

8 May 2019

Ms Lisa Annese  
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Diversity Council Australia  
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Dear Ms Annese,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. A response to your questions is attached.

This election will have real consequences for Australia's economy and our future.

Despite global headwinds, our economy is strong. This year, for the first time in more than a decade, the Government will deliver a Budget surplus.

A stronger economy means we can deliver on our plans to:

1. Create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years.
2. Maintain budget surpluses and pay down debt.
3. Deliver tax relief to encourage and reward hard working Australians.
4. Guarantee increased investments for schools, hospitals and roads.
5. Keep Australians safe and our borders secure.

The alternative at this election is Mr Shorten. Labor's risky agenda includes billions of dollars of higher taxes – on retirees, housing, incomes, investments, family businesses, electricity and more.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst  
**Federal Director**

## **MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA**

### **1. Respect & Recognition for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples**

**In 2018, DCA made a submission, to the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples advocating for recognition of our First Peoples.**

**a) In Government, what action would you take in relation to Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples?**

**b) What if any plans do you have in relation to addressing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people's calls for truth-telling and treaty?**

**c) What policies or plans do you have to support Australian organisations to develop their capacity to create inclusive workplaces that understand and respect the diversity of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and histories, and provide safe, welcoming and culturally competent environments for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to work?**

The Morrison Government will continue our efforts to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution and increase the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the design of policies and delivery of programs that benefit them.

The new *Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement* between the Federal Government, states, territories and the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks) will ensure decision-makers work closer than ever to deliver real change for Indigenous Australians.

*The Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement* will focus all of our efforts to deliver better health, education and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

It recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must play an integral part in making the decisions that affect their lives. This agreement will put Indigenous peoples at the heart of the development and implementation of the next phase of Closing the Gap, embedding shared decision making and accountability at the centre of the way we do business.

In order to effect real change, governments must work collaboratively and in genuine, formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because they are the essential agents of change. The change we all want to see will only come if we work together.

The Agreement was developed collaboratively with *the Coalition of Peaks*, the largest group of Indigenous community controlled organisations, and committed to by all levels of government. It builds on the December 2018 decision by the Council of Australian Governments to establish a formal partnership on Closing the Gap between governments and Indigenous Australians.

The partnership will include a Joint Council on Closing the Gap, which for the first time will include Ministers nominated by jurisdictions, together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives chosen by the Coalition of Peaks. The Joint Council represents an historic step forward in the practical working relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and governments.

To support this historic partnership, the Morrison Government will deliver \$4.6 million to *the Coalition of Peaks* to ensure the representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

are able to engage and negotiate as equal partners with governments to design and *monitor Closing the Gap*.

This is a new way of doing business that reflects that the top-down approach established in 2008 while well-intentioned, did not truly seek to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Australians. We enter this partnership recognising that Canberra cannot change it all and that we need more than lofty goals and bureaucratic targets.

Finalising the refresh of the *Closing the Gap framework* and monitoring its implementation over the next ten years is critical to the future and prosperity of all Australians.

We are committed to working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians.

The refreshed *Closing the Gap framework* and targets will be finalised through the Joint Council by mid-2019, ahead of endorsement by COAG.

*Closing the gap* is not just about targets and programs. It is about making sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can share in the decision making about policies and programs that impact on them and have a real say over their own lives.

The Morrison Government remains committed to recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in the Constitution.

Recognition would acknowledge our shared history and the value we place on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

The Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition's final report notes further work is required to clarify what a voice is and how it could best suit the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

## **2. Gender equality in workforce participation**

**Gender equality offers a range of measurable and well documented benefits to national productivity and competitiveness, as well as to individual businesses. However, DCA's research has shown that there are a number of barriers to enabling women's workforce participation.**

### **a) The availability, affordability and accessibility of childcare**

**What policies or plans do you have to improve access to high quality, affordable and flexible early learning and care services (long day care, preschool etc) to improve workforce participation for parents?**

On 2 July 2018, the Coalition introduced the most significant reforms to child care in more than 40 years. The new *Child Care Package* is benefitting nearly 1 million families, with out-of-pocket costs for families falling by 8.9 per cent within the first nine months of the new *Child Care Subsidy*. A typical family is around \$1,300 better off each year.

