

# foreword



Good government is built on solid policy foundations. The Australian Labor Party Draft Platform 2000 is an essential step in the process of preparation for government. From the objectives, principles and detailed platform proposals contained in this document will come the policies and programs of the Beazley Labor Government. As such, the Draft platform is a valuable and significant document.

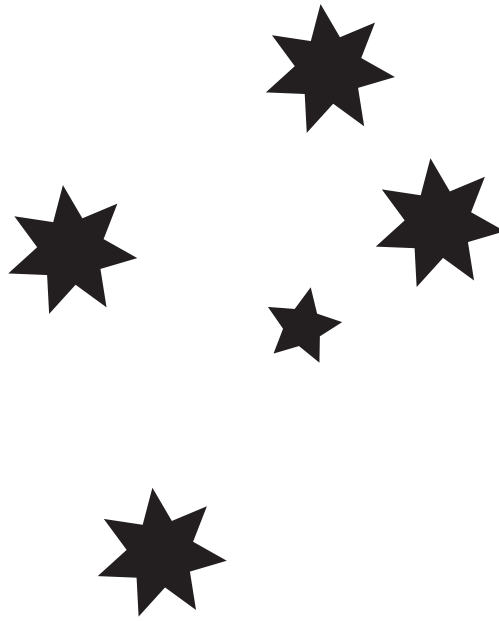
The Draft Platform reflects the many hours of debate and discussion by platform committees of the important issues facing ordinary Australians, their families and the Nation.

Over the past fifteen months more than five hundred members of the ALP have contributed through policy forums, organised by the National Secretariat in

consultation with State and Territory Branches in capital cities and a range of regional centres. As well as the forums, the committees have been assisted in their work through the submissions received from many interested organisations. On behalf of the National Executive, I would like to thank committees for their work.

The Draft Platform provides a sound basis for an extensive and productive debate at the 42nd National Conference in Hobart. From this debate we will then be able to move forward to the next challenges in working to ensure the election of a Beazley Labor Government.

**Geoff Walsh**  
**National Secretary**



2000



draft platform  
and  
constitution



A U S T R A L I A N L A B O R P A R T Y



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## Section 1

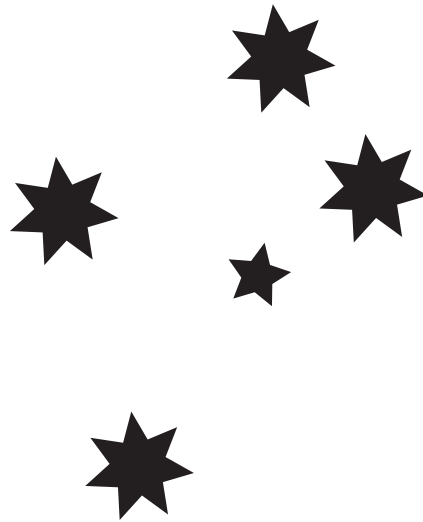
### **Australian Labor Party Draft Platform 2000**

1. Labor Values
2. The Economic Challenge: Growth for a just Society.
3. Developing Australia's Human Resources: Education, Training and Population Policy.
4. Building Australia's Capital Base: Investment Infrastructure.
5. Engaging with the Global Economy.
6. Developing Australian Industry.
7. Developing Regional Australia.
8. Income, Job and Social Security for Working Age Australians.
9. Security and Opportunity for Older Australians.
10. Personal and Family Well Being.
11. Community Security and Access to Justice.
12. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity for all Australians.
13. Safeguarding and Improving the Environment.
14. Enjoying Life: Arts, Culture and Heritage
15. Securing Australia's Place in the World.
16. Delivering Quality Government.
17. Financing Government.

## Section 2

### **The Constitution of the Australian Labor party.**

- A Objective and Principles
- B Rules
- C National Principles of Organisation
- D Resolutions to implement National Principles of Organisation
- E Register of Conference Decisions



# chapter one



## Labor–Constant values in a time of change

1. Our world is being remade, and Australia is being remade along with it, at a pace we have never before experienced, and in ways we cannot avoid. Safety and security do not lie in our standing outside this process of change, which is driven by explosive advances in ideas, technology and science. Labor's approach to our changing world, will continue to be an active and creative one. While a Labor Government will seek to embrace the beneficial changes of the knowledge revolution, it is central to Labor values that we ensure all of us have equal access to its opportunities and benefits.
2. In this era of globalisation, Labor's traditional values will remain a constant on which all Australians can rely. Labor believes the truest measure of a good society is the care it provides for those most in need and the opportunity it provides for every person to realise his or her full potential. Labor's commitment to a strong economy is therefore matched by its commitment to justice, fairness and equity for all.
3. To ensure justice, and an equal share of opportunity for all, Labor believes in a strong role for national government- the one institution all Australians truly own and control through our right to vote. Narrowing the scope of government only diminishes our stake in the nation's future. Labor will use our great national institutions in the task of nation-building. We will not allow the benefits of change to be concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, or located only in privileged communities. The benefits must be shared by all Australians and all our regions.
4. Central to ensuring fairness in an era of change will be to assist families to better balance the pressures of work, family and social obligations. Labor will work with all involved to help achieve suitable work arrangements, and access to social programs to help achieve this balance.
5. Labor was born out of the trade union movement and its struggle for a secure, decent and dignified life for working people. This relationship must be more than merely historic: it must be a constructive partnership that takes the whole nation forward. The partnership between the two great wings of the labour movement has been essential to deal with the consequences of the industrial revolution, and must continue into the



knowledge revolution of the 21st century. We pledge to ensure opportunity, security and progress for working people and their families.

6. **Fairness.** Labor believes that all people are created equal in their entitlement to dignity and respect, and should have an equal chance to achieve their potential. For Labor, government has a critical role in ensuring fairness by:
  - ensuring equal opportunity;
  - removing unjustifiable discrimination; and
  - achieving a more equitable distribution of wealth, income and status.
7. **Compassion.** Labor is committed to protecting and supporting those who are disadvantaged, oppressed or simply struggling to cope.
  - The Labor tradition has always been to reach out, embrace, protect and support those in need.
8. **Individual Freedom.** Labor is committed to a just and tolerant society which fully protects the rights and freedoms of all Australians, including especially the fundamental political and civil rights of everyone to freedom of conscience, expression and association, and to due process of law.
9. **Labour Rights.** Labor is committed to protecting and advancing the fundamental rights of working people to join trade unions, and to organise, collectively bargain and strike.
10. **Responsibility.** Labor believes that rights must be accompanied by responsibilities to behave honestly, humanely and fairly. Those responsibilities must be exercised:
  - by individuals, toward each other and the community which supports them;
  - by social and economic groups and organisations, toward each other and the wider community; and
  - by governments, toward their own people, other governments and the wider international community.
11. **Democracy.** Labor is committed to the essential democratic principle that every person should have the right to a say, directly or indirectly, in every decision that effects his or her life. That right includes:
  - democratic participation in the choice of governments;
  - the opportunity for a meaningful voice in decision-making in the workplace; and
  - the opportunity for a voice in planning, environment, the delivery of public services and similar matters.
12. **Community.** Labor believes that the best chance for the future, for Australia and all Australians, lies in our working together for the common good.
  - Within Australia, Labor is committed to a society in which every person is able to actively and productively participate in the life of the community, and the whole community responds sensitively to individual needs.
  - Labor is committed to a community that embraces cultural diversity and reconciliation, based on mutual respect and acceptance. Genuine reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is crucial to our capacity to face the world as a united, peaceful and just nation.
  - Within the international community, Labor strongly believes that every country's national interests, including our own, are best protected and advanced by cooperation rather than confrontation and conflict.
13. **Providing Security.** Labor's first priority is to provide security for all Australians. This includes:
  - job security during our working years;
  - income security during both working and retirement years;
  - personal security in the event of serious illness, injury or other crisis, or in the case of disability;
  - security and safety in the community living environment; and
  - security of the nation against external threat.



### LABOR'S PRIORITY OBJECTIVES



- 14. Creating Opportunity.** A second Labor priority is to provide opportunity for all Australians:
- to realise fully their individual potential throughout their lifetime;
  - to advance their living standards and quality of life;
  - to gain access to employment, education, housing, health and welfare services, information technology, culture and recreation, and the legal system; and
  - to participate cooperatively in the life of the nation and the communities within it.
- 15. Managing Change to Ensure Security and Opportunity.** Labor has always sought to anticipate and understand the forces of change at work in the national and international communities—not to resist that change, but gain the maximum benefit from it while moderating and smoothing its impact.
- Successful governments are those which understand and communicate the reality of that change, and manage it in a way that both creates opportunity and provides security.
- 16.** Labor recognises that the twenty-first century will inevitably be a period of increased globalisation—with dramatically expanding international competition and technological development, and ever-growing interdependence.
- Labor believes that this offers Australia unprecedented opportunities to become a world leader in balancing a dynamic economy with a just society.
- 17.** Labor has led the way in recognising the necessary interrelationship between economy, society and environment. It is our fundamental belief that:
- economic progress is not an end in itself but a means to achieve social goals; and
  - economic and social changes can only endure if they are environmentally sustainable.

## LABOR'S DISTINCTIVE APPROACH

- 18.** What makes Labor governments distinctive is our belief in the critical role of government:
- We believe that strong and active government leadership, with an effective and efficient public sector operating in partnership with a thriving private sector, best manages change to provide security and opportunity for all Australians.
  - We believe that government is not an impediment, but rather a crucial force in building and realising the full potential of individuals, the economy and our whole society.
- 19.** Labor believes that government is critical to the achievement of social justice, in ensuring:
- sufficient basic income to provide a decent quality of life for all Australians;
  - universal social rights (including fulfilling employment, quality education and affordable health care and housing);
  - equal rights for those in groups subject to discrimination; and
  - special support for those with particular needs (including Indigenous Australians, women, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, the long-term unemployed, homeless, disabled, frail aged and mentally ill).
- 20.** Labor sees government as a guardian of the common good, not only in achieving social justice but in securing many public goods which are simply unlikely to be delivered as effectively, if at all, by the private sector and a free market.
- We see our society as not just a market but a community with mutual responsibilities. Not all values have dollar equivalents.



21. Labor has a distinctive vision of how Australia should present itself in the wider international community. We should be, and be seen to be:
- a modern, innovative, socially and economically advanced, united multicultural society;
  - willing to take a confident and independent position in advancing our national interests, and doing so energetically and creatively.
  - willing to pursue wider good international citizenship objectives; and
  - willing to pursue those interests and objectives by working in cooperation with others.



# chapter two

## The Economic Challenge: Growth for a Just Society

### Basic Objectives of Economic Policy

1. The fundamental objective of economic policy under a Labor government is to promote the well being, and improve the quality of life, of all Australians; to improve living standards by providing maximum employment opportunity and rising incomes; to enable the community to prosper and grow within a secure and cohesive environment; and to provide a decent standard of living for those unable to provide for themselves.

With abundant natural and human resources, and located in the fastest growing region of the world, Australia is better equipped than most countries to pursue and achieve this fundamental objective.

Progressive governments know that growth is not an end in itself. They must pursue growth with purpose. They must demonstrate how that growth will be distributed and how society as a whole will benefit.

In the information age, access to information, education and training is increasingly crucial to economic performance, at a national,

regional and individual level. Australia is dividing into two communities: those well placed to prosper and those being impoverished by a lack of opportunity. The lack of opportunity is most pronounced in outer urban and regional Australia. This divide must be overcome to enable Australia to become the Knowledge Nation. Participation in the information age will be the key to economic well being. Providing universal opportunity is a major challenge facing the nation into the future.

Labor is committed to the development of Australia as a highwage, highskill society. Such a society is essential for stronger economic performance and job creation. It is the pathway to growth with equity and opportunity. Labor rejects outright policies that would condemn Australia to being a divided, low wage, low skill society.

- Education is as important in the information age as coal was in the industrial revolution. Fostering a culture of innovation and lifelong learning is critical to economic success in the





## Globalisation—its features & effects

**A1.** Labor recognises that our world is being remade, economically, socially, culturally, environmentally and politically by a phenomenon known as globalisation, characterised by:

- The reduced cost and rapidly increasing speed of the transmission of information, capital, goods and services;
- The increasing volume and economic significance of international trade, (including e-commerce);
- The increasing volume and mobility of international financial flows;
- The growing number and size of transnational corporations relative to nation states themselves;
- The emergence of environmental challenges which affect the world, increasing environmental inter-dependence;
- The emergence of a world-wide culture as a result of the spread of global communication technologies and global media; and
- Challenges to the traditional sovereignty of nation states.

**A2.** The impacts of globalisation include:

- Major benefits to economic growth, export growth, employment growth and a lower cost of living;
- Economic and social dislocation of workers and families in certain Australian regions and industries; and
- The increasing convergence of domestic and international economic policy, making it increasingly difficult for nation states to act independently

to shape the emerging global order, resulting often in community disillusionment at the capacity of traditional political institutions to address these concerns.

**A3.** The process of globalisation will continue. To meet the challenges posed by globalisation, Labor will:

- Maximise the benefits to Australians of an open international trading system;
- Monitor and help overcome the hardship experienced by those workers and their families who have been adversely affected by economic restructuring and technological change;
- Ensure access for all Australians, through the provision of skills, training and necessary infrastructure, to the opportunities of the global economy;
- Shape, through the various existing regional and multilateral organisations to which Australia belongs, the emerging global architecture and thereby maximise open markets while also responding effectively to the economic, social and environmental impact of globalisation;
- Work towards improving the transparency of global institutions; and
- Increase community confidence in the institution of government and facilitate community understanding of the role of and need for global institutions.



- information age. Education and innovation therefore should be crucial economic policy instruments as well as being fundamental to social cohesion and equality.
- Wise expenditure on education and encouraging business innovation should therefore be considered not simply as a cost to government but as an investment in the nation's future.
2. Australia will not achieve these fundamental objectives in a sustainable way without economic policies that control inflation, balance the budget over the course of the economic cycle and keep interest rates low. Nevertheless, these are not ends in themselves, but means to the achievement of the fundamental objectives of higher living standards and social cohesion.
    - Good economic policy puts people first, matching competence and efficiency with compassion and care.
  3. Labor is committed to achieving full employment, meaning that anyone who wants a job can find one within a reasonable time. Employment and employment security are the keys to personal and social well being, to stable relationships, family life, and access to the necessities and pleasures of life. Employment security increasingly is more than security within a particular job. In the information age, employment security means possessing the skills to maintain employment throughout working life. More than ever, skills are fundamental to employability. Job security increasingly requires lifelong learning for the acquisition of skills that are relevant to emerging employment opportunities.
    - Unemployment, underemployment and widespread job insecurity are all profoundly debilitating for individuals and communities.
  4. Everyone capable of employment should be able to secure a job, education or training: unemployment is not an acceptable option.
    - Labor will always pursue full employment as our highest priority.
  5. The key to achieving both full employment and rising incomes is strong, sustained and sustainable economic growth. Economic growth is a virtuous circle: it enables improved saving, better fiscal management and lower debt, which promote higher investment and further growth.
    - It is bad economic policy to grow the economy faster than can be sustained, but even worse to grow it more slowly than its sustainable potential.
    - It is sound economic policy to seek a sustainable balance between consumption and investment in economic growth, to drive net export growth and in the process lift the growth potential of the economy.
  6. The benefits that flow from economic growth should be available to everyone in the community. Sharing the benefits of economic growth fairly will increase the community's acceptance of the need for sound economic policies. This, in turn, supports higher rates of economic growth while at the same time creating a fairer, more cohesive society. Labor is committed to providing:
    - a fair efficient distribution of the benefits of national economic success, including a fairer distribution of work opportunities;
    - opportunities for everyone to be educated, trained and jobready to the extent of their capacity throughout their working lives through the availability of lifelong learning opportunities;
    - protection of the living standards of those unable to work; and
    - opportunities for those in work to have employment that is as rewarding and fulfilling as possible.
  7. Economic growth should be sustainable not only economically but environmentally.
    - Growth and development in all major industry sectors, and protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment, must be seen as compatible, not conflicting, objectives.
  8. Labor will develop economic policy through rigorous analysis, and encourage competition for ideas through input from a diversity of sources.



## Strategies for Growth

9. Strong economic growth, sustained at 4 per cent or better, is necessary to significantly reduce high unemployment. Falling unemployment is itself a contributor to stronger economic growth. By reducing unemployment, strong economic growth also:
  - raises job security and the living standards of those already in employment;
  - reduces poverty and promotes a more equitable distribution of income;
  - raises private saving;
  - helps improve the budget position, thereby improving public saving and reducing government debt; and
  - by raising national saving, improves our capacity to maintain and increase Australian ownership of national resources and reduce foreign debt.
10. For the Australian economy to grow strongly, economic policy must be directed to ensuring strong and sustainable aggregate demand—that is, demand for goods and services from all sources, public and private, both domestic and overseas. That means pursuing internal and external demand policies that are strongly growth oriented.
  - It also needs to be recognised that, in the absence of strategies to enhance confidence and job security, potential demand may not be translated into actual demand.
11. For increased demand to be translated into increased business and job opportunities within Australia, structural and supply side policies also have to be pursued—ensuring that we can compete against imports and penetrate external markets, and that the labour market can provide the necessary skills where and when they are required.

## Generating Internal Demand

12. Budgetary (fiscal) policy plays a crucial role in ensuring strong and sustainable growth—in helping to stimulate activity during economic downturns, generate additional activity when growth is too slow to significantly reduce unemployment, and prolong expansion by moderating levels of growth that have become unsustainable.
13. Responsible budgetary policy, of the kind that Labor will administer, must have regard to economic and social objectives, including its impact on growth and employment and on:
  - the distribution of the benefits of growth;
  - the need to maintain low inflation and a manageable current account deficit;
  - public debt; including ensuring that future generations do not have to pay for present recurrent expenditure, and developing internationally accepted means by which the future benefits of policy initiatives, not just the cost to revenue, can be measured;
  - balancing the national budget over the course of the economic cycle;
  - the maintenance and enhancement of public infrastructure;
  - the broadening of share ownership across the community;
  - the delivery of public goods which the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide, at all or as well;
  - the provision of a decent level of support for those with special needs; and
  - the need to smooth the economic cycle.
14. Interest rate (monetary) policy is also crucial in ensuring strong and sustainable growth—indirectly influencing consumption and investment in the short to medium term and in the longer term ensuring that economic



growth is prolonged by promoting a stable, low inflation economic environment.

15. While respecting the independence of the Reserve Bank, Labor will do everything possible to ensure that it gives equal weight to both of its charter objectives, not only maintaining low inflation but also maximising employment and general economic welfare.

### **Growing Net Exports**

16. Growth and job security in Australia depend increasingly on being able to sell to the world, and in particular to the dynamic growth areas in Asia—not only in our traditional commodity areas of comparative advantage but also in value-added manufactures and services.
17. Labor will continue to give a very high priority to trade and foreign policy strategies designed to achieve better access to those markets—and to promote Australia's identity and capability as a high technology, high skill, economically advanced, sophisticated and welcoming country, strongly committed to our own Asian region as well as to the wider international community.
18. Labor will continue to pursue sensible trade liberalisation through effective multilateral strategies reinforced by bilateral negotiations. The direction Labor pursued in the 1980s and 1990s of internationalising the economy and reducing protection cannot and should not be reversed.
19. Labor's reforms of the financial system served Australia well during the Asian economic crisis. With increasing global capital flows, that crisis highlights the pressing international need for greater transparency in financial transactions, effective prudential controls, and sound corporate governance.
20. Labor will vigorously pursue our trade and financial agenda in international fora, having regard to the provisions of our platform on trade, including our approach to social and environmental issues in trade and investment.
21. Labor will pursue structural policies to ensure that Australia can meet the competitive

challenge of an increasingly globalised economy. That means, among other things, support for:

- equal access to a world-class education and training system incorporating lifelong learning;
- world's best practice in business innovation and organisation;
- policies promoting entrepreneurship;
- policies designed to overcome regional disadvantage in attracting job-creating investment;
- appropriate levels of investment in infrastructure by both the public and private sectors;
- reducing business costs, particularly in transport, communications and energy;
- a business tax regime that fosters increased investment, job growth and innovation, including greater investment in venture and patient capital and research and development;
- promoting productive links between public learning institutions, the community and the private sector;
- business regulation only to the extent necessary to protect the broader public interest;
- policies that promote environmental enhancement as well as job creation; and
- competition policy that, in each application, is overseen effectively by a revitalised Council of Australian Governments (CoAG); serves the public interest through a strengthened and transparent public interest test; and has specific regard for the implications for employment, regional development and the provision of effective services to communities.

### **Translating Growth into Jobs**

22. Labor recognises that demand side and structural policies aimed at creating jobs will be ineffective if those jobs require skills that are unavailable. Ensuring that growth translates into lower unemployment, without



inflationary impact, requires an intense commitment to the education, training and job readiness programs required to ensure that the necessary skills base is available, where and when needed.

23. Labor further recognises that, given the shape and size of the Australian economy relative to our major international competitors, it is in the national interest that government support and assistance be available, through both outlays and revenue measures. This may include in some cases strategic intervention designed to achieve net exports and job growth. The justification for such assistance is not to protect otherwise inefficient industries against imports, but to support efficient industries and firms to enable them to:
- penetrate export markets that would otherwise be inaccessible;
  - meet competitive challenges, in both export and import markets, in areas where the playing field of government support is not level;
  - gain adequate access to investment finance, particularly small and medium business enterprises;
  - get ahead of the field through high quality, innovative research and development; and
  - continue to diversify the Australian economy beyond its traditional reliance on agriculture, minerals and energy commodities to also include high value-added, high skill manufacturing, services and information based industries; not moving away from our commodity and resource base, but doing more with it and modernising these industries.
24. Labor recognises the great variation in economic activity and opportunity in different parts of the country, and the need to give particular support to those regions struggling to adjust to changing economic conditions.
- Australia's geographic size, combined with a relatively small and widely dispersed population, makes labour and business mobility more difficult than in many other countries, and government involvement more necessary.

25. Labor rejects the view that immigration is bad for jobs. Immigrants not only need a job, they also create jobs by virtue of their consumption and investment. They influence both the supply and the demand sides of the jobs equation. In the Australian context, immigration is unambiguously good for the economy, enriches our lifestyle and creates a more culturally diverse nation. A positive population policy is an essential part of our nation's future health and well being.
26. Labor recognises that a care for the environment and long run economic growth are complementary goals.



### Securing the Integrity of Capital Markets

27. Access to capital markets and efficient capital markets are critical to investment and growth in the economy.

Labor believes that good corporate governance practices are fundamental to an efficient capital market in Australia and critical to ensuring that the rights of shareholders are protected.

Almost one in two Australian adults over the age of 18 years own shares directly. Over half of Australian adults own shares when indirect ownership of shares through either a managed fund or personal superannuation is included.

Labor encourages broad share ownership across the community.

It is now, more than ever, a responsibility of government to ensure that the rights of shareholders and investors are adequately protected.

Labor will review Australia's Corporations Law and encourage companies to follow good corporate governance practices that adequately provide for the democratic control of corporations and the accountability of company officers.

Good corporate governance practices will protect the investment of shareholders and enhance the integrity of Australia's capital market.



Labor's policies will recognise that disclosure and accountability are at the core of good corporate governance and will encourage:

- companies to fully disclose all information relevant to investors, shareholders and the market in a timely and equitable manner;
- companies to appoint independent directors to the board of directors;
- directors to be accountable to their shareholders for the level of remuneration received by senior management;
- companies to use their general meetings to appropriately communicate with shareholders; and
- shareholders and institutional investors to exercise their voting rights appropriately and regularly.

## Managing the Constraints on Growth

### The Current Account and National Savings

28. Australia has long had a current account deficit, reflecting our reliance on foreign capital to fund our investment needs. Greater national saving, both private and public, is necessary to ensure that strong growth can be sustained for long periods without spilling over into an unmanageable current account position. Increased national saving can also increase levels of Australian ownership.
29. Labor is strongly committed to effective strategies to increase private saving, in particular through the continued growth and spread of superannuation. Private saving is also lifted by higher growth and lower unemployment, through higher private incomes.
30. Labor supports the importance of increasing national savings to non-inflationary economic growth. Labor rejects the Howard Government's short sighted policies which

reduce household savings and increase consumer debt to record proportions, thereby increasing Australia's vulnerability to economic shocks.

31. Labor recognises that policies that merely boost public saving in the short term, at the expense of long-term growth and employment, national competitiveness and private saving, will be largely ineffective in improving the current account position. Strong growth and greater national saving should go hand in hand but getting the right balance between the components of growth is essential to sustain this connection.
32. Labor will address the current account deficit by trade and industry policies designed to increase exports, including through government agencies like Austrade, government export support programs and effective diplomacy winning recognition for Australia's distinctive place in the region and the world.
33. Labor will implement policies to boost national saving through:
- improved superannuation arrangements, balancing both compulsion and incentive;
  - encouraging broader share ownership across the community, especially by employees; and
  - responsible budgetary policy.

### Inflation and National Competitiveness

34. Low inflation helps support strong growth by:
- providing a more stable environment for business planning, thus promoting investment;
  - maintaining the price competitiveness of Australia's exports;
  - encouraging private saving, by ensuring that the value of savings is not eaten away by higher prices; and
  - maintaining the real purchasing power of incomes.



35. Labor's systematic and sustained assault on inflation when in government has secured a low inflation economy. We will ensure that the era of high inflation stays behind us by implementing strategies, including education and labour market programs, to ensure that the economy's capacity to supply extra goods and services keeps pace with demand. Addressing potential skill shortages in the economy before they arise will reduce inflationary pressures, as well as maximising growth and employment.
36. Cooperative strategies on incomes policy should continue to be pursued with business and the trade union movement to ensure that faster growth is not quickly dissipated by inflationary pressures. These policies are crucial for ensuring equity in the distribution of the benefits of economic growth.
37. Inflation control policy must be integrated with other policy objectives and not pursued in isolation from full employment and general welfare objectives.

## A Strategy for Jobs in a Just Society

Unemployment, under-employment and the resulting widening inequality in Australia are by far the most serious economic and social problems the nation now confronts. Labor's assault on these problems will involve an integrated strategy drawing on policies from many different sections of this Platform. But our strategy can be very simply summarised. It involves six main elements:

### **B1 Growing the Australian economy as fast as we can**

Labor will use responsible budgetary and monetary policies to achieve the maximum possible economically sustainable growth rate while maintaining low inflation. This involves a continuation of productivity improvements achieved under previous Labor governments, the easing of skill shortages through education, training and appropriate immigration programs, and effective management of the current account constraint on growth through export facilitation.

### **B2 Supporting regional Australia**

Australia will not maximise its growth potential without strong regional growth. When regional Australia prospers, more

jobs are created and social cohesion is strengthened. Labor is committed to the greater empowerment of Australia's regions, enabling them to better identify their opportunities and realise them more fully. Labor will seek to remove impediments to real investment in regional Australia.

Large regional disparities exist in employment opportunities in Australia. Through education, training and infrastructure investment policies, Labor will work for a fairer distribution of employment opportunities across Australia.

### **B3 Education and skills formation**

A good education and the ongoing acquisition of skills through lifelong learning are essential to a person's employability and job security in the information age. As the global economy becomes ever more sophisticated, the jobs of the future will increasingly be high-skill, high-paying jobs. If Australia is to secure a good share of these jobs, governments must invest heavily in education and skills formation. Labor will ensure through properly funded education, training and labour market job





## A Strategy for Jobs in a Just Society

readiness policies that we have the skills base to meet new demands where and when they arise.

### **B4 Trade and industry**

An efficient, innovative Australian industry sector can benefit from appropriately targeted industry policies where market failure occurs. In order to ensure optimum economic and employment performance, weaknesses in the Australian economy should be addressed by government—especially in the vital areas of research, venture capital, infrastructure provision and education and training. Labor will pursue industry policies which maximise employment opportunities by addressing market failure.

It is not enough to rely on internal demand alone to create the jobs we now need. We have to build net exports by being competitive and gaining better access to world markets, technology and expertise, particularly in the dynamically growing areas of Asia.

Labor will ensure greater integration of Australia's industry and trade policies.

### **B5 Directly creating jobs to meet community needs**

Even with increased demand, and the strategies to enable Australian businesses to meet it, many people, particularly older Australians and those who find it difficult to acquire skills in demand, face the prospect of long term unemployment unless further special measures are taken. Accordingly, Labor will work at the Commonwealth, State and local government levels on region based strategies to provide additional publicly funded jobs, involving meaningful and rewarding work in areas of unmet community needs.

### **B6 Encouraging the transition from welfare to work**

The combination of loss of government payments and income tax payable is robbing many recipients of government support payments of the incentive to take on paid work. Extra jobs that are created through Labor's policies may not be taken up if there is little or no incentive to do so. Labor will encourage the transition from welfare to work by allowing job seekers to keep more of their earnings from work.





# chapter three

## Developing Australia's Human Resources: Education, Training and Population Policy



### Becoming a Knowledge Nation

1. Labor believes increased national investment in education, training and research is essential to ensure all citizens have the opportunity to reach their full potential and for Australia to be a successful and prosperous Knowledge Nation.
2. With the acceleration of technological change and globalisation, Australia's development as an advanced democratic nation depends on our ability to provide education and training of outstanding quality.
3. Labor believes Australia needs an education system and training programs better able to provide the skills and knowledge for the jobs of the future, both for school leavers and existing workers who seek to update their qualifications or obtain training for a new career.
4. We need an education system which exposes students of all ages to the virtues of rational thought and problem solving and which challenges and enlivens the intellectual, social and cultural values of the Australian people.
5. Labor will implement a program to renew education by raising the standard of education, modernising our education institutions and attacking disadvantage and social exclusion.
6. Labor's education renewal plan will:
  - a. substantially increase investment by the national government in education, training and research. An essential precondition for Australia becoming a Knowledge Nation is the reversal of the Howard Government's policy that is reducing national investment as a proportion of gross domestic product in education, training and research.
  - b. set itself three key goals in education by 2010:
    - (i) to make the Australian education system the best in the region;
    - (ii) to ensure that nine out of ten young people leave their teens with a year 12 equivalent qualification; and



- (iii) to ensure all young Australians achieve a formal educational or training qualification.
  - c. uphold the rights of all Australian children to access to a quality pre-school education and free and secular public schooling, and will make vocational and higher education more accessible and affordable.
  - d. increase national government funding for literacy and numeracy programs and negotiate with the States and Territories to implement a national literacy and numeracy program involving: basic skills tests to diagnose and assess problems early; additional remedial teachers; more relevant and accurate information to parents and extra resources for schools in disadvantaged regions.
  - e. ensure that Australia maintains a well-qualified, skilful and committed teaching profession at all levels and acknowledges the crucial importance of professional development in updating skills and encouraging best teaching practice.
  - f. offer Teacher Development Contracts to assist existing teachers in upgrading their skills and Teacher Excellence Scholarships to attract and retain high achieving school leavers in a teaching career.
  - g. in cooperation with the States and Territories, ensure that all Australian students have access to up to date computers, software and technological resources.
  - h. seek to develop a truly national TAFE system, with improved resource levels and an increased emphasis on vocational education for existing workers and its contribution to further education.
  - i. expand opportunities for students to gain access to quality vocational education and training (VET) while at school that will provide genuine pathways to employment and further education.
  - j. increase national government support for public universities, phase out up front undergraduate fees for Australian students and review the current HECS structure so that it does not act as a financial barrier to students seeking undergraduate entry.
  - k. increase national government investment in Australian research by expanding resources for university research, introducing a new system of postdoctoral research fellowships, increasing investment in university research infrastructure and encouraging private sector innovation and research.
  - l. ensure that Australia takes advantage of the opportunities for education exports by improving the public sector's support for educators, research and the development of education services; by promoting Australian education exporters internationally; and by supporting open and rigorous quality assurance regimes to further improve Australia's reputation for providing quality education services.
  - m. recognise and address rural and regional disadvantage in education by working with State and local governments and regional communities to address education priorities, and in particular to establish an innovative system of targeted resource provision to disadvantaged regions to improve education outcomes.
  - n. establish a National Workforce Forecasting Council to enable government to provide education and training opportunities to match the skills needed and the jobs available.
  - o. facilitate workforce skills audits in partnership with business to ensure retraining matches skill needs and targets assistance to workers at risk.
7. Labor will establish an educational advisory council to provide independent, cross-sectoral advice to the federal government on all aspects of education policy.
8. Labor believes in strong public investment in education at all levels, with an important role for government in ensuring quality and accessibility.
9. Australia's education system must be based on equity and must ensure that young Australians



have high levels of literacy and numeracy as a sound base for all other learning.

10. Labor will seek to ensure that all young Australians begin their working lives with an adequate set of skills for employment and future learning. Labor also recognises the need to provide lifelong learning opportunities, as the demands of the workplace change and opportunities for new careers emerge.
11. Labor recognises and will address the disadvantage faced by many groups in accessing education. Groups facing particular disadvantage include people living in rural and regional communities, indigenous Australians, people from low socio-economic backgrounds, women studying in non-traditional areas, people living with disabilities and people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Labor is committed to creating an education system in which participation is broadly representative of the Australian community.
12. Labor believes in a comprehensive and integrated approach to developing Australia's human resources. In recognising and embracing the need for a national perspective in education and training Labor will work with the States and Territories to:
  - identify and address priorities such as literacy and numeracy in early childhood, the needs of young adolescents in the middle school years and increasing year 12 completion rates;
  - deal with structural problems such as cost-shifting, new schools policy and other difficulties between public and private education;
  - further encourage the emerging links between secondary, vocational and tertiary education;
  - improve quality in education and training provision, while broadening access; and
  - further improve the quality of teaching and the qualifications of Australian teachers, recognising that they are the strongest influence on the educational outcomes of their students.



## Educating Our Children

13. All children have the right to high quality education so that they can live fulfilling and rewarding lives. Labor believes that it is the responsibility of government to protect that right and to offer an educational guarantee of:
  - Access to free high quality public schooling;
  - Funding for non-government schools on the basis of need; and
  - Additional targeted funding to areas of high educational need.
14. This responsibility entails investment in raising standards at all levels of education. It means promoting opportunity and ensuring that young Australians achieve high standards in such basic skills as literacy and numeracy, as well as the intellectual and social skills to gain the fullest benefit from citizenship.
15. Much more needs to be done to improve participation and retention by Indigenous children in education at all levels. This must involve:
  - focusing on literacy and numeracy in Indigenous education;
  - working with communities to lift school attendance rates;
  - involving Indigenous families in schools and decision-making processes;
  - employing more Indigenous teachers and other education workers;
  - encouraging greater participation by Indigenous children in pre-schooling; and
  - providing culturally appropriate and relevant learning experiences, including Indigenous languages.
16. Labor is committed to ensuring that the school curriculum includes Aboriginal studies and reflects the history of all Australians.
17. Quality education at all levels depends crucially on a well qualified, skilful and committed teaching profession, whose value and status are properly recognised and supported.



18. The federal government must take an interest in issues of national concern such as levels of remuneration, qualifications and registration of teachers and other matters relating to supply and demand in the education workforce. Australia cannot afford to be under supplied with quality teachers, nor to lose its best teachers to other nations or professions. A Labor government will develop a national approach to improving the quality of teaching and the status of teachers.
19. Labor will invest heavily in professional development programs to help teachers renew their skills. We recognise that programs in areas such as literacy, numeracy and information technology are needed to ensure the latest advances in knowledge are translated into effective teaching practice.
20. Educators are the critical knowledge workers in the information society and it is crucial that the quality of teacher education be continuously improved.
21. A great challenge and even greater opportunity for education in the twenty-first century is the rapid expansion of the information society. We must ensure that access to the benefits of the information society is available to all. Labor will not allow our education system, particularly at the school level, to be divided between the information rich and information poor.
22. Labor will develop a national strategy in cooperation with the States and Territories, to ensure that all Australian school students have access to up to date computer, software and technological resources.
23. Labor will work with local government to expand access to new information technology through public libraries.
24. Labor recognises the significant potential benefits of distance education and in particular the benefits for students in remote areas, students employed part-time or full time and Australians living with a disability.



### **Early Childhood, Pre-School and Primary Learning**

25. Nowhere is the right of children to a high quality education more significant than in the pre-school and primary school years, which have a crucial influence on the life opportunities and directions of young Australians and realisation of the full benefits of citizenship. No child should be left behind because of inadequacies in the early years of schooling. This means that the early school years must be at the core of the education policies of government.
26. Labor will work with the States and Territories to develop an integrated and nationally consistent system of childcare and early childhood education to ensure that all Australian children under school age have access to early childhood education and other appropriate developmental and social activities, provided in a safe environment.



### **Schools**

27. Labor believes that every Australian child should have access to a high quality, free and secular public education, consisting of government-funded schools which are not dependent on private or corporate sponsorship and which are appropriately resourced to meet the diverse needs and capabilities of all students.
28. Labor also recognises the importance of public funding for the non-government schools sector and that sector's provision of education to an acceptable national standard.
29. Labor believes that the only effective and fair way to frame schools policy is to invest fully in Australian schools, whether government or non-government, and to allocate these funds on the basis of need. Schools policy must seek to compensate for variations in student



capabilities and, in particular, problems of economic and social polarisation and geographic isolation.

- 30.** Labor's needs based philosophy highlights the importance of effective freedoms and choices in education. In government, Labor fostered one of the most diverse non-government schooling systems in the world. Scarce public resources must focus on core concerns about socio-economic needs and capability rather than on false economies of absolute choice. Accordingly, Labor will establish minimum enrolment requirements and accountability standards for the establishment of new non-government schools.
- 31.** Federal government funding support for the school system needs to be allocated on the basis of acceptable national principles and standards. These include:
- government schools being adequately resourced to provide high education standards, without reliance on private or corporate sponsorship;
  - the development of a national curriculum, with an initial emphasis on early primary school intervention in literacy and numeracy;
  - recognition of the need for a strong general curriculum upon which more specialised forms of learning can be developed;
  - recognition of the need to increase the number of students completing year 12; and
  - fulfilment of the national government's responsibilities in welfare-related areas, especially the resourcing of schools in disadvantaged regions.
- 32.** Poverty remains the greatest indicator of disadvantage and the single most important barrier to educational success. Schools that serve communities with many low income families need specialised systems of delivery and resourcing. Labor will establish an innovative system of targeted resource provision to disadvantaged regions to improve educational outcomes.

**33.** Labor recognises the importance of the middle school years and the need for specific encouragement, support and inspiration for young adolescents at school.

**34.** Labor believes that school education is the best vehicle for teaching young Australians their civic rights and responsibilities. This includes learning about our Australian Constitution, the role of federal, state and local governments and Australian history, including Indigenous history.



### Vocational Education and Training

- 35.** The primary objective of training should be secure and satisfying employment. Labor's training policy aims to:
- ensure portable and consistent national qualifications
  - equip Australians with relevant skills; and
  - maximise training and reskilling opportunities to raise skill levels generally and to prevent workers being forced into low paid jobs.
- 36.** Labor recognises the centrally important role played by the TAFE sector in addressing the technical and further educational needs of the Australian community.
- 37.** Access to vocational education and training is critical for many Australians. Labor will encourage and support a TAFE system in which entry costs are not a barrier to participation by students from low income families, and to which employers should make a funding contribution. As well as training programs delivered through TAFE institutions, Labor believes that private sector employers have a responsibility to provide comprehensive post-school vocational training opportunities for Australia's young people.
- 38.** Labor supports the development of a truly national TAFE system, with improved resourcing and emphasis on further education and the quality of education provided. Labor will support TAFE in its dual roles of training provider and key access point for community education.



39. Labor regards adult and community education as an integral part of a learning society, and will encourage its expansion.
40. While recognising the unique character of TAFE, Labor will facilitate maximum cooperation between the TAFE and university sectors, especially in the establishment of course credits, articulation and, where appropriate, dual and co-located institutions. This recognises the substantial overlap emerging between some university and TAFE courses and the growing number of students moving each way between these institutions to obtain their qualifications.
41. Labor recognises the role played by the private sector in the vocational education and training system. It also acknowledges the value of on-the-job training. The diversification of the training market, however, must not be allowed to damage quality. Australia's current and future workforce must be provided with sound, transferable skills, and our international reputation for quality education and training provision must be protected. Labor will work with the States and Territories to ensure that all providers of vocational education and training are subject to an efficient, comprehensive system of quality assurance including a system of independent auditing. Private sector involvement in workforce skills development should be fully integrated within national education and training goals and accreditation procedures.
42. Labor supports the continuation and adequate resourcing of a national training authority to maintain and further develop a high quality national vocational education and training system with nationally agreed objectives, strategies and planning processes. The quality standards will seek to equip the workforce with the skills and knowledge for the future of technological change and the knowledge based economy and society.

### School to Work Transition

43. Labor recognises that young people who leave the formal education system without recognised skills face lifelong disadvantage.

Labor will give priority to improving the options for such young people and addressing issues such as alienation from the school system. In addition Labor will investigate using community based brokers to aid early school leavers into either further training or paid employment.

### Apprenticeships and Traineeships

44. Labor will provide adequate resources for the expansion of apprenticeships and traineeships to ensure that structured entry level training and work experience opportunities are available on a universal basis and to repair the damage done to training in recent years. Labor will ensure that there are cooperative efforts by government employers and unions to maximise and continually increase the take up of apprenticeships and traineeships with a focus on the development of generic skills.
45. Labor supports continuing review of the form, structure and duration of apprenticeships and traineeships to reflect the changing structure of work and the needs of industry, including the need for on and off the job training. Labor will protect the rights of young workers and other participants in structured training programs to fair wages and conditions and to real on the job quality training experiences that produce lasting and portable skills. All training contracts or agreements will have to meet minimum standards for the protection of apprentices and trainees, which will be properly monitored.
46. Labor acknowledges the particularly crucial and effective role of group training companies in providing rotated structured training and other opportunities for apprentices who work in smaller companies that have a limited capacity to train in their own right. Labor will support group training companies' involvement with a wider range of small companies, and the formation of vocationally based employment pools based on similar principles. In addition to support for group training, Labor will examine ways to encourage public and private employers including contract maintenance, employers, labour hire and





industry schemes, to directly employ more apprentices and trainees.

### Adapting to New Jobs

47. As well as direct job creation for older workers, governments also have a responsibility to invest in the re-training of workers to provide them with new skills in tune, where possible, with national qualifications so that they can adapt to changing demands in the Labour force. Labor will invest in a range of new job preparation programs, including specially targeted labour adjustment programs for mature age workers displaced by industry restructuring, aimed at getting these workers back into paid jobs. These programs may include specifically targeted mature age apprenticeships.

### Management skills

48. Labor is committed to raising the skills and standards of managers in Australia at all levels, as well as workers, through innovative new programs on leadership and management skills, and continuing review of the performance of Australia's corporate managers.

### Universities

49. Labor believes that university education should be open to all, available on merit and equity rather than wealth and privilege.

50. Australian universities must strive for the highest standards of research, research training and teaching. Intellectual rigour and excellence are the cornerstones of successful higher education.

51. Labor recognises that despite the efforts of many dedicated staff the quality of university teaching and research has been undermined by Howard Government policy. The quality of university staff and their remuneration are matters of national interest, and therefore the national government must take some responsibility for ensuring that Australian universities are able to attract, retain and develop high quality staff.

52. Labor will increase federal government support for public universities and phase out up front undergraduate fees for Australian students.

53. Labor opposes the deregulation of fees for Australian undergraduate students at any or all universities. Deregulating fees would reduce opportunities for students from low and middle income families to attend university and undermine the viability of regional and rural campuses.

54. Labor recognises that universities have a range of public purposes, both intellectual and vocational, and that public access to these opportunities should be as broad as possible.

55. Labor will encourage universities to play a leadership role in the internationalisation of higher education, including through the development of new forms of interactive and distance learning methods and technology.

56. The quality of Australia's higher education system is a key factor in the nation's economic and social well being. Labor will work with the States and Territories, higher education institutions, staff and students to ensure that all providers of higher education are subject to independent quality assessment, and to eliminate inconsistencies in establishment and accreditation procedures across Australia.

57. Labor's commitment to a strong system of public universities will govern Labor's policy responses to new learning opportunities generated by technological advances and the increasing number of private providers.

58. Labor recognises the particular difficulties facing rural and regional students who want to go to university and the lower participation rates these difficulties have caused.

59. Labor supports universal membership of student representative organisations because of their representative role and the wide range of sporting, catering, legal, health, employment and other services provided to students, sometimes after normal commercial hours and often in circumstances that would not be viable if membership was not universal. Labor will continue to act to oppose state government interference in decisions of students and independent university



institutions about the membership of student guilds, associations and unions.

## Financing Education

60. Labor recognises the right of all Australians to a decent education, not least because of the impact that it has on earning capacity and the ability to provide for families. Given the importance of lifelong learning in our society, it is more important than ever to ensure education is delivered as a core function of the public sector. The great bulk of education services must be funded by the public sector rather than through up front user charges.
61. All Australians have an interest in providing an adequate level of funding for lifelong education. It is fair that they should contribute to the common pool of public resources according to their capacity to pay, and draw from that pool—especially in the development of skills—on the basis of need and merit.
62. Labor will seek to ensure that all young Australians begin their working lives with an adequate set of skills for employment and future learning.
63. Labor will review the student income support system to identify ways in which it can better meet students' needs, including the special needs of indigenous Australians. In particular, Labor will progressively reduce the age at which students can receive income support at the independent rate.
64. Labor will phase out up front undergraduate fees for Australian students in award courses at universities as they are inconsistent with the merit principle.
65. Labor will review the current HECS structure to ensure that it does not act as a financial barrier to students seeking undergraduate entry.
66. Labor opposes the introduction of vouchers for vocational and higher education.

## The Population Base

### A New Approach to Population Policy

67. The achievement of Australia's economic and social goals, and our international objectives, requires government to consult widely to develop an integrated population policy commanding widespread community support.
  - Labor recognises the need to plan for a sustainable population and in government will develop a formal national population policy.
68. A population policy will allow Australia to decide as a community the long term sustainable population we want rather than allowing population issues to be an incidental by-product of ad hoc, political decisions about annual immigration levels.
  - Labor will focus on population policy as a whole, rather than just immigration, enabling the community to think in a long-term and constructive way about issues which otherwise stand to divide us.
69. The development of a population policy will involve consideration not just of immigration but also of elements as diverse as desirable rates of economic growth; resource constraints; environmental management; internal migration; urban form; industry and regional development policy; and the fertility and mortality of Australia's current population. This will involve drawing in all stakeholders, including the States, local government, farmers, ethnic communities, industry, environmentalists, indigenous Australians and the tourist industry.
70. A national population policy need not specify a precise fixed numerical outcome for a projected date in the future. At a minimum, however, it will identify a range within which year to year policy making will operate, and a process for updating and modifying planning objectives as new demographic, environmental and social factors are identified.





- Labor will establish, as a matter of priority, a new Office of Population to advise on a range of desirable population options, and ways of achieving them.
- 71.** Evolution of a population policy will require coordination across the whole of government. A population policy will affect, but cannot be a substitute for addressing, other current and future strategic planning issues, including:
- economic growth targets;
  - urban sprawl and pressure on services;
  - infrastructure;
  - regional and rural development;
  - an ageing population;
  - protection of fragile ecologies; and
  - sustainable and natural resource use and environmental impact management.
- 75.** Labor will administer a fair and flexible refugee and humanitarian program. While acknowledging that Australia has one of the world's most generous humanitarian programs, Labor will ensure that unforeseen world events that necessitate special responses can be accommodated while at the same time not impacting on the overall refugee and humanitarian intake.
- 76.** Labor will administer a fairer and more balanced immigration program. While the current ratio of skilled to family migration will remain largely unchanged, sub-categories such as the parents stream will be expanded to better reflect the value of family reunion and the family unit within Australian society.
- 77.** Labor will review the current asylum seekers' appeal mechanism to ensure that its decision making and operation is both cost efficient, fair and consistent. While the rights of asylum seekers to seek judicial review must be maintained, it is important that a streamlined and more formal system of appeal is instituted to provide a better filter and alleviate the higher courts' immigration caseload burden.
- 78.** Labor will review the system of temporary entry visas and act to prevent the establishment in Australia of a semi-permanent group of "guest workers" on short term but renewable visas. Labor will maintain a cap on the size of the working holiday scheme and prevent it becoming a de facto labour market program.
- 79.** Labor will ensure that adequate resources are allocated to Australia's overseas immigration posts to combat the growing incidence of people smuggling at the source. These resources will include intelligence gathering personnel and officers whose role will be to liaise and maintain relationships with local authorities.

