

# THE TURNBULL COALITION TEAM

# CCHQ 2016



27 June 2016

Ms Lisa Annese  
Chief Executive Officer  
Diversity Council Australia  
Level 1, 225 George Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Annese

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. On behalf of the Coalition Members of Parliament and candidates I am pleased to respond to your survey.

Australia's future depends on how well we can continue to grow and shape our economy.

Only the Liberal and National Parties have an **economic plan** to do that and ensure Australia's future.

We have a clear plan to transition the economy from the mining and investment boom to a stronger and more diverse economy.

The key elements of our national economic plan for jobs and growth are:

- An Innovation and Science programme bringing Australian ideas to market. This means greater investment and more jobs and opportunities for our young people;
- A New Defence Industry plan that will secure an advanced defence manufacturing industry in Australia. This will create thousands of new hi-tech, higher paying jobs;
- Export Trade Deals that will generate more than 19,000 new export opportunities. These will create many more jobs for our urban and regional families;
- New Tax Incentives, which will include tax cuts for more small businesses. More than two million businesses can benefit, to deliver more growth and jobs; and
- A Strong New Economy with more than 200,000 jobs expected to be created.

Our national economic plan and management is already paying dividends. Last year our economy continued to grow creating almost 300,000 new jobs, many of them in small business.

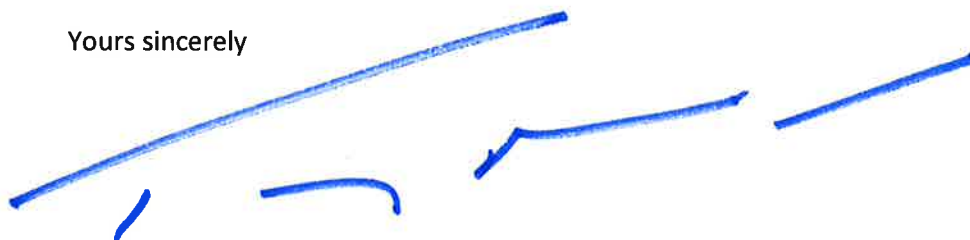
We cannot put economic growth and the jobs that come with it at risk with a return to Labor and their debt and deficits, high taxing, big spending ideas.

Only a Liberal and National Party Government can protect Australia's future.

Once announced, our policies will be available at [www.liberal.org.au](http://www.liberal.org.au) and [www.nationals.org.au](http://www.nationals.org.au).

Thank you for communicating the Coalition's commitments to your members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several connected strokes that form the name 'Tony Nutt'.

Tony Nutt  
National Campaign Director

## COALITION RESPONSE TO THE DIVERSITY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

### Enabling women's workforce participation

The Turnbull Government has a strong record of support for women and gender equality. Harnessing the power of women is a key part of the Turnbull Government's agenda to secure the economic future of our nation.

The Coalition believes a strong economy is key to improving equality and the long-term financial security of women. The Coalition's plan is to balance the Budget over time by keeping expenditure under control, while creating the conditions for a stronger economy that will allow revenue to grow. As the Budget is repaired, we can ease the tax burden, boost productivity and investment, and drive jobs and growth.

The Coalition acknowledges that women, on average, retire with 35 per cent less superannuation despite having a longer life expectancy. The Turnbull Government's comprehensive package of reforms to superannuation will help women accumulate greater superannuation by:

- supporting women to make catch-up payments to their superannuation;
- extending the current spouse tax offset to help families support each other to accumulate superannuation savings; and
- supporting low income earners, who are more likely to be women, to accumulate superannuation through the Low Income Superannuation Tax Offset. This is expected to benefit 2 million women in 2017-18.

### Domestic violence

Ensuring the safety of all Australians - men, women and children - is a key priority of the Turnbull Coalition Government. Domestic and family violence cannot be excused or justified under any circumstances and is a cultural problem the Government is addressing. All victims need compassionate and highly responsive support. All perpetrators must be held accountable for their violence.

The Turnbull Government has made addressing domestic violence a national priority and we currently spend more than \$275 million per year across a range of portfolios to make Australian communities safer. The Coalition committed \$100 million in the 2016-17 Budget to deliver the Third Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*. This builds on the \$100 million Women's Safety Package announced last September.

The Coalition has committed \$1.6 billion over five years under a National Partnership Agreement on Legal Services Assistance with States and Territories, and agreements with Indigenous legal assistance providers.

In contrast, Labor made ad-hoc funding promises for legal assistance. Rather than enhance the base funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the legal assistance sector, Labor created the funding cliff facing frontline legal services with funding ceasing on 30 June 2017.

The Coalition recognises the need to better target and engage perpetrators, or potential perpetrators, of family violence through increased staffing and resourcing. The Turnbull Government has provided \$2 million over three years to MensLine to develop tools and resources to support perpetrators not to reoffend. In addition, the Coalition funds a number of Specialist Family Violence services to provide support to all family members, including men.

