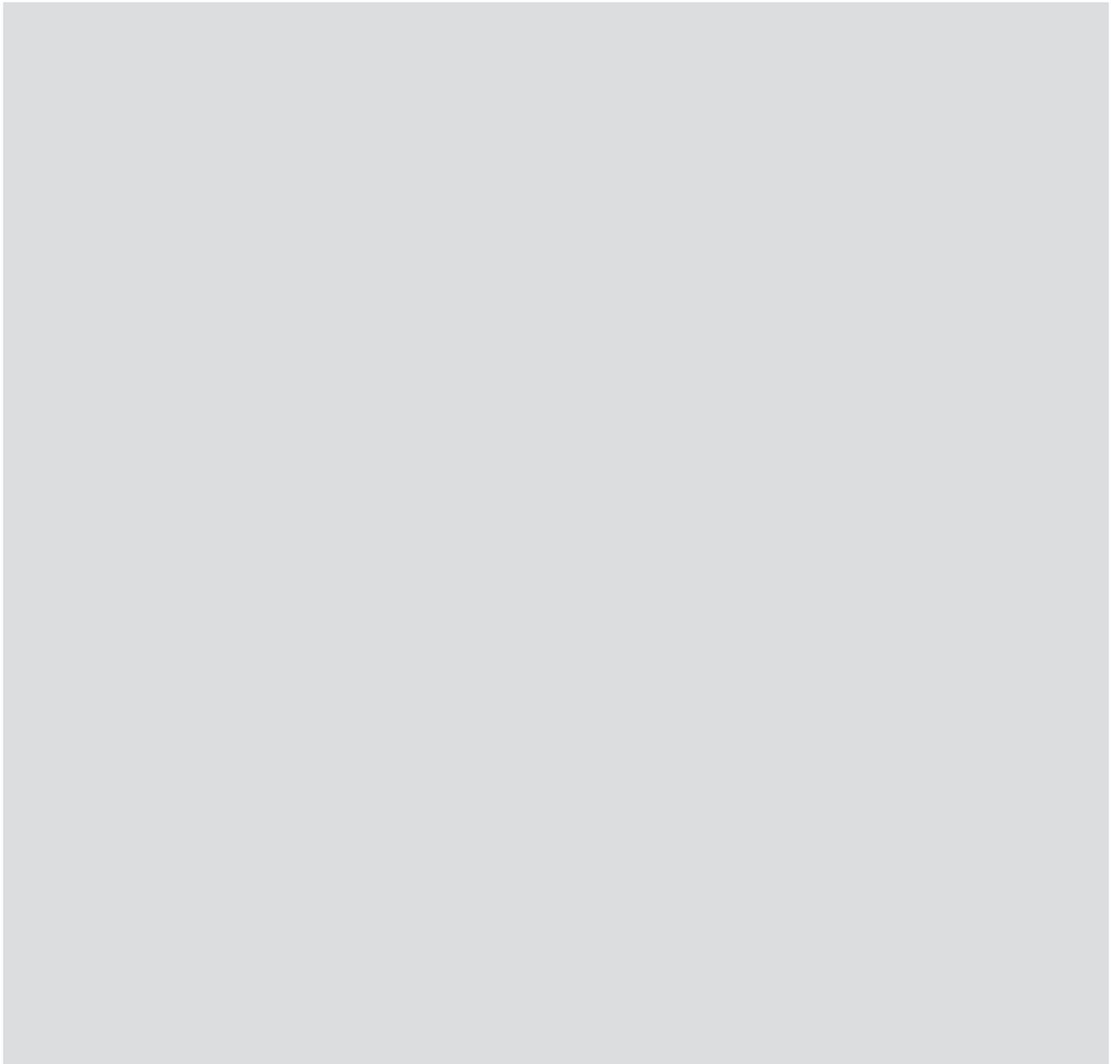




## National Platform



# Chapter 9: A fair go for all Australians

## Introduction

- 1 Labor understands that there are many complex factors that influence the extent to which Australians share fully in the benefits and prosperity of our nation. A person's employment opportunities, financial means, disability, age, cultural background, gender, sexuality, housing circumstances, health and mental health can, among other things, greatly affect the opportunities that are available to them and their ability to participate fully in the economic and social life of this country.
- 2 Labor also understands that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians suffer particular disadvantage, evidenced by the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians have a special place in our nation as Australia's first peoples and as the custodians of the oldest continuing cultures in the world. Labor is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous Australians to achieve the change that Indigenous people aspire to, for themselves and for their children, including closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage in Australia.
- 3 Labor prevented the global economic downturn from creating far wider disadvantage. We are committed to ensuring no one is left behind during this mining boom, despite the challenges of our patchwork economy. In the previous mining boom, large parts of the nation missed out. Labor will not let this happen this time round and will ensure the benefits are spread more fairly for all Australians.
- 4 Understanding the causes of social exclusion has been a priority for Labor. We know that people can get trapped in a spiral of disadvantage caused by family circumstances, low expectations, poor housing, unemployment, age, illness or discrimination. We know certain groups are more likely to be excluded such as jobless families, Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders, people with mental illness or disability, new migrants and refugees, and people experiencing homelessness. Significant transitions in our economy can have harsh effects on already vulnerable members of our society. Labor is the only party that has shown it can manage significant transitions in our society and economy while not leaving behind those who are our most marginalised. Today, Labor faces new challenges in a patchwork economy, with an ageing and changing population in an era of global change. We will manage those transitions in the tradition of Labor and ensure that those who face financial and social vulnerability are properly supported during that transition.
- 5 Fundamental to wellbeing is a decent home. Families are the foundation of our communities and our society, and must be supported to give their children the best opportunities in life. A good and safe home is critical to this, and Labor recognises that homelessness and the housing crisis were neglected for too long in Australia. Labor believes all Australians should have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing throughout their lives. Labor has made tackling homelessness a high priority.
- 6 Labor also understands that to have a fulfilling life, Australians need to engage in a range of activities, including cultural and sporting activities. Such activities play a role in broader social and economic goals. Arts and culture are fundamental to Australia's identity, stretching back to Indigenous traditions of creative expression. Our arts and creative industries are important to the wellbeing and fulfilment of Australians; they contribute to social cohesion and are increasingly important to our economic success, driving innovation and contributing to productivity. Sport contributes to health and fitness and has the power to bring communities together, to cross cultural, religious and political divides. It teaches self discipline and team work to our children and often is a source of immense national pride.

## Labor values

- 7 We have always stood for equality. Throughout our party's history successive Labor governments have sought to achieve this by helping people overcome disadvantages based on social class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, cultural background and racial prejudice. We have always pursued the fair go, tolerance and respect. We oppose all attempts to divide Australians by pandering to prejudice. Australia's diversity is one of the greatest sources of strength in our nation. Our national unity is based on mutual respect, shared values and a commitment to work together to build a stronger Australia.