## Immigration



### A Link to Australia's Future Growth

- 72.** Labor will ensure immigration levels are set within the framework of a population policy fashioned in Australia's interest. The system of setting immigration targets year by year without any underlying rationale or long term policy framework has contributed to declining public confidence in the program. Moving to long term planning will achieve greater stability and confidence.
- 73.** Labor is committed to maintaining a non-discriminatory immigration policy. Labor recognises the economic and social contribution that has been made by immigrants throughout our nation's history. Labor regards Australia's diversity as a source of national strength and nation building and will consistently oppose those who seek to poison Australia's social cohesion by fostering extremism, hatred or ethnic division.
- 74.** Labor will ensure that the current system and criteria for granting visitor visas is addressed and that a more equitable, flexible, fair and non-discriminatory system is implemented while at all times maintaining the integrity of our immigration program.
- Labor will also ensure that close political and diplomatic relations are maintained with all those countries where known people smuggling operations exist and where there is a high incidence of illegal immigration.



80. Labor will ensure that the highest level of service and coordination is restored and adequate resources are provided to organisations that assist in the settlement and counselling of newly arrived migrants and refugees, recognising the value of volunteer contribution in these areas.
81. A Labor government will examine the provision of incentives to newly arrived migrants to settle in regional areas. Such incentives, along with a program of ethno-specific infrastructure development, will ensure that regional migration will provide long term benefits for both the newly settled migrants and the original community.
82. Labor's initiatives will include fostering a secure environment conducive to companies planning ahead to meet future skill needs. The identification of emerging skill shortages is crucial to ensure that as far as possible skilled vacancies are filled by unemployed Australians who have gained qualifications from training programs in this country. The intake of skilled migrants should always be determined in the context of local employment policy.
83. To this end Labor supports the further development of closer consultation between the employment and immigration departments in determining intakes of skilled migrants.
84. Labor also supports the further development and effective implementation of employer sponsorship schemes and labour agreements. These seek to ensure that employers wishing to bring in skilled migrants to fill particular vacancies must consult with the employment department and relevant trade unions, provide justification for that admission, and agree to provide appropriate training to local people in the area of skills sought.



# chapter four

## Building Australia's Capital Base: Investment and Infrastructure

### Australia's Investment Needs

1. A high and sustainable level of capital investment is central to Labor's goals of a better economy and society, contributing directly to:
  - stronger economic growth;
  - more new jobs and a reduction in unemployment;
  - increased job security and higher incomes for those already in employment; and
  - increased innovation and technological modernisation in the economy.
2. Labor recognises that a high and sustainable level of capital investment delivers both short-term and long-term benefits to the Australian economy. Creating buildings, plant and machinery, and transport, communications and energy systems means:
  - increased short-term economic activity in its own right; and
  - an increase in the long-term productive capacity of the economy to sustain higher levels of economic activity than would otherwise be possible.
3. Beyond the general requirement to lift capital investment, which is faced by all growing economies, Australia faces a particular requirement for higher levels of capital investment than would be normally required in an economy of comparable GDP size and population, as a consequence of:
  - the size of our land mass;
  - our modest population size, its uneven distribution and its relatively high level of growth; and
  - the highly capital intensive nature of many of our principal economic activities such as agriculture, minerals and, increasingly, sophisticated manufactures and some key tradeable services.
4. Labor believes that government has a vital role to play in fostering capital investment to meet these requirements, both in
  - achieving higher rates of overall investment in the Australian economy; and



- achieving a broader spread of investment, in terms of its regional, sectoral and labour market impact across the nation.
5. Without government involvement, unfettered market forces cannot be guaranteed to supply adequate levels of capital to all regions and sectors of the economy.
  6. Accordingly, Labor will pursue balanced economic policy measures which promote the highest sustainable level of productive investment, improve the productivity of existing investments, and increase the availability of national savings to fund such investments. Specific measures will range across the areas of:
    - monetary policy (especially through the maintenance of low inflation, which provides a more stable environment for business planning and investment);
    - taxation policy;
    - competition and regulation policy;
    - industry policy;
    - regional policy;
    - infrastructure policy; and
    - enterprise productivity.
  7. Labor recognises that the maintenance of well-functioning infrastructure is fundamental to maximising sustainable growth in the economy.

This involves both the maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure as well as developing the future infrastructure to meet the needs of the nation.

Consistent with the objective of maximising growth and living standards, governments have a responsibility to develop, in partnership

## Lifting National Savings

- A1** Australia has long relied on foreign capital to fund a significant part of our investment needs. Strong economic growth has historically seen a spillover into higher levels of current account deficit. Greater national saving, both private and public, is necessary to ensure that strong economic and investment growth can be sustained for long periods without unmanageable current account problems arising.
- A2** Greater national saving is also necessary to increase the Australian community's capacity to own and control national economic assets. "Buying back the farm" will remain an unrealisable dream unless there is a significant increase in our national saving rate.
- A3** Labor is strongly committed to strategies to increase private saving, in particular through the continued growth and spread of superannuation to encourage broader share ownership across the community; and through pursuing higher growth and lower unemployment—which means higher private incomes and hence greater resources available for boosting private saving.
- A4** Labor accepts that public saving is a significant component of national saving, and that on-going effort in budget management is an important economic priority. But Labor also recognises that policies which simply boost public saving in the short term at the expense of long-term sustainable growth, employment, national competitiveness and private saving are likely to diminish rather than enhance our overall national saving performance



with the community and business, strategies to identify, prioritise, and satisfy the long term infrastructure needs of the nation.

## Public, Private And Foreign Investment

8. Throughout Australia's economic history, Labor governments—at both federal and State levels—have worked to accelerate and broaden national economic development through a balance of public and private investment strategies, involving direct public investment in infrastructure and commercial enterprises, and creating a positive climate for private investment.
9. Public investment has been an important means of meeting community needs, and Labor believes that it should continue to be provided to meet community service obligations, and ensure the provision of essential services, where these could not or would not be provided equitably and accessibly by the private sector.
10. Labor believes that government has a key strategic role to play either in directly providing public infrastructure, or creating the right conditions for the development of beneficial private infrastructure where this is of lower cost, and can contribute more to the overall enhancement of economic efficiency, than direct public provision. Federal policy making should focus particularly on identifying regional and sectoral priorities for infrastructure investment.
11. Labor recognises the contribution made by foreign investors to the development of the Australian economy, supplying capital, technology and other skills. It is also the case that our comparatively low rate of national saving has meant that Australian economic growth has depended significantly on the continued flow of foreign investment.
12. Labor also recognises that:
  - there is broad concern within the Australian community about the degree of foreign ownership, control of the economy and of Australian enterprises;
- Australia has historically been a net importer of capital;
- foreign investment in the Australian economy should be undertaken in such a way that its benefits outweigh its costs; and
- the benefits of foreign investment are likely to be maximised where ownership and control is shared between foreign and Australian investors.
13. Labor will, accordingly:
  - seek to maximise Australian ownership and control of resources and enterprises;
  - encourage foreign investment to the extent that it introduces beneficial and new technology and expertise, increases employment, expands government revenue and provides other clear benefits to the Australian community; and
  - maintain the capacity to limit or control foreign ownership where this is demanded by the national interest.

## Building Australia's Infrastructure

14. Labor recognises that a strongly performing economy is dependent on adequate and efficient national infrastructure, particularly in the critical sectors of transport, communications and energy. Renewal and enhancement of this infrastructure is necessary to reduce business costs, improve the environment, contribute to the community's well being by reducing traffic congestion and increasing mobility, and expand opportunities for economic development in regional Australia.

## Building transport capacity

15. For transport infrastructure development generally, Labor will:
  - support strategies to develop regional infrastructure and intelligent transport systems;



## Improving Access To Capital

**B1** Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) generate a significant proportion of Australia's national income and employment, and the access of these firms to capital sufficient to finance their enterprises is vital to Australia's economic development and well-being.

**B2** Despite generally efficient and well-functioning debt and equity markets in Australia, Labor recognises that there are some areas where those markets are not completely efficient and where government assistance can be used to enhance their operations. This problem relates mainly to equity markets for SMEs. Some SMEs find it difficult to attract sufficient equity to fund their needs—particularly for seed, start up and early stage capital. At the same time, providers of equity capital in Australia (both institutional investors and "business angel" investors) face a shortfall of good quality investment opportunities. The reasons for this mismatch include the following:

- many SMEs require assistance to become "investment ready";
- many SMEs and their advisers are not well aware of how the private equity markets work and where the providers are;
- some SMEs can grow to become successful businesses but are not

yet at the stage to deliver the high rates of return required by the investor market; and

- some SMEs are located in geographical regions which are outside the networks of the providers.

**B3** Labor in government will pursue a balanced combination of policies designed to ensure that market failures affecting SMEs' access to capital are addressed, principally by:

- support for innovation, through targeted assistance;
- the establishment of industry development mechanisms—in partnership with business where appropriate—focused on the venture and patient capital needs of SMEs;
- modifying, where appropriate, finance industry regulatory restrictions;
- providing appropriate taxation incentives;
- providing other appropriate SME industry support measures such as information exchanges; and
- measures to ensure that access to capital by SMEs in regional Australia is appropriate.

- ensure that Australians have access to adequate transport services by providing appropriate financial assistance to State governments to improve and extend public transport systems in urban and regional Australia for employment, education and training, social justice and economic reasons;

- focus infrastructure development strategies on the creation of efficient intermodal connections, particularly at ports and airports;
- develop a national transport planning strategy aimed at implementing a world class national transport network to ensure Australia has a coherent land transport system;



- develop integrated transport planning processes which provide for fair competition between modes, transparent and objective criteria for investment, equality of modal treatment in regulatory and financial issues, and policy integration with environmental, energy and land use objectives;
  - investigate the tax treatment of public transport to encourage its increased use for commuting to and from work; and
  - encourage the promotion of environmentally friendly transport including cycle ways.
- 16. For aviation, Labor will:**
- maintain Qantas and Ansett as Australia's international carriers, delivering high levels of service and providing a substantial proportion of Australia's international aviation needs;
  - foster the development of the general aviation sector and develop the potential of the aviation industry as an important export industry;
  - encourage the growth of air freight through upgraded airport facilities, increased competition in cargo terminal operations and improvements in the logistics chain;
  - ensure that privatised airports maintain competitive pricing regimes, high quality services and strict environmental and safety requirements, and facilitate local ownership of regional airports; and
  - build a second Sydney airport in the Sydney basin, introduce fairer flight paths and maintain the cap and curfew at Sydney Airport.
- 17. For maritime transport, Labor will:**
- ensure that Australian domestic shipping is crewed by workers operating under Australian award conditions under established cabotage arrangements;
  - encourage the continued operation of an Australian coastal shipping industry -and in doing so ensure that Australian shipowners continue to employ Australian crews and receive support comparable with international standards; and
- pursue individual port productivity improvement strategies with the direct involvement of port authorities, stevedoring companies, unions and port users through initiatives such as increased competition, productivity targets in terminal leases, increased investment and enterprise bargaining.
- 18. For rail transport, Labor will:**
- work with State governments to develop an integrated national rail network and tracks of national significance to the operation of the economy, including efficient inter-modal connections, particularly at airports;
  - designate the interstate rail mainline network from Perth to Brisbane as the National Rail System and maintain it in public ownership, and oppose the privatisation of the National Rail Corporation;
  - revitalise investment in Australia's interstate rail network to attain high-speed freight train standards, giving priority to removing speed restrictions and modifying infrastructure to allow double-stacking of containers and further extension of the network to include critical freight lines;
  - provide assistance to major privately-funded extensions to the rail network where there is demonstrable public benefit; and
  - work to reinvigorate Australia's long-haul passenger railways, including assessment of the likely costs and benefits of private Very Fast Train projects, linked to airports where practicable, and establishment of uniform national VFT standards.
- 19. For road transport, Labor will:**
- seek to restore road funding to previous Labor government levels and ensure that road projects are funded according to strict, transparent and objective criteria;
  - seek to expand the national highway network to include critical freight routes - such as port access roads and urban ring roads; and





- improve road safety by providing greater access to well equipped rest stops for both passenger vehicles and heavy vehicles on the national highway.

## Building Communications Capacity

### Equitable access to modern communication services

20. Labor supports the right of all Australians to have equitable and affordable access to a defined modern and comprehensive standard communications service, including voice telephony and broadband data services. Labor believes that access to these standard communications services should be provided as a part of a universal service obligation, the delivery and costs of which should be borne by the industry in accordance with market share.
21. Labor will ensure that, as soon as practicable, every telephone customer in Australian will have access to a telephone service capable of digital end to end performance.
22. Labor recognises that the provision of a high standard communications system in regional Australia is crucial to reducing the high cost structures for industry and small business operating outside the urban areas.

### A more competitive regulatory regime

23. Labor supports a more competitive communications regulatory regime.
24. Labor supports the continued development of national communications infrastructure that avoids wherever possible unnecessary duplication and which requires or encourages fair third-party access arrangements.
25. Relevant regulatory bodies, such as the Australian Communications Authority (ACA) and the Australian Competition and Consumer

Commission (ACCC), must be adequately resourced and operate under clear guidelines in an open and transparent manner.

### Telstra

26. Telstra remains the dominant provider of telecommunications and related services to the Australian public. Labor opposes the sale of Telstra and will not sell any further portion of the company. Labor will maintain the power of the Minister to direct Telstra in the national interest, particularly in respect of universal service obligations and customer service guarantee matters.
27. Labor will ensure that Telstra continues to recognise its role in providing jobs, particularly in rural and regional Australia.
28. Labor supports Telstra maintaining its significant contribution to communications research and development. Labor will encourage communications technology research and development generally, recognising that this will help Australia remain at the forefront of international communications.

### Australia Post

29. Labor will maintain Australia Post in full public ownership.
30. Labor will maintain Australia Post as the sole carrier of the standard size letter service and the sole issuer of postage stamps. The cross subsidy arrangements between metropolitan and regional Australia will remain to ensure an equitable flat rate postal charging arrangement for the standard letter.
31. Labor will maintain and encourage the growth of Australia Post's services and extend the scope of Australia Post's community service obligations, where appropriate, to ensure equitable access for all Australians to a full range of postal services, including banking and bill paying services.
32. Labor will encourage Australia Post to provide public access through its post office network





to new communications options and essential community information.

33. Labor envisages Australia Post playing a central role as a platform for the delivery of emerging digital data services, particularly to rural and regional Australia.

### Building energy capacity

34. Among Australia's greatest economic strengths is the extent and diversity of its natural energy resources, energy infrastructure and energy technology. Australia is both an important producer of established sources of energy, including coal, gas, oil and condensate, and a world class player in the development of renewable and sustainable energy technologies.
35. Australia's energy supply and use must be economically efficient, internationally competitive and sustainable in the long term. Such national energy capability is essential for Australia's sustained economic growth. Labor recognises that the long-term challenge of global environmental issues must be built in from the start in planning the future of the Australian energy industry.
36. Increasingly, more efficient and clean energy supplies and use will enhance Australia's capacity for the downstream processing of minerals and other natural resources, and more competitive manufacturing generally, thus providing employment benefits.
37. The continued development and application of new technology to improve the economic and environmental efficiency of energy production and consumption is vital to Australia's long term international competitiveness.
38. To improve our national energy capacity, Labor will:
- encourage investment in an intensive national oil and gas exploration effort;
  - encourage continued development and investment in energy infrastructure and technologies, particularly gas and renewable energy sources;
  - facilitate free and fair competition between energy sources;
  - facilitate free and fair interstate trade in gas;
- facilitate a national electricity market;
  - encourage co-generation;
  - encourage the use of gas in conjunction with coal for power generation;
  - encourage research and commercial development of new and renewable energy sources and technology; and
  - take into account the relative environmental impact of these energy sources.
39. Labor will encourage greater efficiency in the production, transmission and use of existing energy sources, in particular by acting to:
- ensure a concerted and ongoing effort to encourage the pattern of Australia's domestic, transportation and industrial energy consumption to greater use of clean and renewable energy sources through demand management strategies;
  - encourage greater energy efficiency and consumer purchase of energy efficient products through consumer education programs, innovative financing mechanisms, product standards and energy efficiency labelling schemes; and
  - encourage energy audits for the industrial, commercial, transportation and residential sectors to inform users of their relative energy efficiency and how this can be improved.
40. Labor recognises that major opportunities are emerging in new and renewable energy technologies within the global energy market. Accordingly Labor will:
- support research and development in innovative energy technologies that are cleaner and more efficient;
  - encourage domestic markets in renewable energy technologies;
  - encourage Australian development, manufacture and commercialisation of renewable energy technologies for both domestic and export markets;
  - encourage local and foreign investment to increase Australia's renewable energy technology manufacturing capability; and
  - maximise employment creation within the renewable energy sector to offset possible long term job losses in fossil fuel dependent sectors of the energy industry.



41. Labor will institute a national energy industry policy to integrate the need for improving energy efficiency, abating greenhouse emissions and encouraging the development and commercialisation of new Australian energy industries, including renewable and sustainable energy technology.
42. Labor will ensure that consumers are protected in the new national energy environment, and will ensure access by consumers to competitively priced energy, proper regulation of the national energy market and viable dispute resolution mechanisms.



### **Safeguarding Australia's infrastructure**

43. Labor recognises the importance of Australia's critical infrastructure and the need to adequately plan, maintain and

safeguard it. Critical infrastructure includes systems of telecommunication; banking and financial operations; power generation; air, sea and water transportation systems; water purification; and sewerage and wastewater treatment.

Infrastructure protection is integral to Australia's national security. It underpins our economy. Our quality of life depends on it. Labor is committed to ensuring that Australia can manage and contain emerging threats to our infrastructure, especially those that relate to the information or cyber elements that increasingly control the operation of physical infrastructure. Identified threats include criminals, terrorists, and hostile foreign nation-states who might seek to steal money or proprietary data, invade private records, conduct industrial espionage, cause a vital infrastructure to cease operations, or engage in information warfare.



# chapter five



## Engaging with the Global Economy



### Creating better jobs through trade

1. Labor is committed to ensuring that the benefits of global economic growth are shared—both within Australia and between countries. We support free trade as a means of generating the growth necessary for enhancing the living standards of everyday Australians. Most Australians have directly benefited from trade liberalisation but the distributional effects cannot be ignored. Reducing trade barriers boosts our economic growth, creates more competitive industries, provides benefits to consumers and builds stronger relationships with our trading partners. Trade is the best way of creating more fulfilling, well-paying jobs for Australians.
2. Labor will ensure that the benefits of global economic growth are available to all Australians—through better education and training programs, industry restructuring policies, fostering new knowledge-intensive enterprises and a particular focus on those industries and regions which are adversely affected by trade liberalisation. Whilst the rapid development of new technologies will be encouraged, Labor will introduce policies to make access to technology more equitable. Labor is committed not only to providing an adequate safety net, but also giving everyone, wherever in Australia they live the opportunity to prosper in the new economy.
3. Labor will continue to pursue sensible trade liberalisation through effective multilateral strategies reinforced by bilateral negotiations. The direction Labor pursued in the 1980s and 1990s of internationalising the economy and reducing protection cannot and should not be reversed.
4. Australia's economic future lies principally with Asia. Over half of our trade is with nations in the Asian region. Labor is committed to enhancing our economic integration with those countries in Australia's immediate neighbourhood.
5. Australia needs to make a strong commitment to winning markets in the new economies within Europe and the Americas.



### Opening Markets

6. Labor recognises the importance of maximising trade and investment opportunities for Australia in a rapidly changing world. The role of the Minister and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade must remain sufficiently flexible to meet our future needs. Labor does not assume that the policy machinery of the old economy will necessarily be appropriate to the new economy. Labor will ensure that the skill and capacity of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to pursue trade policy is strengthened.
7. Labor remains firmly committed to realising our free trade objectives—through negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, regional free trade agreements and bilateral market opening.
8. The WTO's objective—to reduce trade barriers worldwide—will help Australia maximise economic growth and job creation. Labor endorses the full implementation of the WTO's Uruguay Round agreements and the work of the Cairns Group (established by Labor in 1986) to reduce world agricultural protection. We call for the commencement of a new round of WTO negotiations, to start as soon as possible, be as comprehensive as possible and include agriculture. Such a round would also deal constructively with boosting growth in developing countries, as well as proper competition and investment policy to prevent the unfair use of market power in the global economy.
9. WTO rules presently allow all nations to determine for themselves the appropriate public/private mix in their health, education or welfare sectors. WTO rules also permit countries to protect their cultural industries. Labor supports both these positions. We will vigorously oppose any proposal that would require Australia to privatise its health, education and welfare sectors, or which would require us to remove protection of our cultural industries.
10. Labor is committed to the peaceful resolution of trade disputes in the WTO, through a system of transparent, fair and enforceable rules. We support efforts to make the WTO dispute resolution process as fair, prompt and open as possible. Labor will make sufficient resources available to ensure that Australia can properly prosecute and defend those cases in which it is involved.
11. APEC (established on Labor's initiative in 1989) is pivotal to increasing trade in our region. Labor will promote APEC's Bogor Declaration goals of regional free trade by 2010 for developed nations and 2020 for developing nations. APEC can also serve a valuable function by mobilising support for a further round of WTO negotiations, facilitating trade between APEC members and fostering dialogue between regional leaders.
12. Labor acknowledges the positive role our Closer Economic Relations agreement with New Zealand has played in improving the economies on both sides of the Tasman. In government, Labor will seek an agreement with New Zealand to jointly examine whatever other possibilities exist to further strengthen the relationship.
13. Labor supports efforts, first begun in 1994, to join the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the Australia-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations agreement into a single free trade agreement. Other free trade agreements should also be actively pursued as part of an overall strategy to achieve the Bogor Declaration goals.
14. Labor will pursue a vigorous agenda of bilateral market access initiatives in all parts of the world.
15. Labor believes that consistent with its Singapore Declaration there is an obligation on the WTO to consider the impact of trade on core labour standards. Consequently we support, as a first step, the establishment of a formal permanent WTO working group or similar body with the following terms of reference:



### Inclusive Trade Policies



- (a) it would be part of the WTO's follow-up to the Singapore Declaration commitment on labour standards and would therefore report back to the WTO General Council with proposed recommendations concerning WTO procedures, mechanisms and regulations;
- (b) it should be a standing or permanent body working on an ongoing basis;
- (c) it should provide for the participation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which must be given formal consultative status at the WTO;
- (d) it must have a defined work programme including, inter alia:
- a mandate to undertake analysis and to propose procedures and instruments for the treatment of core labour standards in the international trading system.
  - the examination of how to associate trade with respect for core labour standards, including positive incentives and assistance;
  - the consideration of measures to be taken where trade liberalisation was associated with violations of core labour standards; and
  - review of the mechanisms of the WTO (trade policy reviews, dispute settlement etc) in order to promote openness and transparency and ensure consistency of trade negotiations and agreements with respect for core labour standards within the work of the WTO.
- 16.** Labor is opposed to the manipulation of core labour standards as a new form of protectionism.
- 17.** Labor will support calls for a meeting between the WTO, ILO, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other relevant bodies, as may be decided, for the purpose of launching on-going dialogue and action on the subjects of development and labour standards.
- 18.** Labor notes that the WTO (through its preamble) and APEC (through successive Leaders' Statements) are committed to furthering the goal of sustainable development. A Labor Government will play an active role in WTO and APEC negotiations to promote sustainable development. In particular, Labor will work towards the removal of environmentally-damaging subsidies, and promote mechanisms which can reconcile the interests of environmental protection and trade liberalisation. A Labor Government will also ensure that all major trade agreements into which Australia enters—bilateral and multilateral—are assessed to ensure that they are consistent with the principles of sustainable development and environmental protection.
- 19.** Labor recognises that free trade is a necessary but not sufficient condition to promote economic growth in developing countries. We will work to ensure that nations in our region and throughout the world benefit from open markets and share in global growth. We will promote policies to achieve this in the WTO, World Bank, IMF, ILO and other international forums. Labor acknowledges the virtuous circle created by equitable economic growth in developing countries. It can free people from hunger and poverty, and by providing access to economic independence for the individual, make meaningful basic human rights. At the same time economic growth in developing countries creates new markets for Australian exporters thus contributing to creating jobs in our country and strengthening our economy.
- 20.** Developing countries must be properly resourced if they are to fully benefit from WTO negotiations. Labor will work to ensure that international funds are made available for capacity building and technical assistance, so that poorer countries can properly participate in WTO negotiations.
- 21.** Governments have a responsibility to make trade policymaking as transparent and publicly accessible as possible. A free flow of



information is important for its own sake, as well as to maintain accountability and public confidence in the multilateral trading system.

Labor will encourage this by:

- ensuring that the positions that a Labor Government takes at the WTO and developments within the WTO are regularly reported to the parliament, including to a Joint Parliamentary Committee established to scrutinise WTO affairs;
- ensuring that all Australian submissions and relevant materials to the WTO are made public unless there are genuine commercial-in-confidence reasons, or disclosure will damage our national interest;
- reviewing all existing government consultative mechanisms and reconstituting them to ensure they are representative of business, unions, environmental and community interests; and
- advancing rule changes within the WTO to ensure immediate publication of dispute settlement decisions, together with a short, plain language explanation of the decision.



### Export Promotion

22. Labor maintains its commitment to the promotion of Australian exports. Austrade should be structured so that it can respond promptly to the needs of individual firms, as well as developing particular export markets. This may also involve forming consortia, holding conferences and educating Australians about the contribution that trade and investment make to our living standards. Austrade should focus particularly on knowledge-intensive industries and the service economy. The Export Market Development Grants scheme should be placed on a permanent footing, but regularly assessed to

ensure that it operates as efficiently and effectively as possible.

23. Labor recognises that the multicultural nature of our society and the many languages spoken by Australians is one of our great strengths as a trading nation. Labor will facilitate trade networking and trade promotional activities in cooperation with major ethnic organisations both domestically and overseas.

24. Labor recognises the almost limitless opportunities the world-wide growth of electronic commerce brings, particularly to small and medium sized businesses in Australia. To help optimise e-commerce opportunities for Australian companies, Labor will:

- encourage Austrade to promote competency in e-commerce as a key function of their work;
- support in APEC, and all other trade agreements, the promotion of electronic clearance and other cross border regulation; and
- promote programs to help exporters to lift their take-up rate of new technology and be e-commerce ready.

25. The Export Finance Insurance Corporation (EFIC) should operate on commercial lines. In so doing, however, it must carefully assess the environmental and social implications of projects to ensure that they are sustainable in the long term. EFIC should retain the ability to refer non-commercial projects issues to the Minister for support, where those projects are in the national interest.

26. Labor will investigate the feasibility of instituting a mixed credit scheme, as part of the role DFAT should play in linking our initiatives to the needs of Australian companies. Such a program should support Australia's development assistance objectives, but would not be counted as part of Australia's overseas aid budget.



### **Anti-dumping**

27. Labor supports the maintenance of anti-dumping measures. Anti-dumping legislation ensures that overseas exporters do not hurt our industry by selling their products in Australia at a lower price than they charge in their home markets. Where there is an allegation of dumping, it should be independently and urgently investigated by the Australian Customs Service.



# chapter six



## Developing Australian Industry



### Industry Development: An Integrated Approach

1. Industry policy is central to Labor's economic development strategy that is based on growing the Australian economy and translating Australian ideas and innovations and the overall level of economic demand into business and job opportunities for Australians. The essence of Labor's approach is to create the potential for Australia to enjoy a high-wage, high-skill future.
2. Australia must have a coherent and visionary industry development policy which lasts beyond the term of any one government, setting out where Australia should be in 2010 and beyond and what we need to do to get there.
3. Such an industry development policy should encourage wealth generation in Australia, in particular in value added activities, and seek to ensure that this is equitably distributed, particularly across the regions of Australia.
4. Labor believes the government must be involved in developing and pursuing such an industry development policy:
  - it is an abrogation of national responsibility for a government to leave industry development to market forces alone.
5. Labor will put in place economic policies to achieve:
  - sustainable economic growth sufficient to achieve a continuous reduction in unemployment levels, with job growth in the manufacturing, mining, agriculture and service industries;
  - significant expansion of export income, with the particular long-term goal of lifting to 50 per cent the proportion of manufacturers who export; and
  - an environment conducive to the achievement of significant levels of investment from both Australia and overseas.
6. Labor will employ the full range of industry development policy instruments necessary to achieve its goals, whether they be industry-specific, region-specific or generic measures such as support for innovation.

The four key elements of a modern industry development policy will be;

  - support for innovation and skill formation;





- strategic intervention;
- cost competitiveness; and
- market access and export promotion.

### Innovation and Skill Formation

7. In the 21st Century, the key drivers of economic success in any modern western economy will be the extent and success of investment in innovation, skill development and skill formation.
8. Labor recognises the fundamental changes that have occurred in the global economy and in Australian society. As the translation of science, technology and innovation into the productive economy proceeds at a rapid pace, we must enhance this process through strategic public and private investment.
9. Labor is committed to ensuring organisations and individuals have the knowledge, skills and incentives to stimulate investment in innovation. Labor will foster an economic climate which supports private investment in research and development (RD), including through tax incentives, and the effective and innovative use of technology by firms and organisations.
10. Australia must achieve at least the OECD average for business expenditure on research and development (BERD) by 2010 if we hope to succeed in the 21st century.
11. Labor will maximise the benefits of innovation by encouraging the local commercialisation of Australian inventions and the development of export markets for new technologies and knowledge based service industries.
12. National science agencies, such as the CSIRO, will be given clear strategic direction and funded at levels which allow them to pursue basic research as well as working with industry to transfer technology and nurture innovation. Labor will further expand and encourage links between the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) and the domestic defence industry. Technology transfer to Australian industry will be encouraged.

13. Labor will ensure that the financial and cultural benefits of technological change are available to all members of society, including those in regional and rural Australia. Labor will address the potential social and financial costs of technological change and questions of equitable access to information and services increasingly delivered in electronic form.
14. An emphasis on innovation and skills is fundamental not only to the creation of new industries but to the modernisation and transformation of traditional industries.

### Strategic Intervention

15. Labor will put in place an active industry policy involving strategic intervention where such intervention adds value to Australia's workforce, its national resources or its ideas and increases our global competitiveness, leading to more exports and investment, or where the cost of not intervening would severely impact on particular industries or regions. The focus will be on building jobs in the new and existing industries.
  - Emphasis will also be given to sustainable industry development, based on environmental modernisation, with the aim of 'cleaning and greening' existing industries and developing new and emerging environmental technologies and industries.
16. A Labor government will be prepared to intervene as appropriate to advance broader economic, social or regional objectives.
17. Labor will work with particular industries to achieve national goals. The sectoral approach adopted in the 1980s and 1990s was highly effective in boosting exports and cushioning the impact of reduced protection. The industry policy requirements of the next decade will not be the same as those of the past.
  - Labor will put in place industry-based assistance measures that meet the needs of the new century.



18. In particular, Labor believes that industry policy measures must be developed and implemented on the basis of mutual obligation. Assistance provided to industries will therefore be on the basis of agreements between government and industry whereby industry agrees, for example, to specific job, export and investment targets, in exchange for governments providing the best possible environment to achieve those targets.

- Measures designed to attract significant new investment, from both Australia and overseas, will be an important element of this approach. Such measures will encourage a national approach to investment promotion and seek to minimise the detrimental effects of 'bidding wars' between the States to attract new investment.

19. Individual projects or companies which receive Federal government assistance under investment attraction schemes will need to enter into activity agreements with a Labor Government which ensure commitments to priority issues such as employment and local content strategies.

20. Accordingly, Labor's policy approach is not about propping up poor performers, nor is it a 'dead hand of government' approach. While Labor urges a greater emphasis on intervention, it is intervention with a focus on building the competitiveness and export orientation of Australian industries.

- Labor's approach involves working with business, workers and their unions and with the regions to support and encourage industries and firms that are committed to best practice and improving their international competitiveness.

## Cost Competitiveness

21. Labor is committed to pursuing, through cooperative and consultative processes, a range of measures to improve the efficiency and productive performance of industry.

Labor will:

- continue to promote microeconomic reform and competition policy in ways which not only contribute to a competitive business environment, but embrace social welfare and equity concerns, benefit consumers and are consistent with industrial relations best practice;
- ensure that business regulation measures are reviewed for their impact on competitive efficiency, are in the public interest and are not used by either the public sector or the private sector to unfairly restrict business competition;
- ensure that Australia's taxation system is sensitive to business needs; and
- continue to emphasise best practice in industrial relations, and the improvement of management systems to improve the efficiency and productive performance of industry.

22. Industrial relations arrangements must contribute both to competitiveness and to achieving fair outcomes. The emphasis should be on the development of productive and cooperative enterprise relations based on a well paid, highly skilled, effective and motivated workforce which contributes to building a competitive business environment.



23. Productive workplaces require attention to opportunities for employees to participate in and contribute to the efficient development of the enterprise and to have the opportunity to share in the benefits of its success. Labor will also develop cooperative tripartite mechanisms to consider industrial relations in the context of wider industry development issues.
24. Labor will ensure that the financial and cultural benefits of technological change are available to all members of society, including those in regional and rural Australia. Labor will address the potential social and financial costs of technological change and questions of equitable access to information and services increasingly delivered in electronic form.

### The Future for Agriculture

25. Australia's agricultural and fisheries industries will continue to play an essential role in the Australian economy as a major source of exports and as the economic base for most of rural and regional Australia.
26. Strong primary industries are crucial for both creating wealth, income and jobs in rural and regional Australia.
27. Labor is committed to positive strategic intervention to ensure that all export development and import replacement opportunities are fully explored.
28. The key components of Labor strategy for agriculture and fisheries are:
  - increasing agricultural productivity
  - Maximising agricultural employment
  - Investment in innovative agriculture
  - Access to markets
  - Workplace safety on farms
  - Women in agriculture
  - Farm assistance programs
  - Intergenerational transfer of farms
  - Science and best practice
  - food safety and quality assurance
  - Agriculture and the natural environment
  - Fisheries and Aquaculture

### Increasing Agricultural Productivity

29. Labor acknowledges that the long-term survival of agriculture in a global environment will depend on continuing innovation and productivity improvement in the sector. Continuous productivity improvement will be achieved by:
  - rebuilding agriculture's research and development capacity to improve on farm productivity and enhance producer competitiveness;
  - specific skilling of farmers and rural workers to enable the sector to keep pace with new production, technology and marketing advances;
  - improving the nation's transport infrastructure and produce handling facilities to enable Australia's agricultural produce to reach overseas markets quickly and at a competitive price to maximise returns, recognising the important role of air freight and intermodal linkages in that task; and
  - ensuring access by farm businesses to quality information technology and communication infrastructure to provide farmers with instant access to production, marketing and financial data.

### Maximising Agricultural Employment

30. Labor acknowledges the capacity of agriculture to generate new jobs in regional areas and is committed to encouraging the further processing of agricultural products close to the source of production as a means of creating wealth and jobs in country towns.

Labor will:

- assist Australian agriculture to identify new products, new market opportunities and areas where agricultural product imports may feasibly be replaced;
- recognise the important role played by "off farm" income sources to the survival of the family farm, and see the



restoration of regional services as an important vehicle for the creation of employment opportunities for farm family members; and

- facilitate the further development and growth of integrated farming and small scale manufacturing and processing businesses.

### Investment in Innovative Agriculture

31. Labor will examine and develop policies which will encourage new forms of ownership and investment by Australian capital in Australian primary industries.
32. Labor recognises there is a potential partnership between the long-term investment needs of agriculture and the growing pool of patient capital represented by Australian superannuation funds. Labor will seek to develop specific incentives and structures that will encourage these funds to play a significant role in contributing to the capital base required in the agricultural industry.
33. Labor will assist in the development of alternative farm ownership models (eg. leasing and cooperative ownership) that may make it more attractive for institutional investors to contribute to the capital costs required to improve returns.
34. Labor will support the ongoing development of organic farming and sustainable agricultural practices.

### Access to Markets

35. Labor will maximise access to international markets for Australian agriculture and fisheries. This will be coupled with effective communication links between new markets and local producers to take advantage of new market opportunities.
36. In pursuit of new domestic and international marketing opportunities Labor will:
  - ensure that Australian representatives at international agriculture and trade forums are adequately prepared to

vigorously pursue the interests of Australian agriculture.

- work with producer organisations to develop programs to keep farmers better informed about changing trends in market and consumer requirements;
- support the development of structures which facilitate appropriate producer involvement at each step of the marketing chain;
- examine existing marketing structures to ensure that they maximise returns to producers and the nation; and
- develop programs which will assist regions and individual farm businesses to attract a premium price for their products through the use of "clean and green" production methods.

### Workplace Safety on Farms

37. Labor recognises the importance of workplace safety for farmers and farm workers and will work with State governments to ensure that best practice farm safety education programs are available throughout Australia.
38. Labor will:
  - work with farm organisations and unions representing rural workers to develop codes of practice for workplace safety on farms. Where codes fail to make the farm workplace safe, Labor will work with State governments to introduce legally enforceable codes.

### Women in Agriculture

39. Labor acknowledges the role played by women in the operation and management of farm businesses.
 

Labor will:

  - work with rural women to enhance the awareness and appreciation of their important role and will develop programs to upgrade the skills and expand the opportunities of women in the sector; and
  - maintain and expand services which support women in the agricultural workforce.



### Farm Assistance Programs

40. With primary industries particularly exposed to changing natural, environmental, economic and social conditions, there is a need to:
- further develop flexibility, innovation and adjustment to change as core skills in Australian primary industry; and
  - develop specific national responses to better provide for the ever present short-term crises such as disease outbreaks and climate problems.

Labor will:

- maintain flexible crossovers between family or household support programs in other portfolios to ensure that primary producers are not excluded from mainstream safety net assistance simply through ownership of the primary asset;
- maintain funding for exit programs which make it possible to exit with dignity as deemed appropriate.

### Intergenerational Transfer of Farms

41. Labor recognises the importance to the farm sector and the national economy of enabling younger generations of farmers to take over family farm businesses without leaving the older generation in financially difficult circumstances.
42. In partnership with farm organisations, Labor will seek to develop new ways of facilitating the intergenerational transfer of farm assets.

### Science and Best Practice

43. Labor is committed to confirming science as an accepted arbiter in questions related to sustainability, environmental assessment, hazards and quarantine.
44. Standards of international best practice and science will be developed and continuously reviewed and updated, in particular to support a fully resourced national quarantine system

which will accept a pro-active responsibility for representing Australian quarantine interests at all levels.

### Food Safety and Quality Assurance

45. Australia's producers must be able to satisfy the consumer need for complete assurance on matters of food safety and quality. Labor draws no distinction between domestic and international consumers in this regard.
46. Labor will establish and enforce a comprehensive model of national food safety and quality assurance, which will include:
- the adoption of international best practice at all levels of the chain;
  - requiring an understanding of food safety and quality assurance concepts for persons performing tasks along the pathway from producer to end user; and
  - development of a national label of accreditation as a universally recognised - symbol of Australian quality.

### Agriculture and the Natural Environment

47. Labor sees an expanded role for the agriculture sector in meeting major environmental challenges such as soil degradation, salinity, chemical use, water conservation, greenhouse and climate change, river rehabilitation, feral and noxious weed control, and the loss of biodiversity.

Labor will:

- encourage the development of innovative production systems and farming practices, new research and infrastructure developments that address these major challenges;
- acknowledge the particular implications for Australian agriculture of long term climate change and will direct scientific effort to identifying areas at risk from such change, and develop long term strategies for regions required to change the nature of their farming activity.



48. Labor recognises the critical role of the rural community in the ongoing stewardship of our land. Labor is committed to working with rural communities and land holders in the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and whole farm planning consistent with regional strategies.

- Labor is committed to building on the achievements of Landcare, encouraging the uptake of sustainable farming practices and the continuing support for the repair of our rural landscapes.



### Fisheries and Aquaculture

49. Labor recognises the importance of the commercial and recreational fishing industries, and the aquaculture industry, in generating employment and export income for many regions.
50. Labor understands the crucial role research and development plays in ensuring that fish stocks remain at a level that can support both commercial and recreational fishing.
51. Labor supports the further development of aquaculture industries.



### The Future for Minerals, Resources And Energy

52. Australia's minerals, resources and energy industries are vital to our economy. They are a major source of exports and a direct and indirect employer, provide an economic base for regional Australia; and make a substantial contribution to the wellbeing of the whole community.
53. Enormous potential for long term economic and employment growth exists in the further development of these industries. The greatest potential for this growth exists in downstream processing of Australia's natural resources and the export of minerals related services and technology.
54. The potential for economic and employment growth in these industries, combined with the globalisation of the economy, the emergence

of new international competitors in the global resources market, and the internationalisation of a number of Australia's larger companies, means that the international competitiveness of Australia's minerals, resources and energy industries is a crucial issue for government.

55. Australia's natural advantages in downstream minerals processing for domestic and export markets can be further enhanced by a more efficient, nationally oriented energy industry.
56. The extraction and use of mineral resources has both natural resource and economic implications. Government and industry should seek to ensure that development of mineral resources occurs in a way which maximises the economic worth of existing resources. Labor will:
- improve the efficiency of the use of minerals, resources and energy so that the depletion of finite resources is minimised by the use of renewable resources.
57. To maximise the minerals, resources and energy industries' social and economic contribution to Australia, Labor will:
- encourage in conjunction with the States an intensified national minerals, oil and gas exploration effort, and the development of new exploration science and technology;
  - facilitate the continued development of a national gas distribution network;
  - promote the sound development of Australia's coal resources, with particular regard to domestic requirements, the development of Australia's coal exports, and the need for a stable and profitable coal industry;
  - encourage downstream processing of minerals, resources and energy products, and, through public and private avenues, the infrastructure necessary to achieve this;
  - bolster research, development and technology efforts to ensure the international competitiveness of the minerals, resources and energy industries, including technology and services derived from those industries;



- harness the scientific, technological, research and development and engineering ingenuity of our minerals and resources industries in a nationally coordinated way; and
  - make a national effort to maximise our energy capacity and efficiency and to bring down the cost of energy for Australian industry and consumers.
58. Labor will maximise local content in the manufacture, construction and maintenance of facilities and equipment for the production and processing of Australia's minerals, resources and energy industries, including by promoting specific facilities and infrastructure which can build and service major offshore and onshore hydrocarbon projects.
59. Labor recognises that the development of Australia's natural resources requires that the benefits are shared equitably between producers and the Australian community, and will foster a full return to the community from the development of common resources and maximise the benefits of Australian ownership and control of our natural resources. Labor supports the use of the tax regime to help achieve this objective.
60. Labor will ensure that the ultimate responsibility for the administration of offshore mining and petroleum production resides with the Commonwealth, and facilitate the efficient production of crude oil from new and existing fields including through regular release of exploration areas and an efficiently administered resource rent tax.
61. Labor will ensure that mineral development on Indigenous land proceeds consistently with Labor's land rights and native title policy, and maximises Indigenous employment opportunities.
62. Labor acknowledges that mining operations may have an impact on Aboriginal communities and traditional land owners. Labor is committed to working with these communities and mining operators to identify and minimise any adverse impact.
63. Labor will adopt integrated long-term plans to ensure the economic and environmental health of the nation's water resources.



## Uranium

64. Labor recognises that the production of uranium and its use in the nuclear fuel cycle present unique and unprecedented hazards and risks, including:
- threats to human health and the local environment in the mining and milling of uranium, which demand the enforcement of very strict safety procedures;
  - the generation of products which are useable as the raw materials for nuclear weapons manufacture, which demands the enforcement of effective controls against diversion; and
  - the generation of highly toxic radioactive waste by products, which demands permanently safe disposal methods not currently available.
65. Labor, accordingly, will not allow the mining and export of uranium except in limited circumstances, and under the most stringent conditions, as described below.
66. In relation to mining and milling, Labor will:
- prevent, on return to government, the development of any new uranium mines;
  - ensure that the first consideration for workers in the uranium industry is the protection of their health, and constantly check health protection standards to ensure that they are adequate and properly enforced;
  - establish a mechanism for ensuring as a matter of course the application of world best practice standards in Australian uranium mining and milling, based on extensive continuing research on environmental matters and on the health and safety of employees and affected communities;
  - ensure through public accountability mechanisms that the Australian public is informed about the quality of the environmental performance of uranium mines; and
  - foster a constructive relationship between mining companies and Aboriginal communities affected by uranium mining.





67. In relation to exports, Labor will:

- allow the export of uranium only from those mines existing on Labor's return to government, and only to those countries which observe the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), maintain strict safeguards and security controls over their nuclear power industries, are committed to non-proliferation policies and have ratified the international and bilateral nuclear safeguards agreements necessary to support these controls and policies;
- reserve the right to withhold supplies of uranium permanently, indefinitely or for a specified period from any country which ceases to observe the non-proliferation safeguards and security conditions which are applied to Australian uranium exports to that country, or which adopts nuclear practices or policies inimical to further advance in the cause of nuclear non-proliferation; and
- support the maintenance and enhancement of international and Australian safeguards to ensure that uranium mined in Australia, and nuclear products derived from it, is used only for civil purposes by approved instrumentalities in approved countries which are signatories to the NPT and with whom Australia has safeguard arrangements.

68. In addition, Labor will:

- vigorously oppose the ocean dumping of radioactive waste;
- prohibit the establishment in Australia of nuclear power plants and all other stages of the nuclear fuel cycle;
- fully meet all our obligations as a party to the NPT; and
- remain strongly opposed to the importation and storage of nuclear waste that is sourced from overseas in Australia.

## Forests

69. Australian forests have high economic, employment, environmental and recreational value. Labor recognises the importance of the forest industries to the Australian economy and the need for their adequate environmental protection. Future development of forest industries must take place on an ecologically and economically sustainable basis, by ensuring the full implementation of the National Forest Policy Statement, the Wood and Paper Industry Strategy, the Regional Forest Agreements process and the Plantation 2020 Vision.

70. Forest industries provide a source of employment for regional communities and contribute to economic growth and employment growth through increasing downstream processing of products taken from public and private forests.

Labor will:

- pursue a sensible forest strategy that balances employment, economic, environmental and recreational considerations and involves government, industry, unions, the community and the conservation movement;
- closely monitor the implementation of agreed Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) to ensure that agreed milestones and outcomes are achieved and that appropriate security is provided to both the timber industry and the reserve system;
- establish an effective and properly resourced Wood and Paper Industry Council to encourage a move away from reliance on the export of woodchips and unprocessed wood towards adding value to Australian forest products;





- ensure to the maximum extent feasible that future supplies of sawn timber and pulpwood come from softwood and hardwood plantations and agroforestry, and establish a task force of interested stakeholders to overcome obstacles to the further development of the plantation sector, particularly on cleared agricultural land, and to use the associated carbon credits;
- promote the optimal utilisation of harvested forest resources; and
- encourage continuing innovation through industry and government investment in targeted research and development programs.



## The Future for Manufacturing Industries

- 71.** Labor is committed to supporting a strong manufacturing sector, on the basis that:
- a strong manufacturing sector can be the engine for significant job growth, particularly in high quality service sector jobs; and
  - exports of manufactures, particularly elaborately transformed manufactures, have experienced rapid growth over the past two decades. Service enhanced manufacturing will be the engine of growth in world trade and it is essential that Australia realises its full potential.
- 72.** Manufacturing provides Australia with some of its most significant economic opportunities. Within the manufacturing sector, the industries with the fastest export growth over the past decade were those that had some level of government assistance, including pharmaceuticals, computer and telecommunications equipment, assembled new motor vehicles, ships, food processing and textiles, clothing and footwear.
- 73.** Labor will secure and expand our manufacturing sector, and through it develop our high growth and knowledge intensive industries. Labor sees the key elements to develop in relation to these industries as being:
- research and development and innovation;
  - quality products and services;
  - a more skilled workforce, including management; and
  - infrastructure.
- 74.** Labor will develop strategic action plans for a range of industries including:
- food processing;
  - pharmaceuticals;
  - biotechnology;
  - medical and scientific instruments;
  - information technology, including software;
  - telecommunications;
  - metal production and fabrication;
  - advanced manufacturing technology;
  - shipbuilding;
  - resource processing, in particular of fibre and forest products; and
  - environmental technology;
  - plastics and chemicals;
  - printing; and
  - energy, including renewable energy.
- 75.** Development of these strategic action plans will involve industry employers, unions and government identifying the opportunities, the barriers to realising these opportunities and the solutions to overcoming the barriers. In addition to the broad array of our industry policy initiatives, Labor will look to establish a partnership with each relevant industry— involving a commitment from each industry to targets in investment, jobs, net exports and research and development, in return for strategic assistance.
- 76.** Labor will continue to support the established manufacturing industries as well as new and emerging industries. The industries which have been undergoing major structural change such as the automotive and textiles, clothing and footwear industries, have the capacity to be transformed into successful world-class industries providing quality jobs with decent wages and working conditions.



