



ALP Response Diversity Council Federal Election Survey

Thank you for writing to the Australian Labor Party and providing the opportunity to outline Labor's positions on matters of interest to the Diversity Council Australia.

Please find our response to your questions below.

1. Respect and recognition for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people

A Shorten Labor Government will establish a Voice for First Nations peoples and seek the support of the Australian people for that Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution.

We support the Voice. We support enshrining it in the Constitution. It is our first priority for Constitutional change.

In May 2017, 250 First Nations leaders met at Uluru and called for a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament.

After more than a decade of debate about what form Constitutional Recognition should take, representatives of First Nations peoples described what it looked like to them.

They told Australia that while the 1967 referendum meant they were counted; the next referendum should ensure they were heard.

The Statement from the Heart is one of the most significant documents produced in the history of Reconciliation and, from day one, Labor has been determined to accord the Statement proper respect and thorough consideration.

If elected, a Shorten Labor Government will move quickly to agree a process together.

In government, we will work with First Nations peoples at the national and regional level to make it a reality.

We will move quickly following the election to agree on a process with First Nations peoples – including a clear pathway to a referendum. We will also work with them to establishing a Makarrata Commission for agreement-making and truth-telling.

This will be a genuine process of government and First Nations peoples working together to achieve meaningful change.

We will examine options for ensuring local, regional and national representation so that First Nations communities have a genuine say.

A Voice would not be a third chamber of Parliament. It would be a mechanism for First Nations peoples to have a greater say in the policy issues that impact their lives.

You can read more about our policies for a fair go for First Nations peoples, including jobs, employment and inclusive workplaces at http://alp.org.au/fair_go_for_first_nations_policy_document.

2. Gender equality in workforce participation

a. *The availability, affordability and accessibility of child care*

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver massive cost of living relief for nearly one million Australian families struggling with the cost of child care with a \$4 billion investment in early education.

A Shorten Labor Government will put more money back in working parents' pockets for 887,000 Australian families. Every single family earning up to \$174,000 will get cheaper child care with Labor.

We will increase the subsidy rate from 85 per cent to 100 per cent up to the hourly fee cap (currently \$11.77 per hour for long day care) for families earning up to \$69,000 who meet the activity test requirements, making child care free, or almost free, for up to 372,000 families. The current tapered reduction will be updated to reflect this new, higher subsidy rate.

Families earning between \$69,000 and \$100,000 will receive a subsidy rate between 100 per cent and 85 per cent up to the hourly fee cap, and families earning between \$100,000 and \$174,000 will receive a subsidy rate between 85 per cent and 60 per cent up to the fee cap – delivering an effective increase of 10 per cent.

Families accessing approved Centre Based Child Care, Family Day Care and Outside School Hours Care, including holiday care, will all benefit from the more generous subsidy.

A Shorten Labor Government will also introduce a new National Preschool and Kindy Program, guaranteeing around 700,000 Australian children a year will be able to access subsidised preschool in the two years before formal school with an investment of an additional \$1.7 billion into early education.

b. *Government funded paid parental leave*

Labor introduced Australia's first ever paid parental leave scheme in 2011. The Liberals have repeatedly tried to slash paid parental leave, calling mothers "rorters", "fraudsters" and "double dippers."

Labor will protect paid parental leave and invest around \$400 million to pay superannuation on paid parental leave for the first time – because parents should not be penalised for spending time with their families.

A Shorten Labor Government will also consult with experts on ways to make parental leave more flexible, so it meets the needs of Australian families.

c. *Improving the uptake of parental leave by men*

Labor introduced ‘dad and partner pay’ when we were last in government to make sure both parents can spend time at home with their newborn baby.

Labor will help parents manage their work and caring responsibilities through paid parental leave; rights to unpaid parental leave of up to two years; the right to request a change of hours for parenting or caring, or other flexible work arrangements, and the right to work reasonable but not excessive hours.

d. *Women in leadership*

Women in Parliament

Labor has a target of 50 per cent representation of women by 2025. We are working to meet this target after this election – six years ahead of schedule. Labor has almost double the number of women standing for the House of Representatives as the Liberals and Nationals.