Our reforms are benefiting Australian families through:

- 25.4 per cent increase in Government-provided support to families;
- 8.8 per cent increase in the weekly hours of child care used by all families; and
- 8.1 per cent increase in the total number of children using Centre Based Day Care.

We are supporting families in regional and rural communities to have more child care options. Our *Community Child Care Fund (CCCF)* provides grants to child care services to reduce barriers to participation (particularly in disadvantaged communities), sustainability support for services experiencing viability issues and capital support to increase the supply of child care in areas of high unmet demand. We want to make it cheaper and easier for families to access child care and we are achieving this through the various elements of our new child care package.

The Morrison Government is providing record funding for child care without increasing taxes. We can afford to support Australian families with young children to go back to work, back to study or back to volunteering because the Morrison Government is keeping the economy strong.

In addition, the Morrison Government is providing more than \$440 million for preschool in 2019 and over \$450 million in 2020, under *the National Partnership with states and territories on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education*. This extension takes our overall investment in preschool to \$2.8 billion since elected.

#### **b) Government funded paid parental leave**

##### **In Government will you make any changes to the existing paid parental leave scheme?**

As part of the *Women's Economic Security Package*, the Coalition has committed to improving the *Paid Parental Leave Scheme* by increasing the flexibility of the *Paid Parental Leave* system and extending access through changes to the work test.

Under the changes, for children born or adopted from 1 July 2020, families will be able to split their parental leave pay into blocks of leave over a two-year period, with periods of work in between.

By allowing the payment to be taken flexibly, parents can use it in a way that benefits and suits them. It will provide women with more choice about how they blend work and family. These changes will support thousands of working women, including self-employed women and small business owners who cannot afford to leave their businesses for 18 consecutive weeks.

From 1 January 2020, changes to *the Paid Parental Leave* work test will mean that who have irregular work, such as teachers on casual contracts, and women in hazardous jobs who have to leave their job early in their pregnancy, such as in mining and construction, will be able to access the *Paid Parental Leave* scheme.

The new work test rules mean that more women who have an ongoing connection to work will be able to meet the work test and access *Parental Leave Pay*.

While women are certainly a focus, importantly, the changes do not only benefit women. The changes will encourage both parents to share the leave and balance family responsibilities with a return to work, particularly benefitting small business owners and self-employed Australians who cannot take long periods of time away from their business.

#### **c) Improving the uptake of parental leave by men**

**Research shows that 95% of primary leave takers are mothers and just 1 in 20 dads take primary parental leave. Of those men who do take leave, 85% take less than 4 weeks leave. The uptake of 'dad and partner pay' by men is particularly low, which is a scheme that provides payment for eligible dads and partners on unpaid leave from work to care for their new child.**

**We know that men who do take parental leave remain more active and engaged fathers, and are more likely to take on an ongoing shared responsibility for parenting, care and other domestic responsibilities.**

#### **How will you encourage more men to take parental leave?**

The Morrison Government's measures on flexible work and parental leave pay benefit not just mothers, but also fathers. By giving them greater choice over how they organise their time between paid work and caring for their new child, the Coalition not only encourages but also facilitates their ability to take leave in accordance with their working demands and personal preference.

In order for men to be able to take on more of the caring responsibility, it must be offered to them by their workplace and must become more culturally acceptable. We continue to support the work of the *Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)* to encourage businesses to have flexible work arrangements for men, as well as women. This is, in part, achieved through the Employer of Choice citation, which commenced in 2014.

#### **d) Women in leadership**

**What policies and programs do you have to increase women in leadership roles and / or enhance the representation of women in corporate Australia, in the government sector and / or in Parliament?**

The Morrison Government is taking a range of actions to boost women's leadership opportunities. The Coalition have increased the percentage of women on Australian Government boards to 47.3 per cent, the highest overall result since public reporting began. This reflects an increase of 5.6 percentage points since the Coalition came to Government.

The Coalition also continues to support a goal of more women on Government boards through expansion of the *BoardLinks program*, appointing *BoardLinks Champions* to advocate and publically promote gender diversity initiative and identify and encourage strong female candidates to consider Australian Government board positions. This important program enables any woman who is interested in being considered for a Government board appointment to register on the *BoardLinks* database.