- 8 Labor is the party of opportunity for all. We believe all Australians should have the opportunity to work, to learn and to participate fully in family and community life. Spreading opportunity and participation is about access to work and the economy, and about supporting families to give their children the best opportunities in life. It is also about access to the broad range of activities and services that make life liveable and fulfilling.
- 9 Our commitment to social justice means we will be judged by our treatment of those among us who are most marginalised. Our commitment to opportunity for all extends to those who are most difficult to reach. Tackling the root causes of poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion and breaking the cycle of welfare dependency is the prerequisite to social inclusion.
- 10 We believe in and are working to create a more sustainable economy. This is a complex task. One aspect of this is the recognition that our population, and our workforce, is ageing. Increasingly, we will need to ensure that as many Australians who are able to work and otherwise contribute in a monetary sense to our economy can and are supported to make that contribution and that we seek to give those people the skills and opportunities to do so.
- 11 Labor is the party of compassion. Not everyone has the capacity to perform paid work. Labor believes these Australians deserve our respect and ongoing support, including financial support. Labor believes that carers deserve the same opportunities as other Australians to participate in work and the community, and live a meaningful life.
- 12 Labor believes in the recognition and protection of human rights and that this actively contributes to building a more inclusive society. Labor has established a new Human Rights Framework to increase community awareness of human rights and to provide greater scrutiny of compliance with our international human rights obligations.
- 13 Labor recognises the importance of community services in delivering services and in building links between Australians. Community and public services provide essential support to the most disadvantaged in our society. Community and public services meet the direct needs of individuals and create social cohesion in communities. Labor believes that the development of a highly skilled workforce in community and public services and a strong and sustainable community and public sector is vital to meeting the nation's social inclusion challenges.
- 14 Australia is an inclusive and multicultural country. Labor upholds these values. Labor recognises the economic and social contribution that has been made by immigrants and refugees throughout our nation's history. Labor regards Australia's diversity as a source of national strength and a critical factor in nation-building. Labor believes in the power of a multicultural society, underpinned by our citizenship process and respect of Australian values. Labor supports a multicultural society and will maintain non-discriminatory migration policies and respect the heritage and customs of migrants. For the Australian people to have confidence and trust in the integrity of our migration system, Labor believes it must be built upon rigorous procedures and processes that protect our national interest and our national borders while also treating individuals with fairness, dignity and humanity.

- 15 Citizenship is a critical factor in our culturally diverse society. Labor supports a citizenship process that encourages all permanent residents to become citizens. Labor's citizenship process will focus on the principles underlying Australia's citizenship pledge: Australia's democratic beliefs and laws, and the rights, responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship. Appreciating that Australian citizenship is a critical part of encouraging participation in the Australian community, Labor will remove unnecessary and unintended barriers to citizenship, particularly for vulnerable groups of migrants.
- 16 Labor is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, vilification or harassment and to harmonise anti-discrimination laws and procedures. Labor supports the appropriate protection of the religious freedom of all people. Labor will act to eliminate the exploitation, including sexual exploitation, of women and children, either in Australia or overseas.
- 17 Labor believes a creative nation is a productive nation. The arts and creative industries are fundamental to Australia's identity as a society and nation, and increasingly to our success as a national economy. Labor is delivering on election commitments to give more Australians an opportunity to participate in the arts, and develop business and services based on our creative skills and knowledge. Labor will also develop the nation's first national cultural policy in nearly two decades to build on its proud history of support for the arts in Australia.