Labor will continue to work to support women’s representation in politics and in parliaments across Australia.

Representation on Government Boards

A Shorten Labor Government will meet our target of 50 per cent representation of women on Australian Government boards within our first term, and we will work to boost the representation of women in Chair and Deputy Chair positions to 40 per cent.

We will also work to tackle the under-representation of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in board positions.

Labor will continue to work with ASX companies to boost the representation of women on private boards.

Supporting Women in the APS

A Shorten Labor Government will set a stretch target of 50 per cent representation of women in senior public service roles by 2025, with a particular focus on women’s representation in traditionally male-dominated economic and fiscal portfolios.

Recognising Women’s Contributions

Labor will modernise the Australian honours system to better reflect the contributions and achievements of Australian women, including by setting a 40 per cent target for nominations and awards by 2020, moving towards a target of 50 per cent.

Labor will also appoint a woman as the next Governor General.

A Judiciary that Reflects our Community

A Shorten Labor Government will introduce a rigorous, merit-based process for appointments to the federal judiciary, modelled on the process Labor implemented when

last in government. We will emphasise the need for a judiciary that is reflective of modern Australia, including gender and ethnic diversity.

e. *Workforce gender segregation*

One of the key drivers of gender pay inequity is the fact work in traditionally female dominated industries is undervalued.

The average woman working in the most feminised industries such as health care, social assistance and education is paid around \$30,000 less than the average man working in the most male dominated industries such as mining and construction.

Australia's equal pay laws are not working well enough to tackle this problem. Of the 21 applications made since 1994, only one equal remuneration order has been made by the Fair Work Commission.

Labor will deliver a fair go for Australian women by strengthening the ability of the Fair Work Commission to order pay increases for workers in female dominated industries such as early childhood, aged care, and disability services.

Labor will change the Fair Work Act to make it clear that the Commission must consider pay equity a central objective of the workplace relations system.

Labor will give the Commission greater capacity and funding to conduct Pay Equity Reviews and order pay increases in undervalued feminised industries. Low paid workers should not have to rely on fighting complex, expensive legal cases to secure a decent wage rise.

Pay Equity Reviews will be conducted by a new Presidential member of the Commission, supported by an expert Pay Equity Panel.

We don't need to compare female dominated jobs with male dominated jobs to know that female dominated industries are often poorly paid – that's just a fact. So we will change the Fair Work Act to make it clear that establishing undervaluation of female dominated industries does not require a male comparator.

Labor will also support women's participation in STEM professions through the creation of Australia's first National Evaluation Framework for Girls and Women in STEM Initiatives. There are more than 300 initiatives to support women and girls' participation in STEM fields around the country – we need to find out what's working best to shape future investment.

Labor will fund the Science and Gender Equity (SAGE) program to drive gender equity in science and research institutions, establish a National Women in Science Day and work with the Australian Research Council and Medical Research Council to find structural fixes to barriers to women's participation in research.

3. Domestic violence

A Shorten Labor Government will more than double investment in the Fourth Action Plan to prevent and respond to family violence, delivering record Commonwealth funding of over \$660 million.

Labor's package includes:

- **Doubling Fourth Action Plan funding for refuges and emergency accommodation:** Investing an additional \$60 million for facilities that accommodate older children and pets; accessibility upgrades; and better facilities for younger children.
- **More transitional and affordable housing:** Establishing an \$88 million Safe Housing Fund to deliver transitional and emergency housing for women and children escaping violence, older women at risk of homelessness and young people exiting out of home care. We will also construct 250,000 affordable homes, helping women and children escaping family violence to quickly find stability and re-build their lives.
- **More legal assistance:** Establishing a \$90 million Preventing Family Violence Legal Services Fund, including:
 - \$42.5 million extra for Community Legal Centres.
 - \$21.5 million extra for Family Violence Prevention Legal Centres.
 - \$21 million to double the number of Specialist Domestic Violence Units and Health Justice partnerships.
 - \$5 million to support the expansion of Family and Domestic Violence courts by establishing national standards and providing training for judicial and court officers.
- **Flexible Support Packages:** Investing \$60 million in 20,000 Flexible Support Packages of up to \$10,000 to support people escaping family violence in the ways that help them the most - such as rent, furniture, transport, medication, home security and transport costs.
- **Supporting Women on temporary visas:** Reviewing immigration and social security arrangements and invest \$5 million in services and interpreters. The Australian Law Reform Commission and the Victorian Royal Commission have recommended changes, as visa status is often used to control women and temporary residents can struggle to access the services they need.