The Morrison Government is working with industry to provide nation-wide programs that support the number of women in leadership positions in the private sector. The Coalition has invested in board scholarships for women through the Australian Institute of Company Directors, including specific scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other culturally and linguistically diverse women, and for women working in the disability sector.

Through the first ever \$119 million *Women's Economic Security Statement*, we are establishing a *Future Female Entrepreneurs program* in partnership with the private sector for around 55,000 girls and young women to encourage entrepreneurialism and self-employment. In addition, the Morrison Government is creating a women's start-up fund, *Boosting Female Founders*, ensuring that women can access the finance they need to achieve their entrepreneurial goals.

#### **e) Workforce gender segregation**

**Australia's workforce is highly gender segregated, that is, across the workforce, women and men are concentrated in different industries and different occupations. This is a driver of pay inequality, as well as meaning many industries are missing out on the benefits of diversity.**

**What action would you take in Government to address gender segregation in the Australian workforce? Specifically, do you have any policies or plans to increase the ratio of women in STEM professions, and the ratio of men in caring professions?**

The Morrison Government is providing opportunities to boost participation in industries where women may experience barriers to success. We have recently launched our *Advancing Women in STEM strategy*, which builds on a range of Coalition programs towards our vision to improve the participation of women across all STEM fields.

The Morrison Government has announced, in the 2019-20 Budget, a \$3.4 million package over four years to support greater participation of girls and women in STEM. This includes funding to extend *the Science in Australia Gender Equity initiative* in higher education and research institutions and showcasing the benefits of STEM skills and careers to our children to encourage more participation in STEM. These initiatives build on the \$4.5 million allocation in the Coalition's 2018-19 Budget which included support for the work of Professor Lisa Harvey-Smith as the Women in STEM Ambassador, and the development of a Girls in STEM Toolkit.

The Coalition's initiatives to support women's participation in male-dominated industries include:

- Funding to support the ongoing operations of *the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE)* initiative so higher education and research sectors can continue to improve gender equity policies and practices.
- Support for the work of *the Women in STEM Ambassador*, including a national digital awareness program to show young Australian women the importance of STEM to their future and the development of a Girls in STEM Toolkit.
- Extension of the *Curious Minds program* to encourage more girls into STEM.
- *The Women in Aviation Initiative* to encourage more women to pursue careers in all elements of the aviation sector.
- *The Women Building Australia initiative*, a construction industry-led program to increase the participation of young women working in the sector.
- *The Women in Stem and Entrepreneurship grants program*.

In addition to increasing women and girl's engagement and participation in STEM fields, the Coalition is also focused on ensuring that Indigenous women are equipped to participate in STEM fields, investing \$25 million. This investment has gone towards establishing a dedicated Indigenous Girls' STEM Academy and a Teachers of STEM initiative, backing a generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to be leaders, role models and game changers of the future.

### **3. Domestic violence**

**Employers increasingly play a significant role in supporting and protecting victims of domestic violence in the workplace.**

**a) What are your policies in relation to supporting and protecting victims of domestic violence in the workplace?**

The Morrison Government is making the single largest ever Commonwealth investment in *the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*, bringing the total investment to more than \$840 million since 2013.

The \$328 million Morrison Government contribution to *the Fourth Action Plan* focuses on key areas where the Commonwealth is best placed to contribute to creating real and lasting change to reduce violence against women and their children. This covers the following major investment areas:

- prevention strategies to help eradicate domestic and family violence in our homes, workplaces, communities and clubs (\$68.3 million for);
- safe places for people impacted by domestic and family violence (\$78.4 million);
- improve and build on frontline services to keep women and children safe (\$82.2 million);
- 1800RESPECT, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service (\$64 million); and
- support and prevention strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (\$35 million).

In addition, the Coalition has made several strong commitments in recent years which support women and children at risk of violence:

- *the Women's Safety Package* to provide a safety net for women and children at high risk of experiencing violence (\$101.2 million);
- *the Women's Economic Security Package*— for measures to support women experiencing family and domestic violence (\$67 million); and
- *the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement*, including dedicated homelessness funding, which is to be matched by states and territories, and will have a focus on women and children affected by family and domestic violence (\$1.5 billion per annum).

Last year, the Coalition legislated a new minimum standard in *the National Employment Standard* for a minimum of five days of unpaid family and domestic violence leave.