## Labor achievements

We have:

- delivered national, government-funded Paid Parental Leave to better support families when a new baby arrives and to support families to give their children the best possible start in life
- established a National Child Protection Framework, the first time a national government has committed to working with the states and territories to keep children safe from harm
- reformed family support programs to have a stronger focus on vulnerable families and children, and are reforming the payments system to ensure that payments are spent in the best interests of children, particularly children at risk
- delivered a National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples, in particular to the Stolen Generations
- continued work to implement our social inclusion strategy, have set up a Social Inclusion Board and have commenced rolling out our Service Delivery Reform model
- agreed a national Closing the Gap strategy through COAG, agreeing actions in the areas of Indigenous health, remote Indigenous housing, Indigenous early childhood development, Indigenous economic participation and remote service delivery
- continued work to deliver housing to Indigenous people in remote communities through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing; more than 800 new homes have been completed and 3100 houses have been rebuilt and refurbished nationally
- signed an historic Statement of Intent between the government, the Opposition, Indigenous and non-Indigenous health experts and the reconciliation movement to work together to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy
- continued to support more Indigenous Australians into work and training, through reforms to the Community Development Employment Projects program and the Indigenous Employment Program
- worked to provide more support to pensioners, including age and disability pensioners, to balance their household budgets, through significant increases and improved indexation arrangements to the pension

- begun doubling Commonwealth funding to the states and territories to deliver disability services such as respite, supported accommodation, early intervention and community inclusion through the National Disability Agreement
- increased support for people with disability to work through better access to employment services and new wage subsidies for employers
- developed a long-term plan for supporting people with disability across government, including in accessing services in health and education, and improved recognition of people with disability through the National Disability Strategy, agreed with the states and territories
- under the National Disability Strategy, established Liveable Housing Australia to promote Universal Housing Design practices in the residential building and property industry so that Australian homes are more accessible
- expanded access to supported accommodation for people with disability, and provided additional help to participate in community life, including improved access to public facilities such as libraries and cinemas
- started work to build a National Disability Insurance Scheme, laying the foundations for reform
- provided new funds for early intervention services for children with disability through the Better Start for Children with Disability and Helping Children with Autism programs, which include additional funds for children living in rural and remote areas
- developed a National Carer Strategy and are making substantial investments to support carers, including through increases to the Carer Payment and the introduction of a new, permanent Carer Supplement; the passage of legislation to recognise carers and their role; and delivering more respite and support for carers of people with severe mental illness
- invested \$550 million in a National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, which has rolled out more than 180 new or expanded homelessness services across Australia and increased funding to homelessness services by 55 per cent
- developed a National Affordable Housing Agreement and have committed to the greatest single capital investment in social housing in our nation's history, building more than 21,000 new social housing homes
- delivered a National Apology to the Forgotten Australians and former Child Migrants, and delivered additional assistance for care leavers including a national Find and Connect service
- introduced a new Human Rights Framework to embed human rights throughout our economic and social policies
- developed a new multicultural strategy and established a new independent advisory body on multiculturalism—the Australian Multicultural Council
- established a National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy, in recognition of the role that an anti-racism strategy can play in protecting a harmonious, multicultural society
- established the first National Sport and Active Recreation Policy Framework
- committed to a new National Culture Policy—the first comprehensive cultural policy since the Keating Government's Creative Nation
- established an inquiry into responsiveness of Australian Government services to the needs of Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- developed a Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program to create sustainable opportunities for youth from new and emerging communities to participate in community sport
- strengthened the provision of settlement services for new migrants and refugees through the development of a new settlement framework and improved settlement programs.

## Labor priorities

### Creating an inclusive Australia

- 18 Labor is committed to giving every Australian the help they need to access the opportunities society has to offer. Its emphasis is on supporting people to enable them to take up available opportunities for work in order to help them improve their circumstances. It recognises that policies and programs need to work in a cohesive and complementary way to deal with the variety of challenges which vulnerable Australians and disadvantaged people face. It requires sustained action across all levels of government and with the private and community sectors.
- Labor's social inclusion goal is to enable all Australians to participate in community life at all levels, through employment, volunteering, community service and education. People need the capabilities, opportunities, responsibilities and resources to participate
  - working together with business to help Australians living with disability and mental illness to participate in work and community life.
- 19 Labor's social inclusion strategy aims to make Australia stronger and fairer over time, by:
- supporting families and building strong and cohesive communities
  - maintaining a strong and internationally competitive economy
  - creating the opportunities and resources that every Australian needs to participate in the economy and community life
  - ensuring that services which are provided to all Australians meet high standards.
- 20 Labor's social inclusion priorities are based on evidence about the causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage. These priorities, where disadvantage is often a result of multiple, complex and interconnected barriers to participation, are:
- supporting families to give their children the best opportunities in life, including a safe home, a good education and the example of a parent who goes to work each day and where necessary, assist them with parenting skills
  - support for people who do not have a source of income from employment to increase the work opportunities available to them
  - improving the life chances of children at greatest risk of long-term disadvantage, including through the National Child Protection Framework
  - reducing the incidence of homelessness
  - improving outcomes for people living with disability or mental illness and their carers
  - closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage
  - breaking the cycle of entrenched and multiple disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods and communities
  - ensuring equitable access to services through maintaining front line access to government services in regional and rural Australia.
- 21 Labor is committed to combating racism and will respond to expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength and, where necessary, the full force of the law.
- 22 Labor promotes, celebrates and values the social, cultural and economic benefits a multicultural society delivers to all Australians.
- 23 Labor is committed to ensuring government services are more responsive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians.