A Shorten Labor Government will also legislate to provide 10 days paid domestic violence leave as part of the National Employment Standards.

Labor will drive cultural change by investing in prevention. This will include an extra \$62 million to provide grants to community organisations and frontline services working to

prevent violence and drive behavioural change. Labor will also provide \$35 million to state and territory and non-government school systems to deliver best-practice, evidence-based, age-appropriate respectful relationships education in schools.

You can read more about our comprehensive plans to prevent and respond to violence against women here: <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/preventing-family-violence/>

4. Pay Equity

A Shorten Labor Government will lead a national push to help close the gender pay gap and ensure women receive equal pay for their work.

Labor's plan will deliver a fair go for Australian women by encouraging employers to take action to close gender gaps in their workplaces and make it easier for the Fair Work Commission to order pay increases for workers in female dominated industries such as early childhood, aged care and disability services.

Labor will:

- Change the Fair Work Act to make it clear that the Fair Work Commission must consider pay equity a central objective of the workplace relations system.
- Establish a statutory Equal Remuneration Principle.
- Give the Commission greater capacity and funding to conduct Pay Equity Reviews and order pay increases in undervalued feminised industries.
- Fully fund professional pay increases of 20 per cent to early childhood educators over eight years.
- Set up an expert Pay Equity Panel led by a new Presidential member and supported by a specialist Pay Equity Unit.
- Restore cuts to penalty rates, which disproportionately impact women.
- Make large companies with more than 1,000 employees publicly reveal their gender pay gaps for the first time.
- Ban pay secrecy clauses and give employees the right to disclose (or not disclose) their pay.
- Require all Australian government departments and agencies to conduct gender pay audits within the first year of a Labor Government.
- Enforce gender-equitable government procurement processes.

Further information on Labor's pay equity policies is available [here](#) and [here](#).

5. People with disability

Australians with disability and their carers have a disproportionately high rate of unemployment. Labor will work with people with disability to improve employment opportunities and job readiness, whether they live in urban areas or regional communities. Labor will ensure links from secondary to tertiary and vocational education maximise meaningful employment opportunities. Labor will also work with people with disability to change stereotypes and demonstrate the real and tangible value of diversity in the workplace.

Labor will act on the recommendation of the Productivity Commission and develop a new National Disability Strategy. The new strategy will set clear and reported targets for employment, education, housing, transport, justice, health and reducing young people in nursing homes. Labor will work with the people with disability, families, advocates, unions and the sector to improve pathways to open employment for people with disability.

Labor will set a disability employment target for six per cent in the Australian Public Service by 2022 – increasing the number of people with disability in the federal public service by 3,500 in Labor’s first term. This is an interim target on a pathway to further improvement, not a distant promise two elections away.

6. Carers

A Shorten Labor Government will improve services and support for carers, as well as invest in making Australia more accessible and inclusive.

There are over 2.5 million carers in Australia whose contribution is valued at over \$1 billion a week - but caring can be invisible work which is easily overlooked by government.

A Shorten Labor Government will listen to people with disability and carers and consider their rights and needs when making decisions across Government. This starts with our commitments to improve supports, services, inclusion and accessibility.

Labor’s plan for carers includes:

- \$66 million boost to carer respite – the equivalent of more than 42,000 extra overnight care sessions per year from July 2020. Carers report that access to respite is the single most important issue they face.
- \$7 million for 25 extra Centrelink Carer Specialists – to reduce phone and processing waiting times and provide accurate advice to carers.
- Making it easier to balance caring and work – allowing Carers Allowance recipients to meet their mutual obligation requirements for other payments by applying for part-time rather than full-time work.
- Better processes – Labor will work with carers to co-design and improve the Carer Allowance, Carer Payment and Department of Veterans Affairs application processes.