The Commonwealth and Victorian Governments established Our Watch in 2013 to drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that underpin and create violence against women and their children. The Coalition Government has provided Our Watch with \$14.1 million from 2013 to 2016-17. This includes base funding of \$1 million per year and funding for specific initiatives, including The Line social marketing campaign, the National Media Engagement Project and the Sports Grants Bank.

### **Pay equity**

The Turnbull Coalition is determined that women should earn the same amount as their male counterparts. We recognise there are a number of factors that contribute to the gender pay gap including gender bias, limited opportunity and a lack of flexible work arrangements that will allow working parents (often mothers) to balance their paid work and un-paid caring responsibilities.

The Turnbull Government is committed to diversity in leadership because it delivers stronger outcomes for individuals, communities and our economy. We recently announced a new gender diversity target of 50 per cent of women on Australian Government boards, effective from 1 July 2016.

The Turnbull Government has also been working closely with leading private sector organisations to increase women in leadership positions, including the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Chief Executive Women, to deliver scholarship and mentoring programmes.

### **People with a disability**

The Turnbull Coalition Government funds both supported and open employment opportunities for people with disability to ensure there are opportunities for as many people as possible to participate in work, as well as a range of services targeted to support their employers.

Over the next four years, the Government will invest over \$3 billion in Disability Employment Services (DES) and associated services to provide open employment opportunities for people with disability.

The Coalition is also providing over \$650 million towards supported employment through Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) over the next three years to ensure their viability and importance in providing employment for people with severe disability.

In 2014–15, the Coalition provided 186 ADEs with \$219.3 million to deliver supported employment to nearly 21,000 people with disability in 295 outlets across Australia. This important assistance funds the type of support that individuals may require in the workplace including occupational health and safety assistance and ongoing close supervision to undertake their work tasks.

In addition to this assistance, the Coalition has provided ADEs with a \$189 million support package comprising:

- \$141 million to help ADEs transition employees from the Business Services Wage Assessment Tool (BSWAT) to new wage tools;
- \$32 million to develop and pilot a new wage assessment tool for ADEs based on productivity alone, in consultation with the sector and the Fair Work Commission; and
- \$25 million to better support job seekers with disability and employers in the open labour market and begin shaping disability employment toward a new model in 2018.

Following the Federal Court's decision in relation to the discriminatory nature of BSWAT, the Coalition set up the BSWAT Payment Scheme to provide a one-off payment to eligible intellectually impaired persons who have had their wages assessed under the BSWAT. Earlier this year, the Coalition passed legislation to increase these payments for affected employees. The Payment Scheme calculates payments at 70 per cent of alleged lost wages.

Before the Coalition's recent amendments, payments were calculated at 50 per cent. The *Business Services Wage Assessment Tool Amendment Act 2016* extends current BSWAT Payment Scheme deadlines by 12 months, to allow further time for people with disability to register and apply for a payment. The BSWAT Payment Scheme has received more than 2,100 registrations and 700 applications since it opened in July 2015. Payments are exempt from 'income' for social security purposes to preserve eligibility for the Disability Support Pension and to prevent debts being raised against participants in the BSWAT Payment Scheme.

The Coalition firmly believes that ADEs have a critical and ongoing role in providing employment opportunities for people with disability and will continue to work with the sector to improve wage outcomes for supported employees, alongside ensuring the sustainability of ADEs.

## **Carers**

The Turnbull Coalition Government is committed to supporting workers who also have caring responsibilities. In 2015, the Coalition introduced the Young Carer Bursary Programme so young carers have the option of undertaking part-time work in addition to their educational and caring responsibilities. The Coalition is providing \$3.5 million over three years to fund around 330 annual bursaries valued at \$3,000 each for carers under 25 years of age so they can continue caring and pursue education and training opportunities at the same time. The bursaries reduce financial pressure and support young carers to complete, or return to, education or training whilst continuing their caring role.

The Coalition has also provided over \$33 million to establish the Carer Gateway so there is a streamlined information service for carers to access the right advice, services and support. The Carer Gateway provides one central point through which information about services and support is available for people who care for someone with disability, chronic illness, dementia and mental illness.

## **Indigenous Australians**

Indigenous employment programmes have seen more than 39,000 Indigenous men and women secure jobs in our first term (18 September 2013 to 27 April 2016.) This is more than 39,000 people whose lives have been turned around by the ability to get off welfare and build a future for themselves, their families and communities.

Training is geared to the skills needed by employers, securing jobs for individuals and training them for that job. This ends the old, failed model of placing people on a never-ending cycle of training which leads nowhere and only compounds an individual's sense of failure as certificates are collected but no job eventuates. Payments for employment programmes are now firmly focused on outcomes of at least 26 weeks of employment. This ensures employers, employment brokers and training providers stick with people moving from training into work and supports them through this critical transition.