- 24 Labor is committed to a program of continuous improvement for newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants as they build their new lives in Australia, including:
- ensuring the provision of practical settlement services, English language tuition, case management where required and encouragement and facilitation for social inclusion, leading to full participation in Australian society
  - increasing employment outcomes for newly arrived refugees and improving employment participation in the long term.
- 25 Labor's framework for building a stronger, fairer Australia is built on five pillars:
- economic growth—maintaining a strong, internationally competitive economy. To improve social outcomes over time and between generations, government economic strategy needs to be consistent with sound fiscal and macroeconomic policy settings.
  - equitable social policy—creating the opportunities and resources that every Australian needs to participate in the economy and community life by:
    - providing an adequate social safety net
    - increasing the productive capacity of low skilled Australians through local skills, training and employment strategies
    - getting people to take responsibility for the choices that are within their control and providing support in ways that build and reinforce their capabilities, resilience and independence
  - quality government services—ensuring that services which are provided to all Australians are appropriately funded to meet high standards, especially for those Australians who need them most but may have difficulty accessing them. This means improving the quality and accessibility of mainstream services and targeting the right support directly to the most disadvantaged individuals and communities. Our service reform priorities include:
    - building a world-class education system which prepares children for work and life, including through lifting the quality of education in the most disadvantaged schools
    - building world-class health and community services which improve life outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged and people with disability, including through better access to primary and preventative health services, linking people to the range of supports they need before crises occur, and at critical life transitions
    - improving the supply of affordable housing
    - closing the gap for Indigenous Australians in areas including life expectancy, education, health, housing and employment
  - strong families and communities—supporting families to give their children the best opportunities in life and building strong and cohesive communities especially in areas experiencing entrenched and multiple disadvantage. Our priorities include:
    - supporting families to give their children the best opportunities in life through paid parental leave, better quality childcare and family support programs
    - supporting vulnerable families and children at risk reforms to family support programs to strengthen their focus on vulnerable people, reduce red tape for service providers and ensure that payments are spent in the interests of children
    - ensuring Australians on low or fixed incomes have access to fair and equitable financial products, including emergency relief, no- and low-interest loan schemes, matched saving schemes and financial literacy support
    - ensuring that all communities benefit from the opportunities afforded by Australia's strong recovery from the global economic downturn and from future economic growth
    - supporting strong, diverse communities, free from discrimination, violence and abuse, by confronting intolerance and promoting respect and a sense of belonging for everyone
    - supporting individuals and communities affected by disasters and critical incidents to recover and build resilience
    - improving social infrastructure in communities and supporting volunteering

- partnership for change — building new and innovative partnerships with all sectors of the economy, so that all levels of government, businesses and not-for-profit organisations are working together to build a stronger, fairer Australia, such as:
  - developing a compact with the not-for-profit sector
  - supporting new models of social enterprise and social investment
  - working with philanthropic foundations and individual donors in areas of national priority like reducing Indigenous disadvantage and improving child health outcomes
  - effectively coordinating action across sectors to prevent and reduce homelessness
  - working together with business to help Australians living with disability and mental illness to participate in work and community life.

## Human rights

- 26 Labor believes a Human Rights Framework that reflects our international obligations is necessary in reflecting our commitment to fundamental rights across social and economic policies. We are committed to promoting the awareness and understanding of human rights, supporting the international human rights instruments to which Australia is a signatory, and properly funding the Australian Human Rights Commission. Labor will adhere to Australia's international human rights obligations and will seek to have them incorporated into the domestic law of Australia, and have them taken into account in administrative decision-making and whenever new laws and policies are developed.
- 27 Labor has introduced a new Human Rights Framework that:
- is investing in a comprehensive suite of education initiatives to promote a greater understanding of human rights across the community
  - through the National Action Plan on Human Rights requires each new Bill introduced into Parliament is accompanied by a statement of compatibility with our international human rights obligations
  - establishing a new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights to provide greater scrutiny of legislation for compliance with our international human rights obligations
  - develops federal anti-discrimination laws into a single Act to remove unnecessary regulatory overlap and make the system more user-friendly
  - provides for a review of legislation, policies and practices for compliance with the seven core UN Human Rights treaties to which Australia is a party (which are listed in the framework).
- 28 Labor will review its Human Rights Framework legislation in 2014 and that review will consider whether the Human Rights Framework could be enhanced through a statutory charter of human rights or other similar instrument.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

- 29 Indigenous Australians have a special place in our nation as Australia's first peoples and as the custodians of the oldest continuing cultures in the world. Their cultures, languages, knowledge and connection to the land enrich and embolden our national identity. Indigenous disadvantage in Australia is unacceptable, and Labor is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous Australians to achieve the change that Indigenous people aspire to, for themselves and for future generations.
- 30 Labor believes that the acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as traditional owners and continuing custodians of country is an important mark of respect and reconciliation at appropriate events, including at the opening of the Federal Parliament. Labor supports welcome to country ceremonies at significant public events.