- Two-year review of the Integrated Carer Support Service – to make sure the new system is working for carers.
- \$250,000 in catch-up funding for Carers Australia – to make up for years of Liberal indexation freezes, deliver better support for carers and improve recognition through Carers Week.
- National Carers Strategy – Labor will re-instate a National Carers Strategy and make carers a cross-government priority. This will include annual reporting on the contribution and wellbeing of carers; the actions Government will take to support carers; and establishing an advisory group to support the development of the strategy.
- Better NDIS planning – Labor will make the completion of a Carer Statement a standard part of the NDIS planning process, to make sure NDIS plans help people to care sustainably.

7. Mature-age workers

Too many mature Australians are too young to retire, but unable to find work – leaving around 86,000 Australians aged over 55 looking for work.

A Shorten Labor Government will make it easier for small business to create new jobs and get more Australians into work – delivering a tax cut for businesses who give older Australians another go.

Companies with turnover of less than \$10 million that have been operating for more than two years will be eligible for an additional 30 per cent tax deduction for up to five new workers' salaries for their first year of employment, capped at \$50,000 per company.

The New Jobs Tax Cut will be available to businesses hiring Australians who face real barriers to finding work, including job seekers over the age of 55.

The New Jobs Tax Cut is good for jobs and good for the economy. Labor's plan will help businesses grow and help jobseekers get a foot in the door.

The New Jobs Tax Cut will cost \$141 million over the forward estimates.

8. Younger workers

Young job seekers today are finding it harder to get a foot in the door – nearly one in three young people in the labour force are either unemployed or underemployed, there are almost 260,000 unemployed youth in Australia that want a job but simply aren't being given the chance. They shouldn't have to deal with discrimination and harassment when they do find a job.

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

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

A Shorten Labor Government will also make it easier for small business to create new jobs and get more young Australians into work – delivering a tax cut for businesses who give young Australians a first start.

9. Culturally diverse Australians

a. Participation

Australia is a nation of 25 million stories from all corners of the globe and our diversity makes us one of the most multicultural countries on earth.

Immigration has made us a diverse, competitive and innovative nation – and contributes significantly to Australia’s economy.

Labor will work to tackle the under-representation of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in leadership positions.

Labor believes that people who are looking for work need to be supported to develop the skills and experience they need for jobs in their local area, and helped to find secure, decent jobs. Labor is committed to strengthening the Adult Migrant English Program so it’s more effective with more services available, helping migrants to become work-ready. Labor will have more to say about policies to support multiculturalism in the lead up to the election.

b. Future Asia

A Shorten Labor Government will lead a step change in Australia’s attitude to drive a whole of nation effort to deepen and broaden Australia’s engagement with Asia.

Labor will implement a comprehensive suite of measures to deliver the FutureAsia plan. The range of detailed measures in the FutureAsia plan will contribute to the major objectives:

- Building Asia relevant capabilities, particularly in our school system.
- Forging deeper economic partnerships with our neighbours.
- Building Australia’s Asia relevant business capabilities and growing our exports.
- Enhancing Australia’s diplomatic footprint in our region.
- Building cultural understanding and exchange.

A Shorten Labor Government will ensure we are delivering on our commitments by providing annual updates to the Parliament.

Key FutureAsia policy initiatives include:

- A nationwide Asia Capable Schools program that will support 5,000 principals understand the economic forces occurring in our region and what kind of future workforce businesses will need.
- A new Australia-based Asian diaspora program.
- Restoring the Liberals' cuts to the Asia Education Foundation.
- Establishing an Australia-ASEAN Studies Centre.
- Improving economic and trade links through regular Asia-Pacific Finance Ministers meetings and 2+2 Australia-Indonesia Finance and Trade Ministers meetings.
- Working with the Australian Institute of Company Directors to enhance Australian directors' Asian capability skills.
- Establishing four new diplomatic posts in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Providing \$15 million to strengthen Australia's arts and music engagement in Asia.