77. A Labor government will ensure that a comprehensive review is undertaken in 2003 prior to the cessation of the current support arrangements for the automotive and textile clothing and footwear industries.
78. Continuing emphasis will be placed on the effort to ensure that our trading partners honour their trade liberalisation obligations and that the established time frame is adhered to by all.
79. Where these industries continue to receive special support, Labor will seek firm commitments to securing existing employment levels, new jobs, new investment and increased exports and a commitment to skills development, research and high quality design performed in Australia. For its part, Labor will seek to ensure that future tariff reductions are matched by our competitors and that programs are in place which encourage continued growth in net value added exports.
80. Labor will put in place anti-dumping measures to ensure that Australian industry is not disadvantaged by unfairly priced imports.

## Biotechnology

81. Labor recognises that Australia has a strong record in biotechnology research and its application to medical, pharmaceutical, agricultural and industrial uses. A Labor government will give strong support for local industry to take advantage of biotechnology research through:
- access to government research and development assistance;
  - a range of venture capital initiatives and other forms of encouragement to enable Australian companies to fully exploit the products of Australian research; and
  - assurance that intellectual property rights will be protected.

## The Future for Service Industries

82. Labor recognises that our service industries already provide a significant proportion of Australia's employment and national income. Labor also recognises that, beyond our traditional strengths in primary industries and manufacturing, the service industries sector has grown in importance in recent years as a vital contributor to our export performance, job growth and ability to sustain economic growth. This trend, as well as the significant growth in service enhanced manufacturing, will strengthen in the future as the long-term shift in the structure of the economy continues.
83. The businesses which provide the many services which are critical to the way we lead our lives as consumers in a modern industrial society—such as financial, transport, communications, information technology (IT), data management, legal, medical, scientific, engineering, construction, education, tourism and leisure services—are also becoming more crucial to our national prosperity, due to their increasing capacity to:
- improve our ability to compete on the international stage by making export initiatives in other sectors more competitive;
  - penetrate services export markets in their own right; and
  - compete with imported services on cost and quality.
84. Accordingly, Labor recognises that service and information industries must be embraced by the broader approach to national industry policy outlined in this Platform. In particular, Labor will develop and implement industry policy measures which assist the different industries which comprise the sector to:
- build export markets;



- generate new jobs;
- attract new investment;
- improve the productive performance of the nation's businesses to internationally competitive levels;
- collaborate, where appropriate, with international partners in export initiatives;
- gain access to capital, where this is warranted because of financial market failures; and
- pursue innovation.

85. Labor recognises the particular importance of a number of key industries in this sector and will develop focused industry strategies in these areas.



### The Information Economy

86. The shift to an information age culture is transforming our world. It will create opportunities and challenges and present advances that will affect almost every aspect of daily life. The economy will only prosper if we are able to use the knowledge and skill base of the Australian people to add value in the context of complex goods produced by complex processes.

87. Labor is committed to putting in place industry development measures which help position Australia as a quality supplier of information technology and telecommunications services, building on the synergies to be achieved between developing the nation's communications and IT infrastructure and manufacturing capacity. In particular, Labor will seek to:

- attract investment into this sector;
- reduce foreign barriers to exports through active market access efforts and export promotion programs;
- lift the nation's educational emphasis on, and jobs skills in, information technology and telecommunications;
- encourage collaborative relationships between local business, educational institutions and government, building on the concept of Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) and technology parks;

- support a range of IT investment initiatives, research and development programs and IT traineeships across a range of significant portfolios: and
- facilitate exports, consistent with our international obligations and commitments.

88. Labor will ensure that the basic infrastructure of the information age, a high speed data network, is in place throughout Australia and that both domestic and international links are continuously upgraded, to match the exponential growth in demand. Strategies will be developed to facilitate community-based training in using these technologies, to increase public accessibility, and to encourage Australians to get online.

89. The public sector must be at the leading edge of online information provision and transaction processing. Labor will utilise the digital environment to improve access to government services without compromising service delivery. Labor will also ensure that the purchasing power of government is used to nurture and support our domestic industry.

90. Labor recognises that, in the information age, the key to fostering sustained growth is the protection and careful management of intellectual property. Online commerce and communication will only flourish if data is secure, ownership identified with certainty and privacy guaranteed. Investment in technology and information based industries requires the development and enforcement of domestic law, supported by international treaties and agreements, for the protection of intellectual property and the regulation of electronic commerce. In particular, Labor will seek to:

- proceed with plans to create unique digital identities through mechanisms such as digital signatures;
- support the use of encryption technologies to underpin IT;
- analyse the relevance of public key encryption or any form of regulated encryption online; and
- develop a framework to deal with information security issues such as information warfare, computer crime and the vulnerability of critical infrastructures.



91. Digital content in all of its forms—entertainment, marketing, presentation of information, applications and databases—is the interface between what Australia has to offer and the global economy. Strategies to achieve excellence serve a dual purpose, providing both a source of export revenues and an opportunity to showcase Australian talent. An industry development focus on the production of digital content should assist in the rapid expansion of our capability in this area.
92. Labor will implement principles governing personal privacy. Action will include:
- using international privacy principles as a minimum in a digital environment; i
  - the regulation of information sharing in a corporate environment where mergers occur and particularly where databases are a core asset;
  - the independent regulation of data matching and its possible inclusion as a role for the privacy commissioner; and
  - the standardisation of meta-data with respect to publicly held information about private individuals.
93. Labor will establish a national framework to provide academic, industry and community input into IT policy development.
94. Labor will encourage the application of new information and communications technologies to established industries to enable their successful transformation into world class industries.
95. Enhanced measures to facilitate and encourage employee share ownership will be an important part of a successful information industry development strategy.

## Government Procurement

96. Labor recognises that in the manufacturing, service and information industries, government has a crucial role as an important purchaser of goods and services. A Labor government will work with industry and State and Territory governments to use public procurement as an industry policy tool in ways

that are compatible with efficiency and cost effectiveness. This will include the revision of procurement guidelines, whole of life procurement strategies and an enhanced focus on the role of the industrial supplies office.

## Tourism

97. Labor acknowledges that tourism is the fastest growing employment sector in Australia, particularly for young people. It is one of Australia's highest export earners and generates immense goodwill for Australia with overseas visitors.
98. Labor acknowledges the importance of strategic coordination between all tiers of government in the development of promotional and marketing activities, infrastructure and new job opportunities.
99. Labor recognises the opportunities which tourism can provide to regional Australia and supports strategic intervention by all levels of government to maximise these opportunities.
100. Labor recognises that there are many varied sectors within the tourism industry ranging from small businesses to international corporations, all of which cater for people with diverse needs and expectations.
101. Accordingly, Labor will seek to:
- improve industry workplace relations by introducing measures to enhance efficiency and productive performance in a cooperative manner;
  - ensure that taxation arrangements are conducive to the industry's growth;
  - ensure that regulation and compliance costs faced by the industry are minimised;
  - improve the price competitiveness of Australian tourist destinations;
  - develop further the job skills of tourism workers and improve the standards and options available for training and education in tourism and related areas;
  - address the significant infrastructure needs of the sector, particularly in transport, encompassing aviation, rail, road and cruise shipping, and communications;



- ensure that the benefits of tourism are spread throughout regional Australia, through targeted assistance to encourage job creation and economic development;
- develop tourism strategies and policies which recognise that the sector is predominantly operated by small businesses;
- develop tourism projects to enhance the employment prospects of indigenous Australians in areas in which they live and work in conjunction with the appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative bodies;
- appropriately resource the marketing and promotion of the domestic tourism sector;
- develop adequate tourist forecasting and research services; and
- maintain adequate resources for marketing and promotional activities, particularly generic efforts related to Australia as a tourist destination through the Australian Tourist Commission.

**102.** Labor recognises eco-tourism as an area of significant growth in Australia and an effective catalyst for encouraging the tourism industry to be ecologically sustainable. Labor is committed to protecting Australia's unique natural environment and to the development of strategies designed to maximise the benefits and sustainability of eco-tourism.

**103.** Increasingly, international visitors are seeking an opportunity to experience Australia's Aborigine and Torres Strait Islander culture. Labor will work with Indigenous Australians, their organisations and communities to facilitate growth in Indigenous tourism and to assist them in becoming more involved in this aspect of tourism.

### Transport

**104.** Labor recognises that transport is a service industry in its own right, and not just an infrastructure network. For transport services, Labor will seek to reduce foreign barriers to transport exports through active market

access efforts and export promotion programs, and assist the growth of aviation as an important export industry.

### Education services

**105.** Labor will assist the education services industry to build upon the successes in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s and position itself as a destination of choice in the booming international education market.

### Financial and professional services

**106.** Labor acknowledges that the financial services industry has become increasingly outward looking since the early 1980s. Labor believes that, subject to the maintenance of quality and cost effective banking and financial services for Australian consumers, this trend should be facilitated by government. In particular, Labor will seek to reduce foreign barriers to financial services exports through active market access efforts and export promotion programs.

**107.** Labor supports the increasingly outward orientation of Australian professional services, such as health, legal, accounting, engineering and surveying services. Labor will seek to:

- reduce foreign regulatory barriers to entry through active bilateral, regional and multilateral trade diplomacy; and
- develop export strategies designed to win a greater share of the burgeoning international market for these services, particularly in East Asia, in partnership with the industries involved.

### The future for the arts industry

**108.** Labor recognises the economic significance of the arts industry in Australia and its contribution to the Nation's cultural capital. Since the 1960s the number of artists and arts workers in Australia has tripled and there are four times as many arts companies. Seven per cent of Australia's workforce now earns some of its income from arts work.



The arts give us a sense of pride and improve the quality of our daily lives. Labor recognises the contribution of the Arts to our intellectual and cultural life, to our leisure time, and to our economy through employment, tourism, taxes and export dollars. By nurturing arts industries, Labor acknowledges a significant investment in the future, ensuring a vibrant culture for the generations to come.

### **Small Business: Creating Jobs and Wealth**

109. Labor recognises that small business plays a central role in the Australian economy. Through individual effort, small business owners provide employment for themselves and many thousands of employees. The dynamism of small business cannot be underestimated and should be encouraged. Its potential to further invigorate the Australian economy must be explored through active assistance from government.

### **Government regulation**

110. To maximise the economic dynamism that flows from the personal enterprise of small business operators, the sector must be free from unnecessary government regulation and interference, provided that firms meet their social and industrial relations obligations by implementing fair and cooperative relationships with workers and their representatives.

### **Fair trading**

111. Market economies sometimes produce market failures. Small firms struggle to compete with larger firms and government has a role to play in ensuring larger players do not misuse their market power to the detriment of smaller firms. Small business must be appropriately protected from unfair business conduct, particularly in areas such as franchising and retail tenancy leasing. Labor will utilise mechanisms including legislation, to ensure that a fair trading environment exists within

Australia and that smaller firms are protected from any unconscionable conduct on the part of larger firms, lessors and franchisers.

### **Government and small business**

112. Labor acknowledges that there are significant government compliance costs associated with running a commercial operation. Small businesses are not as well equipped as larger businesses to cope with this burden. Labor will constantly audit compliance measures and work towards minimising those costs.

### **Employment**

113. Labor acknowledges that the capacity of small business to generate increased employment is sensitive to overall economic conditions. Labor will implement policy in such a way as to provide small firms with opportunities to generate secure jobs that complement the objective of small businesses to operate in their markets profitably and efficiently.

### **Small business and enterprise development.**

114. Labor acknowledges that small business has not had adequate access to successful government programs aimed at enhancing the productive performance of firms. Despite the success of a range of reform programs carried out in large firms, those programs cannot be relied upon to be the principal source of job creation in the future. Therefore, government must do more to facilitate the participation of small firms in programs that:

- enable small businesses to operate with well integrated management, production and service delivery functions;
- enable small businesses to implement sophisticated strategies that enhance the quality of their products, customer service, response time, product development and marketing; and
- encourage the development of small business networks that provide access to otherwise largely inaccessible specialist





activities such as research, product development and finance. Labor will develop programs that assist enterprises within 'cluster' arrangements to maximise their ability to share highly skilled employees who, in isolation, they would not be in a position to employ.

## Finance

115. Small firms need affordable access to both equity and debt finance to prosper and reach their full potential. Small firms are often required to pay a higher premium for finance than the rest of the community. To assist small business, Labor will ensure that a more competitive environment—particularly in lending arrangements and bank fees and charges—exists within the finance sector, and appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms are available.

## Education

116. Small firms, particularly new entrants, would benefit greatly from education and training options specifically designed to assist them operate their businesses more efficiently. Labor will provide small business with such options.

## Access to justice

117. Small business faces considerable difficulty in seeking redress through existing mechanisms because of the prohibitive cost involved. Labor will seek to provide small business with an effective low-cost dispute resolution system.

## Women in small business

118. Labor recognises the growing and important role women play in the small business sector. Labor also recognises women often face barriers not encountered by their male counterparts. Labor will initiate mentor

programs for women entering or contemplating entering the small business sector and fund the development of short training courses on small business management, delivered face-to-face and electronically, targeted specifically at women.

## Information technology

119. Labor recognises the critical importance of IT, and particularly e-commerce, in ensuring the competitiveness and survival of small firms. As new technologies evolve, Labor in government will provide ongoing support for small business to assist them in maintaining best practice business techniques.

Labor will work to maximise the benefits for small firms that flow from the outsourcing of government contracts by:

- ensuring that government procurement policies allow small to medium
- enterprises to effectively compete with multinationals for government
- contracts; and
- providing support and assistance to small to medium enterprises to help them gain access to potential markets.


Labor recognises that e-commerce is the practical facilitator in a global economy, and will work towards ensuring that small firms are not left behind by initiating strategies to:

- communicate to small firms the potential benefits of the Internet as a tool of commerce and the use of e-commerce as a source of choice, competitiveness and ease;
- assist the development of access for small enterprises to national and international business opportunities; and
- ensure the safeguarding of transactions for those small businesses involved in electronic transactions through the further development of frameworks relating to e-commerce, privacy and digital authentication.



# chapter seven

## Developing Regional Australia



### People And Places: Developing Our Regions

1. The sustainable development of our regions, and a fair sharing of opportunity between regions, is critical to Australia's long term economic, social and environmental well-being.
  - Labor recognises that a comprehensive approach to regional development will encompass rural, regional and metropolitan Australia.
2. Labor recognises that there is an increasing economic disparity between different regions in Australia. This inequity undermines social cohesion and limits opportunities for many Australians. Markets alone will not deliver fairness and equality of opportunity to regional Australia. Government has a responsibility to act as both catalyst and partner to meet the challenges confronting our regions and to ensure equitable economic and social outcomes.
  - Abrogation of Commonwealth responsibility and massive cuts to regional development and regional service delivery is regressive.
3. Labor recognises that globalisation and technological change bring both opportunities and threats. Through strategic and targeted intervention, government has a responsibility to ensure that the benefits of change are achieved and equitably shared.
  - Labor recognises that there is role for all three levels of government in developing Australia's regions.
4. Labor accepts that government involvement is critical to improving outcomes in the areas of:
  - infrastructure and service provision;
  - economic development;
  - education, training and skills development;
  - employment and social services; and
  - restoration and management of the built and natural environment.
5. Labor recognises that an integrated cross-portfolio approach to regional development is necessary to realise our economic, social and environmental goals. Labor will consider the
  - Successful nations today have active strategies to regenerate their regions and integrate them into the national and international economy.





impacts of policies on not only our economy, but also on our communities and natural environment.

- Labor will develop a system to ensure all government decisions are assessed in terms of their impact on Australia's regions.
6. Federal government has both the capacity and the responsibility, in consultation with States and local government, to plan for the long-term with respect to industry and workforce development, the provision and maintenance of infrastructure and services, and environmental sustainability.
  7. Labor acknowledges the diversity of our regions and the challenges they face. Labor respects the capacity of regions and communities to determine their own futures, and will support each region in assessing its own potential, identifying its own priorities, devising its own solutions and driving its own agenda.
  8. Labor recognises that successful regional development must capitalise on the knowledge and commitment of the local community and extend opportunities for the involvement of all stakeholders. Furthermore, regional economic development must proceed by embedding new and existing economic activities, rather than relying solely on large subsidies or other inducements to attract often footloose activities. This is best done by developing appropriate infrastructure for skills development, innovation and technology transfer and diffusion in the region concerned, together with ensuring affordable access to finance for investment.



### Reforming Regional Structures And Processes

9. National leadership is required to ensure that regional structures and processes are effectively developed and utilised. Regional planning and decision making allows for coordination between local communities, based on geographic proximity and commonality of interest, whilst maintaining the ability to take into account regional differences.
  - As the level of government closest to the community, Labor recognises the potential role local government can play in regional planning and decision making and will ensure its participation.
10. Labor's regional development structures will build on existing regional and sub-regional networks.
11. Communities themselves need to be the main drivers in the development and implementation of local and regional development strategies. This will require greater collaboration between all levels of government, the private sector and communities.
  - Labor will identify and develop community leadership, including youth leadership, and will provide opportunities for community input to ensure that people have an effective voice in policy development and delivery.
  - Labor sees local leadership, entrepreneurship, innovation and fostering of social capital as critical to regional development. To this end, Labor will encourage the expansion of economic and social networks within and between regions.
12. Labor recognises that regional Australia responds to challenges when it is given opportunity, resources and support. Community empowerment will be at the core of Labor's approach, with the devolution of opportunity and responsibility that this implies.
  - Regions will be assisted to develop proposals that are clearly articulated, have the support of all relevant stakeholders, leverage private sector funding, and have transparent monitoring arrangements.
  - Where these conditions are met, government must be prepared to support community initiative.



## Strategies For Regional Development

13. Labor's regional development agenda involves the development of sustainable communities, and requires action across the broad spectrum of policy.
14. Labor acknowledges the potential of approaches that bring together resources in key policy areas to allow identification of priorities and improved policy coordination.
15. Labor will examine mechanisms for the consolidation and integration of infrastructure and service delivery between the public, private and community sectors.
  - Labor will pursue an expanded role for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)—incorporating Commonwealth, State and local governments—to coordinate and integrate infrastructure utilisation and service provision between different levels of government, and the private and community sectors.

## Regional Infrastructure

16. Labor recognises that a successful regional economy depends on the provision and maintenance of adequate infrastructure, including transport, water, energy, education, health and communications and information technology.
17. Labor will establish a National Infrastructure Advisory Council to coordinate a national strategy for infrastructure provision and maintenance.
  - Labor will develop a regional infrastructure fund, to leverage private sector financing for infrastructure programs in areas of identified priority.
  - Labor acknowledges the important role of local government in terms of the provision and maintenance of infrastructure.
18. Labor will establish a national transport planning strategy to enable integrated planning and to help achieve our economic, social and environmental goals.
19. Labor will seek to ensure up-to-date communications infrastructure and facilities that enable residents and business to participate in, and take advantage of, the opportunities offered by developments in communications technology and services.

## Regional Services

20. Labor recognises that many regional communities have difficulty in accessing a range of basic services.
  - Empowering regional communities to identify priorities and work with government on developing solutions is central to Labor's approach to regional services.
21. Labor believes that all regions should have reasonable and affordable access to services including:
  - transport and infrastructure;
  - basic utilities such as water supply, sewerage and energy;
  - personal, family and social services, including housing;
  - financial services;
  - health and aged care;
  - quality education and training opportunities;
  - employment services;
  - information on government programs and policies;
  - adequate communications facilities, particularly in remote areas; and
  - environmental health services, including land and water usage.
22. Labor will build and expand on existing public networks to provide regional Australia with this range of basic services.
23. Labor recognises the importance of innovation in service delivery, and the potential of coordination to improve the effectiveness of over-the-counter, telephone and online services.
  - Under Labor, all levels of government will play a role in the development and devolution of services to Australia's regions.



24. Labor recognises the particular difficulties faced by small regional communities in accessing a range of basic services. Labor is committed to developing a flexible, long term solution to the service difficulties facing small regional communities.

### **Regional Economic and Business Development**

25. Labor recognises that adequate infrastructure, the ability to attract capital, an innovative business culture and a skilled workforce are critical to developing and diversifying regional economies.
  - Labor is committed to overcoming the practical difficulties facing regional business, particularly small business, in accessing information and expertise.
26. Labor recognises that retaining, creating and expanding business and industry is critical to providing opportunity and security for the future, and will encourage innovation and business growth.
  - Labor is committed to overcoming the practical difficulties facing regional business, particularly small business, in accessing information and expertise.
27. Labor will improve the effectiveness of business networks, including online networks, in disseminating best practice information and new technologies to regional businesses.
28. Labor will encourage strategic alliances between industry, universities, research centres, business service providers and customers.
  - Labor will assist regions to develop business networks that can allow them to identify and develop closer links with other regions, industries and sectors.
29. Labor recognises the difficulties faced by regional businesses in accessing capital, information and advice, and will develop initiatives to improve information flows between financial institutions and regional entrepreneurs.

### **Regional Education, Training and Skills Development**

30. Labor recognises that knowledge and learning are critical to the long-term future of local and regional economies. A skilled and educated population creates not only economic opportunities, but vibrant and diverse communities.
  - The education sector has great potential as a source of ideas and leadership to assist in addressing local economic and social challenges.
31. Labor will examine initiatives to retain and attract a diversity of highly-skilled workers and businesses to the regions, through both internal migration and the immigration program.
32. Labor is committed to working in partnership with the community to develop local employment and training initiatives to improve skills of people at all levels.
  - Labor recognises that skills relevant to local industry are critical to employment prospects in regional areas.
  - Labor is committed to maximising the opportunities for young people to pursue education and employment in their own regions.
33. Labor recognises the importance of all sectors of education and training, and will seek to improve coordination between these sectors at a regional level.
  - Labor recognises the potential of both improved transport and distance learning in expanding access to education and training.



## Regional Employment Assistance and Social Services

34. Labor recognises the debilitating effect of social exclusion on the lives of individuals, families, communities and the nation. An active approach to opportunity and responsibility at the community level, with an emphasis on employability and social participation, is critical to improving outcomes.
35. Labor believes that people in depressed regions should be able to access a diverse range of family and community support services.
36. Labor recognises that people in depressed areas often suffer from multiple disadvantages. They need customised assistance that delivers opportunities for employment and participation and that can improve employability, self-esteem and community well being.
37. Labor will develop coordinated options for work, work experience, reskilling, volunteering, mentoring and other forms of community service for older Australians.
38. Labor acknowledges the potential for regional employment opportunities in areas such as human services, tourism, alternative energy development and environmental renewal, and the application of information technologies, and will develop frameworks that can identify and take advantage of these opportunities.

## Better Management of Our Built and Natural Environment

39. Labor recognises that the federal government must play a leadership role in environmental management, to ensure sustainability at a regional, national and global level.
40. Labor views environmental concerns as integral to policy debates, and will therefore consider the environmental impact of all policy decisions made by government.

41. Labor will encourage the development of regional environmental strategies, encouraging effective land and water usage strategies and the expansion of industries such as alternative energy development and environmental renewal.
42. Labor will facilitate a grass-roots approach to local and regional environmental management, recognising that this is often more effective in obtaining public commitment.
  - Labor acknowledges the important role local government can play in environmental management, planning and service delivery.

## Strategies For Specific Regions

43. Each Australian region has a unique configuration of geographic, economic and social characteristics and requires the development of a specific strategy for that region.
  - Recognising there are regional disparities, Labor will establish benchmarks that recognise differences and help identify what is necessary to overcome them.
44. Labor will focus assistance on regions of greatest disadvantage and on reducing the gap between these regions and more advantaged areas. These regions will be given priority access to federal funding in key policy areas.
45. Labor recognises that in the uneven pattern of economic development, four 'types' of regions face particular difficulties:
  - rural towns and communities with declining populations;
  - old industrial centres affected by industry restructuring; and
  - new coastal conurbations with growing populations, increasing unemployment and limited service provision; and
  - outer metropolitan regions poorly served by infrastructure and services.
46. Labor will develop a menu of support items



and brokered services for regional development, from which communities can select items that are suited to their circumstances. This will require regions to prioritise their opportunities and constraints.

47. Labor's regeneration strategies will seek to reinvigorate regions bearing the costs of economic restructuring. Labor will develop strategies involving all levels of government aimed at improving the physical, social and economic environment in these areas
  - These strategies will involve the development of local industry and employment opportunities, access to education, health, housing and community support services, improved transport links and the involvement of local stakeholders.
48. Labor will continue to develop integrated strategies for particular regions, in partnership with regional communities. Labor recognises that the problems of regional development and their solutions will differ throughout Australia. In the cases of South Australia, Tasmania and Northern Australia, due to their lower populations isolated locations and unique economic circumstances, Labor will develop specific regional packages.



### Local Government

49. The Federal government will provide support for recognition of local government in the Australian Constitution

Labor recognises:

- a direct relationship exists between local government and the Commonwealth;
- the necessity and value of democratic, accountable and efficient local government as a forum for local decision making which is responsible to the local community;
- the value of local government as a soundly based network of public administration throughout most of Australia;
- the increased role played by local

government in the Australian federal system and the potential benefits to the nation of enhancing that role;

- the need to restore COAG and the critical role local government plays through COAG; and
  - the important role played by local government representatives.
50. Labor recognises the daily impact of local government on almost all Australians. The quality and efficiency of service provision by councils is an important factor in the living standards and environments of most people.
    - efficient effective and responsive local government is vital to creating and maintaining equity between regions.
  51. Labor is committed to working with local government to develop and implement strategies to increase participation by women in all aspects of local government.
  52. Labor will work with local government on the issue of urban reform, particularly through further measures to improve the efficiency and quality of local planning and approvals processes.
  53. Labor recognises the role of local government in environmental management. This includes in the areas of coastal management, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, improved waste management, energy efficiency, improved catchment and water resources management and other national environmental issues.
    - Labor will promote consideration of a broad range of national environmental strategies in the core business of local government.
  54. Labor acknowledges the need for greater local government involvement in pursuing employment and training opportunities, in partnership with other spheres of government, business, unions and regional organisations.
  55. Labor is committed to working with local government on the formulation and implementation of regional development strategies.



56. Labor will work with local government to improve the provision of infrastructure to local communities as part of achieving best practice in the development, management and maintenance of infrastructure. This will include:
- increasing efforts to stimulate and support private infrastructure investment; and
  - preparing infrastructure development plans as part of local and regional development objectives.
57. Labor will work to establish a review of the financial issues relating to local government. This will include:
- examining the financial position of local government, including the impact of the GST on operations; and
  - exploring the changes occurring in local government with respect to its functions and responsibilities, including increased financial demands as a result of federal government decisions.
58. Through a "whole of governments" approach, Labor will work towards clearer definitions of the roles and responsibilities of local government within specific functions and the elimination of unnecessary duplication between spheres of government. The "whole of government" approach will also improve linkages between federal, State and local government delivery of services and programs, particularly across rural and regional areas.
- This process will involve the development of national benchmarking and performance indicators for specific services and functions

## External Territories

59. Labor is committed to ensuring that our external territories maintain their unique social and historical structure. Labor believes the potential of our external territories is best realised when the people of the territories:
- have self-determination; and
  - take responsibility for actively promoting their cultural and social uniqueness.
60. To this end, Labor will ensure that the people of the external territories of Australia are provided with the necessary support to allow them to participate fully in decisions relating to not only the day to day administration, but also the long term future of their communities, and the financial support needed to encourage the future economic and ecological viability of those communities.



# chapter eight

## Income, Job and Social Security for Working-Age Australians

### Job Security for Australians

Since the foundation of the Labor Party in Australia the availability of employment and the conditions associated with that employment have been at the core of Labor's philosophy. In the twenty first century Labor believes that a Knowledge Nation is essential to achieving Labor's goals. It is only through a highly skilled and educated workforce that has access to lifelong learning, coupled with sound economic policies and a commitment from government to embrace innovation across the entire economy, that employment for all, with decent working conditions, will be achieved.

1. The most important source of economic security and opportunity for working age Australians and their families is employment, and Labor remains committed to the achievement of full employment.
  - An unemployment rate sustainably below 5 per cent is an important goal for Labor.
  - Furthermore, a low unemployment rate should not be achieved by pushing people out of the labour market. Labor will

pursue a strong participation rate by ensuring that there are opportunities for all Australians who are able to work.

- Labor also recognises that Australia has a chronic under employment problem. Labor will not forget the working poor who are forced to survive on minimal hours of work.
  - Casual irregular hours for workers usually mean constant financial pressure and the inability to borrow money. It also leads to high employee turnover and associated loss of skills.
  - Labor will ensure that workers facing retrenchment receive not only all possible assistance in finding new employment but that they receive their full legal entitlements.
2. Labor acknowledges the strong link between an individual's level of education and his or her employment prospects. Employability is now critical to the economic security of individuals and families. Labor is committed to improving the skills of those Australians who are unemployed or at risk of becoming





unemployed, because skills are the key to employability. Skills are critical to both equity and efficiency.

- Skills regularly updated throughout life are important in giving all working-age Australians access to economic and social opportunity.
  - Investments in skills also help to develop the nation's growth capacity and prolong the economic cycle by acting as an anti-inflation device by better matching supply and demand for skills.
3. There is a clear case for a strong government role in addressing the education, training and skills needs of Australians.
  4. The modern labour market is leaving too many people and communities behind. Rather than reacting to economic change, Labor's approach of planning for, and investing in Australia's workforce needs, is based on intervening early to better prepare our people and places for change.
  5. Labor will seek to improve information flows in the labour market, so that individuals, families, communities and governments can plan and prepare for the future.
  6. Labor sees the task of reducing unemployment as needing an integrated approach across government, and a new partnership between the three tiers of government and the private sector as well as key stakeholders including unions and the community.
    - This partnership will ensure that assistance is provided where it is needed most. It will allow governments to better identify communities and individuals most at risk.
    - An important part of this partnership is ensuring that businesses have full access to, and knowledge of government services and infrastructure. These services include group training programs and the pooled use of public infrastructure.
    - Labor believes the closer integration of education, employment services and income support is the basis for employment and skills development, which is the best insurance policy the nation has against unemployment in the long term.
  7. Labor's strategy to reduce unemployment and improve employability includes a number of elements:
    - growing the Australian economy at the maximum possible sustainable rate through appropriate macroeconomic policy;
    - improving demand for Australian goods and services both at home and abroad through effective economic, trade and foreign policies;
    - ensuring that increased demand translates into business and job opportunities right across Australia through carefully crafted industry and regional development policies;
    - ensuring that all Australians, but particularly those at risk, have the necessary skills to both create opportunities and take up jobs as they arise, through a range of education and training mechanisms;
    - making sure that the unemployed and those at risk of becoming unemployed have access to specific labour market assistance that can overcome any barriers to effective workforce participation;
    - ensuring that all Australians will have access to the benefits of the Knowledge Nation. Labor will institute a national skills audit which will allow those in direct need as well as at risk workers to be identified in advance and appropriate training and reskilling to be provided before they become unemployed; and
    - making sure that the interaction of the tax and welfare systems does not prevent people moving from welfare to work.





8. Labor recognises the challenges presented by a lack of employment opportunities in depressed regions—be they urban, regional, rural or remote. Labor will ensure that national economic policies, including National Competition Policy and public sector employment policies, take account of regional effects. Regional policies will encourage new opportunities for local industry, employment and skills development.

- Labor will actively target high unemployment regional areas with a wide range of available government services. These will include intensive assistance for job seekers, wage assistance training and retraining and where appropriate local community employment programs.

9. Labor developed the concept of reciprocal obligation where people in receipt of benefits were actively assisted by government to develop their capabilities, in return for which they were obliged to search for work and seek to overcome their barriers to employment.

\* Labor believes that mutual obligation must be a two way street. Labor rejects one sided 'mutual' obligation policies.

- Labor will ensure that all labour market programs deliver accredited effective training to participants. The Work for the Dole program has poor outcomes in terms of participants gaining a job as a result of attendance. It has also been widely criticised by organisations such as the OECD for not providing any training.
- Labor will ensure that government meets its obligations. These obligations involve the generation of new jobs as well as giving the unemployed and the under employed the necessary skills and training to fill these positions. Leaving the provision of training to the free market is not the answer.

10. The Job Network, under contract until February 2003, will be subject to a full review and adjustments will be made accordingly. Labor will introduce transparency and accountability into the employment services system.

Through universal, publicly funded active labour market assistance, Labor will aim to

develop the capabilities of the unemployed and those at risk of becoming unemployed.

Labor is committed to the provision of an employment service framework that provides and maintains a nationally accessible job matching data base, delivers customised assistance to the long term unemployed and those at risk of long term unemployment, through job matching services, case management, opportunities for group participation and targeted access to wage subsidies and community employment schemes.

The employment services framework will include a public provider. This public provider will be required to:

- Rapidly respond to local, regional and national structural and economic change;
- Deliver employment services assistance to industry, regions and the general workforce in a timely and efficient manner;
- Provide a range of free, not for profit employment services tailored to local and regional needs; and
- Meet performance benchmarks that deliver high quality employment services.

11. Labor is committed to adequately addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged in the labour market.

12. Labor supports an employment services sector where funding is based solidly on performance, and where providers work in partnership with government.

- Labor recognises the need for greater sharing of information and expertise on what works in employment services, and the responsibility of government to ensure the provision of adequate employment services in depressed areas.
- Labor will encourage a diverse range of providers to take part in the Job Network, including Indigenous providers and unions.

13. Labor will invest in new programs, more closely integrated with employment services, to assist those sections of society and the labour force facing special disadvantages and multiple barriers to workforce participation. In addition to focusing on skills development, Labor will target specific barriers including:



- poorly located housing; low literacy and numeracy; physical and mental health problems; English language difficulties; disability; alcohol and substance abuse; homelessness; and lack of access to social services like child care and public transport;
- poverty traps that do not provide the unemployed with adequate financial reward for working which, together with the tapering of benefits, result in high effective marginal tax rates;
- cultural barriers facing mature age people, those who have been institutionalised and carers returning to the workforce;
- entrenched structural discrimination against people with disabilities, migrants, and Indigenous Australians; and
- direct and indirect discrimination against women which results in vertical and horizontal job segregation, sexual harassment, pregnancy and maternity discrimination and limits women's choices in workforce participation.

14. The type of labour market assistance that Labor provides will be tailored to the particular needs of different unemployed individuals and the characteristics of the local economies in which they participate. Labour market assistance will be regularly refined in the light of success rates and experience, broadly measured.

- Labor's initiatives will involve different emphases for workers in different stages of their lives, striking an appropriately targeted balance between skills development, work experience, community employment, and income support.
- Where appropriate, Labor will provide additional publicly funded jobs, involving meaningful and rewarding work, particularly in areas of unmet community demand and which avoid substitution.

### Supporting Young People (15-24 Year Olds)

15. Labor is committed to all young Australians achieving a formal post compulsory or equivalent qualifications so that all young Australian leave their teens with a recognised qualification.

16. People in this age group require a smooth transition from school to work, through a combination of work experience opportunities including:

- expanded opportunities for students to access quality vocational education and training (VET) while at school, that provides genuine pathways to employment and further education;
- possible TAFE provision of upper-secondary education to early school-leavers;
- a diverse range of traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities; and
- targeted case management to more actively assist those at most risk.

17. Labor will ensure that shorter term unemployed young people have a variety of pathways to develop skills and/or assist them back into the workforce. For those who are long-term unemployed, or at risk of becoming long-term unemployed, case management is necessary to overcome particular barriers.

### Promoting a Fairer Distribution of Work

18. A striking characteristic of the return of structural unemployment since the 1970s has been its concentration in particular areas. There are huge and growing divergences between different areas of Australia in their rates of joblessness.

19. As well as the regional discrepancies in unemployment rates, unemployment has become less evenly experienced in other respects.

- The numbers of children with unemployed sole parents and in families where neither parent works has risen disproportionately in the last decade.
- The new jobs created have tended to go to families in which one member is already employed, rather than to those with no employed members. Women from poorer socio-economic locations are not experiencing a rise in workforce participation.
- Unemployment also increasingly affects successive generations in the one family.



20. There has been a sharply rising trend to casualisation of work, deteriorating working conditions for part-time and casual workers, and increasingly precarious employment generally in a rapidly changing labour market. There also has been an increasing divide between the working conditions of core and peripheral jobs, and a rise in self-employment and independent contracting.

21. Further, at the same time as we have high unemployment we also now have growing demands and pressures on many of those who do have jobs. One of the main inequalities in Australia today is between the overworked and the out of work.

22. In generating additional jobs, Labor will therefore pursue innovative measures to promote greater security and a fair distribution of work between regions and individuals in the workforce, focusing on job creation for the most disadvantaged groups, as part of Labor's overall strategy to reduce unemployment. This will include assisting those workers who wish to change their working arrangements to better balance work, household demands and other aspects of life.

### **Coping with Under Employment**

23. Under employment—affecting part time workers who wish to work more hours, and workers who wish to more fully utilise their skills and qualifications—is also a growing problem.

It particularly strikes women with dependent children working in low paid jobs and migrants from non English-speaking backgrounds, and is most widespread outside the major metropolitan areas.

24. To help cope with under employment, part-time workers need to be treated equally in industrial terms, by obtaining portable entitlements on a pro rata basis to those of full-time workers.

25. The under employed particularly require access to training and career opportunities to assist them to move into better-paid jobs or industries, as well as to the traditional

employment conditions of full-time workers, such as holiday pay, sick pay and long service leave.

### **Supporting 25-44 Year Olds**

26. The concept of lifelong learning is now an imperative for working age Australians. People in work need the opportunity to repeatedly update their skills throughout their working lives. Labor will ensure that working Australians, particularly those at risk of future unemployment, have affordable access to training that can improve their long-term labour market prospects.

27. Labor recognises that improving the skills base of Australian workers is in the best interests of not only workers, but employers and the nation.

- Reflecting this, Labor will ensure that the costs of training are appropriately shared, including by employers.

28. Just as those in work need to update their skills to maintain employment in the face of change, those without work need assistance to overcome the immediate and longer-term barriers to workforce participation.

29. Labor recognises that many people face difficulties in entering the work force after long periods of schooling, caring, illness or child rearing. Labor will assist people in making these transitions back into the workforce. This will be done through school to work programs, pre-work training, increased assistance for carers and access to affordable child care.

### **Supporting Australians who are 45 Plus**

30. Many Australian workers over 45 have borne the brunt of economic restructuring and workforce change. They face particular difficulty in accessing retraining and reskilling during their working lives. This makes it difficult to subsequently adapt to economic change.



31. Labor recognises that people who become unemployed later in life face difficulty finding new, secure employment. While encouraging ongoing workforce participation, Labor will ensure that obligations placed on unemployed workers who are 45 plus such as Work for the Dole and intensive job searching are fair, and respect the dignity and self-esteem of the people concerned. Labor will introduce positive policies directed at getting unemployed Australians who are 45 plus, back into employment.
32. Labor will develop effective options for employment in areas such as human services and environmental renewal, and will develop Australian communities through mentoring and volunteer work.

### Supporting Other Groups with Particular Needs

33. Labor supports additional assistance to address the particular needs of carers, people with disabilities, migrants and indigenous Australians in accessing the labour market. Labor will have a structured means of integrating these programs with the mainstream labour market, and will seek to provide people with sufficient opportunity for advancement.
  34. Labor supports the Community Development Employment Program and wage subsidies to allow Indigenous Australians to better access work opportunities. Labor will re-examine the training framework that applies to Indigenous employment to encourage skills development.
  35. Labor supports the Supported Wages Scheme, and the development of new programs for people with disabilities. Advances in technology supporting workers with disabilities make it increasingly possible to integrate workers with disabilities into the mainstream labour market. Labor will work with employers, unions and community organisations to increase the employment opportunities of people with disabilities in a fair manner.
36. Labor recognises that barriers exist for full time parents entering or re-entering the workforce. Labor will ensure that women or men who spend time out of the work force raising children are not disadvantaged for doing so. This will be achieved by ensuring that they have knowledge of and access to the full range of government services.

### Expanding Choice for Australian Workers

37. Making work pay is an important element of a comprehensive employment policy. Labor:
  - will examine measures to improve the financial rewards from work, including earned income tax credits;
  - will address ways of overcoming other financial barriers to employment such as the ongoing costs associated with child care and transport, or transitional costs such as funds for work-related clothing; and
  - recognises that workplaces that are cooperative, fair, non-discriminatory and non-exploitative are also important in making work attractive.

### Responding to the Changing Nature of Work

38. Labor recognises that the labour market has changed significantly in recent decades, with the ongoing casualisation of the workforce, a deterioration of job security, and growth in the number of people working both short and long hours. This has led to a divergence between the under worked and overworked. Labor considers the development of innovative responses to these changes as one of the most important challenges facing Governments.



## Labor's Industrial Relations System— contributing to income and employment security

39. Security of employment is fundamental to income stability and to all aspects of personal and family life. Therefore the industrial relations system should provide significant protection for the security of workers' employment and of their wages and working conditions.
40. Industrial relations arrangements should serve social as well as economic goals. There must be emphasis on both achieving fair outcomes for workers and contributing to efficient enterprises.
41. The industrial relations framework should encourage cooperation not confrontation. A well informed and skilled industrial relations community is essential in producing these best practice outcomes. Government has a key role in promoting and fostering these developments.
42. Labor recognises that our industrial relations system must take account of the inherently unequal power balance existing between individual workers and their employer. This principle has long been accepted in Australian society and by virtually all federal governments prior to the Howard Government.
43. The rights and entitlements of workers, particularly the most vulnerable such as young workers, workers with disabilities and workers from non-English speaking backgrounds need to be supported and protected as a consequence.
44. This inherent imbalance requires a collective approach within the industrial relations system in order to deliver fairness.
45. The legitimate role of trade unions and their rights to organise, to take action on behalf of their members and on behalf of workers generally, and to bargain collectively, should be enhanced, recognised, and defended.
46. A strong and independent commission is vital to the fair and proper functioning of our system. The independent industrial commission needs a greater role to be able to prevent and resolve industrial disputes and to act in the interests of fairness and in the national interest.
47. A system of comprehensive, contemporary and relevant awards is central to the security of workers, their wages and working conditions.
48. Workers must be able to participate in and share the benefits of the success of the enterprise or industry for which they work and of the economy as a whole.
49. While a system of work place-based collective bargaining will be continued, alternative ways for workers to achieve decent increases in wages and conditions should be promoted, including through the award system and industry based arrangements.
50. Labor will require an open process of reviewing workplace agreements:
  - to ensure they meet a reasonable 'no disadvantage' test;
  - to consider the consequences of an agreement for those outside the particular agreement (for example, other workers, future workers, the unemployed); and
  - to protect the interests of these groups.
51. Nationally recognised high quality vocational training and skill development opportunities should be available throughout the workforce.
52. Non-discrimination will continue to be a central tenet of Labor's industrial relations policy. This includes a continuing commitment to equal remuneration for women, not just equal pay.
53. Labor will ensure that Australia's domestic industrial relations arrangements are consistent with its international obligations. Labor will restore Australia to a position of international leadership and pride.



### 54. Labor will:

- actively participate in and promote the development of international labour standards;
- assist countries in our region and beyond to meet those standards;
- promote free and democratic organisations to represent employees and employers; and
- actively support community campaigns to educate and mobilise the public concerning issues of child labour and forced labour.

55. In addition to reinvigorating our ties with the ILO Labor will provide funding to the ILO Asian Regional Organisation to assist its program of training and technical assistance and help with the development of unions in the region.

56. Labor recognises the valuable role played by Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad (APHEDA) in providing development assistance and aid to help build vital services and provide practical training and support to trade unions in developing countries. A Labor government will provide funding to APHEDA to enable it to meet this important need.

### Protecting employee entitlements

57. Protection of employee entitlements in circumstances of company insolvency is an increasingly important aspect of income security. Labor's legislation to protect employee entitlements will be national and ensure that:

- all entitlements of employees are protected;
- payments to employees are timely;
- additional cost burdens placed on employers are minimised;
- that employers are not required to make additional payments for benefits already protected by trusts or other appropriate means;
- small business is protected from any additional costs; and

- corporations law is amended to enable recovery of assets in circumstances where corporate restructuring has the effect of denying workers their entitlements..

58. To enhance security of employee entitlements, Labor will legislate to provide for more timely payment of employees' superannuation contributions.

59. Labor will ensure that the superannuation system provides:

- essential protection for employees and for the superannuation contributions made by them or on their behalf;
- effective choice, without undermining successful industry funds;
- representative and balanced trustee structures; and
- an independent appeal process.

60. Labor will facilitate schemes that provide portability of leave entitlements between employers where those entitlements would otherwise be lost to the employee.

### Contributing to personal and family security

61. The changing lifetime employment pattern of men and women requires the industrial relations system to increasingly adapt itself to actively balance work and family responsibilities. In particular greater attention needs to be given to the growing casualisation of the workforce, home based work, and dependent contractors, and the increasing demands on Australians in balancing work with personal and family life

62. The method of engagement of workers should not be a vehicle for denying them access to the independent industrial commission nor the usual range of entitlements and rights. Nor should it be designed to undermine their income or conditions.

63. A change in ownership of a business or similar corporate restructure should not be used as a means of evading pre-existing wages and conditions.





64. Labor recognises that many workers want part time and casual work and that these forms of employment are integral to many industries. Whilst acknowledging that all workers have a right to full time secure employment, Labor also supports the rights of workers to have part time work that is regular and secure and to have casual work that attracts appropriate entitlements.
65. An efficient labour market comprising full time, part time and casual employment must be based on fairness to employees.
66. It is in the long term interests of workers, industry and the nation that the increasing reliance in some areas on casualisation of the workforce be reduced and priority given to the provision of secure, good quality employment with career prospects.
67. The inability to balance the increasing pressures of work and personal life can result in loss of productivity for firms, increases in stress and related problems for workers and their families, and a worsening of social problems. Good industrial relations have an important role to play in retaining well qualified and highly motivated workers.
68. Labor will hold an inquiry to examine the growth in contingent and insecure employment and its effects on workers and their families and to recommend measures which would promote greater employment stability for workers and better balance of work and family responsibilities. Labor will work with industry and unions to pursue effective and viable solutions to these important issues.
- give a greater role to the independent industrial commission to act in the national interest and in the interest of fairness and equity;
  - ensure that the powers and objects of the independent industrial commission are adequate to deal with any industrial matter;
  - provide enhanced resources for the enforcement of awards and agreements;
  - ensure that the independent industrial commission has the authority and resources to establish comprehensive and effective award coverage;
  - change the emphasis from an approach based on sanctions to one based on conciliation and where necessary arbitration;
  - reduce excessive legalism and prohibitive cost barriers to accessing rights; and
  - abolish the office of the Employment Advocate.
70. Labor will abolish Australian Workplace agreements (AWAs), which are secretive, unreviewable and unfair.
71. Collective bargaining should be promoted through a fair and simple stream of workplace, enterprise and industry wide agreements, negotiated with trade unions or employees and consistent with International Labour Organisation (ILO) obligations and will:
- ensure a reasonable 'no disadvantage' test is met for agreements provided for under the Act, which includes relevant award or agreement rates of pay and conditions and protects worker's rights to representation of their choice;
  - ensure the transparency of the agreement review and registration processes;
  - provide that the independent industrial commission and affected parties are aware of and able to participate in the review of agreements provided for under the Act;
  - prohibit discrimination against those who wish to bargain collectively and be represented by a union; and

## A Fair Industrial Relations System



### The legal framework

69. Labor will introduce new industrial relations legislation to:
- put fairness back into the legislation;



- provide that workers and their representatives have access to appropriate information from which to make informed decisions.
72. The right of all workers to democratic collective representation by unions should be recognised and protection provided from discrimination against workers based on trade union membership or activity.
  73. The development of representative organisations, which can meet common registration and accountability requirements, should be fostered, including by necessary training and education.
  74. A reasonable right of entry should be allowed for union officials to workplaces for the purposes of communication, organisation, recruitment and assistance to workers.
  75. The protection of the industrial relations system should be extended beyond a narrow definition of employees to include those in employment-type relationships.
  76. Protection against unfair dismissal should be provided to all workers, irrespective of the size of their employer's business.
  77. Public sector workers should have access to the full range of independent industrial commission powers to resolve industrial disputes and promote collective bargaining, and where appropriate, have access to paid rates awards. Labor will discontinue the use of individual contracts for members of the Australian Public Service below the Senior Executive Service level.
  78. All industrial matters should be removed from the Trade Practices Act and be regulated by industrial law.
  79. Comprehensive programs aimed at achieving compliance with the regulatory regime and proactive approaches aimed at securing protection of workers' rights and entitlements should be developed and implemented.
  80. Compatibility of Commonwealth and State industrial relations systems should be sought.



