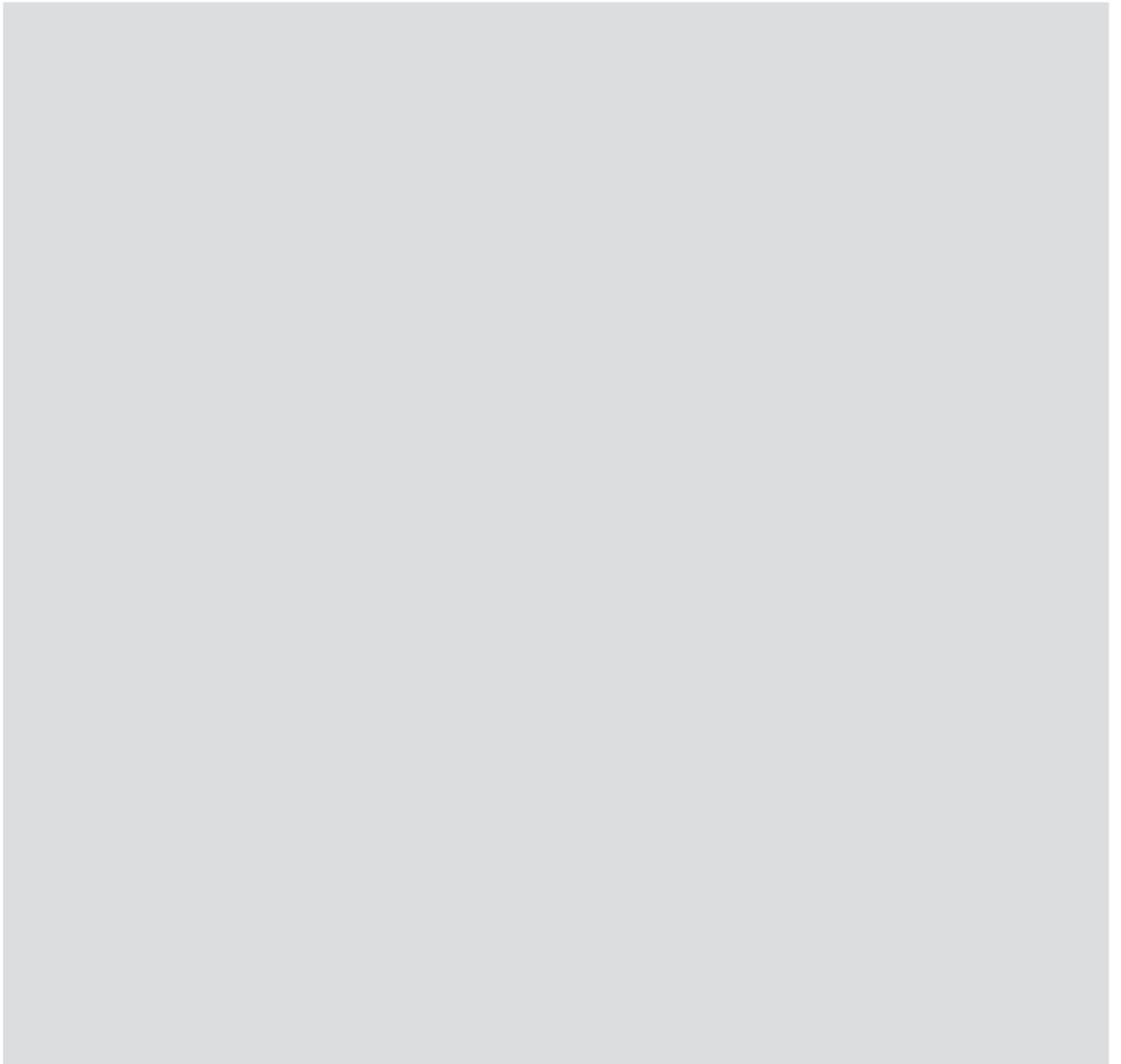




National Platform



Chapter 1: Our enduring Labor values

Enduring values

- 1 As times change, our values endure. The Australian Labor Party was formed 120 years ago to help build this nation and improve the lives of ordinary workers and their families, giving them fair shares in a growing economy and supporting the vulnerable. In the 21st century, we still strive to create a fair, prosperous Australia where everyone has opportunity and nobody is left out or left behind. Our core values have been with us throughout our history and the changing fortunes of our nation: opportunity, responsibility, and fairness. This National Platform explains these values and applies them to our commitments for today and tomorrow. It celebrates our achievements and sets out our vision for Australia.
- 2 Labor values are Australian values. Australia is a society enriched by its diversity. Our history is one of hard work, nation building and innovation, proudly welcoming new generations of migrants, respecting Indigenous Australians, weaving a resilient social fabric to support Australians throughout their lives. We are a modern social democratic party which has made Australia better off, fairer and more sustainable. Universal health care, fairness in the workplace, and the age pension are Australian achievements, part of our tradition of working together for the common good and taking care of those with limited capacity to take of themselves.
- 3 Compared to other countries, we are in a good position to face the challenges ahead. Our economy is strong and we emerged from the Global Financial Crisis more successfully than other advanced economies. We have a great record of job creation, low unemployment while maintaining strong public finances and very low public debt. We have a huge flow of mining investment but patchwork pressures, brought in part by the rise of Asia, mean that some parts of our economy are strained by growth while others are being left behind.
- 4 Global power is shifting to our region and our economy is transforming. We need to make sure that the Asian century is also an Australian century. New technologies are reshaping the way we live and work, empowering people to take control of their lives and at the same time creating new uncertainties. We are facing the threat of climate change and seizing the opportunities of a clean energy future. Society is changing too. People live longer lives. Communities and households are taking new forms.
