government. In this approach, Labour will make policy decisions based on evidence.
- 1.19 Labour will build public confidence in government and in the possibilities of political change by restoring faith in democracy itself. We will meet the challenge to build a political culture and institutions that can meet the expectations people rightly have of a democratic society. Labour understands that a strong democracy is a result of the commitment, participation, and power of people working together.
- 1.20 Freedom, equality, opportunity, solidarity, and sustainability—these aren't Labour's values alone: these are the values that have shaped New Zealand. The breadth of support for these values is such that they motivate other parties besides the Labour Party: with New Zealand's MMP electoral system, progressive, social-democratic coalition governments are a real prospect for much of the time.
- 1.21 Our history and our values mean nobody will be surprised when we fight for a fairer and more inclusive New Zealand, when we fight against inequality, and when we fight to preserve freedom and opportunity for all: this is what Labour believes in, and what drives the activity of our party and its members.
- 1.22 Labour wants to provide a fair go for everyone—the support and opportunity to achieve their potential no matter who they are or what their background is: Labour's values are New Zealand's values.

## Chapter 2: Tāngata Whenua

2.1 Labour recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi (“Te Tiriti of Waitangi”) as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Tiriti:

- recognises Māori as the Tāngata Whenua, the indigenous people of this country
- acknowledges the special connection Māori have with the physical world and the natural environment
- accords Māori unique status as the Crown's Treaty partner.

Labour recognises that the Crown has, in the past, not always honoured Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Labour is committed to providing redress for breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

2.2 At the heart of the Treaty are core values that are consistent with Labour’s values. These core values are kotahitanga (unity and a common purpose); manaakitanga (caring socially and spirit of reciprocity); whakawhanaungatanga (family, kin ties, and interconnectedness); and kaitiakitanga (guardianship and sustainability).

2.3 Te Tiriti o Waitangi (and these core values) will be the foundation of the relationship Labour has with Māori. It will form the basis for the way we:

- engage with and support the aspirations of Māori to realise Māori potential
- assist Māori to meet the individual and collective challenges faced now and in the future.

2.4 A Labour government will honour this relationship through initiatives and partnerships that advance the individual and collective status and wellbeing of Māori.

2.5 Labour acknowledges that tamariki (children) and mokopuna (grandchildren) are at the heart of whānau, and Labour in government will empower Māori to safeguard their tāonga (treasures) and their legacies for present and future generations.

2.6 Labour will nurture these relationships and promote actions that:

- celebrate and assist the growth (at a domestic and global level) of the unique language and cultural identity of Māori
- build on and generate knowledge and skills to advance the economic position of Māori

- enable and support access to necessary resources to continually improve the quality of life for Māori.
- 2.7 Labour, Māori, and Aotearoa New Zealand still face significant challenges in our pursuit of strong and vibrant families, communities, and society. We know that inequality does create other social problems. Reducing inequality is a priority for Labour, and succeeding in that goal will be beneficial for Māori as many Māori experience greater levels of inequality than other people in our country.
- 2.8 Labour must continue to work to honour the Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its core values and the unique status of Māori as Tāngata Whenua. We will develop collective responsibility to one another as Treaty partners through our common purpose and shared ideals of fairness, justice, and peace.
- 2.9 Labour will ensure that future generations of Māori are given the opportunity to succeed by:
- building on the momentum and continuing to work with hapu and iwi on enduring treaty settlements, economic development and innovation that go with it.
  - supporting Māori innovation and participation that contributes to the growth and economic development of Aotearoa New Zealand
  - continuing to work with Māori to identify strategies and partnerships to overcome negative outcomes affecting individuals and families
  - identifying skills and talents and valuing Māori innovation and creativity.
- 2.10 Aotearoa New Zealand has an abundance of natural resources that need to be properly managed. Māori, as Tāngata Whenua, have a special relationship and guardianship role (kaitiakitanga) to the land and natural resources. Labour acknowledges this relationship and will continue to work with Māori to ensure the sustainability of the natural environment for future generations to use and enjoy.
- 2.11 Labour already has a solid platform to tackle the challenges facing our people and our country. To achieve Labour's vision for an inclusive society and strong country, we will use our policy platform to tackle the inequalities facing our people; respecting and appreciating each other's differences, harnessing our unique strengths and abilities to innovate.
- 2.12 Māori success depends on having capacity to lead, influence, and make positive choices for Māori and Aotearoa. Labour is committed to providing opportunities so that Māori can make decisions to act in self-determining ways that positively and actively influence our environment and the individual and collective wellbeing.

# Chapter 3: Strengthening the economy

## Vision

- 3.1 Labour is committed to a strong economy. Labour believes a strong economy is one in which everyone enjoys the security of good incomes and jobs and the natural environment is enhanced and protected.
- 3.2 A strong economy is underpinned by export-led success and a government that plays an active role in creating that success. Labour will build an economy on social democratic values that will not tolerate economic settings based on existing, or growing, levels of inequality. We believe that New Zealand has great potential for robust and durable economic development that will improve people's lives across the Māori and Pasifika economies, across regions and industries, and in all our communities.
- 3.3 Labour is committed to financial and economic development policies that will transform New Zealand into a sustainable, resilient, low-carbon economy that is high-performance, high-wage, high-employment, and export orientated. Labour recognises the inadequacy of GDP as a measure of the quality of life of a people and is committed to developing broad-based measures of economic, environmental and social wellbeing.
- 3.4 Since its ground-breaking first term in office, Labour has actively promoted a strong, diversified, successful New Zealand economy. Labour holds that government must play an essential role in managing and developing the economy. We reject the notion that free markets on their own will deliver either long-term prosperity or just distributional outcomes.
- 3.5 Labour remains committed to this vision and programme. The challenge now is to turn these positive structural changes into economic progress by working more closely in partnership arrangements to create the conditions for success in industries, sectors, and regions. The aim is to build a high-value, high-performance, export-oriented economy. We particularly recognise the potential for such outcomes in vibrant Māori and Pasifika economies.

## Our approach

- 3.6 Labour supports innovative, growth-directed macroeconomic policies designed to overcome long-term structural weaknesses exposed by the global financial crisis. Our policies are focused on long-term environmentally sustainable growth, improved employment opportunities for all New Zealanders, a progressive tax system that sends the right investment signals, and an improved savings performance.

3.7 Labour is committed to a productive and innovative economy that has:

- high-value, high-wage jobs
- participative, safe workplaces
- employment relations legislation that promotes collective bargaining, protects minimum standards, protects workers in restructuring, receivership, or liquidations, and guarantees working people and their unions a voice
- engaged, valued, and well-trained workforces assured of a living wage that allows working families to participate fully in community activities
- a workforce which has adequate sick leave entitlements, and portability of their sick and parental leave entitlements
- regular increases to the minimum wage
- a tripartite framework for collaboration with government, businesses and unions
- a just transition for any structural re-adjustment of the economy to mitigate any adverse social or economic effects.

Labour also believes that key and essential infrastructure, services and public assets should be provided by and regulated by the state and/or in partnership with iwi or by local communities.

3.8 Labour will undertake sustained diversification of the New Zealand economy to improve standards of living and export success. Manufacturing is vital in a modern, successful economy. We are committed to advanced manufacturing and services, supported by new partnerships, to expand investment in research and development.

3.9 Regional and sectoral development is vital. New Zealand's regions must be encouraged and supported to play a full role in our economic development. Labour is committed to a strong rural economy in which existing high-performance sectors are complemented by support for other emerging sectors to reach similarly high standards. Agriculture's traditional economic role, especially in exports, remains important for Labour. Responsible resource extraction or mining will also play a role in the economy. We believe there is considerable potential to grow the value of New Zealand's seafood and marine industries while ensuring appropriate standards of sustainability and decent working conditions. We will work with stakeholders and iwi to achieve this objective.

3.10 Labour recognises the potential for New Zealand as the producer and exporter of quality food to a growing international market. Our reputation for integrity, animal welfare and environmental protection must be protected and enhanced as we grow the volume and the value of our exports.

- 3.11 The wise use and management of our water resources for food production to secure and grow export income must be sustainable and protect the multiple values and quality of all our water.
- 3.12 The competitive natural advantages we have in food production cannot be taken for granted and must form the base for innovative smart systems for a higher value economy.
- 3.13 Under Labour, procurement policy will be based on whole of life costs, local industry participation plans, resilience, and sustainability, as part of value for money. This will enable New Zealand firms to be competitive in bidding for these contracts. Procurement policy will also be used to advance social, regional development and economic and environmental goals. Labour will deliver monetary policy that strikes a balance between the control of inflation and a competitive exchange rate, and which will support strong economic performance. We will promote policies that reduce the incentive for speculative financial behaviour.
- 3.14 Labour is committed to a fair and transparent tax system that promotes social equity, sustainability, and economic growth. Labour is committed to environmentally responsible outcomes in economic development, and clean and renewable technologies with an emphasis on reducing carbon emissions.
- 3.15 Our economic policy will tackle intergenerational unfairness and reverse the growing gap between the poor and rich, reduce the rate of child poverty, and increase the range and number of career opportunities for our young people.

## **Portfolio priorities**

### **Delivering financial stability and successful macroeconomic policy**

- 3.16 Labour recognises that successfully managing macroeconomic settings is imperative if New Zealand's full potential is to be realised. Labour in government has managed, and will continue to manage, government finances prudently.
- 3.17 Labour will continue to use and improve the income tax system as a vital tool to provide all New Zealanders with adequate resources, and to reduce income inequality.
- 3.18 Labour supports a tax system that promotes an economy based on productive enterprise rather than speculation, that ensures greater fairness and looks closely at targeting untaxed wealth in the wider economy.