## Incomes policy

81. Incomes policy should be directed to the following social and economic goals:
  - a. fair distribution of the benefits of economic success;
  - b. job creation and sustained low inflationary growth;
  - c. ensuring equal remuneration for women not just equal pay;
  - d. special attention to the interests of the most vulnerable such as the low paid, young workers, workers with disabilities and workers from non-English speaking backgrounds;
  - e. reasonable opportunities for workers to protect and enhance their living standards without working excessive hours or enduring excessive stress;
  - f. competitive Australian enterprises based on a well-paid, highly skilled, flexible and motivated workforce; and
  - g. the need to address the growing disparity between of incomes in Australia.
82. Labor will establish cooperative mechanisms with participation from the wider industrial relations community to consider current issues and future developments in industrial relations. These issues will also be examined in the context of broader industry, employment, education, and social issues. As part of these mechanisms Labor will support industry level forums to promote discussion and resolution of relevant industrial relations matters.
83. A new basis for a cooperative incomes policy should be established on the following:
  - recognition that where workers express a clear preference for a particular type of industrial instrument to cover their wages and conditions, the parties in that matter should have an obligation to negotiate in good faith to successfully conclude such an instrument;
  - recognition that collective bargaining should remain an important option for workers and employers;





- no worker should be required to enter into an enterprise bargain because the industrial relations system provides no other way to achieve decent wage increases or maintain reasonable working conditions;
- maintenance and enhancement of relevant award standards and wage rates in a manner consistent with overall social and economic objectives, through direct dialogue with unions and employers and through regular national wage cases conducted by the independent industrial commission; and
- recognition that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to wage determination is neither desirable nor appropriate.

### Promoting Safe workplaces

84. Whilst occupational health and safety remains primarily a State responsibility, the federal government can and should do more to ensure appropriate standards are applied for Australian workers irrespective of where they work. The following principles should be applied:
- increased resources for research, standards setting, information and inspection at the national level, and by grants to State, local and industry/enterprise level where appropriate;
  - uniform minimum standards of compensation and other rights for injured workers; and the encouragement of tripartite industry forums on occupational health and safety.
85. States should not be able to gain relative economic advantage by cutting the benefits available to injured workers.
86. A Labor government will work with the States to achieve a nationally consistent occupational health and safety framework which reflects best safety practice within Australia, and which is consistent with the best international standards. This framework should be clear and capable of enforcement at the workplace level.

87. The Federal government should, in consultation with State governments, develop and maintain a uniform national system of occupational health and safety statistics which detail the incidence of deaths and injury from exposure to hazards in the workplace.
88. The Federal government should encourage the States to provide comprehensive rehabilitation programs, and should itself provide such programs within its own areas of responsibilities.
89. Workers must be protected in relation to occupational health and safety with an emphasis on the prevention of disease, injury and accidents. Rehabilitation programs should be promoted. Compensation should enable injured workers to maintain living standards through an income related benefit until rehabilitation has been achieved or during the period when disability prevents a return to the workforce.

### A fairer distribution of work

90. Labor recognises that there is a strong connection between deregulation of the labour market and increased inequality in the distribution of work and income.
91. Labor will encourage and promote incentives for implementation by federal, state and local governments and private employers, in consultation with trade unions and employers, of voluntary schemes such as:
- career break schemes;
  - early retirement schemes;
  - balancing the emphasis on wages/hours/jobs to reflect agreed enterprise or industry priorities;
  - recruitment to new positions based on shorter hours;
  - job sharing; and
  - productivity gains being taken in the form of shorter hours.
92. Labor will support working time arrangements only where they:
- are consistent with employee preferences;



- result in enhanced wages and conditions over time;
- result in reducing excessive overtime; and
- are designed to maximise employment creation.

93. Labor will develop incentives to encourage the employment of extra staff rather than excessive hours for those already in work, and to encourage preference for secure full-time and part-time employment over casual employment.
94. Labor will examine measures to reduce the pressure for increased amounts of unpaid overtime even amongst low paid workers.
95. Labor will consult and work with employers, unions and community organisations to remove obstacles to the employment of people with disabilities in fair and non-exploitative ways.



### **Promoting industrial democracy and cooperative workplaces**

96. The following principles should be pursued:
- the right of workers to meaningful participation in decision making in the workplace about industrial matters;
  - the right of workers and their representatives to be consulted before decisions that will have a significant effect on employment or work generally are implemented;
  - the extension of industrial democracy and other modern forms of work organisation in major enterprises and workplaces;
  - encouragement of employee share ownership programs; and
  - assistance for the development of cooperatives.

## **Social Security**



### **Past, Present and Future**

97. In the post-war era, Labor governments have been responsible for building a decent social security system which has aimed to:
- protect Australians' living standards, providing income support for those in need, and income supplements for families and those with additional costs;
  - give Australians opportunities to improve their lives, providing support and incentives to take up work and learn new skills;
  - demonstrate our compassion for those Australians who, because of age, disability or their responsibility for the care of another, cannot support themselves; and
  - deliver flexible assistance in a cost effective way to the taxpayer.
98. Australia's social security system must change to meet the nation's emerging needs and circumstances.
- Our working lives have changed dramatically. We are now likely to experience periods without a job; we are unlikely to have a job for life with one employer; the hours we work are increasingly unpredictable; some of us are working more hours than we want while others work fewer hours than are needed for a decent life; and many of us will return to training or education at some stage during our working lives; and our children are staying at school and at home longer, and many more are going on to post-secondary study.
  - Increasingly the benefits of economic growth are not being shared equally and there is a widening gap in opportunities



available to people living in particular communities.

- We are living longer and our population is ageing.

**99.** Labor remains committed to preventing and eliminating poverty in Australia, to improving the living standards of all Australians, and to reducing inequality between Australians, by providing people with a secure income and access to the services and opportunities they need to improve their lives.



### First Principles—Security and Opportunity

**100.** Labor recognises that at times in their working lives some Australians may be unable to support themselves through work. Labor remains committed to a compassionate and fair social security system which offers a basic level of income support to these Australians, in proportion to their need and according to their circumstances, and which above all encourages and supports them to enter or re-enter the workforce.

**101.** Labor believes that the federal government, on behalf of all Australians, has a duty to ensure that none of us is left without the means to a decent life because he or she:

- is retired and does not have an adequate retirement income;
- is sick or disabled and unable to work, either temporarily or permanently;
- is unlikely to find work because of age or disability;
- has primary responsibility for the care of children or other family members;
- has lost the support of a partner through separation, divorce or death;
- is unemployed and seeking work; or
- is in education or training, or a combination of education and training and looking for work.

**102.** Labor believes that the social security system also plays a vital role in supplementing income where it is low, and in providing additional help where Australians and their

families face additional costs—because of the need to provide for children, or to meet the costs of disability or health care, decent housing, or education. Labor will:

- continue to supplement Australians' incomes to help meet these costs.
- ensure that the system of assistance for families with dependent children, provided through the tax, social security and education systems, is easy to understand and access, and is designed so that people do not face financial barriers to work and are able to get the help they need when they need it.
- pursue innovative ways to deliver assistance to families to reflect changing roles, responsibilities and work practices so that all families have the opportunity to make free decisions about bringing up their children.

**103.** Labor believes that the fundamental objective of government assistance to Australians through the social security system is to facilitate and increase people's access to the opportunities and skills they need to improve their standard of living. Our welfare system is successful when it not only alleviates poverty, but when it provides a platform from which people may gain access to education, training and economic opportunities. It is in this way that the welfare system can change people's lives.



### Helping People Move Forward

**104.** Labor recognises that, for working age Australians, the best route out of poverty lies in a job with a decent income. Labor believes the social security system should encourage and assist people to take up the work opportunities which will improve their standard of living, and that it should ensure that those who can combine assistance with work, education or training are always better off than if they did not.

- As a matter of urgency Labor will address the poverty traps that see extra earnings immediately clawed back in tax and the withdrawal of social security payments and benefits



- Labor acknowledges the widening gap between the skills an unemployed person can offer and the skills employers want and will better integrate the provision of income support with education and training opportunities, particularly in areas of skill shortages.
- Labor recognises the widening disparity of opportunity in many communities, particularly in regional and rural Australia and will act to coordinate and better target resources in these areas.
- Labor will ensure the welfare system takes advantage of the unique resources and expertise found in local communities.
- Labor will pursue new ways to break the cycle of poverty and long-term benefit receipt by developing strategies that can help families early and provide linkages to health, education, childcare, and labour market assistance.

### The Importance of Creating and Facilitating Opportunities

105. Labor believes in life long education and training and recognises that many Australians combine work with education, training and caring responsibilities, and that families change the way they balance these tasks over the course of their lives.
- Labor will ensure that people receiving payments can move flexibly between caring responsibilities, study or training and the workforce.
  - Labor will build positive incentives into the system to encourage those receiving payments to take up work experience, education and training.

106. Labor acknowledges the important role of affordable child care for parents who wish to access educational opportunities, re-enter the workforce, or increase their hours of work.

### Providing Incentives

107. Labor will better integrate the income support and tax systems to:

- minimise the poverty traps where income tests and taxation combine to severely reduce the benefit of earnings; and
- develop new and innovative ways to reward people who find work.

### Ensuring Adequacy

108. Labor remains committed to providing adequate income support for those who need it. Labor will:
- maintain the benchmark of maximum single adult rates of pension to at least 25 per cent of male total average weekly earnings.
  - maintain the current links between pension rates and family payments to ensure increases to pensions flow on to family payments.
  - maintain the current relativities between single rates and payments for members of couples.
  - ensure basic rates are indexed twice a year, in line with movements in the Consumer Price Index.
  - ensure that those whose only income is provided through the social security system will not have to pay income tax.

### Better Delivery of Welfare Services

109. Labor believes that the social security system should be a flexible and simple system, easy to understand and easy to administer, and will continue to reform it by:
- moving towards a common means test with uniform rules for all forms of income support;
  - reducing the complexity of the eligibility rules for income support and related payments for those of workforce age so that assistance is available to meet the needs of all those who, for one reason or another, are unable to support themselves or their family;
  - ensuring the system is flexible enough to cope with variations in income, so that the help people need is available when they need it; and



- removing the gaps and anomalies in the current rules which discriminate against many Australians, including older women, migrants, young people and those who wish to study.
- 110.** A fairer, simpler and more flexible system will mean that people will be able to more readily understand their entitlements and staff will be able to have time to actively assist social security recipients rather than grapple with administrative complexity. Further, the lengthy processes of review and appeal will be reduced. Labor will retain the independent and free review and appeals process.
- 111.** Under Labor, people will be treated with courtesy, respect and understanding by the social security system.
- 112.** Labor will ensure that personal information is protected and will maintain individuals' rights under freedom of information to have access to their personal files.
- 113.** Labor is committed to maintaining Centrelink in full public ownership and ensuring it has the resources necessary to carry out its services effectively. Labor will:
- develop and expand the role of Centrelink in our communities, particularly as a central resource linking people to services and opportunities in local areas.



### **Involving the community**

- 114.** Labor also believes that effective, high quality welfare services are best guaranteed by an equal partnership between government and the community sector. A Labor government will:
- develop a compact with the community sector to guide the development and delivery of welfare services.
  - maintain a strong role for government within such a compact, noting that many alternative models have insufficient safeguards against government simply abdicating its responsibilities and shifting the burden to the community or other sectors.



# chapter nine


## Security And Opportunity For Older Australians



### Basic Principles

1. Labor recognises the vital contribution of older Australians to our community and will encourage and support them to live full, active and independent lives.
2. Labor will continue to encourage and support older Australians to play an active role in the community and to contribute to the development and implementation of the policies that affect their quality of life.
3. Labor believes that a secure, adequate income and access to good quality, appropriate health and aged care services when they are needed are essential to older Australians' peace of mind.
4. Labor is committed to providing a guaranteed, universal and integrated retirement incomes system that is secure, stable, simple and fair.
5. Labor believes that Australians' access to aged care services should be on the basis of their need for that care and not on their ability to pay or where they live.

6. Labor will continue to honour Australia's debt to veterans through programs of compensation, commemoration, income support, health care, aged care and housing assistance.



### Opportunity For Older Australians

7. Labor recognises that most older Australians remain healthy and continue to lead full, active and independent lives well into their 70s and 80s. Older Australians make a crucial contribution to the Australian community.
8. Labor rejects any suggestion that older Australians are a burden on our society.
9. Labor's policies will recognise older Australians in their many roles as:
  - experienced and committed workers;
  - active volunteers in many organisations;
  - carers of children and other family members;
  - investors;
  - teachers and as students;



- advisers, guides and mentors to the next generations; and
  - builders of our sense of community.
10. Labor's policies will encourage and support older Australians to live full, active and independent lives.
- Labor will enact comprehensive age discrimination legislation and will ensure that its policies do not discriminate against older Australians.
  - Labor will encourage older Australians who wish to expand their learning horizons to take up educational opportunities, particularly through adult and community education, Universities of the Third Age and emerging technologies.
  - Labor will explore ways of encouraging more older Australians to engage in community service activities, including through financial support for organisations administering volunteer programs.
  - Labor will support educational and other programs which encourage older Australians to pursue a healthy lifestyle.
  - Labor will encourage and support older Australians to contribute to the development and implementation of the policies which affect their quality of life.
12. The growing number and proportion of older Australians requires a comprehensive retirement incomes policy which ensures a guaranteed decent minimum retirement income for all Australians.
13. In government Labor, together with the trade union movement, employers and superannuation providers, established a comprehensive three pillars retirement incomes system, based on:
- government guaranteed age pensions with appropriate means testing;
  - compulsory superannuation coverage for all employees; and
  - incentives to encourage voluntary superannuation contributions.
14. Labor will continue to strengthen these three pillars to provide a retirement incomes system which:
- is universal;
  - guarantees all Australians a decent minimum retirement income;
  - better protects retirement investments;
  - is simple and cost effective to administer; and
  - is fair and equitable in its operation.
15. Labor supports a universal retirement incomes system which:
- ensures that no Australian is left without an adequate retirement income; and
  - involves greater integration and coordination of the pensions and superannuation systems, to reduce complexity and enhance stability.

**A Secure Income For Older Australians**

11. Australia, like other comparable countries, has an ageing population:

Australia	1988	1997	2001	2006	2011	2031	2051
Persons over 65 (million)	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.6	2.9	5.0	6.0
% of total population	10.8	12.1	12.4	12.9	14.0	21.3	24.2

Source: ABS 4102.0 Australian Social Trends 1999

16. Labor supports a guaranteed minimum retirement income:
- based on an income support payment which is at least 25% of male total average weekly earnings, and indexed twice a year in line with increases in the consumer price index; and





- supplemented by superannuation contributions.
17. Labor supports a retirement incomes system with better security and protection which:
    - provides protection and compensation in the event of theft or fraud for both pre- and post-retirement income products;
    - ensures fees and charges are monitored and capped where appropriate; and
    - maximises returns through a competitive environment balanced by the safe, stable, and long term approach to be delivered by superannuation investment providers.
  18. Labor supports a simpler retirement incomes system which:
    - is streamlined to improve efficiency and minimise administrative costs;
    - allows superannuation funds to include death and disability insurance in their investment products;
    - provides some access to lump sum benefits; and
    - allows people to make informed choices about their retirement investment strategies through ongoing education campaigns for the community and superannuation providers.
  19. Labor supports a fair and equitable retirement incomes system which:
    - provides taxation treatment of retirement income investments that is fair, equitable and administratively efficient;
    - prevents gender discrimination;
    - provides equitable treatment to same-sex couples;
    - ensures equity and fairness in the division of benefits in the event of the ending of a relationship; and
    - is regularly reviewed to ensure that older Australians share in the growth and prosperity of the country.
  20. Labor recognises that women's work patterns mean that many retire with small superannuation investments. Labor supports a retirement incomes system for women which:
    - ensures that the work choices women make over the course of their lives do not jeopardise the adequacy of their retirement income;
    - promotes the benefits of superannuation for women through a targeted education campaign which assists women to make informed decisions about their retirement income choices; and
    - encourages and fosters the involvement of women in all aspects of the superannuation industry.
  21. Labor will ensure that workers, especially women, employed for a small number of hours per week in part time or casual jobs, shall continue to receive compulsory superannuation coverage with full vesting from day one, in order to maximise their retirement income.
  22. Labor supports maintaining the existing links between superannuation and the industrial relations system to provide essential protection for employees through a representative and balanced trustee structure and an independent appeals process.

### Caring For Older Australians

23. Labor believes that the federal government should continue to play a central role in aged care services. Labor will maintain an appropriate balance between community based and residential aged care services, to ensure that older Australians can access the kind of care they choose, and the kind of care they need.
24. Labor has a commitment to provide the highest quality aged care services possible. To ensure high quality service standards are adopted and maintained Labor supports a rigorous accreditation process and will tighten the monitoring of poor aged care providers.
25. Labor will ensure that the rights of frail older people are respected and protected. Labor believes that aged care recipients and their representatives should be empowered to play a central role in determining the nature of their care and ensuring that quality standards are being met.
26. Labor recognises that older Australians prefer to stay in their own homes and in their own neighbourhoods as they age, and that they



may need assistance to do this.

- Labor will continue to support the vital services which allow older Australians to remain at home, such as personal care, housekeeping, home maintenance, community transport, and meals services.
  - Labor will support older Australians who choose to move to more appropriate housing in their neighbourhoods.
  - Labor will promote new ways of delivering community based services to meet the emerging needs of older Australians.
27. Labor will ensure that older Australians in rural and regional areas have comprehensive access to aged care services appropriate to their needs.
  28. Labor is committed to providing culturally appropriate aged care services for older indigenous Australians and older people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
  29. Labor will support the people who care for older Australians at home, and promote new ways to support carers in their vital work.
  30. Labor believes that older Australians who need residential care because of their health should be provided with the highest quality nursing and personal care, in safe and comfortable surroundings. Labor will ensure that access to residential aged care is determined by medical need, not financial means.
  31. Labor will simplify and streamline rules concerning residents' contributions to their care costs to ensure equity and fairness and protect older Australians from the forced sale of their homes.
  32. Labor will improve the links between health care, aged care and other services so that older Australians have continuity of care, and can access the care they need without having to deal with multiple programs and multiple levels of government.



## Security For Veterans

33. Labor will continue to honour Australia's debt to veterans through programs of compensation, income support, health care, aged and community care, and housing assistance. A separate veterans' affairs department will continue to provide these programs.
34. Labor is committed to continuing and expanding the existing commemoration programs which honour the sacrifices made by Australians in all theatres of war and to reflect the growing community interest in our heritage. Special attention will be paid to providing appropriate educational material to schools and assistance to communities to maintain existing memorials.
35. Labor will consult with the ex-service community about programs and services, and will support veterans' involvement in decision making. Labor will continue to fund veterans' community organisations to assist veterans making claims and to advocate on their behalf.
36. Labor will continue to provide compensation and assistance to veterans for disability or incapacity that is caused by war service or war-like service, through the provision of disability and service pensions, and in particular will:
  - compensate spouses for the death of a partner as a result of war service through the provision of war widow/ers pensions;
  - continue to exempt disability pension payments from income tax and from the service pension income test; and
  - rectify anomalies in pension arrangements that cannot be justified on equity grounds, such as access to war widows pensions by women remarrying before 1984.



37. Labor will:
- maintain the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme;
  - provide veterans with access to high quality hospital and palliative care, including through the Repatriation Private Patient Scheme;
  - provide additional medical, dental and transport assistance to veterans with entitlement cards. Gold card holders will continue to receive assistance for all medical conditions;
  - develop innovative health promotion and health education programs for veterans; and
  - ensure that a full range of health and support services are available to younger veterans, particularly Vietnam veterans, including access to counselling, mental health, rehabilitation, medical screening and health promotion services.
38. Labor will continue to fund epidemiological studies of Vietnam veterans and their families, and implement measures to respond to elevated levels of disability or death.
39. Labor recognises that many veterans prefer to access care within the ex-service community and will continue to provide specialist community care services to veterans, while retaining their right of access to generalist services.
40. Labor will ensure that appropriate residential aged care is available for those veterans who need residential care. Planning for the residential care needs of veterans will be in conjunction with planning for the needs of the broader aged community.



# chapter ten

## Personal and Family Well-Being: Health, Housing and Family Support

### A Health System That Delivers

#### Strengthening medicare

1. The objective of Labor's platform on health is to enhance people's ability to lead full, productive and satisfying lives with dignity and independence. To achieve better health outcomes Labor will:
  - place a greater focus on healthy living and illness prevention;
  - ensure that appropriate, affordable primary health care is accessible to everyone;
  - make use of new information technologies that improve health and empower health consumers;
  - provide more resources to deliver quality health care for the acutely ill;
  - improve the quality of life for those with chronic illness; and
  - improve palliative care services and ensure people can die with dignity.
2. Labor remains resolutely committed to Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as the basis for universal access to high quality, publicly funded health services for all Australians. Labor supports a private health sector that works to complement the core services funded through Medicare.
3. Labor will strengthen Medicare to meet the future challenges associated with our ageing population and increased use of medical technology. Labor will:
  - seek a national solution to the fragmentation of funding of services between different levels of government;
  - encourage the integration of services to get the best outcomes for people;
  - put new emphasis on the quality and timeliness of treatment;
  - promote the adoption of new medical technologies that meet real needs;
  - target priority areas which have been under resourced, including dental services, rehabilitation for illicit drug users and mental health; and
  - tackle the historic injustice that



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face accessing health services.

4. Labor will work to ensure that health resources are allocated on the basis of need so that people are not excluded from necessary services because of their financial circumstances or where they live.



### Improving the quality of health services

5. Labor is committed to improving the quality of health services. Labor will measure the quality of health services provided against six quality principles: access, efficiency, effectiveness, appropriateness, safety and consumer satisfaction.
6. Labor will invest in and promote the collection of national data that will:
  - improve the flow of information through the health care system;
  - reduce the variation in the use and outcomes of health services; and
  - ensure the efficient implementation of evidence based medicine.
7. Labor will develop benchmarks for health service performance and standard of treatment and encourage the use of this information by consumers to help choose their preferred health service, and inform managers and health care providers so that the quality of health services is improved.
8. Labor believes the funders, managers, providers, and consumers of our health services have a role to play in improving the quality of health services. Labor will identify and promote mechanisms that assist stakeholders to take an active role in improving the quality of health services and to ensure that they are held accountable for their performance within the health system.
9. Quality health service delivery depends on cooperative working relationships between governments, professional bodies, community organisations, the public and private health sectors and consumers in the planning and delivery of health services. Labor will work in partnership with all parties to improve the quality of our health services.



### Harnessing new technology

10. Labor sees major opportunities for new technology to make health services more effective, more accessible and more consumer friendly. Technological change needs to be carefully managed with close attention to the social implications and the need for privacy for personal health records. Labor will ensure that commercial interests do not subvert the intended health outcomes as occurred with magnetic resonance imaging.
11. Labor will establish open processes to foster the greater use of new technology in appropriate applications, including:
  - the use of tele-health to give rural doctors and nurses direct access to city based specialists and the resources of major teaching hospitals;
  - the use of Intranets to give doctors and pharmacists access to high quality information sources;
  - the use of electronic prescriptions to speed up and reduce errors in communications between doctors and pharmacists; and
  - greater power for the Health Insurance Commission to analyse data to examine variations in practices to enable the promotion of best practice techniques.
12. Labor will ensure that there is appropriate training available to ensure health professionals know how to harness these benefits.



### Managing health information

13. Labor believes the development and implementation of electronic health records and decision support systems are central to improving the safety and quality of health services provided. However these new tools cannot be widely used until satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure security and privacy are protected.
14. Labor will develop a strong privacy regime built around a unique patient identifier based on the Medicare card. Legislation would prevent



this number being used for any other purpose and access would depend on authorisation from both the patient and the doctor. A range of other safeguards will be incorporated in legislation, which will be developed after a public inquiry into all the issues.

15. It is critical that health providers can communicate effectively with each other while maintaining patient confidentiality. Labor will provide leadership in development of national, secure health data standards and will establish a common framework for health record systems. The delay in establishing this infrastructure is inhibiting the delivery of quality health services in Australia and consequently contributing to unnecessary adverse events.

### Delivering health information to consumers

16. Labor recognises that the Australian public wants and needs understandable and relevant information about their health care. Many Australians feel under-informed about their health care and this lack of information can cause unnecessary anxiety about appropriate treatments.
17. Labor believes that all health service users have the right to:
- receive information about their condition and informed consent about treatment options and risks before receiving health services;
  - make informed financial consent, before receiving health services, which involves the ability to obtain estimated costs of proposed procedures;
  - expect privacy for their health records and other information relating to their health and use of health services;
  - obtain access to their health records; and
  - indicate, ahead of time, their unwillingness to have their life prolonged by artificial means should they at some stage suffer from a terminal illness.
18. Labor believes that better informed health care consumers will participate more actively in the health decision making process which will lead to a reduction in the incidence of adverse events, foster a greater partnership approach between consumers and providers and increase consumer satisfaction with the care provided.
19. Labor will promote consumers' access to timely, accurate and relevant health information through the development of a public internet site which provides an independent, authoritative and thorough source of information for people to research their health problems.
20. Labor will encourage the development of educational materials about treatment options, medicines and procedures associated with a variety of clinical conditions, for consumers.
21. A strong and independent complaints system is essential to ensuring patients' rights are respected and should also play a constructive role in reform.

### Health financing

22. The cornerstone of Medicare is a universal system funded through a combination of general taxation and a Medicare levy based on ability to pay. These arrangements should be retained and strengthened. Labor is opposed to allowing individuals to opt out of Medicare and is opposed to means testing, which would reduce the public system to a welfare safety net.
23. Labor will ensure that health resources are used efficiently and that priorities are set on the basis of the needs of patients and achieving the best outcomes. In recent years funding has been inadequate and service standards have fallen because of under-funding.
24. International experience demonstrates that public purchasing of health services, as occurs under Medicare, is the most effective system for controlling costs and achieving fair access to services.
25. Labor's policies are based on the expectation that Australia's health expenditure will continue to increase as the population grows and ages and technological advances allow



new options for treatment. This increase in expenditure can be met within a growing economy and it will be to the advantage of the Australian community as our health improves.

26. The financing arrangements for Australia's health system need to be simplified. Labor will:
- resolve confusion over multiple funding sources and disputes between the Commonwealth, States and Territories over who is responsible for delivering particular services;
  - ensure the public and private sectors work to complement each other;
  - carefully manage factors which influence demand and supply for health services; and
  - maintain pressure to ensure Medicare buys health services wisely—particularly in high technology areas such as pathology and radiology.



### Cooperation between governments.

27. An effective health system depends upon cooperation between Federal, State and Territory governments in planning, funding, monitoring and delivering health services.
- The Federal government has primary responsibility for national health policy and health insurance—both Medicare and private health insurance.
  - The Federal Government must also play a national leadership role, particularly in health promotion, public health and indigenous health.
  - State and Territory governments have primary responsibility for service delivery and administration and an important priority setting role.
28. In particular, Labor will reform Federal-State health-care financing arrangements to promote a greater focus on population health outcomes, continuity of care, health promotion and illness prevention, primary care and community services, and will continue reform of service delivery to improve the efficiency and quality of services.

29. The Australian health system will be strengthened by clarifying the roles played by Federal, State and Territory governments to reduce overlap and increase efficiency and accountability. The goal is to ensure that service quality is driven by the needs of the users of health services rather than the demands of those who pay.

## Promoting A Healthy Community



### Promoting health and preventing sickness

30. Labor believes a fundamental pillar of our health system must be health promotion and preventing people becoming ill. National responsibility for setting priorities and providing funding rests with the Federal government. However, achieving substantial change in personal behaviour and reducing the risk profile of the community rests with the grass roots—in particular an active non-government sector of community groups working with health professionals to promote good health and illness prevention.
31. To achieve this goal, Labor will:
- pursue national strategies for eight national priority areas: mental health, cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, cardiovascular disease, asthma, injuries, suicide and diabetes;
  - support research into the causes of other preventable health problems in order to develop new effective health promotion programs;
  - reduce the risk of communicable diseases through the vigorous promotion of universal childhood immunisation and high priority adult vaccines;
  - reduce the harm caused by misuse of pharmaceuticals;
  - develop programs that tackle the environmental causes of ill health and issues of occupational health and safety; and





- seek to further integrate health promotion and preventive health activities with Medicare and general practice;
- 32.** Labor will actively pursue national strategies to combat transmissible blood diseases including HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. These strategies will include targeted prevention campaigns, continued access to treatments through the PBS and health programs for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- 33.** Labor will undertake new health education programs to increase awareness of health risks, promote a healthier lifestyle and reduce the toll of preventable ill health. Public health messages will be appropriately targeted to different groups within the community including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds.



### National drugs strategy

- 34.** Labor recognises the serious impact of legal and illegal drugs on our community. Tobacco use causes harm to the individual and the community, but a quarter of the population still chooses to smoke. Other legal drugs such as alcohol can cause damage if not used in moderation and are a major factor in domestic violence and road accidents. Existing programs against illegal drugs have not succeeded in reducing their use and there is a mounting death toll and social cost from illegal drugs.
- 35.** Central to Labor's drug strategy will be the principle of harm minimisation for all forms of drugs. In particular Labor will:
- curb the supply of illegal drugs through effective law enforcement;
  - tackle the underlying causes of abuse of legal and illegal drugs in order to reduce demand; and
  - increase the opportunities for treatment to enable users to overcome their addiction.
- 36. Tobacco.** Labor will reduce the harm caused by tobacco by further tightening restrictions on tobacco advertising, conducting aggressive anti-smoking campaigns, and developing national clean air standards to address passive smoking. A new focus will be placed on harm minimisation strategies and promotion of nicotine replacement therapies to reach those people not influenced by current Quit programs.
- 37. Alcohol.** Labor will promote awareness of safe patterns of alcohol consumption and encourage reduced consumption through advertising and public education campaigns; strengthen treatment services; and target campaigns to reduce underage drinking.
- 38. Illicit drugs.** Labor will combat drug abuse through:
- education campaigns to reduce the taking of drugs;
  - additional funding for treatment, primary health care, rehabilitation and diversion services run by government and non-government agencies; and
  - support for harm minimisation strategies to deal with drug abuse, in cooperation with State and Territory governments, including needle exchange programs and research based trials of alternative pathways to stabilise an addiction and prepare the drug user for a return to a normal lifestyle.
- 39. Road trauma.** Labor will support a comprehensive approach to reduce the incidence of road accidents attributable to fatigue, speeding, alcohol or other drugs.



### Food and Therapeutic Products

- 40. Food standards.** Labor is committed to working with State governments and the New Zealand government to improve the current system of food safety standards. There is a need for greater transparency in the development of standards and more dialogue between consumers, trade unions and industry on technical issues. Australia should bring its standards in line with world's best practice while allowing sufficient flexibility for State based implementation.
- 41.** These standards need to be backed by quality implementation, on going monitoring and



enforcement where necessary. Labor will work with all stakeholders to spread the burden of cost to protect small business and local councils.

**42. Genetically modified food.** Labor recognises community concern about genetically modified food. To ensure our food is of a high quality and safe, Labor will:

- maintain consumer and environmental safety through strict enforcement of national standards as the principle policy consideration;
- build public confidence by providing appropriate and balanced public education;
- ensure all issues pertaining to import, export, production, distribution and use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are overseen by a strong national body that is independent, scientifically based and whose processes are transparent;
- establish a meaningful labelling regime that enables consumers to make informed choices about what they are buying;
- undertake continued research on the use of foods containing GMOs to better understand health, safety and environmental risks and benefits; and
- put in place a rigorous and transparent process based on environmental and safety considerations, for assessing and approving or rejecting research proposals which require the release of GMOs outside the laboratory.

**43. Food and therapeutic products regulation.**

Labor recognises that the ongoing introduction of new technologies has revealed overlaps in the current responsibilities of food, therapeutic products and import/export regulatory bodies. In addition the increasingly blurred line between what constitutes a food and what constitutes a therapeutic product has also revealed gaps in the regulatory system resulting in products being introduced onto the Australian market without the necessary regulatory approval.

**44.** Australia needs a more effective and open regulatory system for setting standards for foods and therapeutic products produced in

Australia and imported from other markets. Labor will introduce a comprehensive food and therapeutic products regulatory model to address overlap and gap issues and place responsibility for consumer health and safety protection within an integrated structure.

### Care In The Community

**45. Primary health care.** Labor recognises the importance of high-quality primary health care services and the need for general practitioners, nurses, community pharmacists and a wide range of allied health professionals to work together in providing these services.

**46.** Labor is committed to the improvement of primary health care through:

- strengthening the link between patients and their GPs to improve the management of chronic illness and to encourage GPs to act as advocates for their patients when they require hospital treatment;
- promoting Divisions of General Practice, as the basis for the development of innovative approaches to primary care and the building of better links between GPs and other health and medical professionals;
- providing new funding for high quality general practices to deliver services for which fee-for-service payment is inappropriate, especially health promotion and illness prevention; and
- maintaining affordable access through bulk billing and opposition to compulsory co-payments.

**47. Continuity and coordination of care.** Labor recognises that improving the continuity and coordination of care, especially for Australians with complex and ongoing care needs, is a high priority in health care reform, and will require a concerted effort at all levels, including cooperation between the Federal, State and Territory governments. Labor does not support US style managed care programs driven by financial rather than clinical outcomes



- 48. Community health.** Labor will put an emphasis on community health programs to ensure all groups in the community have information and access to services appropriate to their health needs. These programs will be delivered by health professionals, and through the general media and community health centres.
- 49. Pharmaceuticals.** Labor will ensure all Australians have affordable access to their essential medicines through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. In particular Labor will:
- ensure thorough and timely evaluation of new medicines and therapeutic devices before their approval for use in Australia;
  - work to reduce the harm caused by the misuse of pharmaceuticals, through inadvertent misuse of prescription drugs or fraudulent abuse of the PBS;
  - support the continuing growth of the Australian pharmaceutical industry and recognise its potential to generate jobs and exports for Australia;
  - maintain the ban on direct advertising of prescription medicines; and
  - prevent the illegal sale of registered and non-registered pharmaceuticals through the internet.
- 50. Community pharmacies.** Labor is committed to maintenance of a competitive community pharmacy sector in Australia to deliver high quality health products and information at a community level. Labor supports an expansion of the range of services to be provided through community pharmacies including the delivery of basic health services such as methadone, wound management and asthma management programs.
- 51. Complementary medicine.** Labor recognises and accepts that many Australians value alternative health treatments. Labor will work to establish appropriate registration and accreditation for practitioners and their products to ensure that the beneficial work of practitioners in these areas is recognised and

also to ensure that consumers are well informed and protected from physical or mental harm or financial exploitation.

## Health Services In Rural And Regional Australia



### Better delivery of health services

- 52.** Labor is committed to addressing the poorer health status of Australians living in rural and remote areas and improving their access to vital health care services.
- 53.** Labor will develop a comprehensive Rural Health Plan that recognises that the health status of rural communities is directly related to the economic prosperity of each community. Depressed economic conditions lead to poorer health and in turn place greater strain on the rural health services provided. Labor's Rural Health Plan is, therefore, one element of a wider regional and rural policy that aims to restore the economic health of rural and regional Australia.
- 54.** A concerted and sustained commitment by all levels of government towards working co-operatively and committing increased resources to rural health is a necessary first step. Labor's Rural Health Plan will foster a collaborative environment between service providers and will increase resources to rural health services. Labor will:
- negotiate agreements with State governments that enable pooling of health and aged care funds at the regional and community level so that the delivery of services is not impeded by artificial funding barriers;
  - create flexible funding arrangements that respond to a community's needs and



- accommodate the different models of health services available; and
- promote greater collaboration and co-operation between public and private health services to enable the sharing of resources and maximise access to health expertise in rural and regional centres.



### Ensuring the availability of health professionals

55. Rural health care providers are facing increasing financial, social and professional pressures in their efforts to provide health care for rural Australians. Labor's Rural Health Plan will recognise the special demands of rural health care and will:
- provide greater education and professional support to rural doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health professionals to reduce the pressure they are currently experiencing;
  - adopt a new approach to rural workforce education and training which acknowledges that the models of health care delivery in rural and remote areas are often quite different from metropolitan health services;
  - support programs that improve access to locum services for rural doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health professionals;
  - support incentive packages that are effective in encouraging doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other crucial health professionals to relocate and remain in rural and remote communities; and
  - promote cross-cultural training programs for rural health care workers to ensure indigenous Australians are appropriately cared for in mainstream health services.
56. Rural Australians suffer from asthma, diabetes, suicide, road accidents, injuries and coronary heart disease at significantly higher rates than their metropolitan counterparts. To address this inequity and to encourage greater emphasis on prevention, Labor's Rural Health Plan will include specific rural health promotion campaigns that target these preventable health problems.

57. Access to mental health services is difficult for rural and remote Australians. Labor is committed to developing and funding new models of delivering mental health services to rural communities. Specific efforts will be directed at reducing the number of youth suicides in rural communities.
58. **Tele-health** Labor will significantly expand access and improve decision-making processes for patients and health professionals through the encouragement of new technologies. The potential applications for tele-health in rural areas are significant particularly as a means of reducing the level of professional isolation experienced by rural and remote health workers.
59. Labor's Rural Health Plan will provide resources to significantly expand tele-health services. These new technologies will be used to complement the delivery of face-to-face services in rural areas rather than replace them.



### Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Health

60. Labor is greatly concerned that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have unacceptably poor health. They suffer a high burden of illness and die at a younger age than non-indigenous Australians, and too often do not have access to adequate health services.
61. Labor recognises that addressing the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requires a comprehensive approach looking beyond a focus on health services to include cultural well being and connection to the land, education, environmental health and employment and training opportunities. Labor recognises as essential the need for the Federal government to work with State and Territory and local governments to address environmental health issues including housing, water, sewerage and roads.
62. Labor recognises the critical importance of community control and direct involvement in planning and delivery of services to the success of health services for indigenous Australians. It is critical that we train Indigenous health workers and vastly increase the number of Indigenous health professionals.



63. Labor is committed to reduce the burden of premature death and disease on Australia's indigenous communities, aiming for equity in health status and life expectancy. This will require:
- a financial commitment;
  - a commitment to changing the way health services are delivered; and
  - most importantly, an overall approach to raise the employment, education and social circumstances that lie at the root of Indigenous health problems.
64. For a start, it will be necessary to increase health spending to achieve this goal, with an emphasis on provision of primary health care in remote, rural and urban communities. Special programs are needed to tackle particular problems such as renal failure and eye diseases. A particular opportunity exists to provide resources and education to expectant mothers to raise birth weights and lower mortality rates.
- Targeting Those In Need**
65. There is strong evidence that the overall level of community health will be improved, and the total cost of the health system minimised, if we focus more on preventive health measures and early intervention with those most at risk of developing an illness. Labor has therefore developed specific policy objectives to ensure that the special needs of various groups in the community are taken into account.
66. **Mental health.** Labor will provide integrated health, welfare, education and psychiatric services to Australians with mental health problems and in particular will:
- minimise the impact of mental health problems through effective health promotion and early intervention;
  - ensure that consultation with service users and providers plays a key role in the planning of mental health services;
  - ensure better coordination between mental health services and other services including aged care, social security, housing and justice to achieve better outcomes;
  - encourage the increased provision of appropriate community based services through coordinated mental health services including treatment, accommodation, employment and social support;
  - recognise the impact of social conditions on mental and emotional health and the large unmet needs for counselling and social support;
  - protect the civil liberties of persons subject to psychiatric committal; and
  - overcome gaps between State and Commonwealth services, particularly in family support and education where a family member receiving benefits also has a mental illness.
67. **Dental health.** The high cost of private dental services makes access to adequate dental care extremely difficult for many Australians. There is a need for Federal government involvement to ensure fair and affordable access to essential dental services. Labor is committed to restoring access to dental services for Australians on low incomes by:
- re-establishing a Commonwealth Dental scheme;
  - working with the States to reduce waiting lists and implement preventive dental health programs; and
  - working with dentists and health funds to curb the rapid growth in dental fees and keep treatment affordable
68. **Women's health.** Labor will develop a national policy on women's health that will encourage specific health services for women and will actively promote participation of women in health decision making and management.
69. Labor will extend the national screening programs for breast cancer and cervical cancer to achieve improved access for those groups not using these screening programs, especially those in rural areas, and non English speaking and Indigenous women.
70. **Men's health.** Labor will put resources into a national education program to raise men's awareness of a range of preventable health problems that disproportionately affect men and which result in generally poorer health



outcomes for Australian men. These include heart disease, suicide, lung cancer, prostate cancer and road accidents.

**71. Reproductive health.** Labor will:

- fund research into the prevention of infertility and fertility control and ensure that access to assisted reproductive technology programs is not determined by economic circumstances;
- provide universal access to fertility advice and control programs and advice on the safe use of contraceptives;
- ensure that a broadly representative body exists to advise governments and the community on monitoring, regulation and legislation related to reproductive technology, including cloning; and
- enforce a ban on the cloning of human beings.

**72. Maternal and child health services.** Labor will work with State and Territory governments to improve the delivery of maternal and child health services. In particular it will:

- ensure that benchmarks for the appropriate use of caesarean section and ultrasound are professionally developed and used to improve service delivery;
- improve the information available to mothers about the options available for childbirth;
- increase the accessibility of birthing centres;
- redirect resources into post birth health care services, which are currently under-resourced;
- ensure continuity of care is available after a baby is born; and
- implement special programs for Aboriginal mothers and babies, to reduce mortality rates and improve health.

**73. Young Australians.** Labor recognises the necessity of specifically addressing the health needs of young Australians, including:

- suicide prevention;
- drug and alcohol education;
- sexuality and safe sex practices;
- body image and eating disorders;
- promotion of a health lifestyle;

- long term nursing home type care required as a result of accident or illness; and
- family support and/or appropriate alternative social networks to help children in difficulty.

**74.** Labor recognises the importance of providing appropriate and accessible health services to young people while ensuring confidentiality.

**75. Migrant health.** Labor recognises that language and cultural differences need to be addressed to ensure fair and equal access to health services for all Australians. In particular, Labor recognises the need for interpreter services, culturally appropriate health services and health education messages in languages other than English.

**76. Palliative care.** Labor believes that every person should have access to quality palliative care when dying. People should be able to decide where they wish to die and to choose the extent of active treatment they want to prolong life as a terminal illness progresses. People have a right to relief of pain and suffering but there is a need for legal guidelines and safeguards to prevent abuse or wrongful actions.

**77.** Labor supports legislative measures to give each person a right to determine in advance the sort of medical treatment he or she wishes to receive, or not receive, in the event that he or she is ever in a condition that prevents them from expressing that wish.

## Acute Care—A Hospital System That Works



### Public hospitals

**78.** Labor is committed to giving the highest priority to the development and maintenance of a high quality, integrated, free public hospital system accessible to all Australians on the basis of clinical need.

**79.** Labor believes that governments at Federal, State and Territory level must substantially





increase their efforts to overcome difficulties with access to public hospitals, and to provide for increasing demand due to the ageing of the population and new medical technologies.

- 80. Emergency departments.** There is a strong community demand to end the long queues in emergency departments and the practice of leaving people on trolleys. Labor will work with the States and Territories to integrate low level emergency treatment services with primary care services available through Medicare and to develop standards for substantial reductions in delays for treatment and admission.

## Privatisation

- 81.** Labor opposes the privatisation of public hospitals on the grounds that Australian and overseas experience has shown that privatisation:
- does not lead to increased efficiency or effectiveness in the delivery of health services;
  - opens the way for the private operator to allow financial incentives to influence admission, treatment and hospital discharge patterns;
  - results in a loss of flexibility in the delivery of services and thereby increases the potential for additional costs;
  - results in governments relinquishing traditional democratic measures of accountability and replacing those measures with contractual accountability;
  - can lead to a reduction of services offered and selective treatment of patients;
  - reduces government control over the quality of services, leading to poorer quality of patient care; and
  - involves a number of inherent risks associated with the contract, including non-performance of contractual requirements, a change in operator ownership, insolvency, and litigation between the government and the operator.

## The private sector

- 82.** The private sector plays an important role in Australia to deliver services paid for through Medicare and to supplement this with other services that are paid for privately or covered by private health insurance. Labor recognises the role the private health sector can play to complement Medicare and remains committed to a balanced health system making best use of both public and private services.
- 83.** However, Labor opposes growth in the private sector at the expense of the public system. In particular private hospitals should not try to compete with public hospitals but should focus their efforts on complementing the services available through Medicare.
- 84.** Labor will establish an independent study to investigate the contracts and operation of privatised public hospitals and their effect on the Medicare Principles governing access and delivery of health services.
- 85.** Labor will assist private hospitals run by both not for profit and commercial organisations to provide services that complement Medicare. Where there are waiting lists at public hospitals for elective surgery that is within the capability of private hospitals Labor will examine tendering this work out.

## Private health insurance

- 86. Medibank Private.** Labor believes Medibank Private plays an important role as a market leader to hold down premiums and keep the private health insurance market competitive and consumer oriented. Medibank Private will therefore be retained in public ownership.
- 87.** The private health insurance industry offers commercial products to those who want additional services to those offered by Medicare. Labor believes the industry needs to be well regulated in the interests of





contributors. To overcome the current difficulties Labor believes the industry needs to:

- tackle the huge disincentive of gap payments;
- curb the rapid rise in premiums by controlling costs;
- offer simpler products with more value for consumers; and
- reform the industry structure to make it more efficient.

88. Specifically Labor will:

- urge funds to increase the proportion of policies that eliminate gap charges without increasing premiums. Doctors and other health professionals who charge gap fees will be required to disclose their additional charges prior to treatment;
- establish a Private Health Insurance Regulatory Authority to streamline regulation and promote modern management practices that benefit fund members;
- reform the reinsurance pool to remove the disincentives for funds to operate more efficiently and for the industry to restructure; and
- provide consumers with access to independent information and require funds to disclose rises in premiums. Funds will be required to simplify their products and produce a common features statement so that people can compare what policies offer.

89. The Private Health Insurance Ombudsman will be given additional powers and resources to investigate policy issues and to develop a Consumer Charter for the industry, setting minimum standards.

- improving the supply of all health professionals in rural Australia;
- developing strategies to improve recruitment and retention of nurses
- ensuring the numbers of medical specialists meet Australia's health needs; and
- increasing the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of the health workforce.

91. Labor will also address workforce issues related to safety and quality including:

- ending the practice of excessive working hours for young doctors;
- ensuring that a full range of supervised training opportunities are available to graduate doctors and that graduate doctors are not used to fill roles they are not trained for; and
- establishing programs to ensure all health professionals remain up to date with the latest health advances and technologies.