- 5 For Australia, Labor has always been the champion of change. We are ready to meet the new economic, social and environmental challenges of this century and make sure that change works in the best interests of the nation. In government, Labor embraces our tradition of reform and nation building and applies our enduring values to these new challenges.

Reform driven by values

6 Australians were the first people to vote a nation into existence and we are one of the world's oldest parliamentary democracies. Ours is one of the first Labor parties to be formed around the world. We are the original Australian party—in name, purpose and identity—a party deeply woven into this nation's fabric. Every other party formed in Australia in the past 120 years has been in response to Australian Labor.

7 Labor has been shaped by the people of Australia and in turn has shaped the character, culture and opportunities of Australians. In the late 19th century, we grew from the collective struggle for social justice, fighting for better living and working conditions, uniting union members with others to overcome the vested interests of employers and governments. Labor is the party of opportunity and security for working people. Working with a strong trade union movement, in the early 20th century we laid this nation's social foundations through votes for women, fair pay, reasonable working hours, unemployment benefits, workers' compensation and decent pensions.

8 In the mid-20th century, we built our national infrastructure and strengthened Australia's cities and suburbs, through the monumental Snowy Hydro Electricity Scheme, transcontinental railways, providing sewerage and running water to Australian homes. In the 1970s, we opened access to education, health care and legal services, protected our heritage and natural environments and modernised our international relationships. In the 1980s and 1990s, we opened our economy to the world, laying the foundations for today's prosperity, introduced universal superannuation, expanded higher education and legislated for native title.

In each period of our history, Labor's values have shaped our core commitments:

9 Labor is committed to a sustainable market economy. We work for long term prosperity, fairly shared by the whole community. We believe a properly functioning market economy creates wealth and provides opportunity and we look for market-based solutions, with robust and balanced regulation. Market design should promote sustainable growth that delivers for working people, combining free and open exchange with strong and durable institutions. Through a dynamic market-based economy we are committed to giving all Australians opportunities and making sure no-one is left behind. Unrestrained greed is damaging to the public interest.