- 3.19 As a priority, Labour will act to ensure that housing market speculation does not create financial instability and drive property prices out of the reach of ordinary New Zealanders. We will implement a fair tax system in which damaging property speculation is discouraged through a mix of tax policy and targeted buyer restrictions.
- 3.20 Labour will modernise the tax system so that e-commerce and cross-border transactions are taxed fairly. We will ensure that Inland Revenue has sufficient resources to administer the taxation system. We will reduce opportunities for tax avoidance so that taxpayers are confident everyone is contributing their fair share.
- 3.21 Labour will act to reduce and then stabilise New Zealand's exchange rate when it is overvalued by drawing on a range of monetary tools and the experience of successful export economies. Under Labour, the Reserve Bank will have a balanced focus on inflation along with other objectives, particularly a competitive exchange rate underpinning improved export performance and job creation.
- 3.22 We will promote a regulatory environment for financial institutions based on prudent, transparent, and professional behaviours. Labour believes in a universal Kiwisaver scheme to improve savings performance. Labour will promote R&D as an integral part of a strong economy, including through targeted tax benefits that encourage successful research and business collaborations.
- 3.23 Labour is committed to an employment-relations framework that delivers a living wage to New Zealand workers. This framework will support extension-industry and sector-bargaining arrangements, in addition to enterprise-based bargaining, to achieve a robust wage-setting system. Labour will continue its traditional commitment to measures that reduce gender and other discrimination in the economy and labour market. Labour will reduce the gender pay gap, recognising that the gap affects women's lifetime earnings and financial independence, family incomes, and the ability to save for retirement. Labour will introduce measures that promote a healthy work-life balance.
- 3.24 Labour will support international trade and investment agreements that promote New Zealand's economic wellbeing and support fairness, transparency, sovereignty, and sustainability. Labour takes seriously environment, labour, and human rights standards that are frequently raised by trade agreements, and is committed to improving such standards as part of trade agreements.
- 3.25 Labour is committed to ensuring democratic, civil society and public involvement at all stages of trade negotiation. While a certain level of confidentiality is required to protect New Zealand's interests, Labour will ensure that full and appropriate use is made of public consultations, civil

society dialogue, parliamentary oversight and public debate before, during and after trade negotiations. Labour believes that the public have a right to such involvement.

- 3.26 Labour will not negotiate or ratify any trade agreements that allow for foreign investors or traders to have special rights to sue under investor state dispute settlement chapters or clauses in these agreements, or any other restriction that prevents the NZ Government from passing laws in the public interest.
- 3.27 Labour is committed to a system of fair universal superannuation. Labour will ensure the future sustainability of the system and will consider options to achieve this.
- 3.28 Under Labour, our immigration policy will:
- meet labour market needs and address skill deficits
  - maintain labour standards appropriate to a high-performing and advanced economy reflect our commitment to our Pacific neighbours, including through family reunification, and to international humanitarian responsibilities.
- 3.29 Labour will engage with and mobilise expatriate New Zealanders to support our long-term economic interests.
- 3.30 Labour recognises, and will act on, the specific needs of Māori and Pacific people in employment opportunity, access to a living wage, and access to educational and training opportunities that underpin stable careers.
- 3.31 Labour believes in an economy that caters for all, particularly those, such as Pacific people, who have not achieved equality in economic outcomes such as participation in business and employment. Labour will provide opportunities for Pacific people to engage in economic activities by developing their ability to form and succeed in business so that they have the means to be self-employed or to be employers. Labour will enable more Pacific people to participate in skilled employment, and more trained Pacific people to work in their chosen areas.

### **Delivering sustainable economic development**

- 3.32 Labour will implement an economic development approach that is ‘clean, green, and clever’. This approach will maintain high environmental standards, promote high-value production, and favour a lower-carbon, more renewable energy future.
- 3.33 Labour’s economic development strategy will be a bottom-up partnership model, rather than a top-down, state-to-client model. In this model, business, industry, regional, workplace, trade union, and community organisations will be first to identify opportunities for initiatives to drive improved economic performance and improved outcomes for people. These initiatives will be developed and taken to government for evaluation and support. Labour will respond to these initiatives actively, constructively, and in partnership with communities and industry while protecting and promoting the overall national interest.
- 3.34 Labour will implement a New Zealand manufacturing strategy. Labour believes that manufacturing has been the lost opportunity in New Zealand’s economy since the 1980s. We will focus on manufacturing because it will deliver high-performing jobs, high-performing workplaces, investment, innovation, exports, and opportunities for improved productivity.
- 3.35 Labour welcomes foreign direct investment when it:
- is integrated into advanced manufacturing and services that lead to jobs for New Zealanders
  - maximises our competitive advantage
  - expands the stock of New Zealand’s intellectual property.
- 3.36 Labour will, on a partnership basis, implement focused, evidence-based industry policies, designed to respond to market failures and opportunity analysis. Labour will work hard to ensure that these policies are strongly supported by:
- basic infrastructure and institutions
  - New Zealand-based savings and investment
  - skilled labour, public-good research, R&D tax credits, linked government procurement, and international market intelligence and assistance.
- 3.37 Labour will have an active regional policy that clearly identifies regional development priorities. Infrastructural capacity will be central to Labour’s regional policy, including a commitment to an efficient transport system that prioritises public transport and reduced emissions.

- 3.38 New Zealand's information technology infrastructure is important in Labour's vision for the economy. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) will drive economic development in New Zealand for decades to come. Labour will ensure that New Zealand takes the opportunity for economic development from ICT as a sector itself and uses it to enhance performance and innovation in other sectors.
- 3.39 Labour recognises the importance of Maori and iwi asset bases and initiatives in developing New Zealand's economy, and will support such initiatives.
- 3.40 Labour is committed to rebuilding and developing Christchurch in conjunction with democratic community input so that it is known internationally for the quality of its urban environment, its creative contribution to the local and national economy, and its commitment to sound environmental principles.
- 3.41 Labour will provide integrated support for innovation across the Crown Research Institutes and tertiary institutions, and through private-sector research activities, and sectoral and regional initiatives. Labour will focus on developing small and medium enterprises where export potential can be clearly shown.
- 3.42 Labour recognises the importance of education and training to economic development. We will support lifelong learning to promote productivity and innovation.

# Chapter 4: A Healthy Environment

## What we want to achieve

- 4.1 Labour is committed, as a matter of urgency, to taking all necessary measures to protect, preserve and restore New Zealand's environment. In doing so, Labour will be informed by the best national and international expert advice, and guided by the concepts of sustainability/kaitiakitanga.
- 4.2 Labour places particular importance on preventing the worst impacts of climate change by limiting the increase in global average temperature to, at the very most, 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.
- 4.3 Labour acknowledges the special connection Māori have with the physical world and the natural environment. Labour is committed to safeguarding the environmental and cultural values of Māori, and to working closely with Māori to ensure our environment is sustained for future generations.

## Why we want to do this

- 4.4 New Zealand is part of the extreme ecological crisis facing the world. Pollution of land, water and air; biodiversity loss and extinction of plant and animal species; increasing incidence of extreme climate events; and resource depletion: together, these add up to an unprecedented existential threat to human civilisation and to ecosystems across the planet.
- 4.5 Despite current understanding of this crisis and expressions of good intentions both nationally and internationally, action to date has failed to bring about the changes needed to reverse this unfolding catastrophe.

## How we will go about achieving this

- 4.6 Labour says that without a healthy environment, there can be no healthy society or sustainable economy. Labour is therefore committed to economic activity being conducted within environmental limits, and to an all-of-government approach designed to ensure that all policy and regulation contributes to sustained environmental health.
- 4.7 New Zealand must play a leading role in international action to reverse environmental degradation. In particular, although not exclusively, this involves honouring commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (including to net zero by 2050, or earlier), together with the effective implementation of the Emissions Trading Scheme.
- 4.8 Labour supports the ongoing development of a comprehensive risk assessment framework, including accurate and consistent monitoring and public reporting on the health of our

environment. The framework needs to be informed by the best expert advice from international and national bodies, such as the International Panel on Climate Change and the New Zealand Climate Change Commission, and by the wisdom of other minds and specialists in our wider community.

- 4.9 Labour believes in putting people's wellbeing and the environment at the heart of its policies. This includes reporting against a multifaceted set of wellbeing indicators in the annual government Budgets. In replacing a narrow focus on economic growth and GDP measurement, the wellbeing approach reflects a fundamental shift in our understanding of progress. In particular, it is designed to give proper weight to the ecological and environmental impacts of our activities.
- 4.10 Our current social and economic lives must shift from carbon-intensive practices to sustainable practices. This will necessarily involve swift and significant changes to many human activities, including primary production.
- 4.11 Labour acknowledges the difficulty and potential disruptiveness of this task and is committed to a Just Transition for those adversely affected, and recognises that imposition of restrictions and penalties must be complemented by encouragement of environmentally sound practices. Labour recognises the need for support where adaptation to changing environmental conditions causes people distress.
- 4.12 The health of our environment is of such fundamental importance that it should be placed above partisan politics. Labour believes in working constructively with all political parties willing to ensure coherent, long-term action to achieve environmental goals.
- 4.13 Environmental policy needs to be based on robust legislation and regulation, which is properly implemented, monitored and enforced. Local and regional government agencies must be supported by clear national direction to ensure sound and coherent environmental best practice throughout the country.
- 4.14 The Resource Management Act is central to the delivery of environmental policy for a sustainable future and to safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems. The Act must be continually monitored to ensure that it meets present and future needs, maintains necessary environmental standards, promotes high-quality built environments, protects productive agricultural land, and integrates effectively with associated legislation.
- 4.15 Government agencies entrusted with the provision of effective environmental advice and protection must be adequately funded. These include the Parliamentary Commissioner for

the Environment, the Department of Conservation, the Ministry for the Environment and the Environmental Protection Authority.

- 4.16 Labour recognises the crucial role of non-government organisations in promoting sustainable environmental outcomes and bringing about positive change. They must be assisted by the provision and dissemination of sound, up-to-date, scientific education and information about the state of the environment.
- 4.17 Government agencies at both local and national level must lead by example in responsible environmental behaviour by minimising their carbon footprint, phasing out unsound practices and showcasing appropriate technologies.
- 4.18 To meet the ecological challenges we face, research and development is of primary importance. As well as encouraging businesses to undertake such work, there must be government support for independent research to further our understanding of the challenges and to develop evidence-based solutions suited to New Zealand's particular conditions.