This historic change to the law enshrines a minimum standard for family and domestic violence leave to all Australians covered by *the Fair Work Act*.

#### **b) How will you drive cultural change on this issue?**

Under *the National Plan* and *the Fourth Action Plan*, the Morrison Government will fund a number of initiatives to raise awareness, drive cultural change and prevent domestic violence, including:

- a range of community programs, information campaigns, resources, and awareness-raising initiatives focused on addressing the social behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence against women and children (\$25.4 million);
- Australia's first Prevention Hub to bring together government, experts, the community sector and corporate partners to oversee and coordinate efforts nationally towards a common goal of stopping violence. The Prevention Hub will measure and report on national impact, and share best practice and evaluation data to more effectively prevent violence;
- prevention programs for vulnerable or at risk groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse communities (\$12.1 million);
- continuation of the national *Stop it at the Start* campaign (\$16.7 million); and
- the delivery of Respect Matters resources to help schools teach children to build positive, healthy relationships based on equality and respect for one another (\$2.8 million).

#### 4. Pay equity

Despite many years of concerted effort by business and policy makers, Australia's gender pay gap currently stands at 14.1%.

If elected to government what action would you take to:

a) Address discrimination in work practices such as hiring, promotion and access to training;

c) Reduce disincentives to increasing workforce participation through personal tax, family payment and childcare support systems; and

d) Increase pay transparency and reporting on gender pay gaps?

A record number of more than six million women are now employed in Australia and more women are in full-time work than ever before. Women's workforce participation reached a record high of 60.7 per cent in January 2019 and is currently 60.5 per cent. The Coalition have reduced the gender pay gap to its lowest level on record and well below the 17.2 per cent gap when Labor left office.

The Morrison Government will continue its efforts to reduce the gender pay gap through the activities of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), and by supporting increased workforce participation by women, increasing women's access to jobs of the future such as in STEM, and improving women's representation in senior leadership roles.

The Morrison Government's \$119.2 million *Women's Economic Security Statement* is focussed on assisting women at many different points of their lives, in different parts of Australia, and in different circumstances. It includes funding of \$65.9 million to increase women's workforce participation through a range of measures.

The Coalition is reinstating *the Time Use Survey*, a contemporary evidence base to measure how we spend our time and to help Government design policies to fit the way people actually live their lives. It will also ensure better service delivery from government departments. Further, it will help us understand the economic value of unpaid work, including care work, a key factor in the workforce participation gap.

The Morrison Government is making improvements to WGEA systems to improve reporting, enhance Australia's gender equality data and reduce the cost of reporting for business. The new technology will strengthen WGEA's work with employers to promote and further improve gender equality in Australian workplaces. The upgrade will enable voluntary reporting enabling public sector employers to voluntarily report on their gender pay gaps for the first time, potentially increasing the size of WGEA's dataset to around 75% of Australian employees, up from the current 40%. Data analysis will enable businesses, not-for-profits as well as the public sector to take direct action to address gender equality in their workplace.

The Morrison Government is providing scholarships for women in accounting, economics and finance through *the Women's Leadership and Development Program* in recognition that the financial and services industry has the biggest pay gap of all Australian industries, with poor career progression a contributing factor.

The Coalition is making taxes lower, fairer and simpler. The Morrison Government will deliver immediate tax relief to over 10 million workers, helping Australian families to get ahead. When fully implemented, our tax relief plan will ensure 94 per cent of Australian taxpayers will pay no more than 30 cents in the dollar.

## 5. People with disability

### **What policies or plans do you have to improve employment opportunities of people with disability?**

The Coalition has already created 1.3 million jobs. The Morrison Government has a plan to keep our economy strong and create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years. It is only through creating these jobs that people with disability will have real employment opportunities.

On 1 July 2018, the Coalition introduced significant reforms to Disability Employment Services (DES) to give people with disability greater choice and flexibility in finding work. Since the reforms were introduced, there has been a 27 per cent increase in the number of people with disability voluntarily participating in the DES program. There are greater employment outcomes – 82 per cent of successful job placements are lasting at least 13 weeks, an increase of 24 per cent over previous arrangements.

In November 2018, the Morrison Government also established *the NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce* to remove barriers to employment for NDIS participants.

The Morrison Government backing the Taskforce with a \$19.9 million grant round to increase economic participation for people with disability.