The Coalition has committed to train up to 5,000 Indigenous people for guaranteed jobs through Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTECs). If re-elected, the Coalition will continue the successful Employment Parity Initiative (EPI). Through EPI, we are working closely with Australia's largest employers, many of whom already have a strong track record of Indigenous recruitment, to create 20,000 jobs for Indigenous Australians by 2020. Employers are committing to increase their existing workforces to ensure parity with the Indigenous population of three per cent or more.

In remote areas, the Coalition has reversed the botched and rushed introduction of Labor's failed Remote Jobs and Communities Programme which only led to more people becoming disengaged. The Coalition has worked in partnership with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations and communities to create the Community Development Programme (CDP), a more effective, simpler and fairer system to support job seekers into employment. Since CDP's introduction in July 2015, disengagement from training and work experience has been reversed. If re-elected, the Coalition will reintroduce legislation to strengthen the CDP, providing weekly payments through local community organisations and service providers rather than Centrelink to link activity more directly to payments in a work-like situation.

Economic development and jobs for Indigenous people need to come from both the public and the private sectors. The Coalition introduced a new Indigenous Procurement Policy in July 2015 and the results have been spectacular. In the first nine months, contracts worth more than \$120 million were awarded to Indigenous businesses – businesses that we know are more likely to employ Indigenous jobseekers. As a major employer, the Commonwealth Government is leading by example with its Indigenous recruitment target of 3 per cent across the Australian Public Service by 2018.

## **Mature-age workers**

The Turnbull Coalition believes we cannot afford to waste the talent and skills of Australians over 50 and we are giving them the opportunities to re-enter the workplace.

The Coalition is encouraging businesses to hire Australians over 50, because their skills and talent are beneficial to any workplace.

Under Restart, employers will receive \$10,000 bonus if an employer hires a full-time Australian aged 50 years of age and over.

We know that Restart is achieving results because since the programme began, over 6,000 mature age Australians are now in jobs.

The Turnbull Coalition Government is working to change employer and community attitudes towards older workers through the 'Power of Oldness' campaign. The campaign highlights the benefits which mature age people bring to the workplace, including reliability, experience, a strong work ethic and leadership.

We recently announced the appointment of the Hon Dr Kay Patterson as Age Discrimination Commissioner. Dr Patterson is extremely well-placed to advocate the transformation of community attitudes towards older Australians and continuing our national conversation on the rights and contributions of older persons to all aspects of society.

In addition, the Attorney-General recently launched the report from the Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australians and Australians with disability.

If re-elected, the Turnbull Coalition will continue to work to remove the barriers to employment experienced by older Australians in our community.

### **Cultural background**

The Turnbull Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians, including those from Asian and other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

All of the Coalition's policies inherently reflect and harness Australia's productivity through diversity. A re-elected Turnbull Government will always support policies that reflect Australia's core values and beliefs by empowering individuals to be the best they can be, whilst maintaining a safety net for vulnerable people and families.

Australians with CALD backgrounds make up 30 per cent of small business owners. The Turnbull Government has identified diversity as a key contributing factor to Australia's economy and overall productivity. Culturally diverse communities foster the entrepreneurial spirit that is an essential part of our economic plan for jobs and growth.

### **LGBTI+ employees**

The Turnbull Coalition is strongly committed to ensuring that rights of LGBTI people are protected and that they can live free from discrimination. We believe LGBTI people should be treated with the same respect as any other member of the community.

The Coalition supported the removal of discrimination against same-sex couples in Commonwealth laws and the *Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013* which established sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status as protected grounds under the *Sex Discrimination Act*. Since 2013, the Coalition Government has been working with the States and Territories to remove any remaining discrimination against LGBTI people in their legislation.

A foundation principle of the Turnbull Coalition is to value families. The Coalition does not seek to proscribe the nature or make-up of these families. We took the lead in proposing amendments to the *Family Law Act* which were subsequently adopted by the former Labor Government to recognise same-sex families. The Act now recognises the non-birth mother of a child born through artificial conception procedures as the parent of the child.

The Coalition will continue to design laws that appropriately balance the rights and freedoms of the LGBTI community and religious communities to advance the freedoms of all consistent with Australia's liberal democratic traditions. We retain a strong commitment to non-discrimination in the provision of healthcare, education, employment and welfare services by service providers.

### **Flexible work**

The Turnbull Coalition appreciates the benefits that come from workers and employers having the ability to come together to mutually agree on flexible work arrangements that suit their needs. The Coalition introduced legislation into the Parliament in 2014 to allow workers and business to better access flexible work arrangements. Regrettably, these arrangements were blocked in the Senate by Labor and the Greens.