## **Specific Environmental Concerns**

- 4.19 Regarding specific environmental concerns, Labour will ensure:
- 4.20 Agriculture/rural sector – best environmental farming practice is celebrated and work with farmers and agricultural scientists to support such practice, recognising that New Zealand's long-term prosperity is bound up in retaining important eco-services and an international perception of environmental stewardship.
- 4.21 Best environmental practice – support and recognition of best environmental practice, while holding responsible those who do not meet their obligations and continue to pollute the environment.
- 4.22 Biodiversity – protection, preservation and restoration of biodiversity on land, in freshwater, and in the ocean; in particular, the protection of endangered indigenous species and those threatened by over-exploitation.
- 4.23 Circular economy – an economy where we can unmake everything we make, where waste and pollution are designed out, and in which, while working towards this end, waste is substantially reduced, reuse and recycling increased, and residual waste disposed of with the lowest possible detrimental impact on the environment.
- 4.24 Clean air – air quality that meets or exceeds World Health Organisation standards in all urban areas.

- 4.25 Clean land – soils free from toxic contamination and synthetic materials hazardous to land and water. Productive land managed sustainably to minimise soil erosion and physical and chemical degradation.
- 4.26 Clean water – water that is safe to drink and allows New Zealanders a range of recreational activities, with rivers, lakes and the ocean free from all forms of pollution.
- 4.27 Energy – clean production and efficient use of energy, moving New Zealand away from reliance on fossil fuels and towards renewable energy; and reducing energy demand through improved efficiency and changes to behaviour in our homes and workplaces.
- 4.28 Extractive industries – minimal environmental risk from extractive activities.
- 4.29 Genetic modification – a precautionary approach to genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and zero tolerance of unapproved GMOs.
- 4.30 Tourism – the economic benefits of tourism and recreational businesses do not come at the expense of the environment.
- 4.31 Transport - a shift away from fossil-fuelled vehicles, promotion of walking and cycling, improved public transport and more environmentally-friendly options for movement of freight.

# Chapter 5: Opportunity and fairness for all

## Vision

- 5.1 The goal of Labour's social development policy has always been that New Zealand would be a place where everyone, no matter what their circumstances of birth or what unexpected troubles life throws at them, will be included and able to get ahead: to build their capabilities, make their own contribution, and have a stake in society.
- 5.2 Labour wants to see all New Zealanders able to reach their potential knowing that if real hardship and tragedy happens, there will be real social security and a pathway to opportunities for them. Labour wants New Zealand to be a country where disadvantage is not produced and reproduced across generations. To break this cycle, Labour wants:
- healthy, affordable housing
  - access to affordable, comprehensive healthcare
  - support for disability
  - access to childcare and adequate time to spend with children
  - equal educational opportunities moving from education into work
  - a living income
  - security of income in old age
  - gender pay equity.
- 5.3 Labour grew from the recognition that modern economies and societies offer great opportunities, but that markets alone and the survival of the fittest will not see everyone realising their potential. Labour stands for the principle of mutual care and responsibility. We understand that our lives are connected, and we believe that through this connection lies the potential to build stronger families and communities, and a better economy.
- 5.4 Instead of standing back and watching market forces create uncertainty and insecurity in people's lives, Labour believes that opportunities need to be actively opened up for people through:
- education and training for people of all ages
  - an accessible public health system
  - a social safety net, that is easily accessible.
- 5.5 For young and old, women and men, Labour's social policy will ensure that adequate support is available when people have a genuine need. We will provide the active support to help people move on and get into (or back into) work, education, or stable family or living situations.

- 5.6 Social security and realising potential both demand fighting poverty. Wise investment and evidence-based policy-making are key if we are to:
- meet the growing costs of the early years and the ageing population
  - enable older citizens and the next generation of New Zealanders to contribute to society.
- 5.7 Mutual care and responsibility means that we all rely on both our own abilities and on the contributions of others. A strong community is one in which we all pitch in to help each other. In support of the principle of mutual responsibility, we expect that all those who have the opportunity to make a contribution will do so, and any barriers to enabling these opportunities to occur are minimised.
- 5.8 Labour recognises that people contribute in different ways: they may be in paid or unpaid work, in care work, in whānau, or in communities. We know that people and governments all have contributions to make, and that in many situations well-designed, evidence-based programmes run by committed and skilled people can make a positive difference.
- 5.9 Labour wants a New Zealand where people are free to and able to build their own lives, and where diversity and differences are respected. But Labour's fundamental value of fairness and our belief that all people are citizens and contributors to society mean that we see rising inequalities as something to be worked against. Countries with high inequalities have poorer outcomes in health, educational, crime and imprisonment, and more.
- 5.10 Labour will always fight for a fairer New Zealand. Fairness and equality of opportunity are strong New Zealand traditions and a part of Labour's soul. Widening gaps between better and worse off and between men and women, young and old, mean that the 'social contract', the strong shared sense of 'us', is under increasing pressure. So too is the sense of having a stake in society, that there are opportunities for everyone, and that responsibilities are mutual. We will always work to heal social divisions, reduce the experience of exclusion and alienation, and eliminate the need to put up walls to keep others out and down.

## **Our approach**

- 5.11 Labour's approach to social security developed out of a recognition that unexpected, undeserved things happen to working people, families, and the elderly that can cause serious disadvantage over generations. Workplace injury, sickness, crowded housing, and discrimination consistently affect some parts of society much more than others. Economic growth can create many new opportunities, but downturns in the economy have disproportionate effects on some groups.

- 5.12 Chance and misfortune mean that some people struggle even in ‘the good times’. Security, mutual responsibility, and fairness demand that those adversely affected should not depend on charity and the stigma that carries, or be subject to humiliation or meaningless ‘make work’ to survive.
- 5.13 Labour policies across portfolios will generate greater security and fairness with all parts of the community playing their part, and everyone benefitting from a fairer and more cohesive society.
- 5.14 Labour recognises that there are New Zealanders whose disability, illness, or age is such that they are not expected to be in paid work, and that these people have a right to dignity and security. People who are temporarily out of the work force should be supported and enabled to re-enter the labour market. We recognise the care of people as work, whether paid or unpaid.
- 5.15 An economy that provides enough jobs with fair wages is not just good economic policy, it is central to our social development goals. Labour believes that people who can work, should. Those in paid work should earn a fair living wage for the labour they give and the contribution they make. The labour market will achieve this through effective collective bargaining, good labour standards, gender equity, and a commitment to a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work.
- 5.16 The first Labour government put social security in place to make sure that working people were supported with dignity and a basic regard for their capabilities and contributions. The basic principles and programmes that flow out of this commitment to social security remain at the core of our approach today, including:
- the provision of public health care and education
  - support for older New Zealanders, parents, children, and families
  - the security of a social safety net.
- 5.17 As society has changed, Labour has set a high value on inclusiveness and diversity, alongside fairness and security. Not all families are the same: what matters is the ability of the family to provide security, belonging, and boundaries.
- 5.18 Labour recognises that not all parents want to stay home and care, and that they need choices in care arrangements. We recognise, affirm, and support the diversity of family structures in New Zealand and value them all equally in the raising of healthy children.
- 5.19 We recognise that diverse communities, including whānau, hapu and iwi, should have more involvement in how social services are designed and delivered.

## Portfolio Priorities

### Families, children, and young people

- 5.20 Labour believes that all children should grow up in families where they are loved, nurtured, and supported. We will support policy that brings together the best evidence about human development with the best evidence about what makes a positive difference. This evidence shows that children develop and thrive when surrounded by people who love and care for them, keep them safe from harm and hunger, and provide them with stable and secure boundaries. Evidence shows that every child needs the possibility of developing confidence and a sense of security when reaching out to learn about the world around.
- 5.21 Children need to be able to trust in carers and their boundaries, enabling them to explore further and to develop self-control, mastery, and responsibility in various situations. Labour will support early years' policies that create stable, predictable family and care environments with enough time, resources, and supportive, flexible working arrangements.
- 5.22 Labour recognises that parents have the most important, and often the most difficult, jobs. While the State is a parent of last resort, we should never abrogate our collective responsibility for our nation's children to for-profit providers. We will support parents to do the job they are best placed to do while being ready and willing to intervene in the best interests of the child. All of the early years are about care and protection. Labour will support systems in which early signalling of vulnerability and risk is closely matched to providing effective interventions, with every child supported and every family given the help they need to cope..
- 5.23 Being a parent is an expensive business. We will use tax and benefit systems to support families facing the costs of raising children. Labour recognises the need to support young people as they transition from school into further education, training, or employment. Early investments only make sense if we follow up with suitable support at key transition points in life.
- 5.24 As a matter of principle and sound social and economic investment, Labour is committed to banishing child poverty in New Zealand. The solutions are not simple, and the goal cannot be achieved immediately. We will co-ordinate and monitor its approach across all of government and policy including:
- early intervention for vulnerable children
  - labour market issues
  - access to early childhood education
  - adequacy of income
  - appropriate and accessible healthcare and housing.

## **Women**

- 5.25 New Zealanders believe in genuine equality amongst our people. We proved our commitment to this ideal early by becoming the world's first democracy to extend the vote to women. After more than a century of progressive change, New Zealand women have full equality before the law but there is always more to do. Labour believes in supporting women of all ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds to reach their full potential by providing them with genuine choices and opportunities in life.
- 5.26 Women in New Zealand still earn, on average, less than men and continue to be under-represented in workplace leadership roles. More often than not, the responsibility of children's wellbeing rests more heavily on women. Too many women feel forced to return to work earlier than they wish after childbirth, and too many women are faced with trading career for family or vice versa.
- 5.27 Labour will strengthen the legislative and policy framework to address the persistent gender pay gap and promote equal employment opportunity. Labour is committed to paid parental leave and flexible working conditions to allow women to participate fully and effectively in society. Labour recognises, with particular reference to women, that everyone has the right to be free from violence and harassment.

## **Housing**

- 5.28 Having a secure and affordable home is central to achieving potential and security for all New Zealanders. A stable and healthy home environment underpins the health and wellbeing of everyone: people living alone, families, and children.
- 5.29 Housing costs are the largest budget item for many low and middle income people. Housing policy is critical when considering how to raise take-home incomes and combat the rising cost of living. Housing, whether owned or securely and affordably rented, can also be a great source of economic and social security. At any age, but especially in old age, an owned home is an asset that will keep people out of poverty and provide security and choices.
- 5.30 Labour takes seriously the evidence that the market alone cannot solve housing issues. Despite a range of incentives and subsidies, housing is an area where trusting, and even helping, the market to supply has simply not worked. The next Labour government will make it easier for people to purchase homes to live in than it is for investors to buy houses to invest in.