## Closing the Gap

- 31 Labor believes that Closing the Gap in life expectancy, employment, health and education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is a national priority. Closing the Gap requires enduring commitment from all levels of government and the corporate and non-government sector, and working in partnership with Indigenous Australians to deliver the change they aspire to for themselves and for future generations. Our commitment to Closing the Gap needs to be evidence-based and include measurable targets that are open and transparent to the community. These targets should include specific goals in areas such as literacy, numeracy, employment, infant mortality, life expectancy and education.
- 32 Labor will continue to work to Close the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage, by:
- overcoming decades of under-investment in services and infrastructure
  - establishing clear expectations for governments, and holding all governments to account for their progress against those clear expectations
  - supporting personal responsibility as the foundation for healthy, strong families and communities
  - building strong, respectful and robust relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, so that we can work in partnership to achieve change.
- 33 Labor is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous Australians to achieve the change they aspire to for themselves and for their children, and will work to build strong and robust relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. These relationships are critical to working in partnership to achieve that change. Labor will set clear expectations, and support those expectations with government action.
- 34 Labor will work to turn around decades of under-investment and neglect. Major reforms and unprecedented investment have been made in education, health, employment, housing and services, governance and infrastructure.
- 35 Labor has built the Closing the Gap strategy through COAG to deliver major investments to improve housing, health, employment, early childhood and to drive fundamental reforms to Indigenous service delivery over the next ten years. Labor is working through the COAG process to implement national strategies in the areas of Indigenous health, remote Indigenous housing, Indigenous early childhood development, Indigenous economic participation and remote service delivery.
- 36 Labor supports a strong focus on better Indigenous outcomes being incorporated into mainstream funding and service delivery. Labor is working with state, territory and local governments to ensure Indigenous Australians enjoy equitable access to essential services, amenities and infrastructure, including quality education.
- 37 Labor understands that all governments must be held accountable for their progress in Closing the Gap to achieve change for Indigenous Australians. Labor will work from a basis of evidence to develop effective solutions that achieve long-term and measurable improvements in the lives of Indigenous Australians. An independent and regular reporting framework has been established through the COAG Reform Council to make sure that governments at every level are accountable. The Closing the Gap strategy sets clear targets to close the gap in life expectancy, early childhood, health, education and employment, and building blocks are in place to focus effort for sustained change. The Closing the Gap targets are:
- to close the life-expectancy gap within a generation
  - to halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade

- to ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four years olds in remote communities within five years
- to halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade
- to halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rates by 2020
- to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

- 38 Labor puts families at the centre of our work to Close the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage, and will work with Indigenous Australians to strengthen families and give children the best start in life. Indigenous children currently experience much higher levels of disadvantage than non-Indigenous children, resulting in poorer outcomes in health and education. Through the National Partnership on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, Labor is working with state and territory governments to implement a comprehensive early childhood strategy for Indigenous children, including better access to antenatal care services, sexual and reproductive health services for Indigenous women and maternal and child health services.
- 39 Labor also recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children have a significantly greater risk of experiencing violence than non-Indigenous Australians. Labor pledges to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in particular vulnerable people and victims of violence, to overcome violence in their communities.
- 40 Labor recognises that safe and secure housing is critical to closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage, and understands the housing crisis brought about by decades of under-investment faced by many Indigenous communities. Labor is committed to addressing the serious issues of significant overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing conditions and severe housing shortages. Labor is working with state and territory governments to reform housing and infrastructure arrangements including land tenure and tenancy management reform in remote Indigenous communities. Labor supports the aspirations of home ownership of many Indigenous Australians, and will continue to work in partnership to make this aspiration a reality for many more Indigenous Australians.
- 41 Labor is committed to closing the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation. This will require significant investment and determined, concerted action by all governments. In March 2008, a historic Statement of Intent was signed between the Australian Government, the Opposition, Indigenous and non-Indigenous health experts and the reconciliation movement to work together to achieve equality in health status and life expectancy.
- 42 Labor acknowledges that Indigenous Australians have the worst health outcomes of any Australians. On average, Indigenous Australians suffer a high burden of illness, die at a younger age than non-Indigenous people and too often do not have access to adequate health services. Labor recognises that addressing the health status of Indigenous Australians requires a comprehensive approach that looks beyond health services to include cultural wellbeing and connection to the land, education, environmental health and employment and training opportunities.
- 43 Labor recognises that improving education and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians is critical to Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage, and believes that the future of every Indigenous child should include a good education and a good job. Labor is committed to ensuring that Indigenous Australians have access to the same education opportunities as other Australians. Labor believes that, like other Australians, Indigenous Australians have a responsibility to give their children the best possible start in life, and will continue to support Indigenous families to take responsibility for getting their children to school each day.