The Morrison Government is encouraging employers to hire people with disability through the *Employ their Ability* campaign. The campaign highlights the benefits of employing people with disability and ensures employers are aware of the government support and programs available to help them.

As part of Our Plan to Support People with Disability, a Morrison Government will also:

- Introduce a new 7 per cent employment target for people with disability across the Australian Public Service (APS) by 2025.
- Provide \$2 million to support people with autism to find and keep a job, including a \$1.5 million national expansion of the successful *Dandelion Program* in partnership with *DXC Technology*.

## 6. Carers

### **What policies do you have to support workers who are also carers (caring for people with disability, people with elder care responsibilities)?**

Supporting carers has been a key priority for the Coalition.

In 2015, the Coalition committed \$33.7 million to launch *the Carer Gateway*, a website and phone service to help carers access practical information and resources to help them in their caring role.

Since it commenced in December 2015, *the Carer Gateway* national contact centre has had over 27,000 contacts and 1.1 million visits to the website.

Following extensive research and engagement with the carer sector over a two-year period, we announced a complete re-design of the carer service system in early 2018.

The new integrated carer support service introduces new early intervention and prevention supports and services for carers to help improve their health and wellbeing and increase their participation in education and the workforce.

As part of the Morrison Government's 2019-20 Budget, a further \$84.3 million was committed to expand these services, taking the Morrison Government's total funding commitment for new carer services to over \$550 million over the next four years.

The Coalition's new model will enable over 360,000 instances of support to be provided compared to 130,000 currently provided.

Emergency respite care will continue to be delivered to support carers experiencing an urgent and unplanned event that restricts their ability to provide care.

New digital counselling, coaching, and peer support services for carers are currently being designed and tested, and will be rolled out nationally through the Carer Gateway in mid-2019.

From September 2019, a network of 16 Carer Gateway regional delivery partners will be established to help carers access a range of new and improved local services such as needs assessments, targeted financial support, information and advice, tailored phone and in-person peer support, counselling and coaching and crisis support.

This is the biggest improvement to the delivery of carer support services in more than a decade.

## **7. Mature-age workers**

**Older people are the fastest growing age cohort in Australia, and will remain so for the foreseeable future.**

**What policies do you have to drive workforce participation and retention of mature age workers?**

The Morrison Government believes that if you want work, you should have the opportunity. That's why we are helping older Australians who want to work, to find and retain employment.

Under *the More Choices for a Longer Life* package, we are investing \$189.7 million on a range of jobs and skills measures to help mature age Australians find the right job, stay in the workforce, have flexibility in their later working years and retire with security.

Our support for mature age workers includes:

- trialling a new *Skills Checkpoint for Older Workers and Skills and Training Incentive* to encourage lifelong learning and help workers aged 45–70 years to gain new skills for future workforce opportunities;
- expanding *the Career Transition Assistance program* nationally from 1 July 2019 so mature age job seekers can benefit from guidance and training to be competitive in their local jobs market. Under the national rollout eligibility will be extended to 45 to 49-year-olds, beyond the current age bracket of 50 and over;
- providing an online self-assessment (Skills Transferability Tool) to assist workers to find jobs that closely match their skills, knowledge and attributes;
- expanding *the Entrepreneurship Facilitators program* to 20 additional locations to promote self-employment among older Australians;
- a range of targeted assistance under *the Job Change initiatives* to increase the re-employment rate of mature age retrenched workers;

- working with industry, via a Collaborative Partnership on Mature Age Employment, to drive cultural change in hiring practices, combat age discrimination in workplaces and equip managers and business owners to work with an age-diverse workforce; and
- maintaining wage subsidies for job seekers aged 50 years and over.

## 8. Younger workers

**DCA's Inclusion@Work Index found younger workers are almost twice as likely to report experiencing discrimination and harassment at work, than older workers.**

### **What policies do you have to address harassment and discrimination of younger workers?**

Existing general protection laws and anti-bullying remedies provide protection against harassment and discrimination of younger workers on a large range of grounds including age. The Morrison Government has provided additional funding of \$1.4 million to *the Fair Work Commission* to facilitate access to free legal advice for small business operators and employees who cannot afford to pay for legal services. This is likely to be particularly useful for younger workers.