- 5.30 Whether a person or family rents or owns their own home, a stable, healthy home is crucial for the wellbeing of all children. Labour supports arrangements that deliver the security of affordable, long-term rental arrangements, and will set high, enforceable standards for rental houses that include insulation, health and safety, and general fitness for purpose.
- 5.31 Overall, housing provision requires several actors working within an effective framework. Under Labour, the state sector will take a stronger lead in improving the quality of rental situations, starting with its own properties. We will work with others, including community housing providers and developers, to provide quality housing for less well-off families.
- 5.32 Labour will continue to improve the quality of the state housing stock, and work with local councils, state social housing providers, developers, and community social housing providers to deliver a mix of affordable rental and privately owned houses—houses people want to live in, and in many cases are able to own. We will ensure public providers are not disadvantaged by policy.
- 5.33 Labour will find ways to work with families through savings schemes, Kiwisaver and Kiwibuild, to enable them to own assets. We will make sure finance and bond markets are geared to provide long-term secure capital, not the usual cycles of boom, bust, capital destruction, and debt hangover.

### **Disability**

- 5.34 Labour believes that a truly inclusive society is one in which disabled people have meaningful lives within their communities, based on respect and equality; have their diversity recognised; and their human rights protected. This is reflected in the motto ‘nothing about us without us’.
- 5.35 Labour recognises that impairment is a part of many New Zealanders’ daily lives. We believe each disabled person must be recognised as an individual person with their own set of needs and aspirations: no two disabled people are the same. We believe that a disabled person should be supported to follow their aspirations, to make choices, and lead a quality life. They must have choice over their housing needs, employment opportunities, sporting and recreational activities, political aspirations, and education opportunities—things most of society takes for granted.
- 5.36 Our policy framework was set with the New Zealand Disability Strategy and further strengthened by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention makes it explicit that nations must ensure the full realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all disabled people on an equal basis with others and without discrimination of any kind. Labour will ensure the Convention is implemented and will work with disabled people to improve areas of current policy shortfall and inadequacy.

5.37 The priorities will be access to information, education, independent living, employment, transport, and disabled people's involvement in decision-making. This involvement will include active leadership in policy areas in partnership with government ministers.

### **Senior citizens**

5.38 Labour recognises that older New Zealanders built this country and deserve our respect. We value the skills, knowledge, and experience that older people contribute to their families and communities—and recognise that old age can be a time of uncertainty and vulnerability.

5.39 The proportion of older people in the population is increasing. Labour believes this expanding group will have an increasingly important role to play in our society. We will support older New Zealanders to be fit and able—not only to contribute to the workforce and communities, but to enjoy their retirement in good health.

5.40 Concerns about aged-care health services, elder abuse, and cost-of-living pressures are mounting for older New Zealanders. Future generations will not have the same levels of asset ownership that currently keep poverty low for older New Zealanders. Inequalities that developed earlier in life are likely to have greater significance in old age. Labour's commitment to all senior citizens is that they will have access to a minimum level of social service provision.

5.41 Labour will support security and predictability of income for senior citizens and access to healthcare and housing that suits their needs. We will support senior citizens to live in their own home as long as possible and to experience reduced isolation through regular personal contact.

### **Violence in families and communities**

5.42 Labour recognises that violence in families and communities is a violation of basic human rights that has profound and far-reaching implications for New Zealand society. Family violence is most often violence against women and children, but also against the elderly. It is characterized by an abuser controlling their victims through coercion and fear to get their own way and with little regard for consequences.

5.44 Family violence is a crime that affects many aspects of our lives from health and wellbeing to employment, rights, and justice. Family violence encompasses physical, sexual, financial, and psychological abuse and occurs regardless of educational background, income level, profession, or ethnicity. Certain groups, however, may be more vulnerable to violence and experience additional barriers to accessing support. These groups include people with

disabilities, migrant and refugee women, rural women, and families dealing with the effects of substance abuse.

- 5.45 Labour will support policy developed in consultation with stakeholders and based on international best practice to address family violence. Labour policy on family violence will be evidence-based and will acknowledge that gender inequality is a cause of family violence. We will identify those groups within society who encounter barriers to accessing support and tailor programmes to meet their needs.
- 5.46 Labour will support youth policies that seek to reduce bullying, self-harm, and suicide by fostering inclusion, attitude change, and pathways to opportunity regardless of background or orientation.

### **ACC**

- 5.47 ACC remains a successful innovation. With the support of many governments, it has overcome the power of vested interests, which in other countries make billions of dollars out of other people's injuries.
- 5.48 Our ACC scheme is cost effective and relatively cheap. It manages injury proactively and preventively; it delivers active rehabilitation and realistic compensation. The scheme has efficiency of scale and power in the market. It negotiates nationally with treatment providers, hospitals, and ambulance services. Yet for all its strengths, ACC needs to be revitalised and protected from undermining, cost-cutting, and preparation for privatisation.
- 5.49 ACC must remain a fair and balanced public system distributing compensation speedily, consistently, and without undue contention. Cost containment, injury prevention, improved rehabilitation outcomes, and administrative efficiencies are all important elements of the ACC scheme, but they should not be pursued where injustice occurs as a result.

### **Community and voluntary sector**

- 5.50 Labour recognises that a wide range of community and voluntary organisations, from churches to clubs and non-government service providers embody much of what is best about New Zealand. These organisations deliver essential services that support diversity and local do-it-yourself initiatives, deepen whānau and wider relationships, and train people in ways that help them make meaningful contributions. These organisations also contribute to the economy and provide a vital component of democratic engagement.
- 5.51 We must build on community capabilities and support communities to do what they do best. We recognise, however, that it is counterproductive to devolve responsibilities to communities when they will struggle to meet those responsibilities. Partnership and a clear and well-considered division of responsibility between central, local, and community agencies are needed before responsibilities and funding are devolved.

5.52 Labour has always regarded the voluntary contributions people make to their communities as sitting at the heart of social development. Where possible, and in whichever ways are best, we will support volunteer organisations to make their contribution by providing:

- services such as meals-on-wheels or youth mentoring programmes
- entry-level or post-employment work opportunities for a range of people
- community activities such as in early childhood centres, language nests, marae, or sports clubs.

# Chapter 6: A world-class education for all

## What we want to achieve

- 6.1 Labour will provide equitable access to high quality, secular, public education for all citizens throughout their lives

## Why we want to do this

- 6.2 We believe that our education system should enable all New Zealanders to develop their gifts and skills, become communicators and thinkers, and be able to engage constructively and positively with others in their communities.
- 6.3 We believe that access to quality lifelong education is a public good. It improves people's lives and develops their ability to work co-operatively and adapt to changing technologies and helps develop an innovative, creative, harmonious and productive society.
- 6.4 We believe that ensuring equal educational opportunity for all New Zealanders regardless of their background, gender, culture, ethnicity or ability is vital if we are to maximize our economic, social and cultural well-being as a nation and as an active member of the global community.

## How we will go about achieving this

- 6.5 Our approach to change will be evidence-based and considered, recognizing the benefits of systemic and careful planning, real consultation with the community and educators, realistic funding/resourcing, and efficient implementation.
- 6.6 We need to focus on developing an educational environment which ensures that:
- 6.7 High quality and affordable early childhood education is accessible to all New Zealand children, underpinning their social, intellectual, and educational development.
- 6.8 A co-ordinated and systemic approach to the recruitment, provision of advice, professional development and support for a high-quality teaching profession is a very high priority.
- 6.9 Literacy, numeracy, creativity, problem solving skills, critical thinking and dispositions are developed from the first years of education.

- 6.10 Students in the compulsory school system maintain a sense of excitement, curiosity and confidence about their schooling and learning.
- 6.11 Students are all provided with a flexible, challenging, culturally responsive, creative, inclusive, relevant, and engaging curriculum.
- 6.12 State-funded schools and teachers work collaboratively through choice and share resources and expertise for the benefit of their network of communities.
- 6.13 Parents/caregivers/whanau feel included and have a role, with their children and teachers, in creating and developing schools which are responsive to their shared needs and aspirations.
- 6.14 Students/learners have access to affordable life-long learning which develops integrated vocational skills and academic pathways for employment, further study, personal growth and community participation.
- 6.15 Greater confidence in our ability to govern ourselves through full participation in a democratic society, such as through civics education.

# Chapter 7: Health - wellbeing, access, and fairer outcomes

## Vision

- 7.1 Labour's vision for health is to build a nation where all New Zealanders, regardless of income or social circumstances, are able to live longer and healthier lives because they have the knowledge to make informed health decisions and the support of a strong and adequately funded public-health system.
- 7.2 Labour is committed to adopting a holistic approach to health, taking into account physical health, mental health, the family, culture and community environment, and the socio-economic determinants of health. Our health system must take into account all of these factors if it is to be truly effective. Labour will address major health inequalities in New Zealand including health outcomes for Māori and Pacific people.
- 7.3 Labour believes the allocation of health resources should prioritise long-term health outcomes. Re-prioritising critical health expenditure can address health inequalities by dealing with the root causes of poor health. While long-term health outcomes can be more difficult to measure than politically expedient short-term health outputs, this is the right thing to do to improve public health outcomes and secure the long-term financial sustainability of the health system.
- 7.4 Core health goals should transcend particular governments so that health ceases to be a competition of who can reach politically determined targets at the expense of long-term public health outcomes. We need evidenced-based strategies that will survive changes in government to meet the health needs of our people.
- 7.5 Labour has a vision of a just society where health outcomes are not predetermined by geographic location, ethnicity, or ability to pay. We believe access to good health care is the right of every New Zealander. From the efforts of the first Labour government, which established our public health system, to the significant primary health care reforms of the fifth Labour government, Labour has worked to bring about this vision. All people should have equal access to appropriate health services.
- 7.6 We can make New Zealand a healthier nation by:
- focusing on equality, access, and fairness in the health domain
  - committing to the integrity of the public health system
  - providing the tools, information, and incentives for people to make good health decisions.