### Health and medical research

92. Labor will encourage innovative health and medical research to improve the health of all Australians, and will maintain Australia's reputation as a world leader in high quality, innovative, cost-effective research. In particular Labor will:

- deliver in full the Wills report recommendation that the Federal government double its research effort over a five year and ensure that other funding sources maintain or increase their effort during this period;
- establish a new career structure and pay scale for Australian medical researchers to encourage retention of our best researchers and to be internationally competitive;
- give priority to emerging international industries of the future such as biotechnology and genetic research;
- encourage private industry to increase its investment in Australian-based research and development; and
- work with stakeholders to establish

## A Stronger Health Sector



### Health workforce

90. Labor will work to ensure an appropriate supply and distribution of doctors, nurses and other health professionals with particular emphasis on:



comprehensive ethical guidelines developed specifically for public and private, general medical research and biotechnology/genetic research.

technologically advanced country with a reputation for high quality medicine, an opportunity to develop health care as a major export industry.

## Health industry

93. Labor recognises that demand for health services both in Australia and throughout the world will continue to grow through the twenty-first century. This growth, particularly in the Asia Pacific region offers Australia, a

94. Labor will develop a whole of government, coordinated health industry plan to promote Australian researched, developed and produced pharmaceuticals, bio-pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, medical technology and health services to both domestic and export markets. This industry offers scope for substantial skilled employment growth.

## Sport and Leisure

A1. Labor believes that the roles of government in sport and recreation are:

- to ensure all Australians have access to a wide range of sporting and recreational opportunities;
- to increase participation in physical and recreational activities to promote physical and mental health;
- to improve outcomes for public health through the promotion of healthy lifestyles and regular physical activity and other recreational pursuits; and
- to develop and support both grass roots and high performance athletes through the provision of infrastructure, resources and leadership.

A2. Labor will, through the Australian Sports Commission, and in consultation with Australia's sporting community, review post Olympics funding and establish appropriate criteria for the delivery of funding requirements to:

- provide appropriate policies and programs to better deliver sporting and recreational opportunities for all Australians;
- develop and enhance programs and facilities for the Australian Institute

of Sport that appropriately reflect our sporting abilities and needs; and

- assist highly talented athletes to pursue sporting excellence and gain international experience.

A3. Labor will examine alternative public and private sector funding options to supplement budgetary initiatives.

A4. In consultation with relevant sporting bodies, Labor will develop a model for Commonwealth government involvement in the provision of local, regional and national community sporting and recreation facilities, especially in rural and regional Australia where it is unprofitable to establish and maintain leisure or entertainment facilities.

A5. Labor recognises that the enhanced teamwork, communication skills, health benefits and interdependence that arises from sport are vital to young people's development. Labor will establish benchmarks to be met by local governments in the provision of coordinated funding for community sporting and recreation facilities that particularly address the needs of young people.



## Sport and Leisure

- A6.** Participation in sport and recreation provides public health benefits. Poor diet and lack of fitness are closely associated with major health problems, while lack of relaxation and enjoyment are associated with stress, anxiety and depression.
- A7.** Labor is committed to integrating the development of sport and recreation with its health policy and programs. Labor will develop mechanisms that direct resources into preventive health strategies that improve the overall health standard of the community by encouraging greater exercise and relaxation.
- A8.** Labor will encourage increased opportunities for participation, administration and coaching for a range of people, including those with disabilities and those involved in veteran and masters sport.
- A9.** Labor is committed to ongoing recognition and support for both Indigenous and disabled sport and will pursue funding options to ensure that appropriate programs, resources and facilities exist for Paralympic and disabled sport, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- A10.** Labor is strongly committed to raising the profile of women's sport. Labor will restore the Prime Ministerial Women in Sport Award, increase the profile of Womensport Australia, and undertake efforts to improve the coverage and portrayal of women's sport.
- A11.** Labor will provide support for the promotion of codes of sporting behaviour and development of workplace health and safety standards through consultation with other levels of government, Australia's sporting community and relevant organisations.
- A12.** Through adequate support for the Australian Sports Drug Agency and education programs, Labor will continue to work towards the abolition of all performance enhancing drugs in sport.
- A13.** Labor will ensure that all Australians have access to free-to-air television coverage of sport consistent with standards laid down in broadcasting legislation.



## Affordable Housing

### Labor's National Housing Strategy

95. Labor believes that all Australians have the right to secure, affordable and appropriate housing throughout their lifetime. Labor is committed to policies which make housing affordable:
- by economic policies designed to maintain low interest rates and a competitive housing finance sector; and
  - by assisting those on lower incomes to meet the cost of home ownership or public, community or private rental accommodation.
96. Labor's national housing strategy will:
- expand the range and supply of secure, affordable and appropriate housing choices;
  - deliver more efficient and effective housing provision and land development; and
  - better integrate housing and other services, to provide neighbourhoods that are safe to live in, and close to employment opportunities.
97. Labor supports the continued existence of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA). Through the CSHA, Labor's national housing strategy will be advanced by:
- setting targets, in cooperation with State, Territory and local governments, for growth in public and community housing, based on a national assessment of need;
  - the establishment of a National Housing Assistance Advisory Committee, which will involve peak representative bodies in program development;
  - ensuring that peak bodies are properly resourced to perform such functions.
  - setting housing affordability benchmarks for public and private tenants:
  - no public housing tenant should pay more than 25 per cent of his or her income in rent; and
  - rent subsidies for private tenants to be set closer to the level of subsidy for public tenants, to reduce housing related poverty in the private rental market;
  - monitoring the effectiveness of rent assistance in addressing housing affordability;
  - evaluating the contribution of relevant housing assistance and taxation policies in improving housing outcomes for low income consumers; and
  - monitoring the impact of the GST on rents in the private rental market, making appropriate modifications to housing assistance policies to adequately compensate private tenants for losses incurred as a result of the tax.
  - developing Commonwealth State housing agreements which contain a commitment to both medium term direct funding for new construction programs and to rent subsidies which will ensure housing is affordable for all tenants and which will ensure funds are available to increase capital stock;
  - introducing national tenancy standards that will provide for security of tenure and consumer safeguards for tenants including caravan park residents and boarders and lodgers. As a condition of funding under the CSHA, state and territory governments will be required to comply with national tenancy standards designed to protect tenants' rights. These standards will ensure that tenants' rights are protected in relation to matters such as eviction, unfair rents, repairs and maintenance, quality of rental accommodation, appeals and bond security;
  - developing a National Rental Housing Standards Code in consultation with non-government tenancy organisations. This code will outline best practice legislative standards required by the Federal Government.
  - ensuring that all states and territories have independent review mechanisms for resolving tenancy disputes with the power to overturn evictions, unfair rents, determine bond or rental disputes and refer matters for prosecution where necessary.



- supporting the regulation of tenant databases through stronger privacy protection including independent monitoring of compliance and access to affordable dispute resolution processes.
- supporting programs, which ensure that people are made aware of and can access the various forms of housing assistance which are available. Labor will ensure that consumer rights are protected and satisfactory standards are maintained for all low income housing consumers through adequate funding to housing consumer services.
- in cooperation with all levels of government, industry and unions developing a plan for the housing industry to increase its capacity to deliver a quality and cost effective product:
- seeking ways of providing assistance to low and moderate income households to buy their own homes;
- establishing frameworks that enable long term headleasing
- developing and implementing strategies that ensure a housing mix, such as community housing models and the encouragement of joint ventures with the private sector
- facilitating employment opportunities for tenants in public housing estates through TAFE training, maintenance work and management
- integrating community family services programs into public housing policies
- developing and implementing a national Indigenous housing strategy, recognising the special needs of indigenous housing policy, taking into account employment needs and the need for cultural compatibility.

**98.** Labor supports:

- a program of urban renewal of old public housing estates, to provide a greater range of housing choices, better integration with services such as public transport and an increase in private investment and employment opportunities;

developing mechanisms to encourage increased institutional investment in the provision of lower income housing, in partnership with social housing agencies;

- the development of appropriate community housing which links housing with other support and encourages residents' participation in housing management;
- improving the quality of the accommodation services provided in boarding houses;
- continuing and expanding crisis and emergency accommodation programs; and
- continuing and expanding high-security refuges for women and children escaping from family violence.



### Homelessness

- 99.** Labor recognises the growing problem of homelessness, and particularly youth homelessness, and that other problems, such as poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, psychiatric or other health problems, deinstitutionalisation, unemployment, family breakdown, or domestic violence, can contribute to or precipitate homelessness.
- 100.** Labor acknowledges the responsibility of governments to ensure that all Australians have access to adequate housing and that homeless people, and those at risk of homelessness, should receive particular attention in housing and broader social programs.
- 101.** Labor is committed to developing a national homelessness strategy in conjunction with State and territory governments.

Labor supports a three point approach to homelessness, the success of which depends on the participation and cooperation of all stakeholders:

- prevention;
- assistance to people once they become homeless; and
- supporting homeless people in their transition from crisis accommodation to more stable housing.



112. Labor is committed to the continuation of the supported accommodation assistance program and its capital arm, the crisis accommodation program. Labor will support diverse supported accommodation assistance program service models and the trialing of other innovative approaches to early intervention and assistance for homeless people, both while they are in crisis and in their transition to stable housing.

Labor supports a cooperative approach to the development of programs to assist people at risk of homelessness, involving service providers, all levels of government, and the organisations and institutions best placed to identify individuals at risk and to assist them.

113. In order to provide pathways for homeless people to move out of SAAP accommodation and into more permanent housing, Labor will ensure that:
- housing programs have clear and planned links with the SAAP program;
  - housing programs provide for long term housing support requirements in both public and private rental housing;
  - housing programs have the flexibility to offer a range of housing options suited to those at imminent and/or chronic risk of homelessness.
114. Labor supports programs which ensure that people know about and can access the various forms of housing assistance available, and will ensure that consumer rights are protected and satisfactory standards maintained in services targeted to homeless people.



### Youth Homelessness

115. Labor recognises that youth homelessness is a growing problem within the Australian community. To this end:
- Labor supports the implementation of a National Youth Housing Strategy, similar to that commissioned under the previous Federal Labor Government;
- The National Youth Housing Strategy will:
- detail strategies to address the pathways

into homelessness for young people (for example abuse, family breakdown, poverty, unemployment, discriminatory social policy); and

- detail strategies to provide pathways out of homelessness for young people;
- investigate how community housing can better assist young people to leave the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program and move into a more stable environment that will allow them to continue or resume education and/or participate in the labour market; and
- develop best practice models of community housing for young people needing to exit SAAP accommodation
- consider ways to encourage young people into home ownership

114. Labor recognises that the current Rent Assistance Program discriminates against young people because they receive lower rates of payment, despite facing similar rental costs to other adult singles. Labor will:
- review the allocation of Rent Assistance payments to young people in receipt of the Youth Allowance, as part of its commitment to improving rental subsidies for young people.



### Boarding Houses, Mobile Homes and Manufactured Home Parks

115. Labor notes that over 160,000 Australians live in boarding houses, mobile homes and manufactured home parks. These people are often retirees or those who cannot afford other accommodation. Refuge services also use caravan parks to provide emergency accommodation.

Labor in government will:

- examine ways to restore equity between the private rental market and permanent residents of caravan parks, boarding houses and manufactured home parks including discriminatory applications of taxation; and
- develop a National Boarding House,



Mobile Homes and Manufactured Home Parks Accommodation Standards Code in consultation with appropriate bodies, including peak advocacy and consumer groups.

## Security For Australian Families

- 116.** For most Australians, our families are our first and best source of care and support—the most important providers of housing, education, health, personal development and well being. They help us reach our potential, and nurture our individual and collective aspirations.
- 117.** Labor believes that government has a duty to support and assist families in these tasks, as an essential part of maintaining a caring Australian community.
- A strong, growing economy, secure jobs which provide a decent income, a safe environment and quality housing, health, education and community services are the foundations of families' security.
  - An investment in early assistance services for families with young children improves their life chances and reduces the incidence of educational, health and labour market disadvantage.
- 118.** Labor recognises that Australia's families do not all fit one pattern, and that the ways families are structured, and organise their lives, changes over time. Labor's policies will be flexible enough to meet the needs of different families at different times in their lives.
- Labor recognises rapidly changing economic and social circumstances place families under great stress, and will focus on policies aimed at minimising that stress.
- 119.** Labor will provide Australian families with the range of services and income support they need to live a decent life. In particular, Labor will
- support work practices and arrangements which recognise the needs of families and promote families' capacities to combine work and family life;
  - ensure that families are well informed about the services and payments available for them and that the help available is easy to access;
  - supplement family income where it is low and provide additional help where Australians and their families need it to meet additional costs in providing for children, and in meeting education, housing, health care and related needs;
  - ensure that the cash assistance that families with dependent children receive through the tax, social security and education systems provides families with the help they need, when they need it;
  - better integrate the income support and tax systems for families, to ensure that income tests and taxation do not combine to severely reduce the benefit of earnings;
  - deliver quality early assistance services to families with young children that address their educational, health and welfare needs and that aim to prevent or ease the difficulties families can face. Labor will support families' access to family and parenting education, early childhood services and family mediation services. Labor will provide couples entering relationships with access to counselling and marriage education programs;
  - encourage and assist families and local communities to develop their own strategies and responses to local and individual needs; and
  - support research on families issues to improve our understanding of how families are changing, the issues they face and the support they need.

## Child Care for All Australians

- 120.** Labor is committed to child care policies which support families in the different choices they make about how they balance gaining an income sufficient for their needs and aspirations, with caring for children.
- Labor's first concern is to ensure that children grow up in caring, stable and safe environments.





- Labor is committed to providing high quality, affordable and accessible formal child care, and to supporting families who choose to care for their children at home.
- 121.** Labor believes that the Federal Government should continue to play a central role in child care through planning to ensure that:
- the supply of places matches demand, including demand for places for babies and children at risk, for children with disabilities, and in outside-school-hours and vacation care services;
  - emerging needs for child care places are met, in line with changes in the way families balance their working and family lives; and
  - location and family incomes are not a barrier to accessing appropriate child care; and
  - the child care sector provides a continuing stable environment for children in communities.
- 122.** Labor will adequately fund the costs of child care, to ensure that quality child care is affordable for the families who choose to use it, and sufficient for child care providers to operate a viable quality service.
- 123.** Labor will ensure that care is provided by appropriately trained and caring staff whose wages and conditions reflect their training and their responsibilities.
- 124.** Labor will work with the States and Territories to develop an integrated system of child care and early childhood education, to ensure that all Australian children under school age have access to early childhood education and other appropriate developmental and social activities, provided in a safe environment.
- 125.** Labor recognises that parents want flexible child care which matches their many needs, and that families' needs for child care can vary.
- Labor will encourage the development of an appropriate mix of centre-based care, family day care, work based care, outside-school-hours and vacation care, and occasional care.
- Labor will support and maintain a viable community based sector through adequate and appropriate funding.
  - Labor will encourage and support the development of innovative models of child care which link child care to the provision of other services.
- 126.** Labor's child care policies will encourage all formal child care providers to involve parents in the management of child care services, and will support parents' involvement in the development and implementation of early childhood care and education policies.
- 127.** Labor will extend the national child care accreditation system to encourage the provision of high quality care and appropriate professional standards in all formal child care services.
- Labor will ensure that only users of accredited services are eligible for child care assistance.
  - Labor will work with State and Territory governments to ensure a consistent national framework for the regulation of child care providers.
- 128.** Labor will continue to support child care for children with special needs and children at risk.

### Child Support When Parents Separate

- 129.** Labor believes that child support policy must put the interests of children first, aiming to reduce child poverty, ensure that both parents contribute to their children's well-being and encourage both parents to maintain an ongoing role in their children's lives.
- 130.** Labor will maintain a nationally consistent and flexible Child Support Scheme which recognises factors such as variations in earnings and new family responsibilities, and which is administered by an appropriately resourced Child Support Agency within the Australian Taxation Office.
- 131.** Labor believes the best arrangements for providing for the children of separated parents are those agreed between parents, and will encourage those who establish a



good payment record to opt out of the scheme by agreement, where this is consistent with reasonable maintenance action.

- 132.** Labor will strengthen enforcement and compliance measures to ensure that parents cannot structure their financial affairs to minimise or avoid their child support obligations.

- 133.** Labor will regularly evaluate the Child Support Scheme's operation, and continue to improve the Scheme so it is easily understood, and provides parents with the support required to establish child support arrangements, including mediation services.



# chapter eleven

## Community Security And Access to Justice



### Community Safety and Criminal Justice

1. Labor believes that a fundamental objective of government is to work with the community to provide greater security for all Australians and their families. To achieve this, the objectives of the criminal law should be:
  - to prevent crime;
  - to protect the personal safety and property of all Australians;
  - to support, counsel and compensate the victims of crime, their families and dependents; and
  - to rehabilitate offenders.
2. Labor believes that the well being and safety of the community is a fundamental responsibility of government. An integral element of community safety is criminal justice. Labor is dedicated to providing the community with an effective criminal justice system, at all levels of government. Labor will ensure that the Commonwealth's investigation, prosecution, defence and judicial processes are separate, independent, adequately resourced and appropriately accountable. Labor will also pursue cooperation between the Commonwealth, States and Territories in developing uniform and coordinated approaches to criminal justice and community safety.
3. Labor will provide adequate resources to the Australian Federal Police, the National Crime Authority and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission to enable them to investigate Commonwealth offences, in particular corporate crime and fraud against the Commonwealth.
4. Labor's response to the tragedy of drug abuse and related crime will be comprehensive. Labor is committed to a strategy for dealing with illicit drugs that aims to improve safety in the community by reducing the level of drug-related crime; to reduce the spread of illness; to keep people alive and to find new ways to reduce the use of illicit drugs in our community.

Labor realises that an effective illicit drugs strategy must address all areas of drug use and have harm minimisation as its central element. Labor's illicit drugs strategy will support and promote:

- harm reduction through programs designed to tackle the health and social problems caused by drug use;



- national coordination and cooperation between governments;
  - State government initiatives, such as supervised injecting places, aimed at reducing the costs to the community of illicit drug use and which will provide access to counselling and rehabilitation and facilitate scientific and medical research;
  - the development of programs and strategies based on expert advice, the adoption of performance objectives and a coordinated approach to research;
  - purposeful law enforcement strategies, including the development of specialist drug courts and diversionary programs, designed to get drug users out of the traditional criminal justice system and into a comprehensive range of treatment, rehabilitation and support programs;
  - adequate funding of law enforcement agencies such as the Australian Federal Police, which aim to break drug smuggling and other crime organisations;
  - effective criminal and civil law reform aimed at deterring and punishing the professional criminal elements of the illicit drug trade;
  - demand reduction directed at reducing the number of people taking up illicit drug use through targeted education programs for young people and users, and a strengthening of community and family involvement in programs across Australia;
  - tackling the social dimension with programs to give young Australians hope and opportunity through employment, education and training and real life options, and which encourage greater support among family, friends and community networks; and
  - improving law enforcement at our borders and on the streets, increasing liaison and coordination with overseas law enforcement agencies, and reducing the profitability of the drug trade.
- For these strategies to work, all need to be effectively funded and supported by government. They must also be properly evaluated and researched.
5. Labor will continue to value the Australian Federal Police as the foremost commonwealth law enforcement agency. Labor will support initiatives and strategies which ensure that the crime fighting and investigation practices of the Australian Federal Police are modern, strategic and effective in combating criminal threats in the twenty first century.
  6. Labor acknowledges that the Australian Federal Police and the National Crime Authority must be effectively resourced in order to carry out the range of responsibilities required of Commonwealth law enforcement agencies.
  7. Labor supports measures that remove the profit which organised crime can make from illegal activities. Labor believes that where the appropriate authority can demonstrate, on the balance of probabilities, that assets are the result of criminal activity the onus should be on the owner of the assets to prove, on the balance of probabilities, that the assets were lawfully obtained.
  8. Labor supports law reform aimed at giving Commonwealth law enforcement agencies greater ability to investigate and apprehend criminals involved in drug trafficking and organised crime. Labor will review the National Crime Authority Act, and amend it as necessary so as to further this aim.
  9. Labor supports the establishment of independent anti-corruption authorities to oversee the investigative, prosecutorial and judicial processes. Labor will ensure that the National Crime Authority and the Australian Federal Police have appropriate independent complaints handling procedures.
  10. Labor supports the creation of national uniform criminal laws. These should include:
    - a criminal code;
    - a code of custody, sentencing and parole, with a specific section on juveniles;
    - evidence laws;
    - laws controlling the power of arrest and bail, in particular to strictly define the power to arrest without warrant and simplify the laws governing bail;
    - laws providing strict controls on the use of firearms and offensive weapons;



- drug laws;
  - national standards for dealing with spent convictions; and
  - national standards for dealing with victims of crime.
11. Labor will maintain and develop mechanisms designed to coordinate and enhance the efforts of Federal, State and Territory authorities engaged in the fight against crime. To this end, Labor will establish a joint parliamentary committee for the oversight of all National law enforcement agencies.
  12. Labor, while maintaining the principle of merit selection, will encourage the Australian Federal Police to recruit from a broad cross section of the Australian community, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women and people from non-English speaking backgrounds, as a means of achieving non-discriminatory and more effective policing practices.
  13. Labor will ensure that the training of members of the investigative, prosecution and judicial authorities, and those otherwise involved in the administration of the law, encourages the development of non-discriminatory and non-violent attitudes in the administration of the law. Labor supports the establishment of consultative mechanisms between investigating authorities and groups suffering from discrimination.
  14. Recognising that crimes such as drug importation, corporate crime and money laundering are increasingly interwoven with globalised commerce, Labor will support enhanced mechanisms for international cooperation including mutual assistance with overseas agencies and regulators.
- laws governing the compensation of victims of crime;
  - coordination across States and Territories of research and evaluation programs, the collection of data on victimisation rates, demographics, and victim needs, and the dissemination of information;
  - standards for the provision of support, counselling and rehabilitation services for the victims of crime;
  - laws providing for victim impact statements, the provision of witness support and information, and standards for the treatment of victims by the criminal justice system;
  - initiatives for reducing repeated victimisation including video conferencing;
  - particular emphasis on the needs of children and victims of sexual assault; and
  - promotion of alternative dispute resolution and restorative justice processes aimed at improving outcomes for both victims and offenders and reducing prospects of recidivism.
16. Labor will aim to minimise the trauma to victims of crime, and in particular the victims of sexual or family violence and abuse, during both the investigation of the crime and its prosecution. Labor will support programs and initiatives that are directed towards people from non-English speaking backgrounds, children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women, and the disadvantaged.

## Victims of Crime

15. Labor will develop national model legislation and program delivery standards for victims of crime, including:
  - a charter of rights for the victims of crime which builds upon the United Nations Charter of Victims Rights (Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power 1985);

## Rights of the Accused

17. As part of its commitment to the development of national uniform laws, Labor will work with the States and Territories to ensure that Australia is a civil and just society so that:
  - Persons accused of a criminal offence are not compelled to incriminate themselves;
  - Persons charged are given a fair and speedy trial;
  - Persons charged with serious criminal offences are provided with legal representation if they are unable to afford legal representation of their own;
  - Persons charged have a right to legal representation during questioning by



- investigating authorities and that such questioning is video taped; and
- Evidence obtained illegally or by improper investigative practice is generally inadmissible.

## Custody and Sentencing

18. Labor supports the development of a national uniform code of custody, sentencing and parole to optimise the rehabilitation of offenders and to ensure the just treatment of all prisoners in public and private prisons. The code will:
- ensure consistent, just and humane treatment of offenders and accused, and will support the appropriate use of non-custodial sentencing options;
  - prohibit the imposition of the death penalty;
  - conform with Australia's international human rights obligations;
  - prohibit mandatory detention regimes for juveniles;
  - adopt special measures to protect young people held in custody;
  - adopt special measures to prevent deaths in custody, particularly amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
  - provide innovative and stronger sentencing options to penalise corporate offenders with penalties designed to redress the harm caused to individuals and the community as a result of offences and to deter future offences;
  - remove imprisonment for the non-payment of fines except in cases of wilful default;
  - adopt international treaties allowing the repatriation of Australians in overseas prisons; and
  - develop consistency in sentences so that the judiciary retain a sufficient degree of appropriate discretion so as to enable sentences to be tailored to the circumstances of each individual case.
19. Labor supports the introduction of sentencing regimes that are purposeful and aim to divert juveniles away from the criminal justice system.

20. Labor will continue to oppose mandatory detention when applied to juvenile offenders or property offences, as it is discriminatory in practice and ineffective in reducing crime or criminality.

## The Causes of Crime and Crime Prevention

21. Restorative justice seeks to build a sense of community spirit and responsibility in the offender and aims to restore the victim and the community to their pre-offence state of security. Labor will promote the principles of restorative justice as a just and effective way to be tough on crime. Labor will support the introduction of programs that are consistent with victims rights, based upon restorative justice.
22. Labor will support ongoing research into, and consult with the Australian community in relation to, the causes of crime, the most effective ways of preventing crime, and methods of rehabilitating criminals and reducing recidivism.
23. Labor will inform Australians about the level and effect of crime so that Australians can acquire a better understanding of the causes of crime, its impact, the measures needed to address it and to reduce any fears that Australians may hold about crime in our society.

## Access To Justice

24. Access to justice requires reducing the cost of legal services and the removal of artificial barriers to justice. Labor will also seek to provide all Australians suffering from disadvantage, disability or discrimination with reasonable assistance and specialist services to enable them to have access to justice.
25. Labor will explore alternative and innovative models of justice administration and delivery to provide ease of access to regional, rural and remote Australians.
26. Labor will reassume a national leadership role with regard to legal aid in order to recreate an independent, adequately resourced national uniform system of legal aid.



27. Labor will continue to support general and specialist community-based legal services, recognise their advocacy role and further develop collaborative clinical legal education schemes with universities to the mutual advantage of both students and the community.
28. Labor acknowledges the many social and cultural dimensions of the Australian community, and the impact which this has upon understanding of and access to justice. Labor will ensure that Australians from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds are given access to information about their rights and responsibilities under the law, and the ways in which these rights and responsibilities can be fulfilled.
29. Labor will ensure the effective and efficient operation of the courts and tribunals by:
- providing adequate resources to the courts to allow the efficient, effective and timely resolution of disputes;
  - supporting the removal of unnecessary procedural impediments to prompt dispute resolution;
  - working with the States to overcome jurisdictional barriers to the delivery of effective and efficient justice;
  - ensuring access to small claims tribunals/courts for the resolution of appropriate disputes;
  - maintaining and enhancing the right to bring representative and group proceedings in federal courts and tribunals;
  - rejecting the application of the user-pays principle to court fees;
  - reviewing and monitoring court fees with a view to imposing court fees that do not act as a barrier to justice; and
  - ensuring provision of interpreter services
30. In order to enhance the accessibility of justice Labor will, without reducing the quality of access to the justice system:
- encourage the continued development of other affordable and simple primary dispute resolution mechanisms;
  - encourage the development of a community approach to dispute resolution;
  - encourage parties to conciliate or arbitrate disputes, where that is appropriate;
  - encourage the continued development of other cheap and simple primary dispute resolution mechanisms;
  - provide just and equitable taxation treatment of legal expenses;
  - promote the use of appropriate and transparent contingency fee arrangements; and
  - promote access to legal expense insurance schemes.
31. Recognising the importance of public duties owed by government to all Australians, Labor will provide relevant public interest advocacy groups with increased standing to enforce public duties.
32. Labor will establish and adequately resource an independent body to advise government on access to justice issues. The body will include representatives from the legal profession, the judiciary, other legal and related service providers, State and Territory governments and consumers.

## Children and the Law

33. Labor supports the protection of the rights of children whilst respecting the proper role of parents and other persons responsible for their welfare. Labor supports the use of programs to help Australians to become better parents and to enhance the life opportunities of their children.

Where appropriate, Labor will ensure that children have adequate and independent separate representation before the courts.

34. Labor supports the development of a national approach to children and the law, which will include:
- recognising the best interests of the child as a primary consideration;
  - a sentencing regime based primarily upon the principles of restorative justice;
  - standards for court procedures where children are involved as witnesses, victims or offenders;





- standards for support, counselling and rehabilitation services for child victims and offenders within the criminal justice system; and
- support for research into causes of juvenile crime.

35. Labor will work with foreign governments, international agencies, the States and Territories, and relevant community groups, to establish and maintain an integrated and effective response to paedophilia, child abuse and family violence.
36. Labor recognises that the way in which the criminal justice system treats juvenile offenders greatly influences whether they will commit further crime. Labor believes that incarceration of juveniles should be a last resort, and that all efforts should be made to divert children from long term involvement in the criminal justice system. To this end, Labor supports a review of the current Federal, State and Territory sentencing practices with respect to juveniles.
37. Labor will work with the States and Territories to develop a uniform national system for adoption.
38. Labor will establish a Children's Commissioner within the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

### The Government and Legislation

39. Government must play an active role in increasing awareness of, simplifying and reducing the cost of compliance with the law. Labor will take appropriate steps to ensure that legislation and legislative instruments are accessible to all Australians. In particular, Labor will ensure that all legislation and legislative instruments are:
- drafted in clear, simple and non-discriminatory language;
  - readily available to the public at the time of proclamation, including in printed form and via the Internet;
  - consolidated in a form which is accessible to both the profession and the public at a reasonable price and in an appropriate format; and
  - regularly reviewed and simplified.

40. Labor believes that substantive rights should be enshrined in legislation. Delegated legislation and other legislative instruments will be confined exclusively to administrative matters and should not be used to limit an individual's rights to access the courts. All legislative instruments should be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.
41. Labor will establish a mechanism for the development of uniform national laws in the Attorney-General's and justice portfolios.

### The Courts and the Judiciary

42. Labor believes in the maximum possible uniformity in the structure and operation of the courts system throughout Australia.
43. The independence of the judiciary is fundamental to the maintenance of both the rule of law and our democratic society. Labor will:
- consult widely in appointing judicial or quasi-judicial office holders on the basis of merit, from among those with the highest personal and professional qualities. Labor's appointment process will be transparent and as far as practicable will seek to reflect the diversity of Australian society by including meritorious appointments from traditionally unrepresented groups such as women, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
  - encourage the judiciary to participate in appropriate professional development programs including programs on gender, race and other relevant issues;
  - support the dismissal of judges only for proven misconduct or incapacity.
44. Labor believes that the courts should be accountable and managed efficiently, and will work with the judiciary to develop means to ensure that the judicial system is efficient, accessible and accountable, including the use of benchmarking to evaluate and improve the delivery of services by courts to the public.



## The Legal Profession

45. The legal profession plays a fundamental role in the provision of access to justice. To this end, Labor supports the creation of a modern, efficient and accountable national legal services market. In particular, Labor will work with the legal profession, the judiciary and the States and Territories to:
- Create an independent, national, unified legal profession, regulated by an independent body so as to be fully accountable;
  - Abolish the distinction between barristers and solicitors;
  - Develop and maintain independent complaint mechanisms through which the interests of consumers and the community are represented;
  - Abolish any anti-competitive practices engaged in by the legal profession except where those practices are in the public interest;
  - Remove restrictions which prevent legal practitioners from incorporating, providing complementary non-legal services and advertising their services, or non-legal corporate entities from offering legal resources by employing qualified practitioners, subject to the protection of the interests of consumers and the community;
  - Establish uniform and mutually recognisable qualifications for entry to the profession;
  - Abolish the practice of some judges and members of the legal profession of wearing wig and gown; and
  - Abolish the title of King's or Queen's Counsel.
46. Labor will work with the legal profession to promote equality of opportunity and to seek to eliminate discrimination within the profession.
47. Labor will work with the legal profession, the judiciary and the States and Territories to:
- Review and simplify all fee scales to ensure that they reflect the true value of work performed by the legal profession;

- Establish fee scales as benchmarks above which lawyers may not charge without the express written agreement of their client; and
- Gather and disseminate information to consumers about the reasonable cost of legal services.

48. Labor will work with the judiciary and the legal profession to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to minimise the level of abuse of the legal process.

## Key Issues In Law And Justice

### Law Reform

49. Law reform is essential to ensure that the law reflects the traditions, values and aspirations of all Australians. Law reform also ensures that our laws meet the needs of our modern democratic society.
50. Labor will seek to engage as many Australians as possible in issues of law reform so that our laws and legal system reflect the traditions, values and aspirations of all Australians.
51. Labor will provide adequate support and resources to law reform bodies, including the Australian Law Reform Commission, to enable them to provide independent and comprehensive advice on all aspects of law reform and to consult as widely as possible with the Australian people.

### Privacy and Free Speech

52. Labor believes in the protection of the individual's right to privacy. In particular, Labor will:
- legislate to extend the operation of privacy protection to cover both the public and private sectors in accordance with international privacy principles and the best international standards;
  - maintain regulation of the use, collection and dissemination of information about



individuals by financial, insurance and credit organisations;

- prohibit the use of telecommunications interception and listening devices unless approved by judicial warrant or subject to appropriate administrative review;
  - provide that evidence obtained by illegal invasion of privacy is generally inadmissible; and
  - examine the privacy implications of emerging technologies.
53. Labor will ensure that all Australians have reasonable access to their personal records and the right to correct false or misleading information contained therein.
54. All Australians enjoy the right to freedom of speech. However, this freedom must be exercised in a manner that respects the individual and collective rights enjoyed by other Australians.
55. In this regard, Labor believes it is appropriate to protect the reputation of others through uniform national defamation laws that ensure a proper balance between freedom of expression and the protection of the reputation of others.
56. Labor believes that adults should be entitled to read, hear and see what they wish in private and in public, subject to adequate protection against persons being exposed to unsolicited material offensive to them and preventing conduct exploiting, or detrimental to the rights of others, particularly women and children.
57. Labor is particularly concerned about the portrayal of violence on television and in films, videos, the internet and video games. Labor will ensure that appropriate controls are in place to protect all Australians and will conduct research into the impact of the portrayal of violence on our society.
58. While recognising security organisations are required to prevent espionage and terrorist activities, their powers need to be properly regulated to ensure that the basic human rights of Australians are not undermined. The activities of all security organisations should be subject to an appropriate complaints mechanism and independent external review.



## Family Law

59. Labor believes that the family is the fundamental unit of society. Labor will provide support to Australians to help them to have happy, secure and productive family lives.
60. Labor believes that community based services aimed at preventing marital and family breakdown, such as relationship education, family skills training, marriage preparation and marriage counselling and adolescent and family mediation, should be a priority and readily available.
61. Labor believes that the resolution of family disputes should focus on counselling and mediation with litigation as a last resort. The resolution of disputes should focus on keeping families together, where it is appropriate. Labor will provide affordable Family Court based counselling and mediation services.
62. Labor will continue to develop and implement measures to ease the anxiety and stress of marital and family breakdown. In particular, Labor will ensure that:
- the rights of children are paramount, in particular their right to support from and contact with both parents and contact with members of their extended family;
  - there is a just and equitable division of matrimonial property;
  - appropriate protections are in place in cases of actual or apprehended family violence or abuse;
  - the particular needs, customs and practices of the diverse cultures which constitute Australian society are appropriately respected;
  - family law disputes are resolved in a timely, effective and affordable way; and
  - the family court system is accountable to the people who use it and are affected by it.
63. Labor believes that family law should apply in a consistent and uniform way to de facto relationships and be under the jurisdiction of the Family Court.



64. Labor supports the continuation of independent sources of advice to, and research for, government on family matters.
65. Labor will review the operation of the Federal Magistracy to determine whether it should be integrated with the Federal and Family Courts to provide a less expensive, quicker and more efficient resolution of less complex matters.

### Family Violence and Abuse

66. All Australians are entitled to live safe from family violence and physical and emotional abuse. Labor will:
- Provide a uniform national mechanism to help protect Australians against family violence and abuse;
  - Support the establishment of a national database to record and advise authorities of family violence and abuse orders;
  - Ensure access to legal assistance and community services for people escaping family violence and abuse;
  - Conduct research and education to counteract the effects of family violence and abuse; and
  - Ensure women and children escaping from family violence have access to high-security refuges with skilled staff to support them.

### Administrative Law

67. Labor will ensure that government is accountable through appropriate freedom of information legislation and by providing mechanisms for all government decisions to be subject to independent administrative review or judicial challenge. Labor will ensure that the law of standing does not inhibit access to administrative justice.
68. Labor will ensure that the provision of public services by the private sector does not diminish the rights of Australians to freedom of information and administrative review or judicial challenge.

69. Labor will seek to establish a uniform national administrative law system that complies with the highest standards of accountability.
70. Labor will continue to maintain an adequately resourced independent body to provide advice to government on the effectiveness of Australia's administrative law system.

### Business Law

71. Labor supports the maintenance of national companies and securities legislation regulating companies, company takeovers, the futures industry and the securities industry to ensure a rational framework for business, its public accountability, the protection of consumers, workers, investors and shareholders and the prevention of anti-competitive practices.
72. Labor will continue to simplify corporate laws in order to reduce unnecessary costs to business and the community while maintaining protection for consumers, workers, investors and shareholders.
73. Labor will review Australia's corporate law to ensure that it adequately provides for the democratic control of corporations and the accountability of company officers, including the disclosure of senior executives' salaries.
74. Labor will work with the States and Territories, the business community and consumer representatives to develop a national business and commercial law to underpin the development of our national economy and to increase the international competitiveness of Australian business. The national law will seek to establish uniform national laws for commercial transactions and the incorporation of non-corporate business structures, while ensuring international best practice consumer protection laws and such other matters as are agreed. Consistent with Australia's close economic relationship with New Zealand, Labor will work with that country if it wishes to participate in Australia's uniform national scheme. If necessary, Labor supports constitutional reform to bring about this objective.



75. Labor will strengthen remedies and penalties to help prevent the practise of establishing phoenix companies.
76. Labor believes that bankruptcy laws should provide an inexpensive and quick determination of the rights and obligations of bankrupts. Labor will ensure:
- maximum possible returns to creditors;
  - that bankruptcy trustees can effectively recover property disposed of by bankrupts in an attempt to defeat creditors; and
  - that small debtors have access to negotiated voluntary alternatives to bankruptcy.
77. Labor will work with the States and Territories to re-design Australia's national uniform Corporations Law to bring all matters falling within the scope of the Commonwealth's constitutional power to legislate in respect of corporations within a Commonwealth enactment. This will largely alleviate, for business, the inability of the States to cross-vest matters into the Federal courts. Labor will also seek the consent of the States to allow the Commonwealth to legislate for the formation of companies.
80. Labor supports a review of the criminal and civil laws relating to fraud, the range of civil penalties available, and possible reforms to the complexity and length of the trial process.
81. Labor will work with the States and Territories, the courts and the profession to export Australian legal services to the world. In particular Labor will, through multilateral and bilateral negotiations, seek to reduce and eliminate inappropriate trade barriers to the export of the legal services of Australian firms.
82. Labor will work with our universities to promote our high standards of legal education to overseas students.

## Legal Services in the Global Market

## EMPOWERING CONSUMERS

## Fraud Control Policy

78. Labor will be vigilant in efforts to eradicate fraud against the Commonwealth, particularly in light of the increased opportunities for fraudulent activity which have arisen from outsourcing and technological changes.
79. Labor supports the development of a fraud control policy which:
- is applicable to modern public service conditions and technological changes;
  - has a comprehensive, all of government application;
  - focuses on developing public sector expertise in preventing and combating fraud;
  - involves the private sector; and
  - acknowledges the primary role of the Australian Federal Police in conducting fraud investigations.
83. Labor is committed to consumer sovereignty. Consumer sovereignty is enhanced by competitive and fully informed markets, balanced by effective regulation to protect consumers from unsound goods, services or practices.
84. Labor is committed to effective lifetime consumer education starting at school. It is through education that all Australians can be empowered as consumers.
85. Labor is committed to effective consumer protection measures at the national and international level. Labor supports unified, consistent, simplified consumer laws and redress mechanisms throughout Australia.
86. Labor is committed to effective product labelling to ensure consumers can make informed choices. Food should be labelled to ensure consumers know both the ingredients and processes used. Labor supports food standards that guarantee minimum compositional requirements for popular foodstuffs such as ice cream and meat-pies. Labor also supports the comprehensive labelling of genetically modified food.
- Labor will strengthen country of origin labelling laws to ensure that products



labelled "Made in Australia" are predominantly manufactured in Australia, and that the "Product of Australia" label is only used on products which are wholly made in Australia.

- 87.** Financial markets offer many new opportunities for consumers but are also becoming increasingly complex. So that consumers can make informed financial decisions Labor supports:
- the full and transparent disclosure of all fees, charges, interest rates, risks and returns;
  - the introduction of truth in lending laws to provide consumers with effective interest rates;
  - advice about all available professional evaluations;
  - an end to unconscionable fees and charges; and
  - up-front display of transaction fees at ATMs.
- 88.** Consumers are entering a new economic era where goods and services are increasingly available in highly deregulated and complex markets. Labor will conduct an urgent audit of our existing regulatory structures to ensure that consumers are adequately protected in this new environment. The audit will include consultation and input from relevant industry and community organisations, including the relevant trade unions and whether:
- the existing regulatory structures need to be redesigned to better protect consumers in the new economy;
  - voluntary industry codes of conduct offer adequate protection to consumer interests in the new economy; and
  - the Commonwealth's Trade Practices Act needs further amendment to outlaw unfair consumer contracts.
- 89.** Labor will ensure that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is adequately resourced to protect the interests of consumers, in areas such as price monitoring, industry codes and pursuit of legal action against organisations in breach of consumer legislation.


- 90.** Labor supports a strong consumer voice in government and will ensure that consumers are properly represented in policy processes and that all consumer advocates on government bodies are genuine representatives of Australian consumers.
- 91.** Services such as mobile phones and the Internet are increasingly essential to full participation in the economy. To protect consumers in these new growth areas, Labor supports the implementation of:
- cooling off periods in consumer Internet and mobile phone contracts;
  - an end to unconscionable fees and charges in consumer Internet and mobile phone contracts
  - strict standards to protect consumers engaging in electronic commerce consistent with international best practice standards.

## Protecting Travellers

- 92.** In relation to aviation safety, Labor will:
- ensure that security at Australian airports and in planes flying in Australia is maintained at the highest possible standards;
  - maintain the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), Airservices Australia and Bureau of Air Safety Investigation in their present forms, and ensure that they have access to adequate funds and resources; and
  - continue the review of regulations and internal CASA reforms designed to streamline procedures, ensure public accountability, concentrate resources on the safety enforcement task and ensure the strict enforcement of safety regulations.
- 93.** In relation to maritime safety, Labor will:
- ensure that the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and equivalent State organisations maintain strict maritime safety regimes; and



- protect the marine environment by adequately resourcing AMSA to combat 'ships of shame', and to maintain strict regulatory regimes governing pilotage, discharges at sea and other matters critical to marine environmental protection.
- 94.** In relation to rail safety, Labor will:
- consult with rail operators, users and unions with the aim of upgrading Australia's rail safety efforts in order to accommodate the proliferation of operators arising from privatisation and/or vertical separation;
  - enhance the role and functions of the Rail Safety Unit in the Australian Transport Safety Bureau to recommend strategies to improve the safety of the national rail network; and
  - develop a modern regulatory and enforcement regime.;
- 95.** In relation to road safety, Labor will:
- continue the process of developing uniform national road transport regulations, and ensure that the regulations regarding driving hours and loads protect the health and safety of drivers, including concerns about driver fatigue and the interests of the general public;
  - continue to develop e-transport strategies and actions to improve road safety, reduce emissions and traffic delays and to make our transport systems more sustainable and user-friendly;
- develop strategies to reward road transport operators and drivers who fully comply with regulatory and health and safety requirements, and penalise operators and drivers for regulatory and health and safety breaches; and
  - strengthen the Federal Office of Road Safety, and restore its public education function, improve the national data base on road fatalities and injuries, and require vehicle manufacturers to release crash test data.



### Environment and the Law

- 96.** Labor believes that every individual has a right to a clean environment and that government has a responsibility to protect the environment.
- 97.** The environment is a national asset. Labor recognises that environmental issues cross State boundaries and require national leadership and will:
- work with the States and Territories to achieve best outcomes in the national interest;
  - assess the environmental and social impacts of all legislation and agreements entered into by the government; and
  - establish an independent commissioner for the environment.





# chapter twelve

## Human Rights and Equal opportunity for all Australians

### Key Issues In Human Rights

#### Basic Principles

1. Respect and support for internationally recognised human rights is fundamental to an equal, just, democratic and tolerant society, and inherent to the dignity of each and every Australian.
2. Human rights are enjoyed not only by individuals but collectively by all Australians.
  - Respect for the individual and collective rights of others is essential to the protection and promotion of human rights.
3. Human rights are essential for the maintenance and enhancement of democracy and peace. Labor wants Australia to reassert its role as world leader in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights both domestically and internationally.
4. Labor believes that all Australians have a right to equality before the law, to the due process of the law, to protection against discrimination, to freedom of thought, conscience, speech, association, religion and peaceful assembly.
5. Labor will continue to support a properly funded Human Right and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) as an independent body advising on, and inquiring into, the protection and advancement of human rights in Australia.
6. Labor will co-operate with the States and Territories to ensure that comprehensive and consistent human rights protection and enforcement mechanisms are available to all Australians.
7. Labor supports both the promotion of human rights internationally and the development of international standards and mechanisms for the protection and enforcement of these rights.
  - Labor will adhere to Australia's international human rights obligations and will seek to have them incorporated into the domestic law of Australia.
8. An awareness and understanding of the human rights enjoyed by all Australians is essential to their maintenance and protection. Labor will promote an awareness and



understanding of human rights that should be enjoyed by all Australians and provide education to all Australians about the significance of, and the need to respect, human rights.

### Constitutional recognition

9. As a means of building community confidence in the constitutional recognition of the rights enjoyed by all Australians. Labor will introduce a legislative Charter of Citizenship and Aspirations.
10. Labor supports constitutional reform to achieve a comprehensive recognition of the rights enjoyed by all Australians.
  - These inalienable rights also carry with them a responsibility to respect the individual and collective rights enjoyed by others and the need to protect and promote institutions and practices fundamental to an equal, just, democratic and tolerant society.

### Discrimination

11. Labor supports legislative and administrative action by all Australian governments to eliminate discrimination, including systemic discrimination, on the grounds of race, colour, sex, religion, sexuality, disability, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
12. Where necessary, Labor will take special measures designed to achieve equality and eliminate the effects of both historic and contemporary discrimination.
13. Labor recognises the right of all Australians to live and work in an environment free from vilification or harassment, and will provide an accessible and effective means for all Australians to protect themselves from such behaviour.
14. Labor supports the enactment of comprehensive age discrimination legislation.

15. Labor supports the protection of the rights of children whilst respecting the proper role of parents and other persons responsible for their welfare.
16. Labor supports the appropriate protection of the religious freedom of all Australians.
17. Labor supports the enactment of legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of a person's sexuality.
18. Labor recognises the right of those Australians living in rural, regional and remote communities to receive adequate levels of essential services in areas such as access to justice, health, education, housing and employment.

### Women: Making Equality Real

19. Labor is concerned that women remain concentrated in lower paid and lower skilled jobs. Women are more likely to work part time, more likely to experience periods out of the labour force, and more likely to require support to balance work and family responsibilities throughout their life times. To address these issues, Labor will implement measures to:
  - further reduce and ultimately eliminate the earnings gap between male and female workers;
  - further reduce occupational segregation;
  - ensure that women receive equal access to educational and training opportunities and ensure that women are encouraged and assisted to take up these opportunities;
  - ensure women equal access to opportunities within the workplace, specifically to promotions and career development;
  - ensure that women have access to adequate retirement income, with a particular focus on increasing women's superannuation contributions;



- recognise and value women's unpaid work, particularly caring and volunteer work;
  - develop specific programs to support women to better balance work and family responsibilities, in particular high quality, flexible and affordable child care and before and after school care;
  - promote changes to both the industrial relations system and labour market programs that improve women's access to employment and to their conditions of employment;
  - provide strong mechanisms to redress sexual harassment;
  - recognise the particular issues faced by women in rural, regional and remote areas and seek to address inequalities of access to communication services, transport, training and employment; and
  - recognise the particular issues faced by women of non English speaking backgrounds and ensure government policies and programs are accessible and appropriate to their needs.
20. Labor will:
- strengthen and improve the Sex Discrimination Act and the powers of the Commissioner to protect women against discrimination on the basis of gender;
  - ensure the unfair taxation system introduced by the Coalition is made fairer for women;
  - invest in the Knowledge Nation so that women are provided with equal opportunities to improve their skills and their life opportunities by getting a better education.
21. Labor will provide the necessary support services which enable women to balance work and family responsibilities so that they can participate fully in the life of the community.
22. As women are the major users of health and community services, Labor will:
- ensure that health, housing, child care, aged care, and other community services are of high quality and affordable;
  - support the rights of women to determine their own reproductive lives, particularly the right to choose appropriate fertility control and abortion;
  - ensure that women have a choice regarding their reproductive lives on the basis of sound social and medical advice;
  - strengthen programs that assist women escaping family violence;
  - provide assistance to carers, including carers in the workforce; and
  - support the development of local and accessible justice, health and community service programs tailored to meet the needs of women living in rural, regional and remote Australia.
23. Labor will pay particular attention to keeping women and families out of poverty, acknowledging that women of all ages and their dependent children comprise the majority of Australians who live below the poverty line, as well as the majority of social security beneficiaries. Labor will continue to help families lift their living standards by:
- Providing income support and health and community services to reduce the number of women and their children living in poverty;
  - linking the provision of these services more directly to employment and training opportunities so that women can improve their living standards over their life time;
  - reducing the tax and social security penalties that apply when many women return to work or increase their hours at work; and
  - ensuring that labour market programs of proven benefit to women are maintained and extended.