- 44 Labor is committed to improving employment opportunities and the job readiness of Indigenous Australians. Labor is committed to halving the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by 2018. Labor has reformed employment and participation services, including the Community Development Employment Projects program, to better support Indigenous Australians to get the skills they need for employment. Labor is reforming remote employment servicing to ensure job service providers are best meeting the needs of Indigenous and other remote job seekers.
- 45 Labor is working with employers and all levels of government to create employment and training opportunities for Indigenous Australians, getting Indigenous job seekers job ready for and connected to jobs, ensuring Indigenous students make the transition from school to work, reforming remote employment and participation services, and supporting the growth of Indigenous businesses, which are proven employers of Indigenous Australians. The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy outlines these and other priorities for supporting Indigenous economic development as a basis for future policy development in partnership with Indigenous Australians.
- 46 Labor recognises the importance of community control and direct involvement of Indigenous Australians in the planning and delivery of health services. Australia must therefore train Indigenous health workers and vastly increase the number of Indigenous health professionals.
- 47 Labor notes the unacceptably high levels of incarceration experienced by Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous young people, and that these rates continue to rise. Labor notes the House of Representatives Standing Committee Report Doing Time—Time For Doing and the 1992 Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody which identify the systemic causes of incarceration experienced by the Indigenous community. Labor will take steps to address Indigenous interaction with the justice system, to reduce the rates of offending and victimisation, and to improve community safety. Suspicious deaths in custody must also be treated in a manner that maintains public confidence in the justice system.
- 48 Indigenous Australians have a special place in our nation as Australia's first peoples and as the custodians of the oldest continuing cultures in the world. Their cultures, languages, knowledge and connection to the land enrich and embolden our national identity. Labor is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous people and to building a strong and respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
- 49 Labor acknowledges the First Nations status and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, as well as their contribution to Australian society.
- 50 Labor remains firmly committed to reconciliation and recognises the importance of reconciliation as a vehicle for healing and justice in Australian society. Labor will continue to support Indigenous Australians, the broader community and corporate and non-government sectors in driving reconciliation.
- 51 Labor delivered the Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples, in particular the Stolen Generations in recognition of the importance of saying sorry for past wrongs to healing and a bridge to building respect.
- 52 Labor is working in partnership with Stolen Generations members and their families to comprehensively respond to their needs as a distinct group, including by establishing the Healing Foundation to aid healing in Indigenous communities and continuing the programs arising from the Bringing Them Home Report. Since the Apology, Labor has boosted support for family reunion services and supported the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation. Reunion, family tracing and counselling services for members of the Stolen Generation will continue under the Link Up and Bringing them Home programs. The program is being reformed to enable better geographical coverage and more flexible delivery of these services.

- 53 Labor supports the recognition of Indigenous Australians in our Constitution. Labor has established an Expert Panel to consult with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians on recognising Indigenous Australians in the Constitution, and will continue to work to progress options for Constitutional reform.
- 54 Labor has also supported the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration affirms the entitlement of Indigenous peoples to all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognised in international law and provides an aspirational framework for future dialogue. Australia's formal support was welcomed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, key Indigenous UN experts and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. This support underlines Labor's desire to work in good faith with Indigenous peoples, acknowledging that our relationship will be tested and evolve over time.
- 55 Labor is committed to compliance with the Racial Discrimination Act in the development of policies relating to Indigenous Australians.
- 56 Labor has supported the establishment of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, which will give Indigenous peoples a forum to express their views and aspirations and build on the strengths of existing institutions and bodies at the national, state, and regional level.
- 57 Labor understands that land and water are the basis of Indigenous spirituality, law, culture, economy and wellbeing. Native Title and land rights are both symbols of social justice and valuable economic resources to Indigenous Australians.
- 58 Labor supports land rights and Native Title as property rights under Australian law and will work to accelerate the resolution of outstanding land and Native Title claims in partnership with other stakeholders. Labor believes that negotiation produces better outcomes than litigation and that land use and ownership issues should be resolved by negotiation wherever possible.
- 59 Labor supports the statutory recognition of inalienable freehold title under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.
- 60 Labor believes that Australia's Indigenous cultures enrich the nation and are integral to our national identity. Labor recognises that the preservation and revitalisation of endangered Indigenous languages is a critical issue and will work to ensure adequate protection of Indigenous cultural heritage and intellectual property.

## Providing opportunities for people with disability

- 61 Labor believes that all people with a disability have the same rights to health, work, adequate housing, and social participation as the rest of the Australian community.
- 62 Labor believes it is the role of government to remove the barriers that prevent people with disability from exercising those rights and ensure that they receive the support they need to participate fully in society. Labor believes people with disability should be supported as individuals and services must be tailored to their individual circumstances to improve the opportunity for people with disability to participate in work and in the community.
- 63 Labor believes that Australians with disability should have the assurance of quality care and support, and that the system that supports people with disability should focus on what they can do, and not only on what they can't.