## **Our approach**

- 7.7 Labour recognises the importance of addressing the social determinants of health: housing, income, access to services, and other factors have a major impact on people’s health. We will work across policy areas to create the right underlying conditions for individuals and communities—that they have the right support, information, and services to lead healthier, more rewarding lives.
- 7.8 We will act on major causes of poor health such as child poverty, poor housing, and economic inequality through bold policy initiatives across economic and social policy areas. People living in warm and dry housing, with enough income to afford a healthy diet, and access to good public services will have fewer health issues. We will focus on the health and well-being of children and young people, putting them at the centre of our efforts across the whole spectrum of policy.
- 7.9 Māori and Pacific people must enjoy the same standard of health as other New Zealanders. Labour is committed to policies and programmes that are tailored for, developed with, and delivered by Māori and Pacific communities. Affordable and accessible primary services are essential, and more Māori and Pacific people need to be in all parts of the health workforce.
- 7.10 Labour will restore a strong emphasis on primary health care, focusing on prevention, health promotion, health education, and research into what works best here in New Zealand. Cost should never become a barrier for any New Zealander needing primary health care. We will support primary healthcare to be developed and delivered at local level to suit the particular circumstances of local communities rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
- 7.11 Labour will encourage and assist every New Zealander to take responsibility, in partnership with health providers, for healthy living, including healthy accommodation and good nutrition. Through a holistic approach to public health, we can address chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.
- 7.12 Every child deserves the best start in life. Maternal and post-natal care is an essential first step to children getting everything they need for good health in the critical early weeks and months. A high-quality maternity service is necessary for a strong bond between mother and baby to develop. This bond creates social wellbeing for the mother, baby, whānau, and wider

community. Labour promotes and supports breastfeeding in accordance with World Health Organisation Standards. Labour believes that all individuals should have control over their own sexual and reproductive lives. An individual's choice to determine the number and timing of one's children cannot be compromised. To ensure that all people can make free and informed choices about their future, Labour supports safe, affordable and universal access to contraception, sexual and reproductive services and information. Labour recognises all women have the right to make their own choices about their own bodies, and should have access to abortion services.

- 7.13 As a country we must meet the challenge and opportunities of an ageing population. New Zealand needs a long-term or sustainable strategy for dealing with this issue. Labour supports the aspirations of many senior citizens to live as independently as possible in the community for as long as possible, and we will put in place the support to allow this to happen. Equally, we will make sure that appropriate and safe aged care is available for those who need it. We recognise the workforce crisis in this sector and will work with providers and sector unions to ensure that both residential and home support workers are valued for the important work they do.
- 7.14 Oral health is a major focus for Labour. We know that many people cannot access appropriate and timely dental treatment because of cost. We also know that the long-term health and financial costs of delayed dental treatment are very high. Labour will develop and implement an oral-health strategy that phases in free dental care for all New Zealanders and builds awareness of the importance of good dental health.
- 7.15 Labour recognises good mental health as a priority alongside good physical health. We support greater public acknowledgment and understanding of mental health issues and will work to ensure that people have access to the support and services they need when dealing with mental health issues. Labour will partner with health services and community groups to provide access to appropriate and proven clinical and community approaches to mental health. We will ensure that funding for mental health services is appropriate and not eroded to fund other priorities. Labour recognises an ongoing crisis in mental health and will take a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to supporting the mental health of children and young people.
- 7.16 Labour supports effective preventative measures to minimise dependency on alcohol, gambling, and harmful drugs. Across these areas, we believe that education is a good start but that it is not enough—strengthened regulation, with better public health at its heart, is required.

- 7.17 Labour recognises that safe, quality healthcare requires a well-educated, flexible, and integrated health workforce. While we have a well-trained, professional health workforce, an increasing and unsustainable proportion are sourced from outside the country. This, together with the difficulties of staff retention and recruitment, is likely to get worse with increased global demand for health practitioners.
- 7.18 It is vital that we make better use of the clinicians we have and move towards self-sufficiency. Labour is committed to working with the sector on comprehensive, long-term workforce planning. We recognise that this is no simple task, requiring a combination of respect for the profession, an understanding of labour market dynamics, and long-term strategic thinking.
- 7.19 Labour is committed to the democratically elected District Health Board model, and to the principle that DHBs and Primary Health Organisations must reflect the needs of the communities they serve. We will work to enhance community input into the delivery of local services, so that communities have a greater role in identifying health priorities in their areas. Labour will collaborate with local communities for the effective and well-managed delivery of local services, so that communities have a greater role in identifying health priorities in their areas.
- 7.20 One in five New Zealanders has a disability. Labour is focused on the need to support people with disabilities as full and contributing members of the community. We are committed to developing independent living arrangements or the local area coordination model. Disabled New Zealanders continue to be over-represented in those not gaining appropriate access to primary health-care services and information. Labour recognises the need for appropriate provision of respite care and carer support for people with disabilities and their families. We will act to reduce the disparities in funding support services between ACC-funded and health-funded people with disabilities.
- 7.21 Under successive Labour governments, New Zealand developed a public health system that was the envy of the world. Our policies have a relentless focus on improving the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders, and we will build on the foundations of the past to ensure that our public health system delivers care to all New Zealanders.

# Chapter 8: Justice, human rights, and equality for all

## Vision

- 8.1 Labour's vision is of a just society and safe communities. Our vision is of a New Zealand that guarantees human rights, provides equal and full access to justice, and achieves real public safety rather than just delivering immediate punitive measures.
- 8.2 Labour is committed to significantly reducing domestic and sexual violence statistics and the level of reoffending by people who have previously been dealt with by the justice system. Our justice system should protect and support victims of crime and provide access to justice for all. Labour understands that justice encompasses more than just crime and punishment. New Zealand must live up to its international obligations and continue to lead international reform on legal equality, constitutional reform, and human rights.
- 8.3 Labour's vision for justice involves a society that is safe and secure, where the rights of all are celebrated and upheld. Labour will emphasise the principles of community safety and community involvement throughout the criminal prevention and justice systems. Safe communities protect the rights and freedoms of all New Zealanders, which are put at risk by crime. Labour will establish programmes to reduce reoffending, and we will make sure that victims get the support they need. Labour will promote restorative justice where appropriate. We recognise that drug and alcohol abuse, domestic and sexual violence in the home, and lack of education and opportunity are all causes of crime.
- 8.4 Labour supports the ongoing development of a modern and effective police service that works alongside local communities to mitigate the causes of crime. This modern police service will be highly skilled, and responsive to diverse communities and their varied needs.
- 8.5 Labour understands that the rights of all people are founded on a basis of equality. When we seek to celebrate diversity, it is because the cultural and social differences of various New Zealand communities are intrinsic to their ways of life, their health, and their happiness. Equality means that we recognise the wide range of traditions and values as being of worth in themselves, besides the overarching liberal inheritance of all New Zealanders: equality before the law and the rights set out in the Bill of Rights and the Human Rights Acts.
- 8.6 Labour's commitment to human rights, the rule of law, and eradicating discrimination is central to our approach to justice and a fair New Zealand. These values underpin our approach to justice and to the administration of our legal system. Human rights can be undermined by structural discrimination. Labour will work to extend the ability for 16 and 17 year olds to participate in the democratic process. Labour will work to remove structural barriers to justice, particularly for Māori and Pasifika communities.

- 8.7 Labour recognises the need for a smarter, fairer approach to criminal justice to keep communities safe. More prisons, more prisoners, and punitive penal policies simply won't work. To reduce crime we need to address the wider symptoms and causes of crime, often through restorative justice and community engagement. It is the state's responsibility to detain its citizens: Labour is opposed to the privatisation of corrections facilities.
- 8.8 Labour recognises that it is the state, and only the state, that should be involved in the administration of justice. The social contract between the citizen and the state is an exercise of public relationship. Therefore, we see no role for the private sector in corrections, policing, justice, or the administration courts. We believe that the state, in partnership with communities, should play an active role in rehabilitating offenders, protecting communities through policing and the courts, and addressing the causes of crime.
- 8.9 Labour understands that justice is not an isolated process, but one that happens within communities and between people. It requires well-resourced community and individual responses. Legal aid and community legal resources must be properly supported, so that those who cannot afford to effectively engage in the legal system can do so. Labour believes that financial means should never be a barrier to justice, and so we will provide every New Zealander with equal access to the law.
- 8.10 Justice, equality, and fairness are at the heart of a successful criminal justice programme. Perpetrators should be dealt with firmly but responsibly, in ways that ultimately encourage rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. Labour will ensure there are effective diversion programmes, especially in relation to youth and first-time offenders, and effective programmes in prison, pre-release preparation and post release support. . Labour will work to ensure that victims of crime are not re-victimised. This will be achieved through providing services that are supportive, respectful and accessible.
- 8.11 Labour recognises the impact that the law has on people's lives. Rules and regulations must be accessible, fair, and easily understood. We will remove arbitrary, unjust, and discriminatory rules.

- 8.12 In a healthy democracy, communities need to be able to engage effectively with powerful public agencies. Under Labour, independent Parliamentary officers (such as the Ombudsman, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, and the Auditor General) and other complaints bodies (such as the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Review Tribunal) will be adequately financed and empowered. Dispute resolution services, including those offered by courts and tribunals, should be accessible to all. We know that a society that promotes equal rights for all citizens is a fairer and more secure society. Labour will promote equality of access and equality before the law for everyone.
- 8.13 Not all crime and violence is reported and in plain sight. Labour will have a renewed focus on domestic and family violence, and preventing child abuse. Labour believes that our family law must be fair, responsive, and always focused on the best interests of the child. Labour seeks to break the cycle of abuse, experienced in many families, that prevents women and children realising their full potential.
- 8.14 Labour prioritises our independent values as a Pacific nation that acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. We respect the fundamental importance of the rule of law. Our constitutional arrangements should reflect these unique values and our place in the world.
- 8.15 Our record of achievement gives life to this vision. Labour knows that a fair and just society is critical to giving New Zealanders the good life they deserve.

## **Our approach**

- 8.16 Labour's approach includes the following elements.