## A better balance between work and family

24. Labor will implement measures to:
- encourage employers to provide more family friendly workplaces, including the provision of family leave, paid maternity leave and family facilities;
  - improve the affordability and accessibility of quality childcare, before and after school care, particularly at or near workplaces;
  - provide greater support for pregnant and breastfeeding women in the workplace;



- encourage greater flexibility in the delivery of social security payments so that families can afford to have one parent stay at home in the early years of child's life;
- promote greater acceptance that women and men will temporarily interrupt their careers for parenting duties and reduce the indirect costs such as loss of benefits and uncertain or reduced employment status associated with these breaks; and
- target social and economic policies to the different needs of families as they pass through each life stage.

### A better deal from federal government

25. To improve the quality of government decision making as it relates to women, Labor will:
  - Introduce annual audits by an independent agency of the impact of specific Labor Government policies on women. These audits will be conducted in partnership with the Office of the Status of Women and will be made publicly available.
26. Labor will support and encourage women to contribute to the development and implementation of policies that affect their lives, and will fund organisations to advocate for women.
27. Labor will strengthen the Office of the Status of Women.
28. Labor will increase the representation of women in Parliament, and will continue efforts to increase the number of women at senior levels in both the public and private sectors.

### Young Australians: Consultation And Inclusion

29. Labor recognises that young people are a diverse group with different needs and aspirations. Labor will develop policies which are mindful of the services and support required by young people, and which take into account the forces which impact upon young Australians and shape their environment—including socio-

economic disadvantage, technological change, shifts in employment patterns and, in some cases, child neglect and abuse.

30. Labor will pursue a positive and integrated youth agenda which recognises and values the strengths, contributions and resources of young people, and which works to redress the problems they face.
31. Labor's education strategies will ensure that young Australians have high levels of literacy and numeracy, and the confidence, flexibility and maturity to contribute to, and participate in, our nation's economic, social, cultural and technological development.

The role of education in preparing young people for the employment market, including the exploration of career paths, development of job interview skills, workplace responsibilities and the rights of the employee, cannot be overstated. Such jobfocussed education should be available through a wide range of outlets including schools, community groups and other convenient and youth accessible mediums such as the internet.

32. Labor's approach to employment and job security for young people entering the workforce will enhance the employment pathways of young Australians. The 15-19 age group requires relevant school to work transition programs, expanded work experience opportunities and work orientated careers education in secondary schools. It is also the target group for apprenticeships and traineeships.
  - Given structural changes in the economy and the greater flexibility which is demanded of the workforce, a commitment of both government and individuals to lifelong education and training is required to ensure that young workers can shift effectively into growth sectors of the economy.
  - Unless young people are given greater certainty about their post-secondary pathways, they will inevitably lower their ambitions, and Australia will become a much weaker nation for this loss of ambition among its young citizens.



33. Labor will provide the support and assistance needed by young people at risk of not successfully making the transition to economic independence. Labor will invest in programs to assist young people who face barriers to participation and will integrate employment development for young people into its regional job creation programs.
34. Labor recognises the need to specifically address the health needs of young Australians, including physical and or mental health issues, drug and alcohol education and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Labor will adopt an integrated health based approach to youth suicide that works with existing community structures. Part of this approach will include strategies to address contributing factors such as depression, child abuse, drug and alcohol problems, access to firearms and discrimination.
35. Labor will seek to address the whole problem of youth homelessness, recognising the interconnection of employment and education opportunities and the need for a voice in the community for young people. Labor recognises the higher incidence of physical assault among young homeless men, and of sexual assault among young homeless women and the need for this to form a central element of service provision.
36. Labor recognises the need for the reinstatement of a peak youth representative body in order to facilitate a direct voice to government for youth service organisations, and to coordinate a national network of autonomous youth services. In addition to this, Labor will examine ways of improving the access of young people to make recommendations to government across all portfolio areas.
37. Labor will seek to establish a meaningful dialogue between young people and the government through the establishment of a specialised office on children and youth affairs.
- This office will have the responsibility for developing a coordinated strategy for, and analysing policies arising from, different portfolios for impacts on children and young people.
38. Labor will review the current citizenship rights extended to youth, including suffrage, discrimination and representation in the policy making process, and seek to extend these rights where they respond inadequately to young people's needs and legitimate aspirations.
39. Labor will establish a Children's Commissioner within the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission.
- ## Indigenous Australians: The Way Forward
- ### Basic Objectives
40. Labor believes that indigenous Australians must be able to:
- exercise and enjoy the fundamental human rights to which all Australians are entitled;
  - exercise and enjoy the distinct rights which attach to indigenous Australians as a group, as descendants of the original owners of this continent;
  - share in and contribute to the economic and social advantages available to all Australians as citizens of a first world nation;
  - exercise their right to self determination within the Australian nation;
  - exercise and enjoy their unique cultures; and
  - share with other Australians the real, practical benefit of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.
41. Reconciliation is fundamentally important to Australia's capacity to face the next century as a united, peaceful, proud and just nation. Labor will continue to pursue reconciliation with the aim of achieving a lasting settlement between Indigenous people and other Australians.



## Guiding Principles

42. Labor is committed to the spirit of the 1967 Constitutional amendment that gave the federal Parliament the power to make laws for the benefit of indigenous Australians. The position of Indigenous people must be seen as a national commitment.
43. Labor is committed to indigenous institutional reform involving the role of Native Title Representative Bodies, Native Title Bodies Corporate, emerging regional authorities and other existing incorporated bodies to ensure that Indigenous people are in the best position to negotiate the enjoyment of their rights and self-determination arrangements
44. Economic development is a key to achieving improved social and economic outcomes and self determination for indigenous Australians as a lasting reality.
45. Labor will pursue a partnership arrangement with Indigenous people in a 'whole of government' approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Labor will pursue new agreements involving Indigenous people, Federal, State and local governments in relation to the delivery of both mainstream and Indigenous specific programs.
46. Design and delivery of programs and services, together with accountability measures, must be results based and outcome oriented, incorporating needs-based resource allocation.
  - Labor will set targets and time frames for the achievement of outcomes as the basis for measuring the progress of government policy.
47. Labor will work towards negotiated, comprehensive regional agreements that address a range of areas including land issues, heritage protection, economic development, cultural support and service delivery. Programs and services must be delivered in a culturally appropriate manner. To the greatest extent possible, Indigenous people must have control over the initiation, development and delivery of policy, programs and services. This control

must be exercised from the local community level in conformity with the principle of self determination

48. Labor will work to overcome the misunderstanding in the broader community as to the root causes of Indigenous Australians' disadvantage. That misunderstanding presents one of the most critical obstacles to the achievement of the primary objectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy.
49. Accountability must apply with equal rigour to all agencies expending public funds in this area. Accountability requirements will be designed to assist Indigenous-controlled organisations to achieve target outcomes. State, Territory and local governments will be held accountable for outcomes in areas for which they are responsible, and for programs using Commonwealth sourced funding.



## Land Rights

50. Dispossession is critically related to the contemporary circumstances of indigenous Australians. Land holds a unique spiritual and cultural significance for indigenous Australians.
51. Access to land and security of title are essential to enable Indigenous Australians to fully exercise their economic, social and cultural rights.
52. Wherever possible, land use issues will be resolved through negotiations directed towards achieving workable, lasting co-existence.
53. Native title is a property right recognised by the common law of Australia. Native titleholders are entitled to the full protection of the law in exercising their rights.
54. Labor believes that many of the 1998 amendments to the Native Title Act are unjust, unworkable and open to legal challenge. Labor will defend, preserve and build upon the mechanism embodied in the Native Title Act of 1993 for the constructive and lasting resolution of land issues arising from the Mabo Decision. It recognises that both practical considerations and further court decisions in this emerging area of legal understanding will



necessitate refinement of this legislation in the future. Labor remains committed to the development and delivery of the Social Justice Package promised to Indigenous representatives as part of the negotiated package in 1993.

55. Labor will encourage the negotiation of regional agreements between non-Indigenous land users, governments and native titleholders. Under the regional agreements framework, native title will be the catalyst for lasting, integrated solutions to the economic and social challenges faced by regional Australia.
56. Education for all Australians about the significance and value of native title is essential to realising the benefits of native title for all Australians.
57. Statutory land rights regimes have provided the foundations for economic, social and cultural development in many Indigenous communities throughout Australia. Labor will build upon that success.
58. Labor reaffirms, as the basis for the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, the principles of the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission (Woodward Report), which include:
  - The rights of traditional owners in relation to access and development on their land;
  - Protection of sacred sites; and
  - The existence of adequately resourced Land Councils with statutory responsibilities for the representation and protection of Aboriginal interests in relation to land.

## Health

59. Labor acknowledges the wide disparity between the health status of indigenous Australians and the general Australian community. Labor recognises that within the Indigenous population health needs vary depending on a number of factors including geographical location, gender, age and experience of health service provision.

60. Labor recognises the problems Indigenous people face in accessing health services. Programs will best serve the health needs of indigenous Australians if they are included in the formulation, establishment and ongoing delivery of such programs. Culturally sensitive and appropriate health programs will be more accessible and effective for indigenous Australians.

61. Health services formulation directed and delivered with a regional focus, that take into account intra-community differences and variance of age, gender, and health provision experience, will best tackle the diverse health problems within Indigenous communities.
62. There is a fundamental link between the health status of indigenous Australians and all other aspects of their disadvantage. Labor is committed to a continually monitored reduction of mortality and morbidity indicators to levels comparable with the general Australian community.
63. Labor recognises the concern many Indigenous communities have regarding particular health problems, notably domestic violence, sexual assault and suicide. Labor is committed to working with Indigenous communities on a regional level to address the fundamental causes of particular health problems these communities have. Labor believes problems such as these must be seen in a health context as well as being law and order problems. By addressing the causes with remedies supported by and involving the local communities, Labor believes the incidence of these problems can be reduced.

## Housing

64. Indigenous Australians are entitled to adequate and appropriate housing. Labor will set objective national benchmarks for adequate and appropriate housing, and time frames for meeting those targets.
65. Labor is aware of the current poor housing experienced by many indigenous Australians. Labor will work with local land councils, housing service deliverers and government





agencies on a state and regional basis to ensure that funds designated for housing are appropriately used. Labor is committed to housing that meets the unique needs of local Indigenous communities and is culturally appropriate.

## Education

66. Labor recognises the key role of education in the economic empowerment, health and employment prospects of indigenous Australians. Labor further recognises the potential for appropriate education to preserve and enrich Indigenous peoples' cultures.
67. Education policy must respond to the appalling reality of current outcomes and the disparity between outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Labor is committed to Indigenous specific programs such as ABSTUDY, which have made a significant contribution to proving Indigenous education outcomes.
68. While recognising that education and training are primarily State and Territory responsibilities, Labor recognises that the Commonwealth has a particular obligation to ensure that Indigenous people have fair access to appropriate education to meet their needs and aspirations, including improved education and training outcomes.
69. Labor is committed to working with Indigenous communities to maintain and extend access to bilingual education where it is supported by those communities to facilitate better education for indigenous Australians, while preserving and enriching Indigenous culture.
70. Subject to the need for significantly enhanced outcomes, Labor recognises the variety of educational needs and aspirations across Indigenous communities. Labor is committed to education programs that are regionally focused and that recognise these differences in their content and delivery. The involvement of Indigenous people in the preparation and ongoing delivery of educational services is vital to the success of such programs.

## Economic Development and Employment

71. Employment programs must reflect the reality that unemployment amongst indigenous Australians is chronic and is projected to increase dramatically in the next decade.
72. Program design and delivery must respond to specific regional, gender and age variations. Programs to address Indigenous unemployment must identify, harness and develop labour markets with genuine potential for sustainable employment. A sustainable land base and access to resources for community development initiatives will be integrated into programs to combat Indigenous unemployment through economic development.
73. Labor will improve the operation of the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act as a means to greater economic development in Indigenous communities.

## Regional Development

74. Indigenous communities are an integral part of regional Australia. Indigenous programs often provide much needed funding and development to small isolated communities. Labor recognises the important role such programs play in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous life in these regional communities and is committed to their continuation and enhancement.
75. Labor acknowledges the disadvantage Indigenous and non-Indigenous people face in regional areas. Labor is committed to the inclusion of Indigenous representatives in the formulation, introduction and ongoing supervision of programs that seek to revitalise regional areas with significant Indigenous populations. Through meaningful inclusion, Labor will ensure all regional residents have a share in the economic and cultural benefits these programs may deliver.



76. Regional agreements, based on the mutual recognition of converging interests between all people living in regional areas, will be an important part of achieving respect for, and inclusion of, Indigenous people in regional development. This will involve legally binding undertakings by governments in relation to the delivery and management of both Indigenous specific and mainstream programs and services.

### Protecting the Cultural Heritage

77. Labor supports strengthened heritage protection legislation to deliver improved economic, social and cultural outcomes, with a continuing role for the Federal Government in upholding its constitutional responsibilities to indigenous Australians.
78. Labor recognises the need for balance between ensuring that Indigenous people possess the power to protect their own culture, both past and present, and the right to economic development for both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Non-adversarial processes that include Indigenous people in the protection of their heritage, cultural and intellectual property will ensure greater certainty for development.
79. Labor is committed to promoting respect for the heritage and living cultures of Indigenous peoples by promoting policies that:
- support the preservation and recording of Indigenous cultural heritage;
  - facilitate and promote appropriate means for sustaining and transmitting the living cultures of Australia's indigenous people;
  - support the repatriation of Indigenous artefacts and human remains removed without Indigenous consent and repositied in overseas collections;
  - guarantee Indigenous involvement in decisions on the location, care and rules of access to cultural artefacts in Australian public collections; and
  - protect the culture and heritage of indigenous Australians' from expropriation, exploitation and desecration.

### Conserving the Natural Environment

80. Labor recognises the special connection may indigenous Australians maintain with the land and the primary role of the natural environment in Indigenous culture and tradition. In accordance with this special relationship, Labor is committed to the involvement of Indigenous people in the management structures overseeing the maintenance of parks, waterways and other public spaces with which local Indigenous people have affinity.
81. Labor is committed to fostering an understanding and respect for the traditional native title rights of local Indigenous people on such lands. This will be achieved in part through the involvement of local Indigenous people in the management of parks and other public areas with which there is Indigenous affinity.
82. Labor recognises that indigenous Australians' knowledge and experience of the land is a beneficial asset in the management and use of our environment. Labor will ensure that indigenous Australians are involved in the formulation, implementation and ongoing delivery of environmental programs.

### Deaths In Custody

83. The problem of deaths in custody is inseparable from the broader disadvantage experienced by indigenous Australians.
84. Labor will seek to overcome the underlying causes of high imprisonment rates among Indigenous Australians, through effective action in all other areas of Indigenous affairs.
85. Labor recognises that the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations and the Commonwealth, State and Territory responses to the Royal Commission, provide a specific and targeted agenda for governments to tackle Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and aspirations, and will continue to support the



implementation of its detailed recommendations by all levels of government.

## The Stolen Generations

86. Labor recognises the importance of the National Inquiry that resulted in the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (the *Bringing Them Home Report*) in initiating the debate on, and widening understanding of, past government policies separating Indigenous children from their families. These policies continue to have lasting economic, social and cultural effects among Indigenous communities in Australia. The legacies of these past policies are a fundamental source of Indigenous disadvantage today.
87. The Howard Government's inadequate response to the *Bringing Them Home Report* has only compounded the problems experienced by members of the Stolen Generations. The unwillingness to extend a formal apology on behalf of the Commonwealth to members of the Stolen Generations, and the refusal to contemplate the issue of compensation on a compassionate level—forcing claimants into the adversarial court system—has forced further hardship on those who have already suffered.
88. Labor will implement a comprehensive response to the recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home Report*. A Labor government will formally apologise on behalf of the Commonwealth for the deficient past policies and practices identified in the Inquiry's report.

## Migrant Australians: Responding To Particular Needs

89. Australia is a multicultural society. Labor recognises that it is part of the Federal government's responsibility to assist all Australians to live together productively and have an equal sense of belonging to the nation.

90. Labor will positively promote the strength that Australia gains from recognising and valuing our diversity and will combat prejudice and discrimination aimed at any migrant community through community education programs and anti-discrimination legislation.
- Labor will maintain effective and independent processes for resolving complaints about prejudice and discrimination.
91. Labor also recognises that some migrants will have particular needs and may require settlement assistance.
92. Refugees and persons admitted under humanitarian programs, some of whom have suffered torture and trauma before arriving in Australia, will receive appropriate support, including counselling for trauma.
93. Labor will support a network of Migrant Resource Centres, provide adequate English language programs to new arrivals and maintain adequate interpreter and translation services.

## Australians With Disabilities: Closing The Access Gap

94. Labor is committed to policies and programs for people with disabilities which:
- recognise and promote the worth and dignity, and improve the quality of life, of people with disabilities, and which encourage and support their participation in the community;
  - improve access for people with disabilities to open employment at decent wages, to other appropriate day activities, to the full range of accommodation options, to transport and the built environment, to health, rehabilitation and community services, and to the education and training opportunities available to other Australians;
  - provide specific redress against discrimination on the basis of disability;
  - improve community awareness and understanding of physical, intellectual, and psychiatric disability; and



- recognise the critical importance of carers and support them in assisting people with disabilities to maintain their independence in the community.
- 95.** Labor supports:
- a national approach to disability policy, continuing to provide services for people with disabilities through mainstream programs where appropriate and through disability-specific programs where they are necessary;
  - a reassessment of the Federal-State Disability Agreement, maintaining the responsibility for employment at the national level, and focusing on increasing the availability of, and improving the range and quality of accommodation services, advocacy services, and non-vocational day activities;
  - increased resources to continue the twenty-year program of implementing the access standards under the Disability Discrimination Act, with priority given to public transport;
  - the trialing of innovative approaches to the financing and delivery of services and aids for people with disabilities and their carers;
- strengthening advocacy services, user rights, complaints, and advisory mechanisms for people with disabilities; and
  - the development and funding of services which are flexible enough to respond to the specific needs and aspirations of different individuals with disabilities and their families.
  - acknowledge the increasing levels of unmet need within disability services and support the formulation of a national strategy to systematically address these needs.
- 96.** Labor will retain the Disability Discrimination Act and Commissioner within the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.
- 97.** Labor will develop a national strategy in cooperation with the States to systematically address the unacceptable level of unmet needs of people with disabilities.
- 98.** Labor will retain the Disability Discrimination Act and Commissioner within the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.



# chapter thirteen

## Safeguarding And Improving The Environment

### Basic Principles

1. Labor believes that a high standard of living and a healthy and sustainable economy rely on a healthy and sustainable environment. Long term economic growth depends on the ability to conserve, repair and maintain our natural resource base.
    - it is the fundamental responsibility of all governments to ensure economic growth is ecologically sustainable, that industry is not faced with a choice between responsible environmental management and economic profit, and that individuals are not faced with a choice between a secure job, maintaining quality of life and a healthy environment.
  2. The natural environment is our greatest natural asset, sustaining our economy and society and providing the context in which they develop.
    - All Australians are entitled to a healthy and productive living environment, characterised by clean air, clean water and healthy ecosystems. Labor recognises the social, environmental and economic value of maintaining diverse biological communities and protecting wilderness areas.
  3. More than two hundred years of non-Indigenous settlement in Australia has had a profound impact on our continent's uniquely fragile and complex range of ecosystems.
    - Development today need not and must not undermine the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations. We hold this land in trust for future generations.
    - Labor's objective is to use, conserve, restore and enhance the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are sustained and quality of life increased.
3. Past environmental damage to Australian soil, flora, fauna and waterways has been in part irreversible. Labor will concentrate on defining solutions rather than apportioning blame.
  - Modern scientific insight and research, together with enlightened social attitudes, provides Australians with choices that allow the abandonment of ruinous practices of the past, and planning for a better future.



4. Labor believes the Federal government must play a leadership role in environmental matters, with an integrated, whole of government approach to environmental protection.
  - Labor is committed to legislation that restores and maintains national leadership to meet national and international obligations and to define national standards of environmental performance.
  - Labor acknowledges that the use of economic instruments can and sometimes should be used to achieve environmental outcomes. Labor supports the removal of perverse incentives and other subsidies or programs that lead to environmental damage and impede progress towards sustainability. Labor further supports the internalisation of environment costs and the principle that the polluter should bear the cost of pollution.
  - Labor believes that expenditure on the environment should, in general, be funded through core funding. Appropriate cost sharing arrangements should be established between the Federal and State governments, based on the principles of cross compliance on environment issues.
5. Labor is committed to accountability, shared responsibility and transparency in addressing environmental issues at all levels of government and society.
  - Many environmental issues are global, yet for effective response, they require national leadership, in partnership with other spheres of government, industry and society.
  - Environmental issues are best addressed with the participation of all concerned individuals and organisations. A Labor government will facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making environmental information widely available. Labor is committed to community empowerment through meaningful consultation and community involvement in environmental management.
  - Labor recognises the unique contribution that certain sectors of the community can make to environmental management, including the creativity, ideals and courage of youth, the perspective of women and the knowledge and traditional practices of Indigenous communities. Labor will support and encourage the involvement of these sectors.
6. Without concerted international effort, serious and irreversible environmental damage will continue to occur. A safe, clean and sustainable global environment is in Australia's national interest and Australia has a responsibility to future generations and the international community to repair, maintain and protect our environment.
  - Labor is committed to international cooperation and action to protect the world's environmental heritage, and will take a leadership role in solving increasingly acute global environment problems, such as ozone depletion, climate change, loss of biodiversity and deforestation.
  - A Labor government will promote an open international economic system with the goal of enhancing economic growth and sustainable development in all countries.
  - Labor recognises that existing international environmental protection regimes need to be strengthened and new arrangements developed to address emerging issues. A Labor government will take a leadership role in multilateral for a that consider issues of environmental protection and sustainable development, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development process.
  - A Labor government will assess all trade agreements to ensure that they are consistent with the principles of sustainable development, and will work to prevent any conflict arising between trade agreements and multilateral environmental agreements.
  - Labor recognises the responsibility of developed countries to assist developing countries in the pursuit of sustainable development through appropriately targeted aid programs, technology transfer and foreign investment. Labor



will give priority to regional environment cooperation in the Asia Pacific region.

7. Labor believes that Australia is in a strong position to prepare for a sustainable future.
  - Australian scientists, researchers and developers are among those leading the world in understanding the environmental challenges we face and developing solutions to them.
  - Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and available scientific information is inconclusive, Labor supports a cautious approach with appropriate environmental safeguards.
  - A healthy and sustainable environment will improve living standards, create jobs and encourage growth of sustainable industries.
  - Ecologically sustainable development represents a future for regional Australia, with regional delivery of natural resource management, sustainable agricultural practices and opportunities for new industries.
  - The international community increasingly recognises the need for sustainable development. Labor believes that early environmental action will position Australia to take advantage of growing global markets for sustainable products and services and deliver improved quality of life.
8. A Labor government will lead by example. In order to achieve national leadership on environmental matters with an integrated, whole of government approach, Labor supports the incorporation of environmental values into all areas of government decision making, both in terms of the government's direct environmental impacts and the environmental consequences of all legislation and regulation.
  - Labor is committed to a social and environmental impact assessment of all legislation and agreements entered into by the government.
9. Labor is committed to ensuring that community, industry and government decision makers are fully informed of the environmental impacts of their actions.
  - Labor supports the development of a genuine progress or sustainability indicator which recognises social and environmental capital and complements monitoring of economic indicators such as GDP.
  - Labor supports the incorporation of environmental reporting into the budget process through the development of a Federal Green Budget. A Green Budget will enable progress on environmental performance to be tracked and achievement against milestones to be monitored.
  - Labor supports the establishment of a Commissioner for the Environment to provide objective, independent analysis and recommendations on environment and sustainable development; monitor and report on progress towards sustainable development, consider public complaints; and assist the Auditor General on matters related to environment and sustainable development issues.
9. Labor is committed to open and transparent environmental decision making and effective monitoring, assessment and reporting of environmental performance. This will be achieved through a combination of state of the environment reporting, environmental audits and impact assessments, and initiatives such as the National Pollutant Inventory and corporate environmental reporting.
  - Labor is committed to post approval monitoring of major projects to ensure that measures and targets agreed during environmental impact assessment processes do in fact achieve the desired environmental outcomes.
  - Labor supports a life cycle approach to the evaluation of environmental impacts of goods and services. Where there is a significant variation in environmental

## Greening our institutions





impact between comparable products, Labor supports eco-labelling to provide the consumer with the necessary information to make informed purchasing and lifestyle decisions.

- A Labor government will encourage the adoption of internationally recognised forest certification systems appropriate to Australian conditions and will promote their consideration by consumers of forest products.



### Human settlement and population

10. Patterns of human settlement and the size and rate of growth of the population are crucial determinants of our ongoing impact on our ancient and fragile environment. Labor believes that Australian cities must be ecologically sustainable and incorporate a sound understanding of environmental principles in their planning. Labor recognises that the Federal government has a role in long-term strategic planning for demographic change and local government priority setting.

The daily lives of most Australians are spent in and around urban areas. Our quality of life and our physical and mental health is increasingly at risk from degradation of urban environments. Labor is committed to appropriate demographic policies and to ensure that any population increase is sustainable and does not come at the cost of the environment.

- Labor is committed to protecting and enhancing our urban environment through long term integrated urban planning for all major cities, major industries and rural communities. Planning must be supported by the provision of information, the development and implementation of practical solutions, and the right policy framework to ensure our cities are healthy and sustainable.
- For any planned increase in the population of a particular urban area, Labor supports infrastructure investment (especially transport investment) that is evaluated on the basis of its contribution to improvements in that urban environment, including air and water quality.



### Built and cultural heritage

11. Thousands of years of Indigenous settlement and more recent waves of migration have left Australia with a rich and diverse heritage. This heritage is a link between the past and present and is both a national asset and a source of national pride.

- Labor is committed to the identification, preservation, restoration and promotion of significant and representative built and cultural heritage, whether material or not.
- It is important that we preserve what is best of our history, tradition and heritage. Where culturally appropriate, Labor is committed to the promotion of and access to our built and cultural heritage, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.
- Labor believes that the Federal government has a responsibility to provide adequate heritage protection for Commonwealth properties of heritage significance.



### Sustainable industries and cleaner production

12. Modern clean industries that minimise resource consumption, waste and pollution generation, together with new agricultural techniques that reduce land and water degradation, are the key to sustainable economic development.

- Labor is committed to the modernisation of existing industry to ensure sustainable patterns of production and consumption. Labor is committed to helping industry adjust and identify associated value adding opportunities.
- With existing technology, it is possible to produce more using less. A Labor government will promote more efficient and cleaner production practices and the 'reduce, reuse, recycle and recover' approach to waste management through a combination of voluntary, fiscal and regulatory measures. Labor will encourage the adoption of life cycle analysis, green purchasing arrangements and voluntary corporate environmental reporting.



New global markets are developing as the demand for sustainable goods and services grows. New industries are emerging with new jobs and both domestic and export opportunities. These opportunities range across industry sectors and geographic areas. Labor is committed to supporting the development of these new industries.

### Chemicals, toxins and pollutants

13. Labor recognises the important role of chemicals in both industrial processes and every-day life. However, many pollutants are produced as a result of the use of chemicals and it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that the production, release and disposal of these substances is adequately managed to ensure that individuals and the environment are not exposed to harmful concentrations.
- Labor is committed to the strict control of pollutants and toxins in the environment, including the minimisation of the production, import and use of harmful substances, the development of alternative technologies and, where possible, the elimination of harmful substances.
  - Labor believes that governments have a responsibility for appropriate disposal of hazardous wastes generated within their boundaries. Labor is committed to the aims of the Basle Convention and to fulfilling Australia's obligations in the control of transboundary movements of hazardous waste.
  - Labor remains strongly opposed to the importation and storage of nuclear waste in Australia that is sourced from overseas. Labor does, however, acknowledge that Australia has a responsibility to manage nuclear waste material that has been produced in Australia.

### Greenhouse

14. Labor considers human-induced climate change a serious and unpredictable global climate experiment with potentially serious

consequences. Climate change is possibly the most serious global environmental challenge facing the world today and it is in our national interest to mitigate the effects of global warming.

Labor recognises that the CSIRO has estimated that international greenhouse gas emissions would need to be cut by 60-80 per cent of 1990 levels to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.

- Labor believes that significant emission reductions can and should be achieved with a net positive effect on Australia's economy and our international competitiveness. By delaying effective action, Australia will miss out on growing global markets for sustainable goods and services.
  - Labor believes Australia must act as a responsible member of the world community and commit to greenhouse gas emission targets.
  - Labor strongly endorses the notion of internationally applicable compulsory targets and the implementation of a national emissions trading system in advance of a global system.
  - Labor supports activities undertaken in Australia that offset emissions elsewhere (for example LNG production and export that displaces coal fired generation). Labor supports the introduction of international flexibility mechanisms that ensure that such projects are not disadvantaged.
  - Labor believes that adequate funding of research into the science of climate change, emission reduction technologies and adaptation management is vital if Australia is to meet the challenge of climate change.
15. Labor will implement regulatory, fiscal and voluntary measures that lead to greenhouse gas emission reductions and efficiency improvements in all sectors of the economy. Labor supports a critical assessment of appropriate subsidies and taxes to ensure the most efficient use of our resources.
- Labor supports the promotion of demand management and end-use efficiency throughout the national electricity and



gas systems, with programs targeting both domestic and industrial energy use. A Labor government will evaluate the national electricity market to review the impact it has had on delivering environmental outcomes and will seek to remove barriers to demand management, cogeneration and renewables.

- Labor supports the promotion of renewable power solutions that provide reliable supply to rural communities and minimise greenhouse gas emissions.
- Labor is committed to expansion of national, mandatory energy efficiency design and performance standards, including those for domestic appliances, industrial equipment, residential and non-residential buildings and motor vehicles.
- Labor supports the promotion of less greenhouse intensive forms of transport, including cycling, walking and public transport.
- Labor supports the introduction of measures to promote consumer uptake of energy efficient technologies and renewables.
- Labor recognises that it is both possible and desirable to introduce measures to increase the contribution of renewable energy to the national energy market beyond current targets and in line with international best practice.
- Labor recognises that the utilisation of waste methane from landfill and coal seam methane present opportunities for emission reduction and power generation.
- Labor will promote more sustainable management of Australia's vegetation cover. Labor is committed to cooperation between States, Territories and landholders to achieve net expansion of vegetation cover and reduction in emissions related to land use change.

### Clean air

16. Urban Australians rate the quality of the air they breathe as their most serious environmental concern. Labor is committed to improving air quality and averting the serious health risks that air pollution represents.

- A comprehensive system of monitoring and reporting of air pollution will be an integral part of Labor's air quality initiatives, including dissemination of information regarding health risks.
- Labor will introduce national air quality standards commensurate with international standards.
- Labor will recognise the environmental and health impacts of vehicle emissions and will seek to strengthen emission regulations. Labor recognises the need to promote greater transport choice and a Labor government will pursue strategies to encourage alternative modes of transport, alternative fuels, greater fuel efficiency and lower average vehicle age.

### Clean water

17. Water sustains all human and biological communities on our planet, yet our current lifestyle places significant pressure on our oceans, inland river systems and groundwater. Stormwater, sewage and industrial and agricultural waste water contaminate our waterways resulting in the immediate prospect of ecological crisis. Without continued and concerted national effort, there is a real prospect of the economic as well as ecological collapse of major systems such as the Murray Darling Basin.
- Labor recognises the responsibility of all governments to provide safe and adequate drinking water to communities and to maintain the ecological health of river systems.
  - Labor is committed to a national inland rivers program, in cooperation with State and local governments, industry and communities, that provides adequate ecological flows to inland rivers, adequately addresses encroaching salinity and enables the restoration of river systems currently in crisis, including the Murray Darling Basin and the Snowy River.
18. Labor is committed to supporting initiatives, including community education, to reduce residential, industrial and agricultural water consumption and the release of waste water and pollutants into our aquatic environment.



- Labor encourages the adoption of water efficiency technologies and urban planning measures that improve the quality and integration of urban water, sewerage and drainage, and the adoption of whole of catchment approaches.
- Labor supports the reuse of waste water and is committed to the development and promotion of waste water utilisation.

## Biodiversity and endangered species

19. Australia has one of the most diverse collection of species, habitats and ecosystems of any developed nation on earth. This national asset remains under threat from human activities such as land clearing for urban development and agriculture, the loss of native forests, the introduction of exotic species and the inadequacy of our system of national parks and reserves. The extinction of plant and animal species over the past 200 years has been dramatic. We may not be able to change history, but we do make history.
- Labor acknowledges the contributions made by zoological parks through their research and development into captive breeding.
20. No generation has the right to appropriate biodiversity for its exclusive use and no government should accept species decline as inevitable.
- Ecosystems and living species can exist harmoniously with human life. Healthy, functioning ecosystems are necessary to maintain the quality of the atmosphere, and to maintain and regulate climate, fresh water, soil formation, cycling of nutrients and disposal of waste.
  - Labor is committed to a national approach to the protection of rare, vulnerable and endangered species and ecological communities, through the development, resourcing and implementation, in cooperation with State and Territory governments, of threat abatement and recovery plans.

## World heritage areas and national parks

21. While in government, Labor earned an international reputation for providing a high standard of properly funded protection, management, monitoring and presentation of world heritage areas. A Labor government will continue this standard of protection, and will support the investigation of areas identified as suitable for future listing.
- Labor strongly opposes any moves to roll back protection of world heritage areas, the listing of which protects areas of outstanding universal value.
22. Labor recognises the fragile and diverse nature of Australia's natural environment and its unique array of species and habitats, wilderness areas, old growth forests, rivers, coastlines and oceans. Labor is committed to the protection of Australia's biological diversity through the establishment of a national system of comprehensive and adequately sized national parks and reserves (including a representative range of terrestrial and marine ecosystems), while continuing to promote ecologically sustainable use of all our natural resources.
- Labor does not support mining or other resource extraction in national parks and world heritage areas.
  - Labor will ensure that the Federal government will retain responsibility for the protection of forests located in listed world heritage areas. Labor will progress further world heritage nominations in accordance with Regional Forest Agreement objectives.

## Sustainable agriculture and nature conservation on private land

23. Labor recognises the critical role of the rural community in the ongoing stewardship of our land. Labor is committed to working with rural



communities and landholders in the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and whole farm planning consistent with regional strategies.

- Labor is committed to building on the achievements of Landcare, encouraging the uptake of sustainable farming practices and maintaining support for the repair of our rural landscapes.

24. Labor is committed to conservation and regeneration of our native plant communities outside our nature reserve system through partnerships with landholders. Significant proportions of Australia's arid and rangeland ecosystems are suffering from serious degradation and are in need of urgent government attention to ensure their conservation values are restored and maintained.
- Labor is committed to halting the loss of vegetation, reducing soil erosion and rehabilitating degraded land particularly those lands affected by soil salinity.
  - Labor supports the adoption of integrated catchment management plans, property management plans, voluntary conservation agreements, community based revegetation programs and appropriate regulatory and fiscal policies to promote the conservation ethic.
  - Labor is opposed to broad scale and unregulated land clearing. A Labor government will insist that funding of State, Territory and landholder projects is conditional upon the States, Territories and local governments introducing appropriate clearing controls. Labor supports the introduction of national standards to strictly regulate approvals for land clearing in limited circumstances.

### Forests

25. Labor is committed to the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system that is consistent with the agreed Janis criteria and

aims to protect at least 60 per cent of existing old growth forest (increasing to 100 per cent for rare and depleted old growth), and 90 per cent or more of high quality wilderness, as part of a broad objective of preserving 15 per cent of pre-1750 distribution of each forest ecosystem.

This goal will be achieved through the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) process. RFA outcomes will vary from region to region in response to variations in community expectations and environmental concerns.

- Labor is committed to the ongoing monitoring of compliance with agreed RFA outcomes and full implementation of the National Forests Policy Statement, the Wood and Paper Industry Strategy and Plantation 2020 Vision.
- Labor recognises the potential for development of plantations and integrated farm forestry, particularly on existing cleared agricultural land and the additional benefit in addressing dry land salinity and greenhouse emission abatement.
- Labor recognises that large scale monoculture plantations have consequences for biodiversity and disease control and will encourage development of mixed species plantations managed to enhance biodiversity.

### Wetlands

26. Australia's wetlands are critical to the ongoing health of Australia's rivers, estuaries and coastal waters. These vital environments are under increasing threat from human settlement, jeopardising the habitat and survival of many species of fish and crustaceans that use wetlands as a nursery ground, and migratory birds that depend on wetlands as feeding and resting areas.

- Labor is committed to ensuring proper management and protection of our wetlands and will promote and honour Australia's obligations under the Ramsar Convention.



## Marine environment protection

27. Labor is committed to promoting the conservation and sustainable use of our marine and coastal environment. Labor will work with State, Territory and local authorities and agencies to ensure Australia's biologically diverse and fragile marine environment is monitored and sustainably managed.
- The Federal government should provide leadership, policies and resources to ensure integrated regional ecosystem based management across jurisdictions and maintain marine biodiversity.
  - Labor supports a comprehensive assessment of offshore ecosystems to inform policy development and management of marine resources.
28. A Labor government will promote the efficient and sustainable use of Australia's marine resources and will address unsustainable fishing practices.
- A Labor government will work towards the reduction of the serious threat to water quality from coastal shipping practices, sewage and stormwater disposal and thermal pollution, nutrient sedimentation, and introduction of exotic pests and diseases via ship ballast water.
  - Planning imperatives include the need to address unsuitable coastal development, agricultural practices, pollution of estuary and coastal water, ship transport regulation, rig and pipeline developments and industry accountability for pollution.



# chapter fourteen

## Enjoying Life: Arts, Culture and Heritage

### Towards a National Cultural Policy

1. Labor recognises that culture embodies the energy and the spirit of our nation through the creative expression of ideas and imagination. Labor is committed to supporting and promoting opportunities for cultural expression and cultural experiences for all Australians whatever their backgrounds and wherever they live.
2. The arts can open our minds, challenge us, delight us and sometimes change our views. Labor will encourage the development of creative talent and imagination through continued support to the cultural industries and groups and individuals within them.
3. Labor recognises that, while there are many changes occurring in contemporary society, artistic creativity and innovation can also be important factors in the preserving our social identity and building national pride.
4. In a fair society, there needs to be a balance between government support for the development of excellence and giving everyone a chance to participate. There needs to be emphasis on accessible forms of art, culture and leisure activities, not merely on elite performance.
5. Labor is aware of the contribution that can be made by the arts and artists to improving Australia's quality of life, and the progress of tolerance, justice and peace in the world. The talents of our artists give us unique opportunities to strengthen our intellectual, social and economic well being.
6. In a democracy, a necessary part of effective participation is equitable access to diverse sources of information and opinion. It is also of fundamental importance to Australians that our news and entertainment reflect our own values and priorities. The celebration of our diverse cultures expressed in uniquely Australian voices is important for our vision of ourselves and for the vision of Australia overseas. This requires the Australian government to commit to promotion of local content development and availability.
7. Australian cultural life is more than an optional recreational add-on. Labor will involve the community in developing strategies to reach agreement on a national cultural policy.





### Government support for the arts

8. Labor will continue to give priority to the Australia Council and the principles of merit based funding and peer assessment. The Australia Council will provide:
  - an independent voice in policy development; and
  - support for Australia's major organisations and for new and emerging artists and art forms.
9. A fundamental role of the Federal government must be in the maintenance and development of the great national collecting institutions and of their role in presenting the best the world has to offer to Australians wherever they live, as well as providing effective access to the best traditional and contemporary works produced by Australians.
10. While it is necessarily the case that the role of the Federal government will be in development and support of professional arts, there must be a recognition of the importance of amateur art, particularly in the performing arts. This includes support for an increased role for professionals in providing advice to those involved in local and regional arts activity.
11. It is important that government continues to support the Australian film industry directly through diverse sources of film financing, through the provision of facilities and the support for their development, and through the training of future talent, and that it provides assistance in market development through Australian content requirements on free-to-air and pay television.
12. The Federal government should co-operate with State and local governments to ensure regional and local libraries can provide effective and equitable access to literature and information, including through modern technology.
13. Labor will continue its support of the provision of art, drama and music education in the public school system. It is recognised that this ensures all Australians have the opportunity to develop their interest and skills in these activities.

14. Technological change is creating the possibility of new media and art forms and new industries associated with it. The Federal government should continue to take initiatives which allow Australians to develop their talent in this area, to assist the development of Australian jobs in producing material for these media and to ensure Australian consumers have access to such material.
15. Labor will seek to restore priority to the provision of art works in major public buildings as part of a public works program.
16. In addition to financial support, government needs to play a role in encouraging and coordinating the development of private and corporate patronage and sponsorship of arts and culture to maximise the social resources provided to this sector.
17. As society and the economy change and develop, the economic and employment significance of the arts and culture industries must be recognised and industry and export assistance programs developed in ways which are appropriate for these industries.

### Support for artists

18. A fundamental element of any aspect of government funding in arts and culture must include priority for the development of excellence and the maximisation of the opportunities of Australians to develop their talent to the maximum and to display it to other Australians and the world.
19. A fundamental part of industry development and equitable access is policies to maximise employment in the arts, cultural and heritage industries, training for employment in these industries and support to enable talent to be developed into a career. Labor will support the transition from education and training to work. Labor will also support programs for mentoring emerging artists.
20. Training and re-training options for artists and arts workers in mid-career should also be a high priority. Emphasis needs to be given to programs to facilitate the development of, and



access to, such training programs and to special project support for artists who have an established career.

21. It is important that programs are developed to protect the industrial rights and conditions of workers in the arts, culture and heritage industries, many of whom are particularly vulnerable industrially.
22. This, together with the legal framework of copyright, is a necessary part of a program to ensure that the income generated by arts, culture and heritage is fairly distributed between the creators and the institutions and entrepreneurs who make it available. Labor will support the introduction of legislation to protect artists' moral rights, recognise copyright in performance and implement a system of *droit de suite* for the resale of visual art works.
23. The tax system needs to be responsive to the needs of workers in, and the products of, arts and culture, and should reflect the very varied nature of artists' income generation within years and over different years. Labor recognises the unfair impact of the GST on the arts and will ensure that artists and audiences are not disproportionately disadvantaged.



### Equity and access

24. To balance the emphasis on excellence, it is fundamental for Labor that priority be given to maximisation of, and equity of access to, participation in arts, culture and heritage activities.
25. Any policy of equity and access must place great emphasis on the development of arts in regional Australia and in the outer suburbs of our cities. Labor supports regional arts organisations and the touring of arts between regions of Australia. This requires a role for government in assisting regional touring and the development of regional facilities.
26. Emphasis on access must include the development of effective opportunities for Australians with disabilities and Australians from disadvantaged groups to participate on

an amateur or professional basis in the arts and to have access to the best Australia has to offer.

27. There has been significant limitation of the opportunities for women to participate in the arts, and government policies need to recognise, respond to and compensate for this historical disadvantage.
28. There is a need for special emphasis on youth participation in the arts and the development of arts of interest to young Australians.
29. The arts must reflect the reality of our cultural diversity and give voice to all Australians including the long settled Anglo-Celtic communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the post-war migrant groups and more recent arrivals. Multicultural arts will receive Labor's support and recognition.
30. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island arts are increasingly important as a part of Australia's national identity and its projection and an important part of the economic base of Aboriginal communities. Therefore, special consideration needs to be given to proper funding for these activities and to ensuring that the funding gets to the arts providers as directly as possible. Labor will also assist Indigenous artists to protect their work.
31. Labor recognises that in order to develop the audiences and the artists of the future it is important to improve access and participation in cultural activities and experiences in education. Through arts education programs young Australians gain access to the ideas, values and beliefs of others, and nurture their own imaginations.



### Heritage

32. In placing emphasis on developing the best and newest, it is very important not to lose sight of the priority of preserving what's best of our history, tradition and heritage.
33. It is not only important that this material is preserved but that it is made effectively available to Australians wherever they live. This requires institutional and individual activities



at a local and national level, assistance to private owners of heritage properties and skills development and training.

34. Labor will give special attention to the preservation of the heritage properties owned by the Commonwealth.
35. Labor will ensure that the National Trust is supported to identify priority projects for heritage protection.

### The Media

36. At a national and international level, media and broadcasting are subject to a process of vast and rapid change, driven by the digitalisation and convergence of technology and the globalisation of media, broadcasting, communications and information technologies.
37. During this process of change, Labor remains strongly committed to long standing national and public interest strategic objectives:
  - media and broadcasting of high quality and excellence;
  - diversity of sources of information, education and entertainment;
  - diversity in ownership, operation and control of media;
  - the development and reflection of a distinctly Australian national identity;
  - a vibrant competitive industry of international standard;
  - the development of and equitable access to new technology.

### Diversity and content

38. Labor is committed to diversity in both the ownership and operation of free-to-air and pay television, radio, newspapers and emerging on line media. Labor recognises that the convergence of new technologies does provide new opportunities and challenges for Australia's media but believes that the strategic objective of diversity can continue to be secured by a range of measures. To this end Labor will retain cross media ownership laws.

39. Labor is committed to plurality of content and maximum levels of Australian content in free-to-air and pay television, radio, newspapers and emerging on line media.

### Media and broadcasting regulation

40. Labor believes that an adequately resourced, strong regulatory institution such as the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) is central to the attainment of maximum diversity of ownership and plurality of content in the media. The relevant regulatory institution for media and broadcasters must be given strong powers enshrined in legislation. Codes of practice should be established and backed by a transparent regulatory regime.

### Public broadcasting

41. Labor is committed to the provision of an independent, balanced, comprehensive and national public broadcasting service free from political or ideological interference, and free of advertising and sponsorship.
42. Both the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) provide unique services to the Australian community. Labor will provide adequate funding on a triennial basis to ensure quality is maintained in both the program and service delivery areas, as well as ensuring that Australian content levels are maintained at an appropriate level to foster the development of our cultural identity. Where appropriate, Labor will ensure that adequate funding is provided to assist the ABC and SBS with the introduction of digital broadcasting and online technologies.
43. Labor recognises that the ABC is also a cultural institution contributing to our sense of national identity. As part of its comprehensive program coverage, and without limiting the range of programs and services the ABC may provide, Labor will ensure that the ABC provides high levels of local content and has the capacity to:



- cater to the needs of regional and rural Australia, providing coverage of local news, current affairs and community activities;
  - provide programs and services of relevance to young Australians;
  - cater to the arts community;
  - provide comprehensive coverage of a broad range of sporting events; and
  - retain its key role in the creation of a wide range of programs for television and radio.
44. Labor recognises that the SBS provides a unique national broadcasting service that promotes a multicultural Australia, providing services to ethnic Australians that are not offered by either the ABC or the commercial broadcasting sector.
45. Labor recognises the need for Australia to maintain a publicly funded independently managed external broadcaster. An external broadcaster's role is to explain Australian values to the world, and in particular encourage closer ties with our Asian and South Pacific neighbours, as well as serving the needs of Australians

abroad. Labor will ensure that the external broadcaster has the capacity to broadcast in the languages of the region and has access to an effective means of transmission.