- 64 Labor in government has put people with disability and their carers on the national agenda after 12 years of neglect under the Liberals, in which funding to states and territories to deliver disability services went backward despite the growing need for services.
- 65 Labor believes that the current system is letting people with disability and their carers down, and is not delivering the kind of care and support Australians expect for people with disability, or in the event of significant disability through accident or disease. Labor is committed to the fundamental reform of the disability services system through a National Disability Insurance Scheme that provides people with significant disability the individual care and support they need over the course of their lifetime, and supports those who care for them.
- 66 Labor will work to improve services for people with disability, including by delivering income support and employment services; focusing on early intervention, individual and personalised attention; and working cooperatively with state and territory governments to expand the availability of supported accommodation places, in-home support and individualised arrangements that support community recreational participation and inclusion.
- 67 Labor will improve access to buildings, communications, transport, health care, aids, equipment and the justice and education systems, for those with disability and their families.
- 68 Labor will support service providers to better develop, train and employ disability care workers and is committed to addressing attraction and retention of the disability services workforce. Labor believes in a strong and sustainable disability sector, and will work with staff and providers to improve sector capacity ahead of the establishment of a National Disability Insurance Scheme to ensure quality standards are maintained and enhanced including:
- enhancing skill levels and continuing professional development of the workforce
  - ensuring employment standards are protected and maintained through the National Disability Insurance Scheme funding mechanisms
  - supporting sector group employment and training models that enhance job security and work with the sector to minimise the spread of casualised work
  - maximising funding to direct client services rather than administrative and brokerage costs.
- 69 Labor will continue to work to change public attitudes to people with a disability and encourage better recognition of the rights and potential of people with a disability.

## Reforming disability support services

- 70 Labor is working with states and territories to build the foundations for a National Disability Insurance Scheme. This follows the Productivity Commission's report examining reform of disability support services. We believe the system we have today is not delivering the kind of care and support Australians expect for people with disability.
- 71 Labor believes that the fundamental reform of the disability services system is necessary, and will work to build a National Disability Insurance Scheme that provides individuals with the support they need over the course of their lifetime through insurance principles. Labor supports reform of disability services that is financially sustainable.
- 72 Labor has commenced work with the states and territories to build the foundations for reform. We have established a COAG Select Council of Ministers from the Commonwealth, states and territories to lead reform in this area and an Advisory Group to the Select Council to provide expert advice on delivering the foundations for reform and preparation for launch. Labor recognises that future reform of disability services will require investment from all levels of government and consultation with all major stakeholders such as consumers, trade unions, care providers and peak bodies.

## National Disability Strategy

- 73 The National Disability Strategy outlines a ten-year national policy framework to guide government activity across six key outcome areas. It will drive future reforms in mainstream and specialist disability service systems to improve outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers. It represents a commitment by all levels of government, industry and the community to a unified, national approach to policy and program development. This new approach will assist in addressing the challenges faced by people with disability, both now and into the future.
- 74 The federal, state, territory and local governments have developed the strategy as a result of a large nation-wide public consultation process, involving more than 2500 people and was formally endorsed by COAG.
- 75 The strategy sets out six priority areas for action to improve the lives of people with disabilities, their families and carers. These are:
- inclusive and accessible communities—the physical environment including public transport; parks, buildings and housing, digital information and communications technologies; civic life including social, sporting, recreational and cultural life
  - rights protection, justice and legislation—statutory protections such as anti-discrimination measures, complaints mechanisms, advocacy and the electoral and justice systems
  - economic security—jobs, business opportunities, financial independence, adequate income support for those not able to work, and housing
  - personal and community support—inclusion and participation in the community, person-centred care and support provided by specialist disability services and mainstream services and informal care and support
  - learning and skills—early childhood education and care, schools, further education, vocational education, transitions from education to employment and life-long learning
  - health and wellbeing—health services, health promotion and the interaction between health and disability systems, wellbeing and enjoyment of life.
- 76 The National Disability Strategy will guide public policy across governments and aims to bring about change in all mainstream services and programs as well as community infrastructure. It is the first time the federal, state and territory governments have agreed to such a wide ranging set of directions for disability.

## Acknowledging and supporting carers

- 77 Labor values the contribution of carers to our society and believes that carers should have rights, choices, opportunities and capabilities to participate in economic, social and community life. People who care for sick and elderly relatives and people with disabilities and mental illness deserve acknowledgement and support for the job they do and their great contribution to Australia's economy. They take on enormous responsibilities that are often at both a personal and a financial cost. Labor recognises that many carers experience substantial financial hardship, reduced education and employment prospects, lower levels of health, depression and chronic grief or anger. Labor believes that carers play an invaluable role in providing care and support to loved ones, and believes that carers deserve the same opportunities as other Australians to participate in work and the community, and live a meaningful life.