### **Adopting an evidenced-based approach to crime prevention**

- 8.17 Punitive and reactive approaches to criminal justice do not work. In some areas it is actively harmful and only contributes to more crime. Labour rejects the 'lock them up and throw away the key' approach to criminal justice.
- 8.18 Labour is committed to taking a smarter approach to societal safety and crime prevention. Criminal justice is complex and interdependent. Labour will immediately focus on key problem areas, but we will also take a holistic approach to criminal justice. We want New Zealanders to be safer and better served by the justice system regardless of gender, socio-economic status, culture, or race.

### **Dealing with the causes of crime**

- 8.19 The principles of fairness and equality will guide Labour's policy on dealing with the causes of crime. We will not address criminal justice on its own, but will develop policies across government that are effective and responsive. A broad, principled response to the causes of crime is called for, and Labour accepts that the intended results will take years, not a single electoral cycle, to achieve.
- 8.20 Our justice system should encompass education, work opportunities, and counselling for offenders to reduce reoffending and encourage prisoners or parolees to be contributing members in the community.

### **Protecting and strengthening human rights**

- 8.21 Labour will put human rights at the centre of justice in New Zealand. We will develop legislation that protects and supports rights and legal institutions that recognise and uphold rights. Public bodies will uphold human rights when they conduct their public functions and exercise their powers.
- 8.22 Labour will commit to developing adequate legislation that protects against discrimination, including hate crimes and hate speech directed at groups at risk, such as LGBTQIA, religious and ethnic groups.
- 8.23 Labour will also provide more support to victims of discrimination, by developing more responsive systems that victims can report hate crimes and hate speech to and be provided with the resources they need. Labour will seek to eliminate discrimination to reassure the safety of victims and the protection of human rights in our communities.

### **A well-funded, effective, and efficient justice system**

- 8.24 Access to justice empowers citizens and resolves disputes fairly and finally. Labour will modernise our courts and court structure in a principled manner with the aim of making it more effective, efficient, and responsive.
- 8.25 Research has shown that restorative justice reduces reoffending. Labour recognises that restorative justice is a key foundation in our justice system and, where appropriate, will encourage engagement between offenders (particularly youth offenders) and their victims.
- 8.26 All citizens must have equal power when accessing justice and the courts. Labour will resource an effective legal aid system, targeted at the people and communities who need it most.
- 8.27 Labour understands that community responses to crime and crime prevention need to be adequately supported. Labour will properly fund community policing and investigatory work, and will support and encourage innovation in New Zealand's police service.

## **Taking an evidence-based approach to constitutional change and law reform**

- 8.28 Labour believes that our laws should always reflect who we are as a modern, diverse society free from discrimination. We are committed to ongoing constitutional reform to keep the rules regulating government fair, open, and transparent and to make sure our constitutional rules reflect our modern society.
- 8.29 Labour will base all legal reform on sound evidence, good policy, and international best practice so that reforms are done right, first time.

## **Portfolio priorities**

### **Get smart about crime prevention and community safety**

- 8.30 The focus of criminal justice reform will be on a government-wide approach towards dealing with the causes of crime.
- 8.31 We will adopt the following evidence-supported measures to protect our communities from crime.
- Modernise sentencing laws, removing unworkable and harmful sentencing legislation and the prevalence of short-term sentences.
  - Allocate resources to measures that genuinely improve community safety and prevent reoffending rather than creating hardened criminals who continue to reoffend.
  - Recognise that the problem of personal drug use is primarily a health issue and that the criminal justice system, especially prisons, only makes the problem worse. Labour will reform drug policy so it is evidence based and has harm reduction as its focus.
  - Significantly improve access to alcohol and drug treatment, education, counselling, and rehabilitation services for prisoners and other at-risk New Zealanders.
  - Eradicate Māori and Pacific Island over-representation in the criminal justice system.

### **Provide all New Zealanders with equal access to justice**

- 8.32 A just society requires genuine and equal access to justice for all citizens. Labour will provide access to justice by:
- removing obstacles to the courts that prevent adequate and equal access to justice and, in particular, disadvantage women seeking custody and/or access to their children. We will reinstate legal assistance at the earlier stage of proceedings to prevent drawn-out and expensive proceedings.
  - making access to legal services and legal aid fair and equitable for all New Zealanders so that ability to pay does not become a barrier to justice.

### **Address sexual violence**

8.33 Labour is deeply concerned about the rate of sexual violence in New Zealand and the lack of justice available to most survivors. Labour is committed to taking the following measures to address sexual violence.

- Use primary prevention strategies to stop sexual violence before it happens by confronting dominant cultural norms—beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that make rape and sexual abuse possible—and to promote and increase positive behaviour and ways of relating to replace sexual violence.
- Review possible reforms to improve the criminal justice system's approach towards sexual violence, taking into account research that reflects the prevalence of sexual violence against women and children, and the cultural issues surrounding the reporting of sexual violence in some communities.
- Educate communities about what constitutes sexual violence, how to report it to the appropriate authorities, and how the justice system protects and supports survivors—all of which will encourage the reporting of sexual violence
- Create a well-funded and resourced support network for survivors of sexual violence, beginning with initial support when sexual violence is reported through to meeting the long-term needs of the survivors.

### **Public control of justice and corrections**

8.34 Labour believes that it is the State's responsibility to administer justice. We believe that private entities should not be contracted to run prisons, and profit from them, while not adequately dealing with reported abuses of and by prisoners.

8.35 Labour recognises that the social contract exists between the citizen and the state. As a consequence, any breaches of the social contract need to be resolved through public, and not private, means. We will work to make sure the state administers justice and enforces penalties through public and accountable means.

### **Public participation**

- 8.36 Labour wants all New Zealanders to have meaningful input into justice reform and human rights priorities. We will engage and consult with the public in developing a workable and effective justice system.
- 8.37 Labour will make sure that public complaints bodies and accountability mechanisms are properly supported and resourced. We recognise that citizens engage with the administration of justice through a wider body of organisations than just the courts. We will enable these organisations to operate effectively and achieve meaningful outcomes for citizens.

### **Protect human rights for all**

- 8.38 Labour will ensure that our laws are fair and non-discriminatory, and that they are applied in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.
- 8.39 We will require public institutions to be aware of, and uphold, human rights when exercising their public functions and powers.

# Chapter 9: New Zealand's identity and culture

## Vision

- 9.1 In a world that has become increasingly connected and standardised, Labour believes it is important to retain a strong sense of what it is to be a New Zealander. Our culture is what makes us special and different from other people. Creative people across different cultural fields record and illuminate our shared history, values, and accomplishments from a New Zealand perspective. We believe that our culture is an important part of our shared national wealth.
- 9.2 We recognise that New Zealand has been built on a partnership between Māori and Pakeha through Te Tiriti o Waitangi the Treaty of Waitangi. Although that partnership has not always been honoured, the Treaty relationship underpins a culture of mutual understanding and trust that is internationally recognised and admired. We take pride in that. Labour recognises the importance of wahi tapu and heritage sites and places as an important contributor to our cultural identity turangawaewae. The protection and retention of the built heritage is significant to all communities of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 9.3 Our national identity is built on the distinctive accomplishments of New Zealanders. Our sense of nationhood reflects the legacy of Labour and other governments in building our welfare state; being the first nation to give women the vote; our comprehensive accident compensation system; our nuclear-free policy; and our advocacy for international justice and peace. Our writers, visual artists, performing artists, musicians, and film-makers inspire and entertain people throughout the world. Our architects and designers help to shape our cultural expression and enrich experiences offered to New Zealanders and to visitors and export customers.
- 9.4 Labour holds freedom of expression and the ability of all New Zealanders to participate in decision-making processes as fundamental values. Every New Zealander should have the right to seek, receive, and impart information and opinions. We know the state has an important part in helping New Zealanders to exercise that right.
- 9.5 Labour understands that the cultural sector is not just at the heart of our national identity, but is an important part of a modern, creative, high-wage economy. A strong creative sector is vital to our future economic development. As a country, we can no longer take an ad hoc approach to arts, culture, and creative industries,. Labour believes that the sector deserves certainty and sustainability from government.

## **Our approach**

### **The Treaty relationship in our culture**

- 9.6 Labour celebrates our Māori history and culture. Labour formed a partnership with the Ratana movement in the 1930s; established the Waitangi Tribunal to address injustices to Māori; and articulated the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as part of the basis of a uniquely bicultural nation. We envision a society where Te Ao Māori is supported and flourishes; where traditional and contemporary Māori art forms develop and thrive; where Māori have a voice, and that voice is heard. Chapter 2: The unique status of Māori as Tāngata Whenua provides further detail on Labour's vision for Māori.

### **Arts and culture**

- 9.7 Labour believes that a flourishing arts and creative industries scene has a strong intrinsic and economic value. We are committed to supporting professional arts practices at the highest level. We will support the sector to develop viable paths into fulfilling, rewarding careers in the creative and cultural pursuits. We will focus on measures that lift the incomes of creative practitioners and those who work in the cultural sector.
- 9.8 Labour recognises that investment in education and skills is vital to the success of New Zealand's creative and cultural sectors. We believe it is important to ensure the long-term sustainability of the cultural sector through investment at all levels of education.
- 9.9 Labour supports the growth and development of a thriving arts and culture scene that operates at a community level. We know that adequate public support of the arts is central to their continued vitality.
- 9.10 Labour supports every New Zealander to participate in our cultural life. We are committed to funding our cultural institutions to a level that allows this participation. We believe that participation in culture isn't just about being a reader or an audience member. We will support ordinary New Zealanders in creative activity through funding for continuing education and community groups. We recognise that everyone needs leisure time to participate in cultural life.

### **Heritage**

- 9.11 Labour believes that knowing and understanding our past and conserving our heritage is essential to establishing a strong sense of national identity. It is important we tell the stories of our nation's history, and that places, structures, and tāonga of significance are preserved for future generations.
- 9.12 We understand the importance of protecting our historic heritage, and are particularly committed to protecting the precious remnants of Christchurch's historic built heritage.