### Community broadcasting

46. Labor regards community broadcasting, both radio and television, as the third tier of the free-to-air broadcasting system and encourages its growth wherever possible. Community broadcasting provides important local services to communities, particularly in rural and regional areas. Labor supports diversity in community broadcasting recognising that stations meet the broadcasting needs of local communities including ethnic, Aboriginal and print-handicapped broadcasters. Labor seeks to improve the capacity of community stations to serve their communities by providing support to the sector for improving skills, technical equipment and program development. Labor accepts that appropriate public funding must be provided to the community broadcasting sector.



# chapter fifteen

## Securing Australia's Place In The World

### Foreign Policy Objectives And Challenges

1. Labor has a proud tradition of activism in international affairs. We are determined to bring to Australia's foreign policy the conviction and commitment which saw previous Labor governments play critical roles in world events, including the formation of the United Nations, proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, establishment of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, banning of chemical weapons, and in the development of Australia's vital engagement with the Asia Pacific region.
2. The fundamental objective of Labor's approach to international affairs is the promotion of Australia's national interests. This means acting to:
  - preserve and enhance our security;
  - foster our economic growth, jobs and standard of living;
  - protect and improve our quality of life;
  - safeguard the world environment; and
  - foster mutual respect, cooperation and greater economic interdependence between nations.
3. Labor believes foreign policy must advance more than self interest. Australia's international relations must reflect our nation's core values; in particular, our commitment to peace and cooperation among nations founded on international justice, and our concern for universal human rights and democratic processes.
  - A foreign policy that does not incorporate and give active expression to these universal values will fail to win respect at home or abroad and undermine our long-term national interests.
4. Australia's place in the world must never be taken for granted. Globalisation, internationalisation and accelerating change present Australia with profound international challenges and opportunities. By the end of the next two decades many of the features presently taken for granted in Australia's external environment will no longer hold. As an independent, middle power with a strong



Asia Pacific focus, Australia must make its own way in an increasingly complex, competitive and uncertain international environment.

5. A creative, forward-looking and appropriately resourced foreign policy is vital to our nation's well being. It is vital for economic growth, for jobs, and for national security.
6. Australia must be prepared to energetically defend our interests and advance the common good. We need foresight—a view that extends well beyond a single term of office. We must anticipate and move quickly to seize new opportunities.
7. While realistic about the limits of Australia's influence, we are confident that with clarity of vision, effective advocacy and appropriately resourced and targeted diplomacy, Australia can play a significant role in regional and global developments in favour of our own interests and the common good. Labor will pursue Australia's interests with vigour and determination at all levels in the international system: globally, regionally and in our bilateral relations with other countries.



### Engagement in the Asia Pacific and Beyond

8. Labor considers that no more important foreign policy issue faces Australia than advancing our engagement with Asia. Australia is inextricably linked with Asia. We contribute to both the prosperity and security of Asia, just as the region profoundly contributes to Australia's prosperity and security. Labor is unapologetically committed to our nation's future with Asia.
9. Australia's greatest international challenges and opportunities arise from rapid economic change in East Asia and the evolving security environment of the Asia Pacific region. The resumption of economic growth in East Asia over the next decade will present Australia with critical opportunities to advance our prosperity and security.
  - Resumed economic capacity will be accompanied by increasing regional confidence and assertiveness. As a consequence Australia will have to make greater efforts and work with imagination to maintain and enhance our relative influence in our region and beyond.
10. We are determined to broaden and deepen our link at all levels in the Asia Pacific region and will seek to secure full participation in significant regional forums and processes.
  - In the longer term, the potential development of an East Asian community—a cooperative linking of North-East and South-East Asia — has profound implications for Australia.
  - Labor will continue to consolidate Australia's economic engagement in the Asia Pacific region, especially with the economies of East Asia, including working through the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and other cooperative arrangements to produce concrete benefits in terms of economic growth, jobs and our standard of living.
11. Labor strongly supports engaging and integrating China with the emerging Asia Pacific security community. The rise of China is the single biggest geopolitical force in the ongoing transformation of our region.

Labor is similarly committed to actively contribute through the ASEAN Regional Forum to region-wide cooperation on security, specifically the development of confidence-building measures, mechanisms and practices of preventive diplomacy and peaceful dispute resolution.

- Labor will actively encourage further broadening of regional dialogue and cooperation to include problems of sustainable economic and social development and environmental protection with the aim of enhancing human security throughout our region.
- At the bilateral level, Labor will work with vigour in building productive relationships which advance shared political and economic interests. Labor strongly supports enhancing people-to-people contacts between Australia and our East Asian neighbours and will actively pursue the further development of social, cultural and educational ties.



- Australia's interests are best served by China's positive involvement in the international political and economic community. It is imperative that Australia seek to work cooperatively with China, bilaterally and regionally, and in global forums.
12. Australia and Japan have a long-standing and mature relationship. Japan is a vital economic partner and our political and strategic relationship is of fundamental importance to Australia's regional and international aspirations. Labor looks forward to the further development of Australian-Japanese ties, especially people-to-people contacts and greater understanding of each other's society and culture.
  13. Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country and Australia's nearest Asian neighbour, is of vital importance. Labor is committed to building a new relationship with a new democratic Indonesia.
  14. Australia and Indonesia have strong, shared interests in regional security cooperation and in relation to many international issues. Labor looks forward to the development of a close, mature and multi-dimensional relationship in which no one dimension dominates. Labor will seek to maximise our cooperation in regional and global forums.
  15. Labor considers that support for universal human rights and democratic processes should be an integral part of Australia's engagement with Indonesia. In the context of a broadly based and multifaceted relationship, Australia should maintain contact with all elements of the political process in Indonesia and our dialogue should give expression to the Australian people's fundamental concern with human rights and democratic freedoms.
  16. Labor will give priority to further developing our bilateral economic relationship with Indonesia, provide appropriate humanitarian assistance, supporting sustainable development, and increasing people-to-people and institutional exchanges, especially in fields such as the media, education, the arts, health and language training.
  17. Labor applauds the East Timorese people's courageous exercise of their long denied right of self-determination. Labor looks forward to East Timor's formal independence and participation as a new sovereign state in international forums.
  18. East Timor's territorial integrity, democratic development and economic reconstruction deserve strong and sustained international support. Labor considers Australia duty bound to generously assist the East Timorese people as they build their independent future.
  19. While pursuing closer engagement with East Asia as Australia's highest foreign policy priority, Labor is firmly committed to strengthening and broadening our links with other countries and regions.
  20. Australia must embrace India, a country of immense potential, an important participant in global and regional forums, and a trading partner of growing significance. Australia has long neglected India in our foreign relations. Labor will work energetically to remedy this deficiency and enhance our ties with the world's second most populous nation.
    - Labor recognises the increasing importance of the Indian Ocean Rim as a region for achieving the long-term objectives of our foreign and economic policies. Labor will build our relationships with the Indian Ocean Rim and the emerging economies of Southern Africa.
  21. Labor will give high priority to the further development of Australia's strong and mutually beneficial relationship with New Zealand, both in respect of bilateral economic and political ties and through cooperation in multilateral forums. We should jointly review existing mechanisms for cooperation and coordination and explore further opportunities for closer integration.
  22. Papua New Guinea remains a country of great importance to Australia. Labor will work closely with PNG in dealing with the very substantial challenges of economic and social development in the context of great cultural and political diversity.





- Labor will maintain Australia's strong support for the Bougainville peace process.
  - Labor will continue to provide substantial support to PNG, focusing particularly on basic education and health services, including programs to address the spread of HIV/AIDS, and district and community level employment creation and income generation; and support efforts to improve resource management and conservation in the areas of fisheries and forestry.
23. In the South Pacific, Labor will pursue a comprehensive Australian approach in partnership with the countries of this diverse region. Labor will:
- participate actively in and support the further development of the Pacific Islands Forum as a strong regional organisation;
  - promote economically and environmentally sustainable and equitable development;
  - strengthen regional cooperation in areas including natural disaster planning, response and relief, and fisheries research and protection;
  - provide appropriate assistance when requested to enhance democratic institutions and processes in Pacific countries; and
  - work to ensure that impacts on the peoples and nations of the Pacific are fully considered in the negotiation of solutions to global problems.
24. Labor will work to substantially expand Australia's growing economic and political engagement with the countries of Latin America. We note the profound economic and democratic transformations they have undergone and the scope for greatly enhanced relations in the future.
25. Labor will continue to develop Australia's longstanding ties with Europe and constructively engage with the European Community in global fora.
26. Finally, the United States remains our closest security ally and a vital global partner. Labor is firmly committed to maintain and strengthen

Australia's close relationship with the United States, a relationship founded on common democratic values and a shared commitment to international security and justice.

### **Global Diplomacy: Cooperative Problem Solving**

27. Labor's approach to international relations is based on a clear recognition of the fundamental interdependence of the world community. Global economic and social development, human rights, environmental protection and international security can best be achieved through multilateral diplomacy. Through international organisations we can promote the agreements necessary to build a secure twenty-first century based on economic justice and development, respect for human rights, environmental sustainability and peaceful means of resolving conflict.
28. The United Nations is the key forum for cooperation on many issues that affect Australia's interests, including our national security, trade and sustainable development, and our humanitarian concerns for people's welfare and human rights. Agreements reached under the auspices of the UN and its agencies touch on almost all aspects of our national life. Australia must contribute actively and constructively to shape global changes through the work of the UN.
29. A Labor government will work closely with like-minded countries to reform and improve the administrative efficiency and effectiveness of the UN. This should be directed to enhancing the role and standing of the UN as the primary forum for global cooperation and understanding. Labor will devote particular attention to strengthening and improving the UN's human rights machinery and processes.
30. Recognising the significant threats to international security that arise both from longstanding and new conflicts between and within states, Labor supports strengthening the UN's capacity in the fields of preventive diplomacy and peace building, peace making, peace keeping and peace enforcement.



31. Consistent with our strong commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law and justice, Labor considers Australia duty bound to assist the resolution of disputes and conflicts wherever we can play a positive role consistent with our national interests.
32. As a middle power with significant experience in peace-keeping, most recently in East Timor, Australia should play an active role in pursuing reform of UN peace-keeping policy and operations. Australia must be prepared to accept peace keeping responsibilities consistent with our national and international security interests.

### Australia's Role In Arms Control And Disarmament

33. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical and biological—is widely recognised as one of the most serious international security issues facing the world. The international environment in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War allowed important gains in nuclear arms control and disarmament. In more recent years, however, progress in nuclear disarmament has faltered with adverse implications for efforts to halt weapons proliferation.
34. Disarmament and non-proliferation measures are vital to ensure long-term international security and to channel resources into sustainable and just development. Australia has a direct national security interest in ensuring our immediate region remains free of such weapons and that their presence does not lead to instability and conflict elsewhere.
35. Australia has made significant contributions to important multilateral disarmament and arms control negotiations, notably the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Labor will ensure Australia is at the forefront of international efforts to advance disarmament and non-proliferation.
36. With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Labor will energetically support and pursue appropriate initiatives, such as those recommended by the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and the New Agenda Coalition, to achieve further deep reductions in nuclear armament and strengthen non-proliferation regimes as steps toward the ultimate objective of a nuclear weapon free world.
37. Labor will continue to give strong support to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to strengthening safeguards against further horizontal proliferation, to negotiating a convention banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons, and to the earliest possible entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Labor will continue support for nuclear weapon free zones in the South Pacific, Africa, Latin America and South East Asia and explore the possibilities of links between those zones to consolidate a southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons.
38. Labor will actively encourage the pursuit of further substantial reductions of nuclear arsenals and the development of processes for bringing all nuclear weapon states into the disarmament process. In this regard Labor considers it very important to protect fully the integrity of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.
39. In the longer term, achievement and maintenance of a nuclear weapon free world will require an enduring legal framework, linked to the Charter of the United Nations. Labor supports exploration of potential legal frameworks for the abolition of nuclear weapons, including negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention that would ban nuclear weapons and provide a global framework for the elimination of existing arsenals.
40. Efforts to reduce and eliminate nuclear arms must be accompanied by further progress in eliminating other weapons of mass



destruction. Labor will continue Australia's strong support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and pursue the earliest possible completion of negotiations for a robust and effective verification protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention. We are committed to continue support for the Missile Technology Control Regime and explore the possibilities of negotiating more effective multilateral constraints on ballistic missiles.

41. In response to the global humanitarian crisis produced by anti-personnel landmines, Labor will campaign to encourage universal adherence to the Ottawa Convention and continue support for negotiation of a global ban on the transfer of landmines. Labor will also continue to give high priority in Australia's overseas aid programs to de-mining activities and assistance to landmine victims in afflicted countries.
42. Labor strongly supports international efforts to address the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons across the globe. We are committed to work in both global and regional forums to stop illegal trafficking and limit destabilising accumulations and transfers of small arms. Labor strongly supports negotiation of an international protocol on the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms.

### Environmental Diplomacy

43. Labor considers the protection of the global environment a vital diplomatic objective.
44. International environmental concerns have become ever more acute. Many of the most serious environmental problems extend far beyond the boundaries of nation states. Climate change, ozone depletion, over-population, over-consumption, deforestation and loss of biodiversity threaten the future of the planet and its inhabitants. Environmental degradation contributes to social and political conflict. It undermines regional and international security. Protecting the environment will support Australia's national interests and security.
45. Major advances have been made in international environmental cooperation on and regulation of global commons. Although multilateral agreements have proven powerful tools for addressing environmental problems, international environmental stewardship lags behind rapid economic and social change. Gains from new technology and environmentally sensitive policies are being overtaken by the pace and scale of population growth and economic development. Concerted global action is required.
46. Leadership on these issues can and must be taken by middle powers such as Australia. Labor is determined to rebuild Australia's reputation as a world leader on international environmental issues.
47. Labor is committed to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development process as the framework for our international environmental policies, and to Agenda 21 as an action plan to promote sustainable development on a world wide basis.
  - Labor looks forward to the comprehensive review of progress on Agenda 21 to be undertaken by the Commission for Sustainable Development in 2002. Australia should be fully engaged in this review and inject much needed new momentum for coordinated action on global environment problems.
48. Labor strongly supports the work of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and will pursue reform aimed at enhancing the UNEP's advocacy of global environmental concerns.
49. Labor will give priority to environment cooperation in the Asia Pacific region where rapid economic growth is accompanied by increasing environmental pressures and damage. Labor supports regional cooperation on environmental issues through APEC and in cooperation with ASEAN. We will seek to upgrade consultation with Japan, the United States, Canada and New Zealand. We will further seek to establish new and substantive dialogues with major developing countries, especially China, Indonesia and India.



50. Labor will work to enhance the role of the Valdivia Group of Temperate Southern Hemisphere Countries in giving voice to southern hemisphere interest in international environment meetings.
51. Australia's Pacific Island neighbours face increasing environmental challenges arising from global warming, population growth and rapid increases in exploitation of land, forests and fisheries. Increased Australian support for the South Pacific Regional Environment Program, sustainable management of fisheries and other bilateral environment assistance to Pacific Island countries will be key elements of Australia's engagement with the Pacific under Labor.
52. As a major Antarctic claimant state, Australia has a special responsibility to protect the Antarctic's near pristine environment. Labor will work to further strengthen the Antarctic Treaty System with particular emphasis on enhancing environmental protection. Labor supports negotiation of a stringent agreement on liability for damage to the Antarctic environment. Priority will also be given to developing effective arrangements for management of tourism and other non-government activities that may impact on the Antarctic environment. Labor will energetically seek to combat unsustainable, illegal and unregulated fishing in the Southern Ocean.
53. Labor considers the promotion of universal human rights to be a core foreign policy objective that cannot be traded off against other diplomatic and economic goals. Support for an active and consistent pro-human rights stand is firmly Grounded In Australian Values.
- The Australian people expect our nation's diplomacy to be both principled and effective. A foreign policy that incorporates and reflects the core human rights values of our society will enjoy more respect overseas and greater support within Australia.
  - Respect for human rights brings benefits in higher standards of international behaviour and the contribution domestic peace and stability make to international security. Effective human rights diplomacy supports international and regional security, and Australia's national interests.
54. Labor considers all human rights to be universal, equal and indivisible. There is no hierarchy of human rights. The basic human rights to food, shelter, health care, economic security and education are preconditions for human survival, dignity and the enjoyment of civil and political rights. Equally, respect for civil and political rights is critical to advancing economic and other rights. Each group of rights underpins the other.
55. Labor considers all states have a duty to protect and promote universal human rights. This obligation is grounded in the principles contained within the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international covenants. It is an obligation also based on the consistency of experience across diverse cultures and societies in which ideals of popular sovereignty, equality of treatment, fairness and freedom are enduring themes.
56. Labor considers human rights to be a subject of legitimate international concern and rejects attempts to portray this concern as interference in the internal affairs of other states.
- International dialogue on universal human rights issues must be based on the concept of mutual respect. Australia must respect the political, economic, social, religious and cultural differences between other countries and ourselves. At the same time, Australian diplomacy must never lose sight of our core national values as a country with proud democratic traditions of openness and rigorous debate.
  - Labor will be forthright in raising concerns over human rights violations with relevant governments in our region and beyond. Similarly we expect and

## Human Rights In International Relations



welcome the prospect of international scrutiny of Australia's domestic human rights record.

57. Labor is determined to further strengthen international mechanisms and processes for monitoring human rights violations, especially those under the auspices of the United Nations, and encourage the development of regional dialogue on human rights issues in the Asia Pacific region.
  - Labor is committed to appoint an Ambassador for Human Rights to provide a focus for policy development and programs to advance Australia's human rights objectives in the United Nations, other multilateral fora and in regional and bilateral dialogues.
58. Cooperation between national human rights institutions is an important foundation for regional understandings and arrangements to advance human rights in our region. Labor will work to further develop the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. Labor will give high priority to supporting institutions such as Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) that face major new challenges and opportunities to advance respect for human rights.
  - Recognising the links between human rights abuse and unresolved political and social conflict, Labor will establish an independent Regional Centre for Human Rights Dialogue and Conflict Resolution.
59. Labor strongly supports the development of bilateral human rights dialogues as an integral element of Australia's relations with our neighbours in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. These should supplement but not replace multilateral monitoring mechanisms and processes and not constrain Australia's ability to speak out, strongly if necessary, against violations of human rights. Where appropriate, Labor supports the imposition of political and economic sanctions against governments that violate fundamental human rights.
60. Labor will actively campaign to focus world attention on governments that persist with forms of repression against the development of free trade unionism. Labor reaffirms that issues of core labour standards relate to fundamental human rights and will pursue as appropriate, through international treaties, guaranteed respect for those rights. Labor deplores cuts to Australia's participation in the ILO and reaffirms its support for programs designed to address abuse of labour rights in the Asia Pacific region. Labor will restore and strengthen Australia's participation and support for these vital activities. Labor will also give high priority to supporting international efforts to eradicate the exploitation of child labour.
61. Labor will play an active role in encouraging Australian companies operating overseas to adopt public codes which commit them to observe international human rights standards, including core labour standards, and ensure that their operations do not directly or indirectly violate human rights, or inflict unacceptable impacts on local communities and the environment.
62. Labor abhors the increasing levels of repression against women in some countries. Labor will vigorously support international campaigns to end:
  - sexual exploitation of women and children;
  - prohibitions on education and paid employment for women;
  - the denial to women of equal property rights;
  - the unequal standing of women in judicial systems;
  - the persecution of rape victims; and
  - the systematic use of rape and sexual torture in war.
63. The establishment of an International Criminal Court is an important step in efforts to deter the perpetrators of crimes against humanity, and to ensure justice is done when atrocities have been committed. Labor will actively encourage ratification by other countries to achieve earliest possible entry-into-force of the Court's Statute.



## Development Assistance Responsibilities

64. Eliminating the disparities between the world's rich and poor is one of the critical international challenges of our time. A world is not just if one in five of its people live in abject poverty and are denied basic rights to health, shelter, education, clean water and sanitation. Global poverty is also a leading source of international insecurity with high levels of poverty linked to political and economic instability, human rights abuse, unrest and war, uncontrolled migration and population growth, and environmental degradation.
- Both altruism and self-interest require that we actively assist the economic and social advancement of people in developing countries, especially the poorest countries and communities.
65. Consistent with our commitment to the ideals of equality and social justice, Labor accepts the challenge of working to eliminate global poverty as an urgent priority. Labor considers that Australia's overseas aid programs should be focused on a single, clear goal, namely to assist developing countries reduce poverty through sustainable economic and social development.
66. This objective is fully consistent with and supports Australia's long-term security and economic interests. While the provision of development assistance may also support our foreign policy objectives, the pursuit of short-term diplomatic and trade advantage can easily compromise the effectiveness of our aid program and should not determine development assistance priorities.
67. A focus on poverty reduction is also consistent with our determination to employ Australia's overseas development assistance to advance respect for human rights. Labor considers efforts to advance the full range of human rights—economic, social, cultural, civil and political—must be integral to Australia's overseas aid.
68. In promoting poverty reduction and enhancing human rights, Australia's overseas aid program should involve a cooperative partnership with developing countries and peoples to:
- support broadly based, equitably distributed and sustainable economic growth by encouraging sound national economic policies, including helping to develop efficient, accountable and equitable government administration;
  - work to increase access to basic human requirements such as health, education, housing and sanitation, where possible building upon existing infrastructure, knowledge and resources of local communities;
  - increase the productivity of the poor by facilitating access to productive assets, including support for microcredit programs, and access to vocational training and appropriate agricultural technology;
  - break down barriers to the participation of the poor in economic and social development, and especially support activities which enable women to contribute to and benefit from development;
  - establish a human rights framework for Australia's overseas aid programs and include human rights issues and respect for indigenous rights and culture, in our development assistance policy dialogue with recipient countries;
  - support environmentally sustainable development work directed towards environmental protection and rehabilitation;
  - address HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases; and
  - support population activities, including voluntary family planning, as part of wider efforts to improve the health and education of women.
  - Labor recognises the important role education plays in reducing poverty. Information technologies will make the export of education to developing countries more accessible.





69. Labor strongly supports further international action to provide effective debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries. debt relief should be closely linked to social development and poverty alleviation. Australia must be prepared to contribute its fair share of the cost of debt cancellation.
70. Labor will pursue reforms to ensure the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and Asian Development Bank are held more accountable for their programs in terms of poverty reduction and impacts on vulnerable groups and communities.
71. Labor accepts the internationally agreed aid volume target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for overseas development assistance. A Labor government will ensure that Australia's overseas aid as a percentage of GNP is not further reduced and as a first step will seek to restore development assistance to Labor's 1995/96 ratio of 0.32 per cent of GNP as quickly as budgetary circumstances permit.
72. The geographical scope of Australia's bilateral aid programs should reflect our primary regional focus on East Asia and the South Pacific. This should not preclude significant development assistance activities in other areas, especially South Asia and Africa where many of the world's poorest communities are located. Labor also supports the continuation of special development assistance programs of global significance such as Australia's aid contributions in support of the Middle East peace process.
73. Labor is committed to ensuring that Australia's overseas development assistance is delivered professionally in a cost-effective manner and subject to monitoring and evaluation systems that focus on the outcomes and impacts of assistance. Labor strongly supports the role of non-government organisations in the development and delivery of Australia's overseas aid program. Labor will further enhance the role of Australian and international non-government organisations as channels for Australia's development assistance, subject to rigorous standards of effectiveness and accountability.



## Institutional Foundations Of Foreign Policy

74. Australia's diplomatic service is a national asset that is critical to maximising our international influence and securing outcomes that advance the interests of Australia and Australians. Australia needs effective diplomacy to make us heard and help shape the course of international and regional events.
75. Australian governments must be provided with timely and high quality analysis of international developments. Similarly our overseas representation must enable us to pursue our objectives in a cost-effective way and to exploit emerging opportunities to enhance our security, economic and other interests.
76. Australia's diplomatic service has suffered significant cutbacks that impair its ability to pursue our national interests. Targeted reinvestment in our international relations effort is required to meet the challenges of the next two decades and beyond. Labor will:
  - strengthen the capacity of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and other relevant agencies to assess global and regional patterns of strategic and economic change, and their implications for Australia, especially in the longer term;
  - ensure that the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio retains and develops relevant policy expertise;
  - review the capacity and focus of Australia's overseas representation to ensure that our network of diplomatic posts is resourced to meet the challenges of the increasingly complex international agenda and the growing needs of government, business and the Australian people; and
  - review and strengthen Australia's public diplomacy programs to project abroad an image of a modern, culturally diverse, tolerant and sophisticated Australia, in support of our key foreign and trade policy objectives.





77. Labor will ensure that high priority is given to assisting Australian travellers and Australians overseas through effective and accessible consular services.
78. Labor recognises the important contribution made to advancing Australia's national interests by Australia's intelligence collection and assessment agencies and the necessity for effective management, scrutiny and accountability of those organisations. Labor is committed to:
- ensuring that our intelligence agencies are able to assess effectively and respond to national security challenges, including threats arising from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism; and
  - maintaining appropriate and effective oversight of Australia's intelligence agencies, including placing all such organisations on an appropriate legislative basis and under effective parliamentary scrutiny.



### Treaty Making Process

79. Labor is committed to ensuring effective parliamentary and public scrutiny of international treaties prior to final treaty action by government.
80. Labor will continue arrangements for review of treaties including the Treaties Council, the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, and the requirement that treaties together with National Interest Analyses be tabled in the Federal parliament for at least fifteen sitting days before final treaty action is taken. Labor is committed to further enhance consultation with State and Territory governments and increase opportunities for public and parliamentary scrutiny prior to the conclusion of treaty negotiations.

## Strength, Sustainability And Self Reliance In Defence Policy



### National security

81. One of the primary obligations of government is to secure and defend its territory, people and economic and political interests. Military defence is a fundamental basis of any country's national security. However, effective national security relies on much more than military defence alone.
- Foreign policy, customs services, international crime detection, immigration policies, trade and economic policies all combine to contribute to a nation's security.
  - In addition, securing a clean environment, maintaining critical infrastructure systems such as telecommunications and transport and ensuring the integrity of key information systems are vital to the nation's security.
82. Because all aspects of national security are interrelated, Labor will establish effective inter-disciplinary working parties at both Cabinet and senior departmental levels to ensure effective coordination amongst relevant portfolios. In so doing, Labor will provide maximum security for Australians and their property to enable all to live, work and raise families in safety and security.
83. Whilst our alliances and international relations are critical components of our national defence, the foundation of Labor's defence policy is self-reliance, which requires that Australia maintain the military capabilities to defend our country and key interests. Labor's military defence policy rests on the assumption



that it is critical to maintain a strong and efficiently managed defence organisation that possesses the equipment and personnel necessary to meet the demands placed upon it by the Australian people through their government.

### Alliances and international relations

84. Labor recognises the importance of both bilateral and multilateral defence relationships in achieving security for Australia and creating and maintaining stability in Australia's strategic environment. Defence cooperation with Australia's neighbours can make important contributions to building regional security. Labor will ensure that defence cooperation with other countries supports our national and regional security and does not contribute to any suppression or violation of human rights or democratic freedoms. Labor in government will closely monitor the human rights performance of military forces with which Australia engages in defence cooperation. As necessary, Australia should actively encourage regional military establishments to increase respect for human rights and democratic processes.
85. Labor is strongly committed to transparency as a way to build trust and reduce unfounded suspicion and dangerous misunderstandings in strategic affairs, especially within our own region. Accordingly, Labor will ensure that military capability development is directly related to strategic requirements and that appropriately regular strategic reviews are undertaken with public reports published.
86. Australia's alliance arrangements with the United States of America remain fundamentally important to Australia's security. Labor will continue to build on the excellent relationship developed over many years. We will modernise and revitalise the consultative mechanisms to facilitate a strong relationship for the new century.
87. The Pine Gap Joint Facility makes an important contribution to this alliance as well as to the deterrence and avoidance of conflict. Labor will require that this facility continue to be managed and operated on a joint basis and only with the government's full knowledge and concurrence of the facility's activities. Labor will ensure the operations of the Joint Facility are consistent with Australia's national security, disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Furthermore the Joint Facility will only operate to support the use of armed forces with the specific prior agreement of the Government.
88. Indonesia's pursuit of democratic systems and practices will assist Australia to foster a new relationship with that country. Labor will ensure that any military relationship between Australia and Indonesia will be as equal partners, seeking to achieve the security interests that benefit both countries and that of our broader region, while ensuring that our commitment to liberal democratic and human rights values is not compromised. This relationship must also assist Indonesia's own military forces to develop as accountable instruments of a democratic civilian based government and secure a stable long-term future for Indonesia.
89. Our participation in the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) will remain an important aspect of regional policy under Labor. The FPDA provide a unique multinational forum in which Australian forces can exercise with other countries of the region. We will work to maintain it as a cooperative treaty with benefit for all participants.
90. Australia's historical and close ties with New Zealand are the basis of an ongoing partnership. Labor will promote regular joint military exercises with New Zealand and seek to improve the operational capability of potential joint deployments and foster the synergies that can be created with our different military capabilities.
91. Australia has a special role and responsibility in its relations with Papua New Guinea. Labor in government will assist PNG to develop an effective and disciplined defence force, while encouraging non-military solutions to problems of internal security and order.



92. Security of the Pacific nations is important to regional security and our national defence. Labor has a good record in support of Pacific nations in their efforts to protect their economic zones, particularly fishing rights, and in the development of modern defence forces. Labor will build on those achievements, working cooperatively with those nations.



### Allied use of Australian facilities

93. Labor will support the use of facilities in Australia by the armed forces of friendly countries for combined exercises, training and goodwill visits, provided that in times of peace:
- use of Australian ports by foreign warships does not extend to the home-porting of any of those vessels in Australia;
  - the staging of military aircraft through Australian airfields or airspace shall only be for such purposes as may be agreed beforehand by the Australian government;
  - no nuclear, biological or chemical weapons may be stored or stationed in Australia;
  - nuclear powered vessels visit only those ports which, after assessment by the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), have been determined by the Visiting Ships Panel (Nuclear) as being suitable for those vessels, and provided also that all other safety precautions and conditions that are deemed necessary by the relevant Australian authorities are complied with by the vessels concerned; and
  - appropriate environmental safeguards are in place.

## Australia's Armed Forces



### Defence capability

94. Labor's defence and foreign policies are based on the conviction that armed conflict is a last resort requiring every effort to be made to prevent it. Nevertheless, a strong and

technologically advanced defence capability must be maintained and be so effective as to demonstrate beyond all doubt Australia's intention and ability to defend itself and its vital interests.

95. All Australians within Australian territory are entitled to the protection of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). No concentration of defence effort in particular areas shall jeopardise the security of other parts of Australia's national territory.
96. Labor recognises the importance of ensuring that the Australian Defence Force maintains a focus on its core function, that being the military defence of Australia. Accordingly Labor will free the ADF from its maritime policing roles by transferring those roles to a newly established, single, dedicated agency—an Australian Coast Guard. In times of war or national emergency the Coast Guard will come under the command and act as a fourth arm of the ADF. In times of peace the ADF and Coast Guard will maintain high levels of cooperation and assistance in the pursuit of national security.
97. Whilst the Australian Defence Force's primary and overriding priority is the protection of Australians within Australia, our armed forces need to possess the capacity to participate with allies and United Nations forces in support of important national goals and in the protection of Australians abroad.
98. Labor will ensure that the Australian Defence Force responds to the challenges of, and capitalises on the opportunities arising from, the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and ensures that military doctrine and methods of operation remain relevant and effective in the new age of military affairs.




### Personnel

99. Labor recognises that the most valuable asset our defence force has is its people. The Australian Defence Force must be willing to compete with the private sector to recruit and retain the best and brightest personnel. The well being of members and their families



is integral to the efficiency and effectiveness of the ADF and is a shared responsibility between the ADF and the member. In order for the ADF to be an attractive and competitive employer Labor will develop an integrated long term personnel policy that addresses the special nature of military service and the needs of service families.

100. Labor will ensure that ADF pay and conditions continue to be fixed in a fair and transparent manner by an independent tribunal and that ADF personnel have the right to form, and be members of, associations in respect of their pay and conditions. Labor will allow associations that can demonstrate a substantial membership to have the right to appear before the independent tribunal to present the views of serving members.
101. Labor will give particular consideration to the Defence Reserves. As part of the total force structure, they will play an increasingly important role in the defence of Australia. As a priority, Labor will:
  - reintroduce defence leave for reservists as an allowable award matter;
  - abolish the system of common induction training for the Army; and
  - legislate to protect the civilian interests of part time members of the forces who participate in overseas humanitarian, peace making or peace keeping missions, whilst also taking into account the legitimate interests of civilian employers.
102. Labor will ensure that proper consideration is given to occupational health and safety requirements. Furthermore, the worker's compensation arrangements for ADF personnel should reflect the unique risks involved in military service and give appropriate emphasis to treatment, rehabilitation, return to work and income maintenance measures. Serving personnel should be given better information about health and safety and compensation provisions and increased assistance to claim compensation when they sustain a work-related injury or illness.
103. As part of its integrated personnel policy, Labor will give particular attention to:
  - greater recognition and equality for single members, particularly in the standard of on-base accommodation;
  - a spouse employment strategy;
  - further development of a flexible child care system;
  - greater use of the Defence Home Owner Loan Scheme;
  - extension of compassionate leave provisions; and
  - provision to Defence families of education advice and assistance targeted to their particular circumstances.
104. Labor will review the extent to which the remaining prohibitions on women serving in combat positions serve any useful military purpose. The experience of overseas Defence forces will be considered as part of this process.
105. Labor is strongly committed to implementing all necessary steps to eliminate sexual harassment in the ADF including the establishment of a single point of complaint and a specialist investigative unit, separate the chain of command and accountable directly to Defence Headquarters, to investigate all allegations of harassment. All allegations of sexual assault involving members of the ADF will be referred to the civilian police to investigate under standard criminal procedures.
106. Labor believes it is important that the nation's defence force be representative of the community it serves. Accordingly, recruiting policy will aim to ensure that the ethnic composition of the ADF better reflects that of the broader Australian community.



### Community recognition of defence service

107. Labor will initiate discussions with those nations which enforce conscription against Australians who have dual citizenship with the purpose of ensuring that Australians are able to visit their country of origin without being forced into conscription. We will seek to develop civilian and military alternatives in



Australia for those who choose to undertake such alternatives and wish to embark on extended visits.

- 108.** Labor is committed to commemorating the sacrifice of those Australian men and women who have served in war and overseas conflicts on behalf of Australia and who have participated in United Nations peace-keeping operations.
- Labor will ensure that Australia particularly remembers the individual sacrifice of those who have given their lives in the service of our country.
- 109.** Labor will assist the Australian community to learn about and remember the nation's experiences of war, and to appreciate both the personal contribution of those who served and the social, economic and political impact on the wider community. This will include the preparation of suitable curriculum material for schools, as part of the teaching of Australian history.
- 110.** Labor will review the range of policies on the issuing of medals and benefits for operational service, with a view to addressing any outstanding anomalies.



### Veterans' housing

- 111.** Labor will maintain subsidised assistance under the Defence Services Home Scheme to assist veterans to purchase their own homes. The limits to the level of assistance provided will be monitored in the light of broader trends in housing costs and interest rates, and enhancements implemented over time.
- 112.** Labor will maintain a public sector home insurance system for defence service home owners.
- 113.** Labor will ensure that low income veterans who are tenants receive rent assistance through its income support payments and have adequate access to public and community housing.

## Defence Industry And Procurement



### Defence acquisitions

- 114.** It is critically important that the procurement and acquisition processes of the Defence Acquisition Organisation, particularly for major defence equipment, deliver timely and value for money outcomes for the Australian Defence Force. Labor will vigorously pursue new, streamlined, innovative and efficient acquisition processes that will bring benefits to the ADF, Australian defence industry and the Australian community.
- 115.** Defence industry is an integral part of our nation's defence. It impacts directly on a range of key capabilities and contributes to sustainable defence. Labor is committed to fostering a strong and viable long-term domestic defence industry and will ensure that government policy will reflect that commitment.
- 116.** Defence acquisition play a significant role in the modernisation of Australian industry and the development of a skills base. Labor will give preference to Australian based companies, with special consideration for local suppliers being desirable where:
- the supplier is commercially competitive;
  - the supplier is operating in an area of high strategic value;
  - competitors are likely to be subject to political and intelligence pressures from foreign powers and are consequently unreliable; and
  - local production is required to establish a new capacity capable of future development.
- 117.** Labor recognises the importance of industry involvement in the defence procurement process from the earliest stages. This involves participation in planning, design and supply. To this end Labor will establish cooperative



and close liaison with industry, particularly in those areas that:

- produce equipment or technology that is identified by Government as vital for our strategic needs; and
- contribute to defence sustainability.

**118.** Labor recognises defence procurement can assist in providing a more balanced workload for industry through scheduling adjustments that are compatible with both defence and industry needs.

### Defence science and technology

**119.** The Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) has an impressive record of research and development of defence related technologies. Labor will further expand and encourage the links between DSTO and the Australian defence industry, including technology transfer to Australian industry. This will ensure maximum benefit from Australian defence research and development (R&D) and enhance domestic development opportunities for new technologies and products. As far as possible, Labor will foster the retention of intellectual property ownership in Australia, including where appropriate ownership of intellectual property by Defence.

**120.** Consistent with Labor's urban and regional development and transport policies, we will develop ports, airfields, railways and roads which will contribute to the mobility of, and infrastructure support for, the ADF as well as to the material development of the nation and growth in the defence industrial base. Labor will also ensure that the Defence Forces activities that provide important transport links and economic infrastructure for rural and regional centres are maintained.

### Defence exports

**121.** Labor will ensure government control over the manufacture and export of arms, munitions and military goods and services.

**122.** Labor supports the export of Australian defence equipment within strict guidelines. Labor will not permit defence exports to countries where those exports would:

- have an adverse impact on Australia's security interests;
- contravene United Nations embargos; and
- pose a clear, identifiable risk of being used for the major suppression or violation of human rights or fundamental freedoms.

**123.** Defence exports are important in maintaining local industry support for the ADF and in contributing to Australia's own defence capability. Accordingly, Labor will review the defence export facilitation program in consultation with industry to ensure maximum opportunities for Australian defence industry, within the strict guidelines required for defence exports.

### Civil And Natural Disaster Organisations

**124.** Labor recognises that civil defence is an integral element of a national defence posture. Under Labor the Federal Government will, through Emergency Management Australia (EMA), aid and supplement the States' civil defence and emergency services. The civil defence force should be able to buy specialist equipment for its own use if the availability of defence equipment during disasters cannot be guaranteed.



# chapter sixteen

## Delivering Quality Government

### Making Government Responsive, Accountable And Efficient

1. The process of globalisation has set in train developments that are affecting the image and authority of states everywhere: there is widespread disillusionment with government and a lack of confidence in the capacity of governments to solve problems. Labor rejects these views, remaining committed to the belief that governments, which are truly representative and accountable, have an essential role to play in protecting and enhancing the lives of citizens.
2. If people are to be persuaded of the legitimacy and worth of government, then the standards, practices and services of governments must be of the highest quality. In particular, government must be responsive and representative, accountable and accessible, efficient and effective.
3. **Responsive and representative government.** Government must respond to the higher level of social wants characteristic of modern, technologically rich societies and to the economic insecurities citizens are experiencing. Labor reaffirms its commitment to:
  - the idea and practice of government intervention to promote social democratic goals and to ameliorate the consequences of market failure; and
  - remaining responsive to community opinion, with a continuing emphasis on consultative processes of government.
4. Government must be truly representative if it is to realise the aspirations of all Australians. Labor believes governments should reflect the diversity of our society through their representatives, appointments and decisions.
5. **Accountable and accessible government.** With the growing perception that decisions affecting the lives of citizens are increasingly being taken beyond national borders, it is imperative that people should have access to and confidence in their national governments. Labor believes this can only be achieved if:
  - governments are truly accountable to Parliament and the electorate;
  - citizens' rights to independent review of administrative decisions are guaranteed;
  - transparency of government decision





making is facilitated by effective measures such as freedom of information.

6. **Efficient and effective government.** Labor has always believed that its goals are best achieved if government services are delivered in the most efficient manner possible.
  - Because of the universal difficulty in matching government revenue raising capacity to required outlays the premium on efficiency is greater than ever.
7. Labor recognises that community support for an active role for government in the achievement of social and economic goals requires that government programs deliver the expected results.



### Respect For The Constitution

8. The Constitution is the fundamental compact between the Australian people and their government. The Constitution and the powers it vests in the three arms of government—the Parliament, the Executive and the Judiciary—all draw authority from the Australian people.
9. A healthy and open democracy in which government is held to account by the people is dependent upon a participative and active population. Our democracy's ability to respond properly to the priorities of people is diminished if people feel they are not part of that society or that it has nothing to offer them.

Labor is committed to addressing issues such as economic deprivation, geographic isolation and language barriers that contribute to people's perceptions of social exclusion.

- Through citizenship education and lifelong learning, Labor is committed to empowering Australians to understand the operation of our system of government, and to the need for ongoing constitutional reform to ensure that our legislatures are properly equipped to meet the challenges of the twenty first century.
10. To continue to meet the increasingly complex economic, environmental, political and social needs and aspirations of the Australian people, Labor believes that the Constitution must be flexible and readily capable of alteration.

11. Australians have only rarely amended the Constitution. History shows that referenda are only likely to succeed when they receive broad support across the political spectrum.
  - Accordingly, Labor will seek to build a broad consensus for constitutional reform both with other political parties and among the Australian people as a whole.
12. The Constitution was not set in stone at the time of Federation. It must be adaptable and acquire meaning from the needs of the day.
  - Labor acknowledges that it is the role of the High Court to interpret the Constitution in context, rather than relying on any expression of original intent made at the time of Federation.
13. The Constitution should:
  - reflect Australia's status as an independent nation and as a federal parliamentary democracy;
  - use simple language and reflect actual practices and conventions of our system of government, including that the Head of State should act on the advice of the Government enjoying the confidence of the House of Representatives;
  - provide the most suitable framework for the economic, environmental, social and political development of Australia as a federation;
  - recognise an appropriate division of responsibilities between all levels of government to facilitate national planning and the effective delivery of public services;
  - protect the independence of the judiciary; and
  - ensure that our individual, collective and civic rights are guaranteed, with constitutional reform to entrench these rights. Labor recognises that these inalienable rights carry with them a responsibility to respect the individual and collective rights enjoyed by others, and the need to protect and promote institutions and practices fundamental to an equal, just, democratic and tolerant society.
14. Labor supports the inclusion of a new preamble to the Constitution which recognises the core



elements of Australia's history and democracy and appropriately expresses the values, aspirations and ideals of the Australian people.

- 15. Australians must be entitled to participate equally in the democratic process and in public life and administration. Labor supports constitutional reform to entrench the principle of one vote, one value for all elections, to ensure equal participation for all regardless of place of residence.
- 16. Labor supports the concept of four year terms for the House of Representatives and simultaneous elections for the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- 17. Labor supports constitutional reform to prevent the Senate rejecting, deferring or blocking appropriation bills.
- 18. Labor supports constitutional reform at the Federal, State and Territory level to provide for the reinstatement of those persons who have resigned an office of profit under the Crown to unsuccessfully contest a Federal election.

19. Labor supports constitutional reform to allow all Australian citizens to contest Federal elections.

20. Labor supports the removal from the Constitution of provisions no longer having any effect.



### Respect For The Parliament

- 21. Parliament is the central institution in our system of government and respect for Parliament is an essential element of a healthy democracy. In Labor's view this respect is dependent on the extent to which Parliament reflects the will of the people; the credibility, appropriateness and effectiveness of the institutions of Parliament; and the standard, dignity and transparency of parliamentary proceedings.
- 22. Labor reaffirms its belief in the primacy of the people's House (the House of Representatives) and believes that a government enjoying the confidence of that House should be able to

## The Republic And National Identity

- A1 Labor believes that the monarchy no longer reflects either the fundamental democratic principles that underlie the Australian nation or its diversity. Labor believes that our Head of State should be an Australian who embodies and represents the traditions, values and aspirations of all Australians.
- A2 Labor recognises the difficulty of advancing constitutional reform if the Australian people are not fully involved in the process and unless bipartisan support is obtained.
- A3 Labor is committed to consulting with the Australian people, other political parties, the States and the Territories as to the

- form that the Republic should take. Labor will promote community debate about the advantages and disadvantages of the various republican models.
- A4 Labor will undertake a series of plebiscites to identify the form of Republic that Australians want with a view to putting that model to the Australian people at a referendum.
- A5 Labor believes that every Australian citizen should be eligible to be our Head of State.
- A6 Labor supports Australia's continued membership of the Commonwealth of Nations.



- govern without obstruction by the House of review (the Senate).
23. Labor acknowledges the need for ongoing reform to ensure Parliament is able to meet the changing needs of government and society.
  24. Parliamentary question time should be an opportunity for calling the government to account. Labor believes that all ministers should be in attendance and that there should be procedures to ensure that questions are adequately answered.
  25. Labor will support measures designed to enhance the independence of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
  26. Labor regards the parliamentary committee system as an important means for enabling Parliament to exercise its responsibility to review draft legislation and oversee the implementation of laws, policies and programs.
  27. Labor believes that those holding public office should fully disclose their financial interests and any other interest that may conflict, or be perceived to conflict, with their public duty.
  28. Labor ministers will be required to adhere to a formal code of conduct which sets out the action to be taken when conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest, arise and which prohibits behaviour likely to bring discredit to the government.
  29. In order to enhance the accountability of parliamentarians for their expenditure of allowances, Labor will table details of expenditure of travel and other allowances annually and will establish an independent auditor of parliamentary allowances and entitlements with appropriate powers of investigation.
  30. Recognising that every citizen should have a stake in the political process and that political parties need to be broadly representative, Labor endorses the maintenance of compulsory voting and registration.
  31. In order to guarantee effective representation of the community in the Federal Parliament, limitations on the opportunities for Australian citizens to offer themselves for election to the Parliament should be minimal. Labor will work towards removing unnecessary barriers, and in particular will support reforms to terminate the constitutional ban on election to Parliament of a person holding an office of profit under the Crown, provided that office is relinquished on election.
  32. Labor supports public transparency of political donations. Labor believes all original sources of political donations should be disclosed and the cost of participation in the political process should be shared between the public at large and the various parties' members and supporters. Labor will monitor the effectiveness of the current system of disclosure of political donations.

### **Integrity And Openness In Government Administration**

33. In government Labor will aim for the highest standards of integrity, transparency in decision-making, openness and accountability.
34. Labor will promote transparency and open government through effective freedom of information legislation, including mandatory release of internal working documents where this is not contrary to the public interest, and the regular tabling in Parliament of reports on the operation of government and government-funded agencies.
35. Freedom of information provisions should be available to all. Labor will ensure that the costs involved in using freedom of information procedures do not put them out of reach of the community.
36. Labor will ensure that considerations relating to outsourcing, privatisation, notions of commercial confidentiality and corporatisation are not used as excuses to allow government and government-funded agencies to escape the requirements of open government and accountability. The rights of clients and other recipients of such services, including rights to access to information, privacy, correction of inaccurate information and, where necessary, redress, will be maintained.



37. Labor recognises that where the government acknowledges responsibility to provide a service, it must guarantee delivery standards. This will require that the performance of service providers, whether they be public or private sector, be subject to examination by the Auditor-General.
38. Labor remains committed to a strong, independent and well resourced national audit office capable of providing objective and balanced audit advice and assurance to the Parliament, government and public sector entities.
39. Labor believes that all government and administrative decisions should be subject to administrative review or judicial challenge, including through the continued effective operation of the Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act.
40. Labor will defend the integrity of the office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman and ensure that it is adequately funded.
41. It is essential for the integrity of the review process that tribunals and other bodies should maintain their independence from the agencies under review.
42. Labor supports public participation in government decision-making through consultative processes such as advisory bodies, that are representative of community views.
43. Labor recognises that whistle blowing is a legitimate form of action in a democracy and will support legislation to provide effective protection for whistleblowers in the public sector.
44. Labor reaffirms its view that the public sector has an essential and valuable role to play in the promotion of our economic and social policy objectives.
45. Labor supports the maintenance of a strong, unified, apolitical public service as a repository of knowledge and expertise in the development of government policy and the delivery of essential services to the Australian community.
46. Labor believes there are characteristics, which are unique to the public sector, such as multiplicity of objectives, the need for higher standards of accountability and the need to respond to the changing requirements of governments and that there are limits to the extent to which private sector practices can and should be applied to the public sector.
47. Under Labor, the focus of government will be on achieving benefits for the Australian community as a whole. While cost effectiveness will be an important consideration, equity, social cohesion and the provision of opportunities for all Australians will be of prime importance.
48. Labor recognises that in the drive to make Australia more competitive, there is a need for continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of government service delivery.
- Labor is committed to achieving best practice in the provision of government services.
49. Labor believes public ownership of national assets will continue to play an important role in helping to foster a strong economy and a more equal society. Any consideration of outsourcing or privatisation of government assets or services, including through the application of national competition policy, will only occur where it is demonstrably in the public interest. Such public interests test will include:
- privacy of consumer information;
  - accountability to and scrutiny by the public;
  - genuine cost savings, not at the expense of quality of service or access to service, nor through cuts to jobs or employment conditions;
  - no negative effect on the environment or industry development; and
  - assessment of impacts on regional, rural and remote Australian communities.
50. As part of the process for improving the performance of public sector trading enterprises, Labor will ensure that they are

### Efficiency In Government Service Delivery



provided with an adequate capital structure, including an adequate equity base.