## 9. Culturally diverse Australians

**DCA's research has shown that leveraging cultural diversity can assist organisations broaden their strategic perspective, innovate and address projected workforce requirements.**

### **a) What policies do you have to enable workforce participation of people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including in relation to their representation in leadership roles?**

The Morrison Government continues to help all Australians to have greater choices about their lives, improved economic independence and financial security.

The Morrison Government's mainstream employment services system, *jobactive*, helps people to prepare for and obtain meaningful and sustainable work opportunities. It includes employment service providers who specialise in providing support for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. The Government is making changes to *jobactive* to ensure that the support and services available to newly arrived refugees is better targeted. As a result of the Morrison Government's changes, from 1 January 2020 during their first 12 months in Australia, newly arrived refugees will be able to focus on adjusting to life in Australia and improving their English language proficiency through our Humanitarian Settlement Program and the Adult Migrant English Program. During this period, they can volunteer to participate in *jobactive* at any time and access the full suite of *jobactive* assistance. This will improve on the assistance through Stream A (Volunteer) under current arrangements.

The Morrison Government is also introducing transformative change to the employment services system, including greater investment in enhanced services for job seekers that face significant barriers to employment, giving them the extra support they need to move from welfare to work.

The NDIS also creates unique workforce opportunities for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Part of offering genuine choice and control is building a workforce that represents the diversity of participants. An NDIS workforce that meets diverse needs will be supported through initiatives targeted at particular groups that may otherwise be underrepresented in the workforce. This includes people of CALD backgrounds, people with a disability, young workers and Indigenous Australians.

**b) Given the importance of Australia's relationship with Asia, what action will you take to improve Asia capability for the future workforce?**

Through our flagship initiative for tertiary education, *the New Colombo Plan* (NCP), the Coalition has ensured that young Australians are prepared for the ever-changing future workforce by enabling them to study and undertake internships in the Indo-Pacific. More than 50,000 scholarships and mobility grants have been awarded since 2014. We have bolstered the NCP's success through strengthened private sector partnerships, providing work experience for students and developing a new generation of Australian leaders with the cross-cultural skills for the modern workforce.

China, our key trading partner, is one of our most popular destinations for NCP students, with 7,138 students receiving awards to support their study and work experiences in China. The NCP's Business Champion David Olsson, Chief Executive of Chinese/Australia merged law firm King Wood & Malletsons (KWM) endorsed the program, stating the *evidence is clear*. The NCP opens up students; horizons, creates cultural awareness, lends new perspectives, and nurtures their critical reasoning. Alumni develop skills, networks and friendships vital to their careers and the nation. Notably, a total of 19 NCP undergraduates have gained valuable cross-cultural work experience at KWM in Asia.

#### **10. LGBTIQ+ employees**

**DCA's research has found significant concerns about continued discrimination among Australian LGBTIQ+ employees in the workforce and broader society.**

**What are your policies to prevent discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation of LGBTIQ+ people and their families, both in the workforce and more generally?**

The Morrison Government believes that there needs to be fair and effective remedies to deal with discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation in the workplace. Existing remedies in *the Fair Work Act* enable actions against discrimination on multiple grounds, including on grounds of sex and sexual orientation. A wide range of effective orders are available if unlawful discrimination occurs.

The Coalition has strengthened the resources of the Fair Work Commission to deal with these matters quickly and at little cost. The funding of \$1.4 million, that the Morrison Government has provided to the Fair Work Commission to facilitate access to free legal advice for small business operators and employees who cannot afford to pay for legal services, may assist eligible LGBTIQ+ employees to pursue litigation, should they perceive that their rights have been breached.

#### **10. Flexible work**

**The Fair Work Act 2009 provides that certain employees are eligible to request flexible working arrangements in specific circumstances. Yet DCA's research shows that considering flexibility in response to individual circumstances does not drive workplace productivity. DCA's research shows that flexibility can provide significant workplace benefits where it is reframed as a business issue and addressed at an organisational, rather than individual level.**

**Do you have any proposed measures to enable the mainstreaming of flexible work for all people, for any reason?**

Flexibility is important for employers and employees. The best outcomes arise when employers and employees consult and reach mutually agreeable arrangements.

Awards contain provisions regarding flexible work arrangements that encourage flexibility and discussions of this nature. The award provisions have recently been reviewed and enhanced by the Fair Work Commission and further changes are possible from ongoing proceedings.