## **Broadcasting**

- 9.13 Labour will protect freedom of expression and create genuine opportunities for people's voices to be heard. Ensuring New Zealanders have their own television and radio stations means that that we have a voice within our own country and the ability to share our stories. Labour values cultural diversity, artistic expression, renewal and quality, and will defend those values through our commitment to public broadcasting. Labour supports the Radio New Zealand international service broadcasting to the Pacific Islands. It is a well-respected and a trusted news source, not only in the Pacific but around the world. Labour will continue its long record of support for this publicly owned radio service to our Pacific neighbours.
- 9.14 Labour believes in a public broadcasting service that informs, entertains, and uplifts—a service that reflects the diversity of voices in our country. An informed democracy needs a strong, independent, free public-broadcasting media service. Public funding is essential to maintaining that strength.
- 9.15 Public service broadcasting needs to be engaged with all New Zealanders and give them a way to be heard. While we will all debate and contest different views of the world, to have that debate we need a public sphere where we share opinions and facts.
- 9.16 Labour knows that the current commercial media market does not deliver this. We believe that public broadcasting should deliver a genuine public good rather than focuses solely the financial needs of its owner (the Crown). We make sure that public broadcasting structures are not unnecessarily duplicative, and that best practice is shared across current service providers.
- 9.17 Labour believes public broadcasting includes new media. Publicly funded productions should make full use of the possibilities of online media.

## **Our multi-cultural future**

- 9.18 Labour takes pride in New Zealand's multi-culturalism and believes that government has an active role to play in supporting a wide range of cultural traditions to flourish in New Zealand, and in helping different groups develop positive relationships with each another. An area of particular focus is in supporting the retention of Pacific languages through education and bi-lingualism, recognising New Zealand's historical relationship with the Pacific Islands
- 9.19 Labour strongly supports international cultural exchange and meetings between different cultures within New Zealand. Our ability to accept, understand, and live alongside other cultures is something we are proud of. We believe in inclusiveness, co-operation, and collaboration. We value the cultural enrichment we gain from our increasing diversity.

## **Information and communication technology**

- 9.20 The Internet is changing how we engage with culture. Our culture and technology are changing rapidly, each affecting the other. Our laws need to keep pace. Both broadcasting and telecommunications policy must consider the wider cultural context in which they operate.
- 9.21 Labour will protect the rights of creators of works. We will also protect the rights of everyone to our shared cultural heritage, including reasonable reuse, format shifting, and term limits that don't keep works from our grandchildren. Because the Internet is now an important and necessary medium for participation in society, we affirm that access to the Internet is a right for everyone.
- 9.22 All New Zealanders should have access to public-broadcasting content across radio, television, and the Internet.

## **Sport and recreation**

- 9.23 For many New Zealanders, our sense of pride and nationhood is intertwined with our success on the sporting field. Labour will support high-performance sport and elite athletes so that New Zealand remains internationally competitive. We will focus on providing opportunities for young New Zealanders to participate in sport and, where promise is shown, pathways to excel.
- 9.24 Participation in sport and recreation opportunities is important for our sense of well-being. It is also an important part of our strategy to create a more active and healthier New Zealand. Labour will encourage all New Zealanders to participate in sport and recreation.

# Chapter 10: New Zealand's place in a changing world

## Vision

- 10.1 Labour wants New Zealanders to be proud of the role our country plays and the stances we take internationally. This pride will come from action on the basis of principled engagement, independence, and a focus on human rights, peace, and sustainability.
- 10.2 Our international vision is for a peaceful, nuclear weapon-free, prosperous, and interconnected world where:
- human rights and differences are respected
  - we cooperate to secure a sustainable environment
  - trade and movement of people contribute to wellbeing and inclusion for everyone.
- 10.3 Under Labour, New Zealand is a reliable and credible partner in developing our region—a willing contributor to multilateral development initiatives, building peace and security, helping reduce poverty and inequalities, strengthening regional cooperation, integration and opportunities for our Pacific neighbours.
- 10.4 Labour sees New Zealand as using its small size to its advantage as a non-threatening country, respected for its integrity, independence, ability to promote clear and coherent solutions, and willingness to mediate disputes and assist others. As a small state, we recognise the importance of multilateral organisations and solutions. Labour believes that important international decisions should be made by the community of nations, not just a powerful few.
- 10.5 Labour sees New Zealand's multiculturalism and unique Treaty partnership as a basis of experience for working with diverse cultures and countries and bridging differences within and between nations, especially in the Pacific.
- 10.6 Labour's vision is for a Defence Force that capably participates in maintaining peace, security, and stability in New Zealand, in the Asia-Pacific region, and around the world.
- 10.7 Labour's vision for border security agencies is for highly skilled, intelligence-based, technologically advanced organisations that are well connected to agencies of our key trade partners, and are able to secure, protect, and facilitate goods and people at our borders as increasing volume and rapid technological innovation challenge our capabilities.

10.8 Labour wants a rules-based, multilateral global trading system that is accessible, fair, and transparent. We will take an approach to trade negotiations that promotes an environment where innovative firms can develop capability to adjust to new international challenges and pursue opportunities that exist in a rapidly globalising market. We will only support trade agreements that protect New Zealand's sovereign right to make laws and regulations as we see fit, and that commit parties to international labour and environmental standards.

## **Our approach**

10.9 Labour governments have always played a role in promoting New Zealand as a country committed to multilateralism and the rule of law, and New Zealand's role in international affairs as an independent nation. These principles endure in Labour's approach today.

10.10 Labour is proud of New Zealand's reputation as an independent, principled country that promoted policies for a better, more peaceful, and fairer world. In government, Labour will give New Zealand a strong and independent voice in the world.

## **Peacebuilding and sustainable development**

10.11 Under Labour, New Zealand will:

- be an active player in multilateral organisations and agreements at the United Nations and other agencies
- play a leading role in pushing sustainable economic and environmental policies at the international level, particularly in taking up the challenge to respond effectively to global warming
- be nuclear-free, in line with the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act (1987)
- be a leader in promoting disarmament by working with like-minded countries to outlaw nuclear weapons, including through a Nuclear Arms Convention
- play a strong role in conflict prevention and resolution, particularly in the Pacific region, in resolving disputes as it has previously on Bougainville, Timor-Leste, and the Solomons
- take specific initiatives in promoting openness and transparency in government, combatting corruption and working with countries to develop institutions that respect and promote human rights—these are areas in which New Zealand has a strong reputation, and these initiatives can be included in the work we do for international development assistance.

- have a highly professional, capable, and committed Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to promote our values and our interests
- focus Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) on alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development and other initiatives in line with our principles, such as the advancement of women
- manage ODA independently from foreign policy through an agency with a high degree of autonomy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- increase New Zealand's ODA contribution as a proportion of GDP as fiscal conditions permit.

### **Pacific Island relationships**

- 10.12 Labour recognises that Pacific people have a unique position in New Zealand society with many coming from countries such as the Cook Islands, Tokelau, Samoa, and Nuie that have special relationships with New Zealand. A long and strong relationship has been established between New Zealand and our Pacific neighbours.
- 10.13 We will engage with our Pacific partners in developing a strong, integrated region, able to protect and grow its environment and resources, and access global markets and opportunities for its young people.
- 10.14 Labour will establish strong and meaningful relationships with Pacific nations and build on existing economic, cultural, and aid relationships.
- 10.15 In line with our commitment to building stronger relationships, Labour will strengthen the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs so that it has the resources it needs to support our Pacific communities here in New Zealand, and to more effectively reach out to Pacific Island nations.

### **Defence**

- 10.16 Labour will ensure that our Defence Force has the resources required to be deployed on peacekeeping, reconstruction, disaster relief and, where necessary and UN-mandated, full combat missions. Capital investment will continue to ensure the Defence Force has the equipment required to carry out its tasks successfully.
- 10.17 Labour values New Zealand's Defence Force personnel. We will reciprocate the commitment and loyalty demonstrated by our service people and their families by ensuring that recruitment and retention rates are at sustainable levels. New Zealand honours its social contract throughout a Service person's life, beyond their period of service, to ensure reciprocal social security.

10.18 Labour will continue to enhance our relationships with the Defence Forces of our traditional partners. We also need to build on our relationships with the nations of the Asia-Pacific region to assist our pursuit of peace and stability in our region.

### **Border security**

10.19 Labour's commitment to investing in highly skilled staff is crucial to enable the New Zealand Customs Service to adapt to rapidly changing technology, volumes of passengers, and an expected increase in trade.

10.20 Labour will strengthen relationships with border security agencies in other nations, especially those of our key trade partners, to provide greater risk management, intelligence flows, and possible integration of technology. The aim is to achieve better targeted policing and faster and more efficient flow of goods as well as protection of the environment and agriculture.

10.21 We will ensure that border security agencies, police, and other international customs and enforcement counterparts work more closely together to manage threats to our border security. Labour understands that our EEZ is an important area to New Zealand's wider security. We will ensure our Defence Force works collaboratively with border security agencies and be well resourced to actively patrol and maintain this area to stop poaching, trafficking and other activities that have harm to our greater border, social and economic security.

10.22 Labour believes that New Zealand's security and intelligence agencies should be grounded in a balance between protecting the security of New Zealanders and their privacy. They must act in accordance with international and domestic human rights law, and operate in a manner that is transparent and accountable.

### **Trade Negotiations**

10.23 In trade negotiations, Labour recognises how important it is for New Zealand to continue pursuing strategic trade relationships that grow the value of our exports, create jobs, and deliver higher incomes. But we will not support provisions in trade agreements that would unreasonably constrain our sovereign right to make laws and regulations on social, environmental, economic (including intellectual property and copyright), and foreign investment matters for the public good.

10.24 Labour will not support provisions in trade agreements that limit the government's right to provide, fund, or regulate public services, such as health or education. Trade agreements should not prohibit the government from restricting the sale of land and infrastructure or regulating the sale of state assets.

- 10.25 Through our trade agreements and negotiations, Labour will seek to improve labour and environmental standards. Labour upholds New Zealand's right to adopt measures it considers necessary to fulfil its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi. We affirm that the interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi, including the nature of the rights and obligations arising under it, should not be subject to any dispute settlement provisions.
- 10.26 Labour will promote a broader civil society debate on our trading relationships based on principles of openness, greater transparency, and the virtue of contestable advice.