10. LGBTIQ+ employees

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver a fairer Australia for LGBTIQ people by tackling discrimination and giving a stronger voice to LGBTIQ Australians.

Labor has a proud record of promoting and defending the rights of LGBTIQ people. When Labor was last in Government, we introduced an unprecedented number of reforms and rights protections for LGBTIQ Australians, ending legal discrimination in 85 pieces of Commonwealth legislation.

We fought side by side with LGBTIQ Australians in the fight for Marriage Equality, and together, we won.

We understand, however, that there is more to do. A Shorten Labor Government will:

- Establish a National LGBTIQ Ministerial Advisory Council.
- Protect LGBTIQ students and staff from discrimination in schools.
- Work with the states and territories on a nationwide ban on so-called "LGBTIQ Conversion Therapy".
- Establish a full-time LGBTIQ Human Rights Commissioner within the Australian Human Rights Commission
- Work to remove all remaining discrimination at the federal level.

- Provide small grants to LGBTIQ Community organisations.
- Provide \$10 million to the new Victorian Pride Centre and \$600,000 for JoyFM

Labor has a comprehensive plan to ensure a fair go for LGBTI Australians. Details of our policies can be found [here](#).

11. Flexible work

Labor supports secure, flexible work with fair wages.

We want to see a workplace relations system that is fit for purpose. A system that provides for security of employment, that allows people to balance work and leisure and that keeps people safe at work. We have a track record of reforming the workplace relations framework to make things fairer, to foster cooperation between employers and workers while supporting inclusive economic growth.

A Shorten Labor Government will also work with the Australian Public Service Commission and Commonwealth Public Sector Union to lead by example by promoting more flexible working arrangements for women and men across the APS.

12. Innovation: automation, artificial intelligence and the future of work

Labor is advancing a set of policies designed to prepare the country, its workers and our industries for the future. Labor's plans include an action plan on climate change which will create jobs, industries and opportunities; our plan for a new national inquiry into both our post-secondary education system; and the science and research system. Labor has advanced plans to set up a Centre for AI Excellence in Melbourne and has plans to support and expand the activities of the Australian Space Agency as a part of our comprehensive approach to innovation and creating the jobs of the future.

13. The Racial Discrimination Act

For over 20 years, since it was enacted by the Keating Labor Government, section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act has drawn the line against racial vilification and protected our citizens and our society from the poisonous effects of racist hate speech.

In the last six years, the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government has launched two separate attacks on section 18C. Labor was appalled by the actions of the Liberals in attacking section 18C, and we stood with thousands of individuals, legal experts and organisations, as well as community groups from across our nation, to successfully defend section 18C from these reckless, ideological attacks by the Liberals. Labor believes that the Liberals should accept that Australians do not want more racism and more bigotry in our community and commit to never seeking to water down our race hate protections.

Labor introduced the protections against racial hate speech in Section 18C over 20 years ago, and we will continue to fight to keep those protections in place.

Because Labor holds that all politicians have a responsibility to behave in a respectful manner when discussing issues of race and ethnicity, every member of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party has now signed a Federal Parliamentarians' Code of Race and Cultural Ethics.

14. Sexual harassment in the workplace

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

Following the announcement of the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces, Labor wrote to the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to provide our strong support for the Inquiry and indicate a number of priorities Labor hope to see addressed as part of the Inquiry.

Labor particularly supported review of the current legal framework and complaints mechanism surrounding sexual harassment to ensure the legal framework keeps pace with community expectations and advances in anti-discrimination laws in comparable jurisdictions.

A Shorten Labor Government will work closely with stakeholders to take action on the recommendations of the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces when it is released and will make addressing a sexual violence a priority through our new National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.

Labor has also committed to create an independent taskforce to crack down on sexual harassment and assault at universities, TAFEs and residential colleges because all Australian students have the right to an education free from harassment.