10 Labor is a party of active government. The Global Financial Crisis demonstrated how markets can fail and prompted new thinking about government's responsibility to ensure that markets works in the public interest, not only for individual gain. Labor believes in the unique and positive role that can be played by government in a market economy. Only governments can ensure universal, high quality education, health care and a social safety net; protect national security; plan for and meet national infrastructure needs and protect the natural environment. Government has a responsibility to invest in public goods, including assets, infrastructure and services, to provide the legal and institutional underpinning for efficient, competitive markets and to intervene where there is market failure. In these and other areas, government involvement achieves better outcomes for all Australians than would be achieved solely through market forces.

11 The Labor party and the trade union movement work together as partners. As a political party, Labor was born out of the labour movement and its struggle for social justice. By working with the movement to create and defend good jobs and fair work and to promote participation and shared responsibility across the workforce, Labor has given millions of Australians the opportunity to build a secure, decent and dignified life and to improve their own and their children's life chances. Labor will continue to protect and advance the rights of working people, including their right to join unions, to organise in the workplace, to bargain collectively and to take industrial action, including the right to strike.

- 12 Trade unions are the largest and most representative community movements in Australia, looking after two million Australians and their families and campaigning for the interests of all workers. We believe a strong trade union movement is necessary to deliver fairer, more cooperative workplaces and contribute to a more equitable and democratic Australia. Our partnership with the trade union movement remains crucial for Australia's future.
- 13 Labor is a party of its members. Our success depends on the support and activism of our members. They provide our candidates at every level of government, and they enrich our policy discussion. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with the trade union movement, members are the party's backbone. We will continue to renew and refresh the experience of members and their involvement in the party and its campaigning.
- 14 Labor supports families. Families form a fundamental part of our society as a basic organising unit and government has a duty to help families give children the best possible start in life. This is essential to providing the opportunity to live, work and be a part of their community and in ensuring all Australians can share in all that this nation can offer.
- 15 Labor is the party of educational opportunity. From our inception, the transformative power of education has been at the heart of Labor's mission. Opening the doors of learning to people who could not otherwise access a quality education has been the achievement, in every generation, of Labor reform. By expanding and reforming education, from early years to schools, from trades and vocations to universities, Labor has transformed the lives of millions of Australians, enabling them to get on and get up. In the 21st century, our mission is to demonstrate that demography is not destiny: that background and the circumstances of birth are no barrier to educational excellence and that every Australian can contribute to our national success.
- 16 Labor is a party of community. As a nation we are at our best when we are working together for the common good. Individual self-interest alone does not create a fair and decent society. We are committed to a society in which every person is treated with respect and dignity and can actively participate and contribute to the life of their community. Labor believes a strong and resilient not for profit sector is part of the nation's social economy, working to provide services and opportunities that enrich Australian lives. We will work to strengthen them and improve their skills and capabilities. We recognise the contribution of philanthropy and will work to foster a regulatory environment which fosters a culture of giving. We celebrate diversity and respect the rights and responsibilities of Australian citizenship.
- 17 Labor is a party of equality. We defend equal rights of citizenship and before the law, support social and economic equality, promote gender equality in the community and the workplace and refuse to accept discrimination and inequality of opportunity in our society.
- 18 Labor is a party of reconciliation. We have apologised for past injustices in the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous People. We have worked for land rights and native title. We are investing to reduce Indigenous disadvantage and we are working to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
- 19 Labor defends Australia's national security, promotes our national interest and protects human rights. For more than a century, Labor has played a significant role in defending our national security, fighting against oppression and injustice and supporting international efforts for peace and development. While the challenges change, our resolve to protect Australia does not. As a nation, we can give no greater respect than to those who take up military service in the defence of Australia and of our values in the world. We honour and cherish our military veterans for their proud contribution to our nation and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for our common good.