# Chapter 11: Effective and Accountable government

## Vision

- 11.1 Strong and engaged communities lie at the heart of good government. Through democratic governance, we want to refocus central and local government processes to enable communities to make more decisions for themselves and provide opportunities for citizens to participate actively in shaping their world. Labour is committed in citizen engagement in policymaking and in working in coordination with civil society in the design of the public services they want. Our objective is a state in which government at all levels empowers and resources its citizens to live fulfilled lives and recognises their potential to help build a healthy, fair, and prosperous society which actively seeks to honour Te Tiriti and its principles.
- 11.2 Labour believes that in the ideal state a strong partnership exists between citizens and its government. The ideal state is flexible, modern, and responsive. It listens to the needs of citizens and can respond quickly and effectively. However, it also has the capacity to lead and innovate by developing high-quality public services that make New Zealanders' lives better. We believe that central and local government can only be effective when it is accountable, fair, and transparent in all its dealings with citizens. We recognise that the abuse of public power by the state undermines the public's trust and faith in democracy.
- 11.3 Labour's commitment is to protect equal political and social opportunities for all New Zealanders, and that means that effective public services are a priority. While everyone benefits from public services, public services must be delivered in an effective and well-tailored way for the diverse communities now merging into mainstream New Zealand. Both our central and local government public services need to be leaders in integrated and innovative service delivery.
- 11.4 We recognise the opportunities as well as the responsibilities of open government. In particular Labour will strive to:
- promote open communication, empower citizens, and harness the power of meaningful collaborations to make government more effective and accountable.
  - uphold the value of openness in our engagement with citizens to improve services, manage public resources, promote innovation, and create safer communities by working with local government and local communities.

- embrace principles of transparency and open government to achieve greater prosperity, well-being, and human dignity in our own country and in an increasingly interconnected world.
- drawing on the lessons that have been learned in communities for effective and improved coordination at the local level

11.4 Labour realises that we must harness the ideas, knowledge, wisdom and skills of the non-government sector. In order to help shape positive outcomes, we recognise that government needs to be more responsive in using its resources and partnering with others.

11.5 Labour is a mainstream progressive Party that believes that democracy is about more than just voting once every three years. We will put New Zealand people at the heart of government, so they feel that government is owned by them. We believe in local democracy and the right of communities to have a say on major decisions affecting them. This includes the form and activities of local government, the right of communities to shape and plan their own future development, and the right to be genuinely heard by central government when it exercises its powers.

11.6 Labour also believes that a strong democracy needs strong institutions that act as a check on those with power. We should be strengthening, not weakening, these checks and balances in our system.

11.7 Labour knows that participation at all levels promotes community capacity and resilience. Responsive, transparent, and accountable government promotes trust. A strong civil society with the capacity to engage with both local and central government builds social capital, which in turn makes communities more resilient to any emergent challenges. We will work with communities in an inclusive way to build self-confidence and self-sufficiency and encourage participation in democracy at all levels.

11.8 Labour believes that accountable government must put New Zealanders at the centre—whether it's about earthquake recovery in Christchurch, local government reform in Auckland, or the health and wellbeing of diverse local communities throughout the country.

## **Our approach**

### **Strengthening our democracy**

11.10 Labour stands proudly for a strengthened democracy in which communities have genuine decision-making rights, and in which empowered and independent institutions scrutinise those

who exercise power. We affirm the rule of law in protecting democratic rights. We affirm the ability of central government to put in place policies and law that support the national interest.

- 11.11 Labour will give local communities the right to determine what form of local and/or regional government they have through a democratic process in which they have the final and binding say. It is a long-standing tradition of New Zealand democracy that local communities are best placed to determine their own future development. Labour will support local communities' right to plan for the future without undue interference from central government. Labour understands that central government and local government do not exist in isolation, and that their interests should be balanced and supported. Other forms of participation, such as Town Hall meetings, feedback at community events, and expressing views on current decisions through new media will be encouraged.
- 11.12 Labour also signals its strong support for those civil society and parliamentary institutions (including the ombudsman system and OIA process) that act to keep government accountable. These institutions can be assured of Labour's support and respect. We acknowledge the central role of voluntary and community sector organisations in a democracy, and will engage in an equal dialogue and genuine partnership with them. Our democracy needs strengthening, and Labour is the party with the traditions and values to work with the community on this important task.
- 11.13 Labour recognises that as our society and civil service develop, citizens will engage more frequently with government at all levels. We will enable citizens to feel safe engaging with government. Personal information and privacy must be protected and upheld. Labour recognises that the state has an important role to play in people's lives, but that it should not unduly or unfairly interfere with them or breach citizen's confidences.
- 11.14 To promote and strengthen democracy, Labour will:
- Support the democratic principles of pluralism, compromise and consensus building in its engagement with all stakeholders, by always listening to the issues and concerns of citizens.
  - Act as a bridge between divided groups by promoting spaces for open discussion and debate and building consensus.
  - Strengthen parliament and the parliamentary processes to ensure it is can be a democratic forum for the public on legislation and policy issues and that it can act

as an effective protector of human rights and our democratic tradition a bulwark of democratic and human rights and privacy;

- Seek to introduce automatic voter registration, education initiatives, laws, and secure technology changes, to substantially increase voter understanding and participation; and
- Maintain effective spending limits and requirements on disclosure of private funding of election campaigns to ensure all citizens can participate equally in the democratic process at all levels.

### **Working with local government and local communities**

11.15 Local government has a unique and vital role in our overall system of government, and we believe that role should be respected and enhanced. We believe that co-operation and collaboration hold more benefit for communities than a model based on competition and focused on short-term cost cutting. Community wellbeing, as determined by local communities, needs to be placed at the heart of local government purpose and decision-making. Community wellbeing should be the guiding principle of local government—whether it is in Council’s responsibility for a clean and safe environment, the enforcement of standards for food and water quality, or the oversight of building standards essential to safe and warm homes.

11.16 Local government will receive the support it needs to deliver on the transport needs of our cities, towns, and regions. In particular, Labour will work with local government to enhance affordable, sustainable, and energy-efficient public transport in all its forms—on roads, rail, waterways, cycleways, and walkways—in line with Labour values.

11.17 Labour will ensure that central government policies, strategies and service delivery plans are have regard to their differing impact on densely populated urban areas and more sparsely populated provincial areas, so that as far as practicable equal access and equal outcomes are available regardless of location.

### **Leading the way—quality public services**

11.18 Labour values the role of the public service and understands the meaningful contribution that quality public services can make to New Zealanders' lives. We believe the public service has an important service delivery role that goes beyond the market and the private sphere. We want New Zealand to have the best public services in the world that empower, support, and encourage our citizens to live quality lives. We believe that the public service should be a model of effectiveness and engagement which the private sector can learn from.

- 11.19 Labour will provide the public service, which is charged with delivering the government-of-the-day's programme, with the independence and support it needs to provide robust policy advice. Developing and expressing creative options and dissenting views need to be encouraged with a capacity to understand and accept risk and to admit fault without a culture of blame. Labour will ensure that the public service is responsive to the needs of New Zealanders, and that the importance and capacity of the public service is strengthened so that New Zealanders appreciate the beneficial role it can play in their lives.
- 11.20 Labour believes that the operation of the public service would be markedly improved by encouraging government departments to be collaborative and transparent. The long-term gain will be improved information sharing and joint, collaborative multi-level working teams between government departments. This approach will encourage developments and, for junior staff, the confidence to be innovative, and improve communication between the public service, Ministers of the Crown, and the public. This, in turn, will result in more durable policies and greater public trust in government.
- 11.21 Labour believes that part of this approach must be constant reflection on how the public service operates and the removal of barriers to innovation. We are committed to building a public service that puts the public first, and we won't accept a public service that is simply a poor imitation of private enterprise. We will uphold the public service's underlying principles of service, neutrality, co-operation and collegiality, and a focus on sound long-term planning for the national benefit. The State Services Commission will have an active role, and we will empower it to encourage innovative and adaptive improvements and efficiencies while acknowledging and overcoming any poor performance and management.
- 11.22 Under Labour, the state sector and the people who work in it will be respected and listened to. The sector will receive the stability and support it needs to carry out its functions, and the encouragement it needs to be innovative and flexible. Public services must be accessible both in technological adaptation and adopting a 'no wrong door' approach to prevent members of the public being bounced from one agency to another. The public sector delivers where the market fails, and it can model positive behaviour to influence the private sector. Labour will run public enterprises for the benefit of the public, not just to return a profit.

### **Lessons learned**

- 11.22 The Canterbury earthquakes have highlighted the challenges that disaster response and recovery efforts pose for the public services, both at the local level and nationally. We plan well for the response to a disaster, but we have not planned well for recovery. A centralised, top-down model of government was imposed on the city. Removing the democratically elected regional council raised serious questions about how a locality or region can protect itself against the heavy hand of central government. We know we can do better than that.

- 11.23 International literature points to the need for inclusive and engaging leadership, with a commitment to empowering the communities that have been adversely affected. Engaging with communities in a meaningful way may seem to take longer, but evidence shows that the reverse is true. The approach helps build public resilience so that the people themselves have the ability to respond to adversity and recover quickly.
- 11.24 Labour will investigate whether the current top-down civil defence model supports the recovery of communities after disaster. Using existing community and iwi networks, starting from Neighbourhood Support and Residents Associations, could provide the basis for such an approach, as well as providing opportunities for communities to work collaboratively ahead of any disaster. This could lead to developing a better understanding of how communities can interact with decision-makers in central and local government.
- 11.25 The experience of Auckland's reforms highlights how important it is that local communities have the final say over amalgamations and the shape of their own local government. This includes the form of Māori engagement and participation, and making Council Controlled Organisations directly accountable to elected councils, not their own boards. Labour believes that local communities should have an important say in what services are provided by their Council, how those services are provided, and how those services are prioritised.

### **Portfolio priorities**

- 11.26 Labour's priorities are to:
- improve the State Sector Act
  - break down the silos between government departments and agencies, promoting more collaborative ways of working
  - continue to explore new ways for citizens to interact with and influence government, including making better use of new and emerging technologies
  - implement a 'democracy project' to support and reinvigorate people's engagement in democratic decision-making at central government, local government, and community levels with an emphasis on youth engagement and Māori participation
  - work with local government and non-government organisations so that services are delivered in a way that is responsive to local communities and their needs
  - continually improve transparency in government decision-making processes and set the benchmark for excellence in service provision to boost public confidence
  - work with communities in an inclusive way that understands and builds on their strengths
  - restore local democratic control over promoting and providing for the aspirations and wellbeing of communities.