51. Labor believes that the purchasing power of the Federal government and other levels of government should be used to provide expanded opportunities for local industry and to achieve savings in the purchase of goods and services for the public sector.
52. Labor supports the conduct of efficiency audits and effectiveness reviews on a continuing basis. Programs should be regularly monitored to ensure that they are achieving their stated objectives.
53. Labor is committed to improving transactions between the public sector and the wider community. It will strengthen the consultation between government agencies and consumers and will ensure that service delivery is simplified and better directed through the use of appropriate technology. It will favour changes to program design that enable recipients to exercise greater choice and control in their utilisation of basic government services.
54. Labor recognises that despite the potential for increased efficiencies offered by new technologies, access to personal service and expert advice locally will still be of great value in many circumstances, particularly in the delivery of services to regional areas.
55. Labor will undertake audits of the provision of government services, including to regional, rural and remote Australia, and develop a strategy to ensure adequate service provision.

### Access And Equity In Government Employment

56. Labor is committed to a single, integrated, merit based and non-discriminatory career public service that is able to respond to the changing needs of government and society.
57. Selection and promotion in the public sector will be on the basis of merit. At the same time Labor reaffirms its commitment to ensure a rapid increase of representation, including at

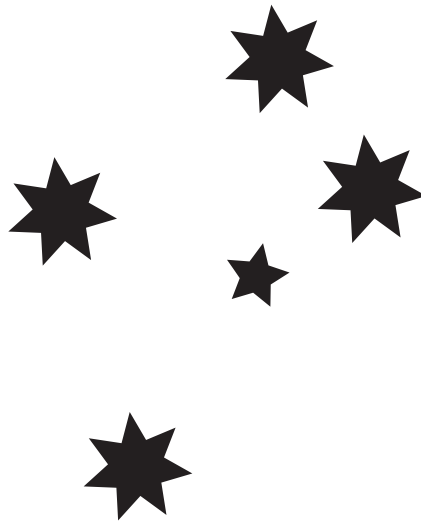
senior levels, of sections of the workforce who have been discriminated against, or who have special needs: namely women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, migrants and people with disabilities.

- Labor also recognises the important role of the public sector in providing employment, training and career opportunities for young people.
58. Labor reaffirms its commitment to the principles of participatory decision making and industrial democracy in the public sector.
  59. Labor will encourage mobility between and within departments, particularly for the Senior Executive Service, and between the public service and other appropriate areas of employment.
  60. Labor recognises that:
    - Australians want a career public service without partisanship;
    - public service employment must be fair and equitable;
    - there is necessarily a limit on, and need for public scrutiny of, top public service remuneration;
    - there must be an ethos of public service; and
    - outcomes are funded by public money.
  61. These special elements should be reflected in public service industrial relations arrangements by:
    - ensuring secure, comprehensive, service-wide standards and classifications;
    - ensuring secure superannuation arrangements;
    - emphasising training and career development;
    - enabling public servants to balance work and family responsibilities;
    - ensuring appeal and review rights;
    - ensuring that contracting-out is not used as a vehicle to cut wages and working conditions for public sector employees; and
    - establishing staffing levels commensurate with work loads, not arbitrary financial targets.



## Protecting our coastline

62. The front line of Australia's national security in peacetime is our maritime jurisdiction and coastal borders. The increased prevalence of transnational organised crime and illegal fishing operations and Australia's environmental responsibility have created substantial new challenges to Australia's national security.
63. Labor believes that the most effective way to combat these threats to Australia's security is through a professional, disciplined, well-resourced maritime law enforcement organisation.
64. Labor will establish an Australian Coast Guard. The Coast Guard will bring together in an effective and better coordinated way the marine surveillance and enforcement roles of all Commonwealth agencies.
65. The Australian Coast Guard will be responsible for the detection of and response to all incursions into Australian waters; for the enforcement of all Commonwealth laws as they relate to the maritime jurisdiction; for carrying out coastal surveillance and intelligence gathering operations; for coordinating maritime safety and search and rescue operations; and for coastal surveillance and protection against incursions in times of declared emergency and conflict.
66. In times of peace, the Coast Guard will be a civil law enforcement agency within the Justice and Customs portfolio. It will be appropriately armed. It will coordinate its intelligence and surveillance work closely with the Australian Defence Force and in times of war or declared emergency the Coast Guard will come under the direct command of the Defence Force.
67. The Coast Guard will also have a volunteer and entirely civil reserve component to provide a localised search and rescue service. This component will not transfer to the ADF in times of war or emergency.



# chapter seventeen



## Financing Government



### Basic Principles

1. High quality public services provided by government to meet the needs of the community are essential in any civilised society. They must be sustainably financed in a way that is as fair and economically efficient as possible.
2. The management of Australia's public finances must meet broad economic and social objectives. It is counter-productive and self-defeating to have public finance strategies which:
  - unnecessarily contract economic growth and harm employment;
  - achieve greater public saving only at the expense of private saving;
  - neglect public infrastructure;
  - detract from Australia's international competitiveness and export performance;
  - reduce services for those in need; or
  - diminish the availability of public goods not provided as well, or at all, by the private sector.
3. Labor will finance government in ways which recognise not only the role of fiscal policy in ensuring sustained economic and jobs growth, but also Australia's hard-earned status as an economy with relatively low levels of taxation and public debt.
  - Labor will not increase the burden of taxation on lower and middle income Australians, nor seek to raise revenue beyond the proportion of GDP established over the past decade.



### Revenue

4. Labor believes that the operation of the taxation system should be consistent with the criteria of fairness, economic efficiency, adequacy, simplicity, transparency, comprehensiveness and administrative efficiency.
5. **Fairness.** Labor is committed to a fair and progressive tax system characterised by:
  - vertical equity, meaning that those with differing capacities to pay tax should face differing burdens, with a greater





- contribution from those with the greater capacity to pay; and
  - horizontal equity, meaning that those with equivalent capacities to pay tax should face similar burdens.
6. Labor will ensure that the taxation system is fair by, in particular:
- recognising the costs faced by families in raising children;
  - ensuring that the interaction of tax and welfare does not act as a barrier for people to move from welfare to work;
  - providing appropriate resources to revenue authorities to ensure a high level of compliance with, and minimal avoidance of, existing taxation laws;
  - taking measures to ensure that high wealth individuals are not able, through family trusts and other income splitting arrangements, to avoid paying their fair share of taxation;
  - ensuring that the tax system does not subsidise excessive executive remuneration; and
  - addressing erosion of the PAYE tax base through incorporation and contrived independent contracting.
7. Labor opposed the GST because it is an inherently unfair tax that shifts the tax mix from income to consumption and the tax burden from high to low and middle income earners. Australia has a GST because of a deal between the Howard Government and the Australian Democrats, and the deception of the Australian public. Many items are caught which the Howard Government said would be tax free. The GST cannot be made fair, but it can be made less unfair. It is not a simple tax; it is administratively complex and burdensome for business.
8. Labor is committed to lifting the burden of the GST, within the constraints of fiscal responsibility. Subject to the experience of implementation, we will be guided by the following objectives:
- reducing the impact of the GST on education and health;
  - easing the burden of the GST on charities;
  - reducing the compliance burden on, and enhancing the competitive position of, small business; and
  - easing the burden on those most disadvantaged by the GST.
9. **Economic Efficiency.** The design and structure of taxes can have a significant effect on the economic viability of particular industries, regions or indeed the whole nation. To maximise economic efficiency in the tax system, Labor will seek to ensure that it:
- encourages economic growth and employment;
  - facilitates equal access to the IT and new media;
  - encourages savings through both superannuation and share ownership, including by employees;
  - encourages new investment, especially in venture capital and new start-up businesses, and in research and development;
  - assists the location of headquarters of international businesses in Australia;
  - facilitates the establishment of Australia as a major regional financial centre; and
  - maintains the integrity of taxation bases that are currently threatened.
10. **Adequacy.** Labor will ensure a level of revenue adequate for the public services we are committed to providing by:
- achieving sufficient economic growth to generate revenue;
  - ensuring that the integrity of the tax base is maintained; and
  - ensuring that all taxpayers are contributing fairly, by appropriately designed tax measures and effective legislative and administrative action to minimise tax avoidance.
11. **Simplicity.** Labor will ensure that the taxation law is as simple to apply as is practicable and consistent with the achievement of fairness and other objectives. Taxpayers should be able to determine their liability inexpensively and with reasonable certainty, and the authorities should be able to calculate and collect revenue equally readily.



- 12. Transparency.** Labor will ensure that the taxation system is as transparent as possible, with decision-making discretions reduced as much as possible and a comprehensive system of rulings maintained to keep taxpayers fully informed of the practice of the revenue authorities.
- In addition, Labor is prepared to look at the capacity of returning bracket creep to taxpayers over the economic cycle.
- 13. Comprehensiveness.** Labor will ensure that the tax base is as comprehensive as possible, consistent with the achievement of other objectives, in a way that ensures that all sections of the community pay their fair share and no one is disproportionately burdened.
- 14. Administrative Efficiency.** Labor recognises that administrative efficiency is particularly desirable in the taxation system, in that it minimises the negative effects of taxation on the economy; reduces the costs of collecting revenue, thereby providing more net revenue for government services; and improves voluntary compliance by taxpayers.
- Labor will ensure that the taxation system minimises compliance and collection costs. Maximum use will be made of information technology to minimise the time and cost burden faced by taxpayers, in particular small businesses, in complying with their taxation obligations.
  - establishes clear priorities and intended outcomes for spending, in line with announced policies;
  - seeks wherever possible to offset new recurrent expenditure with efficiencies in existing programs;
  - maintains world's best practice and continuous improvement in the efficient delivery of high quality public services, and encourages innovative ways to achieve policy objectives at lower cost;
  - maintains accrual accounting, but makes it more transparent and rigorous;
  - evaluates rigorously all spending and tax expenditure programs to ensure that programs are efficiently and effectively achieving their objectives;
  - ensures the prudent financial management and accountability of public monies through a framework of strong fraud control measures, efficient cash management, optimal buying practices by government agencies and active asset management; and
  - maintains the role of the Auditor General as the sole auditor of budget funded bodies; ensures adequate resources for the Australian National Audit Office; and provides comprehensive financial information throughout the budgetary cycle.

## Outlays

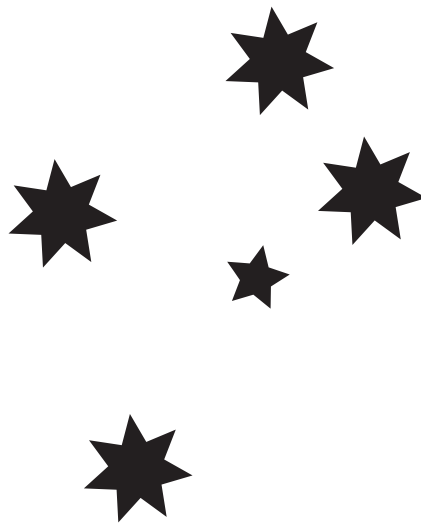
- 15.** In addition to maintaining a taxation system which provides the primary source of revenue for meeting the needs of the Australian community, Labor recognises that the public expects government to continually review and assess public spending, so that value for money in public expenditure is achieved and additional resources can be directed to high priority objectives.
- 16.** Labor recognises that this can only be achieved by way of a rigorous and disciplined budget process and financial management system. Accordingly, Labor will implement a system which:

## Commonwealth-State Financial Relations

- 17.** Australia's federal system creates a number of financial challenges in the delivery of public services to Australia's citizens. Labor recognises the key role of sensible and balanced intergovernmental financial relations in ensuring the delivery of public services, and ensuring fair access to those services. The best public policy outcomes arise from whole of government approaches to policy which are coordinated across all levels of government. Only Labor is committed to such an approach in conjunction with a meaningful regional focus.



18. Labor, in opposing the GST, proposed a system which guaranteed certainty in Federal payments to the States and Territories. Confusion and a lack of certainty will prevail under the GST. It is essential to provide certainty.
19. Accordingly, Labor will:
- maintain a system of general purpose funding to the States and Territories which provides adequate funding for their needs;
  - distribute these general purpose funds under a comprehensive system of horizontal fiscal equalisation based upon the per capita relativity recommendations of the Commonwealth Grants Commission;
  - maintain a system of general purpose funding to local governments which provides adequate funding for their needs;
  - continue to support specific purpose payments to States and Territories where these are appropriate to meet national objectives or ensure national standards, and ensure that those payments are used for the purpose for which they have been allocated; and
- ensure that State, Territory and local governments and their authorities are able to maintain and steadily improve their economic and social infrastructure.
20. Labor will also:
- seek to eliminate inappropriate duplication between Federal, State, Territory and local government functions and activities;
  - support arrangements to voluntarily harmonise revenue bases and tax administration between the Federal government, States and Territories; and
  - support arrangements to voluntarily integrate the administration of Federal government and State and Territory taxes and charges, where this has the potential to lead to economic benefits such as lower compliance costs for business.



## The Constitution of the Australian Labor Party



### **A OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES**

#### **Origins**

1. The Australian Labor Party had its origins in:
  - The aspirations of the Australian people for a decent, secure dignified and constructive way of life;
  - The recognition by the trade union movement of the necessity for a political voice to take forward the struggle of the working class against the excesses, injustices and inequalities of capitalism,; and
  - The commitment by the Australian people to the creation of an independent, free and enlightened Australia.

#### **Objectives**

2. The Australian Labor Party is a democratic socialist party and has the objective of the democratic socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange, to the extent necessary to eliminate exploitation and other anti-social features in these fields.
3. To achieve the political and social values of equality, democracy, liberty and social cooperation inherent in this objective, the Australian Labor Party stands for:
  - a Redistribution of political and economic power so that all members of society have the opportunity to participate in the
  - b Establishment and development of public enterprises, based upon federal, State and other forms of social ownership, in appropriate sectors of the economy.
  - c Democratic control and strategic social ownership of Australian natural resources for the benefit of all Australians.
  - d Maintenance of and support for a competitive non-monopolistic private sector, including small business and farming, controlled and owned by Australians, operating within clear social guidelines and objectives.
  - e The right to own private property.
  - f Recognition and encouragement of the right of labour to organise for the protection and advancement of its interests.
  - g The application of democracy in industry to increase the opportunities for people to work in satisfying, healthy and humane conditions. And to participate in and to increase their control over the decision making processes affecting them.
  - h The promotion of socially appropriate technology and the monitoring of its introduction to ensure that the needs and

shaping and control of the institutions and relationships which determine their lives.



- interests of labour, as well as the requirements of competitive industry and consumer demand, are taken into consideration.
- i The restoration and maintenance of full employment.
  - j The abolition of poverty, and the achievement of greater equality in the distribution of income, wealth and opportunity.
  - k Social justice and equality for individuals, the family and all social units, and the elimination of exploitation in the home.
  - l Equal access and rights to employment, education, information, technology, housing, health and welfare services, cultural and leisure activities and the law.
  - m Reform of the Australian Constitution and other political institutions to ensure that they reflect the will of the majority of Australian citizens and the existence of Australia as an independent republic.
  - n Recognition and protection of fundamental political and civil rights, including freedom of expression, the press, assembly, association, conscience and religion; the right to privacy; the protection of the individual from oppression by the state; and democratic reform of the Australian legal system.
  - o The development of a democratic communications system, as an integral part of a free society, to which all citizens have opportunities for free access.
  - p Elimination of discrimination and exploitation on the grounds of class, race, sex, sexuality, religion, political affiliation, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, regional location, or economic or household status.
  - q Recognition of the prior ownership of Australian land by Aborigines and Islanders; recognition of their special and essential relationship with the land as the basis of their culture; and a commitment to the return of established traditional lands to the ownership of Aboriginal and Islander communities.
  - r Recognition and encouragement of diversity of cultural expression and lifestyle within the Australian community.
  - s The use, conservation and enhancement of Australia's natural resources and environment so that the community's total quality of life, both now and into the future, is maintained and improved.
  - t Recognition of the need to work towards achieving ecologically sustainable development.
  - u Maintenance of world peace; an independent Australian position in world affairs; the recognition of the right of all nations to self-determination and independence; regional and international agreement for arms control and disarmament; the provision of economic and social aid to developing nations; a commitment to resolve international conflicts through the UN; and a recognition of the inalienable right of all people to liberty, equality, democracy and social justice.
  - v Commitment to and participation in the international democratic socialist movement as represented by the Socialist International.
  - w Recognition of the right of citizens to work for progressive changes consistent with the broad principles of democratic socialism.

### Principles of Action

4. The Australian Labor Party believes that the task of building democratic socialism is a cooperative process that requires:
  - constitutional action through the National and State Parliaments, municipal and other statutory authorities;
  - union action; and
  - ongoing action by organised community groups.

### Membership and Organisation

5. Membership of the Australian Labor Party is open to all residents of Australia who are prepared to accept its objectives and who have associations with no other political party.



6. Australian Labor Party policy is made by National Conferences comprising the national and State Parliamentary leadership of the Party, together with elected delegates from all States, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and Australian Young Labor.
7. Party policy within the States and Territories is framed by conferences of delegates elected by constituent branches and affiliated unions. Policy within the Australian Labor Party is not made by directives from the leadership, but by resolutions originating from branches, affiliated unions and individual Party members.

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## B RULES

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### 1. Name

The name of the Party shall be 'The Australian Labor Party'.

### 2. Objective

The objectives of the Party are set out in the Basic Principles as determined by the National Conference. To achieve these objectives the ALP will act in accordance with the Principles of Action and Progressive Reforms set out in the Party Platform from time to time.

### 3. Head Office

The Head Office of the Party shall be known as the National Secretariat and shall be established in Centenary House, Barton, ACT or any other place determined by the National Executive from time to time.

### 4. Composition

The Party shall consist of branches in each State, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory (hereinafter referred to as State Branches).

### 5. Structure of Party Organisation

- a the Party shall function upon the following basis -
  - i National Conference;
  - ii National Executive;
  - iii Federal Parliamentary Labor Party (FPLP); and
  - iv Australian Young Labor;
- b the National Conference shall be the supreme governing authority of the Party and its decisions shall be binding upon

every member and every section of the Party;

- c the National Executive shall be the chief administrative authority of the Party, subject only to the National Conference;
- d the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party shall have authority in properly constituted Caucus meetings to make decisions directed towards establishing the collective attitude of the parliamentary Party to any question or matter in the federal parliament, subject to:
  - i at all times taking such action which may be possible to implement the Party's Platform and Conference decisions;
  - ii on questions or matters which are not subject to National Platform or Conference or Executive decisions, the majority decision of Caucus being binding upon all members in the parliament; and
  - iii no attitude being expressed which is contrary to the provisions of the Party Platform or any other decision of National Conference or National Executive; and
- e Australian Young Labor shall function in accordance with the rules that may be approved from time to time by the National Executive and subject to its control and jurisdiction.

### 6. National Conference

- a National Conference shall consist of 190 delegates, or a number as near as practicable thereto, comprised as follows -
  - i four delegates being the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Party in the Senate;
  - ii delegations from each State consisting of -
    - (a) the State Parliamentary Leader;
    - (b) a base component of 12 persons; and
    - (c) a supplementary component determined in accordance with 6(b).
  - iii a delegation from the Northern Territory consisting of -



## 2000 alp national conference

- (a) the Northern Territory Parliamentary Leader;
- (b) a base component of 2 people; and
- (c) a supplementary component determined in accordance with 6(b).
  - iv a delegation from the ACT consisting of -
    - (a) the Australian Capital Territory Parliamentary Leader;
    - (b) a base component of 2 people; and
    - (c) a supplementary component determined in accordance with 6(b);
      - v two delegates from Australian Young Labor; and
      - vi State Secretaries who are not delegates to National Conference shall be able to attend National Conference with the rights of delegates except that of voting;
- b the supplementary component for each State and Territory delegation shall be determined in accordance with the following formula -
  - i a base figure of 100 delegates shall be set and shall constitute the numerator;
  - ii the total number of House of Representatives seats, as at 31 December in the year preceding that in which the National Conference is required to be held, shall constitute the denominator;
  - iii the denominator shall be divided into the numerator and the resulting dividend shall, in the case of each State and Territory, be multiplied by the number of House of Representatives seats existing in that State or Territory as at 31 December in the year preceding that in which the National Conference is required to be held; and
  - iv the resulting product shall in each case constitute the supplementary component to which the State or Territory in question is entitled, provided that a fraction of less than one half shall not be counted for this purpose and a fraction of one half or more shall count as the next higher whole number;
- c no less than one third of the combined base and supplementary components of each State delegation shall consist of women ('the basic entitlement'), provided that where the calculation made to determine this basic entitlement results in a fraction of one half or more then the basic entitlement shall count as the next higher whole number, and where it results in a fraction of less than one half it shall count as the next lower whole number;
- d Proxy Delegates -
  - i each State shall be entitled to a minimum of two proxies up to a maximum equal to half the State's delegation;
  - ii the credentials for State Branch proxies shall be circulated in advance and accepted at the commencement of the Conference and no other proxies may be admitted;
  - iii it is the responsibility of each State delegation to ensure that the Chair is advised of all changes of delegation during the Conference. No proxy shall participate in the debate of a report in which the delegate he/she is replacing has participated; and
  - iv State and federal leaders may each nominate one proxy subject to (ii) above. Such proxies must be a member of the relevant parliamentary party;
- e delegates shall be elected by a system of proportional representation in a single ballot with affirmative action;
- f delegates shall be elected within 12 months prior to the date of National Conference;
- g State Branches cannot bind delegates with regard to their vote on any issue before the National Conference;
- h National Conference shall be held every three years in a location determined by the National Executive which shall have the responsibility for determining the time of the National Conference;
- i Special National Conferences may be held for specially stated purposes and shall be called in the manner prescribed by these rules;





- j
    - i the National President need not be a delegate to National Conference but where the President is not a delegate he/she shall have the full rights of a delegate except that of voting; and
    - ii the National Secretary shall not be a delegate to National Conference but shall have the full rights of a delegate except that of voting; and
  - k the National Secretary, after receiving instructions from the convening authority, shall observe the following procedure for the purpose of establishing Conference agenda -
    - i give the following bodies three months notice to send items to Platform Committees: State Branches, Australian Young Labor, and Federal Electorate Councils, and trade unions whose State branches are affiliated with the Party in a majority of States in which they operate, all of which bodies shall have the right to submit items to Platform Committees. Bodies so submitting items to Platform Committees shall be notified in writing of the Committee's views on such items; and
    - ii send to State Branches and other bodies represented at National Conference, agenda and any other documents related thereto at least one month before Conference meets.
- 7 **National Executive**
  - a the National Executive of the Party, which shall be the chief administrative authority subject only to National Conference, shall be constituted in the following manner -
    - i the President, who shall be elected by National Conference, shall have full rights of a delegate except a vote, unless elected a delegate in his/her own right;
    - ii 20 executive members elected by the National Conference;
    - iii the National Secretary, who shall be elected by the National Conference, shall not be a delegate but shall have the full rights of a delegate except that of voting;
    - iv the Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party or proxy nominated by the leader. Such proxy must be a member of the Federal Parliamentary Party;
    - v State Secretaries who are not delegates to the National Executive shall be able to attend National Executive meetings with the rights of delegates except that of voting; and
    - vi delegates shall be entitled to nominate their proxy for any meeting or part of a meeting for which they are unable to attend;
  - b
    - i the terms of all those elected by the National Conference shall commence at the conclusion of the National Conference at which they are elected. They shall be subject to re-election at each Conference except the National Secretary who shall be subject to re-election at every second Conference;
    - ii casual vacancies may be filled by unanimous consent of the National Executive. Where such agreement cannot be reached casual vacancies within National Executive shall be filled by counting-through the Conference ballot;
    - iii casual vacancies for the positions of President and National Secretary shall be filled by a ballot of the National Executive and the National Executive Committee shall institute procedures to hold a ballot;
    - iv three Vice-Presidents shall be elected by and from the National Executive;
  - c powers and duties of the National Executive -decisions of the National Executive shall be binding upon all sections and members of the ALP subject only to appeal to National Conference. Pending the hearing of any appeal, the decision of the National Executive shall operate. The National Executive shall -
    - i be the administrative authority carrying out the decisions of National Conference, and in the interpretation of any Conference decision, the National Platform and the



- Constitution and Rules of the Party, and the direction of Federal Members;
- ii convene National Conferences in accordance with these Rules;
  - iii convene Special National Conferences when requested by a majority of State Branches for special purpose(s), providing that such purpose(s) is/are national in character. The National Executive may also, on its own motion, convene such Conferences;
  - iv elect a National Executive Committee and such other committees, including National Policy Committees, as it may determine from time to time;
  - v meet at least three times a year, and at such other times as the Executive may determine, for the purpose of considering and determining all matters that are properly before it. Subject to these rules only State Branches, Australian Young Labor, the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party and trade unions whose State branches are affiliated with the Party in a majority of States in which they operate shall be competent to send matters to the National Executive;
  - vi initiate discussions of any question of a national nature if a majority of the Executive so decides;
  - vii determine the time and place of all meetings. However, special meetings of the National Executive may be convened with the agreement of a majority of delegates or by unanimous decision of the National officers;
  - viii be competent to hear and decide appeals from any affiliated organisation or individual member against the decision of any State Conference or State Executive alleged to be inconsistent with any national decision or matter;
  - ix where any member or affiliated organisation desires to appeal to the National Executive on a question which does not involve any national decision or matter, leave to appeal must first be obtained from the State Branch concerned; and
  - x hear and decide an appeal from any person seeking to be a candidate for federal elections against a decision of any State Conference or State Executive affecting his/her pre-selection or endorsement, providing that leave to appeal is granted by the National Executive. Such leave to appeal is not to be granted except by a decision in which 11 members vote affirmatively;
  - xi have plenary powers to deal with and decide any matters which, in the opinion of an absolute majority of members of the Executive, affect the general welfare of the Labor Movement, provided that no decision of National Conference shall be abrogated under this rule;
  - xii in the case of any State Executive, State Branch or section of the ALP acting or having acted in a manner deemed by the National Executive to be contrary to the National Constitution, Platform and Policy of the Party as interpreted by the National Executive, the National Executive may over-rule such State Executive, State Branch or section and/or may declare that same no longer exists, and shall set up in place thereof an organisation competent to carry out the National Constitution, Platform and Policy of the ALP. Pending the hearing of any appeal, the decision of the National Executive shall operate. In the event of the National Executive taking any action under this sub-clause, the National Executive shall be the body to approve any selection which otherwise would have been made by the body affected by the National Executive decision; and
  - xiii the National Executive, in part, combined with the parliamentary



leadership and Caucus representatives would be combined to form a revamped Political Coordination Committee. Such a committee is to meet regularly to discuss key strategic issues facing the Parliamentary Party.

#### **8 National Executive Committee**

The National Executive Committee shall consist of the National Secretary and such other members of the National Executive as may be elected by the National Executive.

- 9 The National Executive Committee (NEC) shall be responsible for the administration of the Party between meetings of the National Executive. They shall meet at least once between each two meetings of the National Executive for the purpose of preparing the agenda and making recommendations to expedite the business of the National Executive. Other than in urgent situations which preclude either a special meeting of the National Executive or a postal vote of Executive members, the NEC shall not have the power to make decisions on behalf of the National Executive. Any actions taken by the NEC between Executive meetings shall be reported to the next meeting of the Executive for endorsement. The non-parliamentary members of the NEC shall also be members of the companies John Curtin House Limited and ALP Legacies and Gifts.

#### **10 Duties of President**

The President, when available, shall attend and preside over all meetings of the National Executive and conduct such meetings on the basis of the Standing Orders as applicable to National Conference. The President may carry out any other duties that the Executive may deem fit.

#### **11 Duties of Vice-President**

The Vice-Presidents, in order of seniority, shall take the Chair in the absence of the President, and shall perform any other duties that may be referred to them by the Executive.

#### **12 Affirmative Action**

- a Party Positions  
all elections, other than public office preselections, conducted by national and State level Party units for three or more

positions shall incorporate affirmative action in favour of women. Not less than one-third of such positions must be filled by women provided sufficient women nominate, ('the basic entitlement'), provided that where the calculation made to determine this basic entitlement results in a fraction of one half or more then the basic entitlement shall count as the next higher whole number, and where it results in a fraction of less than one half it shall count as the next lower whole number;

#### b Union Delegations

union delegations to Party conferences and forums shall comprise a minimum of one third women delegates except where the level of female membership of a union is less than one third of their total membership in which case the minimum representation of women delegates shall be set at that level;

#### Public Office Preselections

- c preselections for public office positions at State and federal level shall incorporate affirmative action. The intention of this is to produce an outcome where 35 per cent of public office positions held by Labor or a majority of seats needed to form government, whichever is the greater, will be filled by women and not less than 35 per cent will be filled by men by the year 2002. Each State and Territory Branch must ensure that its rules are in line with this objective and are submitted to the National Executive for approval by December 31 1995; and

- d the National Executive shall have the responsibility and the power to determine the outcome in any public office preselection progressively between now and the year 2002 in order to ensure that this Rule is complied with.

#### **13 Finance**

- a to meet the general expenses of the Party, each State Branch shall pay each year, to the National Executive through the National Secretary, a sum representing a rate per thousand adult members, and a rate per thousand pensioner and student/junior members. The total due



- shall be paid in four quarterly instalments on 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October. The National Executive shall have the power to fix sustentation fees;
- b in the event of a State Branch being six months in arrears in its contributions to the Party, the National Executive may decide that such Branch shall not be entitled to be represented at any meeting of the National Executive or National Conference, or be consulted on any question that may be subject to a ballot of State Branches, until such arrears are paid;
  - c upon request, State and Territory Branches shall report financial information to the National Secretary in a standard format determined by the National Executive;
  - d the National Executive shall determine an annual budget for travel costs and administer an equalisation pool for such costs associated with National Conferences and the National Executive;
  - e the National Executive shall meet the expenses of the National President attending National Conference and the expenses of any officers associated with any duty being carried out on behalf of the National Executive;
  - f each Branch shall pay to the National Executive not later than 31 December of each year the appropriate fee, to be determined by the National Executive, for international affiliations or activities associated therewith;
  - g the National Executive shall authorise the National Secretary to negotiate banking facilities on behalf of the National Executive of the Party and determine the manner in which the Party's accounts shall be operated including the signatories to the Party's bank accounts; and
  - h fundraising by the Labor Party at State, Territory and National levels and by the Labor Party candidates for public office shall be governed by the ALP Code of Conduct for Fundraising as approved by the National Executive.

#### 14 Platform Review Committee

The officers of the National Executive, together with the leaders of the FPLP, shall act as a Platform Review Committee and further act as a consultative body for the purpose of removing misunderstandings provided that no action shall be taken to disturb the constitutional functions of each body.

#### 15 Federal Parliamentary Labor Party

- a no State Branch may direct or discipline members of the FPLP in regard to matters affecting the National Platform or policy or upon legislation before the parliament or any matters the subject of consideration by the FPLP; and
- b the power of direction, advice and/or guidance is reserved for the National Conference and between Conferences, the National Executive.

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### C NATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION

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1. Policy at the national, State and Territory level shall be determined by the national, State and Territory conferences respectively. Such decisions shall be binding on every member and every section of the Party, or of the relevant State or Territory Branch.
2. On matters that are not subject to National Platform or Conference or Executive decisions, or their State and Territory equivalents, the majority decision of the relevant Parliamentary Labor Party shall be binding upon all members of the parliament.
3. In all parliaments, the Parliamentary leadership, the Ministry and Shadow Ministry shall be elected by the Parliamentary Labor Party.
4. In all States the State Conference shall comprise not less than 50 percent nor more than 60 percent union representatives and not less than 40 percent or more than 50 percent constituency Party representatives.

(This shall not bind Territory Branches until the proportion of unions affiliated is equivalent to that in the States. This principle shall apply to all State level Party units comprised of



direct representatives of unions and constituency units.)

5. Membership of the ALP is open to all residents of Australia who are prepared to accept its objectives and who have associations with no other political party or proscribed organisation. This right to join shall not be impaired other than in circumstances in which it can be demonstrated clearly that an individual cannot meet the requirement outlined above.
6. All bona fide unions shall have the right to affiliate to the ALP. This right to affiliate shall not be impaired unless it can be demonstrated clearly that the relevant organisation is not a bona fide union or that the organisation has engaged in conduct that renders it unsuitable to be affiliated.
7. Each State and Territory Branch should develop an equitable basis of determining union entitlement for representation at relevant State level Party units. This shall not prevent State Branches making reasonable special arrangements for the representation of small unions.
8. Subject to Rule 12 b, it shall be the right of each union to determine the criteria and procedures for selection of its delegates, subject also to those delegates being financial members of the Party .
9. That, pursuant to rule 7(c)(i), the National Executive be empowered to amend the rules of any State Branch as required to implement the National Principles of Organisation.

#### 10. Members Rights and Responsibilities

The following are to be established as minimum standards –

- a the process of joining the Party shall be simplified and all unnecessary impediments to that process shall be removed from State Branch rules; and
  - b in all States full membership rights shall begin to accrue once the member has attended their first Branch meeting and those rights shall accumulate, to the maximum, following twelve months consecutive membership. These rights include: being eligible for preselection;
- standing and voting in delegate elections to conference; participation in preselections; and voting for, or standing on, the various Party bodies and executives. A Party member is required to be a member of the appropriate union if eligible.

#### 11. The Basic Organisational Unit and Training Programs

- a the Branch structure shall remain based on a geographic unit located in a State or federal electorate;
- b the Federal Electorate Council (FEC), or combinations thereof, shall be encouraged to appoint a Community Activities Officer and a Policy Development Officer when electing or appointing its executive;
- c the Community Activities Officer shall assist the local branches to identify the major issues within the community, within which they should be active and assist in the development of either endorsed or unendorsed (depending on the State Branches) candidates for local government or other community bodies;
- d the State Branches shall assume within their organisational structure the responsibilities of coordinating the Community Activities Officers and the Policy Development Officers;
- e the Policy Development Officer at a State office level and a State and federal electorate level shall be responsible for coordinating policy input on local, State or federal matters, as appropriate, and work within a defined relationship between those electorate-based Policy Committees and State Policy Committees and/or the National Platform Committees; and
- f each State Branch shall develop training programs for Branch executives, candidates and activists, as well as introductory programs for new Party members. The National Secretariat shall assist in the development of such programs.

#### 12. Preselections

- a any member who meets the membership



- eligibility requirements shall be entitled to participate in voting for a candidate in any preselection covered by the applicable boundaries within which they reside;
  - b the only residential boundaries that can affect that right are those devised by either federal, State or municipal electoral commissions. That is, the entitlement is guaranteed by the publicly known and independently drawn boundaries of respective electoral commissions. Therefore, if you live within the respective electorate and meet other criteria within the rules you are eligible to vote in the preselection; and
  - c that subject to Rule 12 c, the reform or otherwise of preselections systems be left up to the respective States.
13. That the National Executive will monitor the implementation of these National Principles in consultation with State and Territorial Branches.
- (These principles shall apply equally to all State Branches, including Territory Branches unless otherwise stated.)
14. All State Branch rules as revised in accordance with the recommendations of the Organisational Review Committee Report (1991) are to be submitted to the National Executive for endorsement.

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## D RESOLUTIONS TO IMPLEMENT NATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION

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### 1. General Membership System

- a each State should adopt a system to allow applications to be processed and accepted by the Head office thus allowing potential expansion of a general membership system;
- b a general member initially has only the right to take up at their initiative the process of becoming a full member through the Branch membership system. The general members are to be encouraged to contribute to the Party in whatever way they can and they are

- bound to assume the responsibilities of supporting the Party both privately and publicly; and
- c any general member of five years or more standing could be considered for preselection provided the majority request of all Party members in their respective electorate was made and/or the majority request of that State Branch Administrative Committee or Executive was made.

(For guidance to the State Branches.)

### 2. Party Communications

The National Secretary shall be requested to prepare an annual budget for internal Party communications, to include methods of financing, as well as expenditure. The National Executive shall liaise with the State and Territory Branches with the objective of improving internal Party communications.

(For direction to the National Secretariat.)

### 3. Responsibilities of National Executive

That the responsibilities of National Executive be clarified to ensure appropriate powers to manage the Party's -

- a finances;
- b education and training for memberships;
- c liaison with the trade union movement;
- d liaison with community organisations;
- e campaign technique development for Party members and constituent units; and
- f Party communication;

and to organise the Manning Clark Labor History Memorial Lecture at each National Conference of the Party.

### 4. Review of Campaign Techniques

That National Conference instructs the National Executive and State Administrative Committees to undertake a review of campaign techniques to ensure continued electoral success. The following principles are central to such a review—

- a the need for redevelopment of campaign skills within safe Labor seats;
- b the need for continuous workplace campaigns to be developed in



consultation with the trade union movement;

- c improved liaison with community organisations; and
- d continued development of Ministerial involvement at the local level.

#### 5. National Organisation—Ongoing Review

- a that the National Executive take responsibility for an ongoing process of organisational review. The National Executive should establish a Standing Committee to initiate proposals, or receive submissions from members and affiliates, on the Party's rules, structures and political effectiveness; and
- b that an ongoing National Organisational Review Committee (ORC) be established with appropriate delegated powers under the guidance of the National Executive to continue the process of improving the effectiveness, participation and accountability of the Party's organisation.

That the ORC undergo a consultative process with State Branches, union affiliates, Party units and members on strategies to achieve the following objectives—

- i strategies to increase the level of ALP branch membership;
- ii strategies to encourage more trade unions to affiliate to the ALP and to involve unions more effectively in the Party's decision-making processes;
- iii strategies the ALP should consider in order to defeat coalition party proposals to undermine the existing arrangements for trade union affiliation; and
- iv strategies to increase the participation of women at all levels within the ALP.

That the National Secretariat provide adequate resources for the Committee to meet its objectives.

#### 6. Preselections

That the matter of preselections be referred to the ongoing organisational review process.

#### 7. Internal Party Relationships

- a the National Secretariat shall coordinate a regular program of ministerial visits to FEC meetings, coordinated through the State Branch offices, to report on the work of the Government and then receive views of Party members. Such FEC meetings to be open to all Party members; and
- b that a representative delegation from the State Administrative Committee shall combine with the parliamentary leadership and Caucus representatives to form a State political coordination committee. Such a committee shall meet regularly, to discuss key strategic issues facing the Parliamentary Party.

(For guidance to the National Secretariat and State Branches.)

#### 8. Establishment of a State-Based Labor Advisory Council

A body similar to the Australian Labor Advisory Council (ALAC) be established at a State Branch level. This body would consist of representatives of the Party's organisation, the parliamentary Party leadership and the trade union movement.

(To be referred to the State Branches, State Trades and Labor Councils and State Parliamentary Labor Parties for implementation.)

#### 9. Basic Principles

- a the National Executive establish a Committee for the purpose of revising the Basic Principles of the Party including its objectives; and
- b the Committee, in conducting its revision, should invite submissions from any interested Party member or interested unit and conduct appropriate seminars on the subject, prior to finalising any recommendations on changes.





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## E REGISTER OF CONFERENCE DECISIONS

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(These decisions of previous National Conferences remain in force)

### Members Initiating Legal Proceedings

Decision of the 1955 Conference

This Conference resolves that as a general principle it cannot concede the right of any member of the Party to initiate legal proceedings for the purpose of establishing the constitutional behaviour of the Labor Movement. We emphasise that, with a few isolated exceptions, the history of our Party discloses we have functioned on a basis of complete determination in accordance with our own rules and our own interpretation of them. We insist we must continue to create our own procedures, taking care of our own business without the introduction of lawyers and law courts.

### Union Elections

Decision of the 1963 Conference

Conference believes that industrial legislation should provide for trade unions to properly determine their own internal policies in accordance with their rules and constitutions and deplores interference in trade unions activities by any government, outside individuals or organisations. Conference accordingly calls upon all trade unionists to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of another trade union.

### Grievance Procedures

Decision of the 1979 Conference

That Conference believes that the procedures of the Party at State and national level provide adequate opportunity for people who are dissatisfied to seek redress of grievance and calls upon all members of the Party in respect of matters in dispute to refrain from making comment outside the Party.

### Affirmative Action

Decision of the 1981 Conference

That Conference—

- i asserts its support for affirmative action to ensure greater representation of women in the Party structures and amongst its representatives at all levels of government.

- ii endorses the Guidelines for Implementation of an Affirmative Action Programme in the ALP, June 1981, produced by the Working Party on Affirmative Action, drawn from the State Women's Groups and requests each State and Territory Branch to implement an affirmative action programme in keeping with these guidelines.
- iii requests the National Executive to monitor regularly progress in each State Branch and to report to each National Conference.

That all Party publications and Party ballot papers be given an indication of sex by use of given names.

That it be the policy of the ALP to investigate, instigate, and fund the provision of child care facilities at all conferences and large assembly meetings of the Party.

That it be the policy of the ALP that all Party literature and publications should be free of sexist terms and sexist overtones; similarly all Party conferences, meetings etc. should be free of sexist comments, terms and overtones of any kind and all officers, MPs and members of the Party should be advised accordingly.

### Abortion

Decision of the 1984 Conference

Conference resolves that the matter of abortion can be freely debated at any State or federal forum of the Australian Labor Party, but any decision reached is not binding on any member of the Party.

### Conduct Of Ballots

Decision of the 1994 Conference

Procedures for conduct of ballots if required—

- i that ballots for multiple vacancies be conducted in accordance with the rules of the Victorian Branch;
- ii that ballots for single vacancies be conducted under the optional preferential system; and
- iii that ballots for multiple vacancies be conducted in accordance with rule 12a.



### National Conference Decisions

That decisions of National Conference are equally binding on all members of the Party whether determined as Platform or as a decision of Conference. However, decisions of Conference which relate to matters of policy lapse if they are not reaffirmed by the subsequent Conference. Decisions of Conference which relate to organisational, administrative or rules matters continue in force until a subsequent Conference otherwise determines.

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## F NATIONAL CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS

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### 1. Chair of Conference

The National President shall preside over Conference. In the President's absence the Senior officer present shall preside. If no officers are present a delegate shall be appointed by Conference to preside.

### 2. Credentials

Each body represented at National Conference or National Executive shall lodge with the National Secretary the names and addresses of its delegates as early as practicable before the meeting. These names and addresses shall be sent by the National Secretary, to all members of the National Executive and other bodies represented at the National Conference as soon as possible.

Any body or delegate may challenge the credentials of any delegate by lodging with the National Secretary the grounds of objection in writing within 14 days of being notified of the nomination of that delegate.

The grounds of the objection shall be conveyed to the delegate challenged and to the body nominating the delegate by the quickest possible means. The National Executive shall hear and determine the challenge. An appeal shall lie to the National Conference. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the decision of the National Executive shall stand.

### 3. Session Times

Conference shall meet each day from 9.30 a.m. to 12.45 p.m., and 2.15 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.,

subject to Conference at any time, determining on motion or amendment without debate, and without rescission of any previous decisions as to meeting times, to meet at any other times.

### 4. Order of Business

The agenda of the National Conference shall be as distributed by the National Executive pursuant to rule 6(j)(ii). The order of business shall be as determined by Conference from time to time.

5. No discussion shall be allowed except on motion or amendment duly proposed and seconded.

6. Any member desiring to propose a motion or amendment, or to discuss any matter under consideration, must rise and address the Chair. No member shall address the Conference unless called by the Chair of Conference.

7. All questions shall be determined in the following manner—

- a the mover of the motion shall have seven minutes to present argument in support of the motion and five minutes to reply;
- b the seconder of such motion, and all other speakers, shall be limited to five minutes;
- c the movers and seconders of motions and amendments must exercise the right to speak at the time of moving and not subsequently, subject to the right of reply by the mover of the motion;
- d Conference on motion without debate may extend the time of any speaker; such extension of time shall not exceed five minutes. Conference may agree to further extensions on the same basis;
- e the Chair shall call attention to the time of all speakers one minute before such time expires. Motions for extensions may be made when the Chair so calls, but no later;
- f after the motion has been moved and seconded, and no speaker rises to oppose or move an amendment, the Chair shall proceed to put such motion to a vote of Conference;
- g all votes of Conference shall be subject to the following procedure—



- i the Chair shall call upon those who support the question to say 'Aye' and those who are opposed to say 'No'; and
    - ii the Chair shall then declare the question carried or lost;
  - h any delegate not satisfied with the Chair's decision may, by standing in their place, call for a show of hands. The Chair shall proceed to determine the question by calling upon those who support the motion to raise their hands, and those opposed to act similarly. The Chair shall appoint two tellers to take the count and they shall be representative of the opposing viewpoints. When the tellers are agreed upon their count the Chair shall declare the result by quoting the figures for and against;
  - i when any question voted upon by Conference results in equal numbers for and against, the Chair shall declare such question lost; and
  - j any motion or amendment affecting the Pledge, Platform or Constitution of the Party shall be declared lost if less than a majority of delegates credentialed to the Conference vote for it.
- 8. Amendments**
- a at any time during debate on any motion it shall be competent for any delegate to move an amendment. All amendments must be seconded. Motions may be amended by adding words, by deleting words, or by deleting words and inserting others in their place, providing that the effect of any proposed amendment is not to establish a direct negative to the question contained in the motion; and
  - b any number of amendments may be proposed and discussed simultaneously with the original motion, notwithstanding Standing Order 14. At the close of debate amendments shall be put in the order they have been moved.
- 9. No member shall speak more than once to any question before the Chair, unless by way of personal explanation or with the consent of the Conference. Such consent shall not be given unless by a majority of those present.
  - 10. At any time during debate on any question it shall be competent for the Chair to accept a motion "that the question be adjourned," "that the question be put", or "that the next business be proceeded with", provided at least two speakers have spoken for and against. A member having spoken to the question shall not be competent so to move. Such motions shall be immediately put without debate, provided that in the event of Conference agreeing "that the question be now put" the mover of the original motion shall have the right of reply.
  - 11. On Conference agreeing "that the question be now put" it shall mean not only the question contained in the motion, but in any and all amendments.
  - 12. No question shall be debated for a longer period than one and a half hours, subject to Conference agreeing on motion or amendment put without debate to extend such time. A two-thirds majority of those present shall be required to approve any such extension.
  - 13. Motions directed towards the re-consideration of any decision reached by Conference shall fail unless carried by a three-fourths majority of the delegates credentialed to Conference.
  - 14. Not more than two delegates in succession shall speak for or against any question.
  - 15. All questions involving an interpretation of policy on any section of the Platform or the direction of members of the parliament in accordance with the principles and methods of the Party, shall be subject to decision by Conference on the basis of these Standing Orders and not by ruling of the President.



16. Questions other than those contained on the Agenda shall not be discussed unless agreed to by two-thirds of the delegates credentialed to Conference, and no delegate shall canvass the subject matter of the proposed new business when seeking Conference approval for discussion of same.
17. Rulings given by the Chair on any question shall be subject to motion calling upon Conference to disagree with any ruling. In the event of such motion, the mover shall be permitted not more than five minutes to support the motion and the Chair shall be permitted not more than five minutes to defend the Chair's ruling. There shall be no other speakers. The Vice-President or any other delegate appointed by Conference shall occupy the Chair during the currency of such motion.