- 20 Labor believes Australia's interests are best protected and advanced by promoting peace and cooperation, including through our historic alliance with the United States, international forums like the United Nations, engaging with Asia, through public diplomacy and overseas aid and development.
- 21 Labor is a democratic party. Labor believes that every person has the right to a say, directly or indirectly, in the decisions that affect his or her life. We believe in an individual's freedom of conscience and their right to express beliefs without fear. We are committed to open, democratic and accountable government and to empowering citizens and improving their participation in governance and fostering advocacy for those who cannot advocate for themselves. Only Labor believes in genuine broad based engagement in government and tackling the opportunities and challenges facing Australia. Labor believes in genuine tripartite processes in dealing with industrial, economic and reform challenges and in genuine community and industry engagement in delivering a clean energy future.
- 22 Labor is a party of human rights. Labor believes in a just and tolerant society that fully protects the rights and freedoms of all people in Australia. Labor supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international treaties to which we are a signatory.

Our values

Opportunity

- 23 Labor is a party that shares the opportunities of this rich and diverse country. A country where privilege and power do not determine the life course of each individual or community. A country where people can shape their own lives and work together to contribute proudly to the life of their communities.
- 24 Australia can be a nation in which everybody has opportunity to shape their own lives, develop their potential and enjoy the rewards of hard work. Labor believes that background and privilege should not determine success in life.
- 25 We believe in:
- giving all Australians the opportunity to achieve their potential and contribute to their community and national life
 - empowering all Australians to shape their own lives for the better
 - making available the dignity and benefits of work to all those Australians who can participate
 - providing the best education, from cradle to grave, where background is no barrier to achievement
 - supporting family life and improving living standards and quality of life
 - rewarding the effort of hard work and supporting people to enter, re-enter and progress in the workforce.
 - providing access to employment, education, housing, health care, a strong social safety net, information technology, culture and recreation, and legal rights
 - building an economy which provides sustained economic growth and opportunity, decoupled from the growth of emissions and environmental damage.

Fairness

26 At the core of Labor's history, beliefs and aspirations is the need to make sure everybody gets a fair go.

27 Labor believes in:

- treating all Australians with dignity and respect
- sticking together and sharing fairly the risks that we all face
- upholding the rights, benefits and duties of citizenship and democratic participation
- a fair distribution of wealth and income
- a reconciled Australia where Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians create a stronger future together
- support for Australians with particular needs, including Indigenous Australians, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, the homeless, people with disabilities and mental illness and older Australians, to live decent and dignified lives, access opportunity and participate along with other Australians.

Responsibility

28 Labor believes that taking active responsibility for ourselves, each other and our future is a fundamental value, at the heart of our identity and our success as a community.

29 Responsibilities and rights come together and they require us to:

- protect and support children and families and respect the caring responsibilities of parents and family members
- take individual responsibility for ourselves, including the responsibility to get work and contribute to our independence and personal development through work, as far as each of us is able
- share responsibility for our environment and protect it for future generations, including by taking action to create a clean energy future
- ensure that businesses act responsibly, obey the law, pay their fair share and contribute to the communities in which they operate
- hold governments and other institutions to account and ensure they meet high standards and work in the public interest.

Our vision for Australia's future

- 30 Our National Platform sets out our values and a framework for the policies that will deliver a better future for Australia. It does so in the following areas:
- a strong and diverse economy, economic management and reform, more job opportunities and greater workforce participation through investment in skills, innovation and incentives to work, save and learn
 - achieving growth across the whole nation: our national infrastructure, regional Australia and primary industries
 - the transition to a clean energy future and protecting our heritage and natural environment
 - fairness and opportunity for working families
 - our ageing population
 - education, early childhood, science and research
 - our long-term health needs and challenges
 - ensuring all Australians get a fair go, including Indigenous Australians, people with disability, carers and people with mental illness
 - democracy and good government
 - foreign affairs, national security and defence.
- 31 Labor is working to create a better future for Australian: a prosperous, forward looking nation, a stronger and united community and a fair society where every Australian has opportunity to live a good life and nobody is left behind. Our party platform applies these values to the challenges of today and tomorrow and renews our determination to deliver them for all Australians.