The Morrison Government will continue to monitor developments and will respond as appropriate.

#### **11. Innovation: automation, artificial intelligence and the future of work**

**Automation and artificial intelligence are going to cause mass disruption in how work is done, and who does it. Some new technologies have been created in ways that disadvantage certain groups. In 2018, DCA made the following recommendations to the Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers:**

- **While there are differing predictions on which groups may be impacted more than others by technological changes to work, governments and policy makers must provide quality training, up-skilling and ongoing education to all groups.**
- **Access to technology must be provided equitably to ensure parity of opportunity for all Australians.**
- **In determining policy responses to changing work patterns, the government must be aware of, and take into account, existing inequalities and structural biases in our labour market.**

**In Government, what action would you take to ensure that existing structural inequalities are not exacerbated by technology?**

The Morrison Government is laying strong foundations for the nation's future prosperity as the economy and workplaces evolve - driven by new technology, shifting demographics and changing consumer preferences.

The Morrison Government is helping people prepare for the jobs of the future by making available new information on jobs and skills demanded at the local level; and developing new tools, such as the Skills Transferability Tool, to help people proactively plan their future career.

The Morrison Government recognises that lifelong learning will increasingly become a vital part of Australians' career experience. The Morrison Government is trialling new ways to support people at risk of retrenchment to reskill and upskill. This includes through our Skills Checkpoint and Skills and Training Incentive to help mature age Australians build skills in the later stages of their careers so they can continue to contribute productively in the workforce. The Morrison Government is also ensuring a future fit VET sector through our \$525 million package to ensure Australia's vocational educational and training sector delivers the skills critical to the economy now and into the future.

In certain regions where 'traditional' industries are concentrated, the Morrison Government recognises that they could experience a more challenging degree of structural adjustment. The Morrison Government is providing support to people being retrenched through structural adjustment programmes, including our *Stronger Transition package* which provides pre- and post-retrenchment support to help workers take advantage of local labour market opportunities.

The Morrison Government's *Regional Employment Trials* are also piloting innovative solutions to local labour market challenges by partnering with local communities.

In addition, the Morrison Government's *Entrepreneurship Facilitators program* is promoting and supporting people into self-employment in 23 regions around Australia.

## **12. The Racial Discrimination Act**

**In 2016, DCA made a submission to the Freedom of Speech in Australia Inquiry arguing against changes to s18C of the Racial Discrimination Act that would weaken protections against “offensive behaviour because of race, colour or national or ethnic origin”.**

**What is your position on legislative protections against racial discrimination?**

The Coalition believes that Australia is a place where everybody should be free from discrimination on the basis of their identity. The Morrison Government has no plans to amend s18C of *the Racial Discrimination Act*.

## **13. Sexual harassment in the workplace**

**In 2019, DCA made a submission, on behalf of our members, to the AHRC’s National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces.**

**In Government, what action would you take to prevent workplace sex-based and sexual harassment?**

The Morrison Government has zero tolerance for any form of harassment in Australian workplaces. Australian women have the right to be safe in their homes, in their communities and in their workplaces.

The Morrison Government recognises that for affected individuals, the personal and career consequences of workplace sexual harassment are very significant. And the effects on workplaces are also substantial, including reduced productivity, increased staff turnover, absenteeism, compensation claims and early retirement.

That is why the Coalition provided additional funding to increase *the 2018 National Survey into Workplace Sexual Harassment* from 2,000 to 10,000 participants. The results of the 2018 survey are more detailed and robust than ever before and provide an important evidence base to inform the work on *the Australian Human Rights Commission’s National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*.

The Coalition is supporting the world *leading National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace* with \$500,000 of funding. The first of its kind in the world, the Inquiry will be a positive and meaningful step forward in reducing sexual harassment at work and ensuring that, when it does occur, it is dealt with sensitively and appropriately. It is also the first time that economic modelling will be drawn upon in Australia to provide the evidence around the cost of sexual harassment to individual business and the economy. The Inquiry is due to report in the second half of 2019.

With women now employed in record numbers and the gender pay gap reduced to a record low it is vital that government, business and the community work together to protect Australian workers from being subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace and ensure, that if it does occur, it is dealt with sensitively and appropriately.