- 78 Labor recognises the invaluable contribution of carers to the Australian community. Labor passed the Carer Recognition Act in 2010, and has delivered a National Carer Strategy to recognise and support the contribution of carers. This builds on what the government already provides for carers and complements reforms to improve supports provided through the aged care, disability, mental health, primary health care, hospital, and community care systems. The National Carer Strategy is the outcome of consultations with carers, state and territory governments, service providers and peak bodies.
- 79 Labor is making major investments to support carers, including:
- increasing the amount of the Carer Payment and introducing a permanent Carer Supplement to support carers to better balance their household budgets
  - \$7.6 billion between 1 January 2009 and 30 June 2015 provided to state and territory governments to increase and improve specialist disability services provided under the National Disability Agreement
  - \$2.2 billion over five years to drive fundamental reform in Australia's mental health system, including:
    - boosting mental health respite services, to help carers have a break or undertake education or training
    - reform to the Family Mental Health Support Services to provide improved support and strengthen families affected by mental illness
  - extending automatic eligibility for Carer Allowance (child) for carers of children with Type 1 Diabetes aged between ten and 16 years
  - continuing the Carer Adjustment Payment, a one-off payment to families where, following a catastrophic event involving a young child aged 0 up to 6 years old, the family is going through a period of significant adjustment as a result of the care needs of the child
  - ensuring fairer access to the Carer Supplement
  - ensuring fairer access to Bereavement Payment
  - funding a national and targeted campaign to raise public awareness of the role and contribution of carers.
- 80 In addition, we:
- have extended the Demonstration Day Respite Pilot for a further 12 months and will evaluate the effectiveness of respite options for supporting carers who want to balance paid work with informal care
  - will consult with stakeholders about expanding the right to request flexible working arrangements under the *Fair Work Act 2009* to employees caring for older Australians and those caring for a person with a serious long term illness or disability
  - will provide funding to hold a young carer festival in each state and territory.

## Homelessness

- 81 After a long history of neglect of homelessness and the housing crisis by the Coalition Government, the Federal Labor Government has delivered the largest ever investment to social housing and homelessness to dramatically improve housing availability and services for those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- 82 Labor is strongly committed to halving homelessness by 2020 and will continue to implement the 12-year strategy laid out in the 2008 White Paper on reducing homelessness, including:
- providing access to stable, affordable and long-term housing, with an emphasis on 'housing first' models of support that end homelessness long-term, such as Common Grounds and Foyers

- providing support services to help maintain stability in housing
- increasing early intervention and prevention services
- preventing exits from care into homelessness
- ensure appropriate access to mainstream services, such as employment services
- better integrating service provision and providing outreach support
- encouraging private sector investment in homelessness and housing affordability.

83 Labor will improve and expand homelessness services, giving particular emphasis to improving the connections between homeless shelters and mainstream services and getting the homeless into employment. Labor will focus on ending homelessness rather than just managing it. Labor is committed to ensuring that those who are homeless receive strong support through government programs and government policies such as (through) Centrelink Community Engagement Officers.

84 Labor recognises the links between access to affordable rental housing and homelessness. Labor will strongly encourage the states through future funding agreements to prioritise people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the allocation of social housing and provided with the services to help them maintain their tenancies.

85 Labor will work with state and territories and stakeholders to continue to improve services for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Labor will also continue to enhance data collection on homelessness to ensure more reliable and timely data and to help optimise government policies.

86 In addition, Labor understands the significant connection between homelessness and mental health. Mental health can be a cause of homelessness, just like family breakdown or domestic violence can be. It can also be in itself caused by homelessness. Through Labor's investment in mental health, the government will enhance services to people with a mental health concern that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

## Labor's National Housing Strategy

87 Labor recognises that having a home provides the foundation for financial, social and emotional security. If Australia is to be a truly fair and democratic society, we must not tolerate the social exclusion that arises from failing to meet this basic need. Labor believes all Australians have the right to secure, affordable and appropriate housing throughout their lives.

88 Labor is committed to policies which make housing affordable including:

- economic policies designed to keep downward pressure on interest rates and create a competitive housing finance sector
- assistance that allows low to middle income households to meet the cost of home ownership
- programs to supply affordable public, community and private rental.

89 Labor has developed a National Affordable Housing Agreement to bring together all areas of housing policy. The NAHA is the mechanism to commit all governments to joint action on housing policy and reforms including:

- expanding the supply of housing, particularly affordable rental accommodation
- delivering more efficient and effective housing, land and infrastructure development
- improving opportunities for first home buyers to enter the market
- reforming the social housing sector to improve the public and expand the not-for-profit (community) housing sector
- better integrating housing and other services to strengthen communities and build neighbourhoods that are safe, healthy and close to employment opportunities

- expanding the role of institutional investment in the provision of affordable housing
- promoting housing options that minimise adverse environmental impacts
- preventing and reducing homelessness
- improving housing outcomes, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in remote communities.

90 Labor will review the National Affordable Housing Agreement ahead of the renegotiation of the next agreement, which will commence in June 2014. The next renegotiation of the National Affordable Housing Agreement will focus on:

- expanding the not-for-profit sector to boost the overall supply of social housing
- setting targets for expansion of stock in each state and territory
- promoting partnerships between the public, private and community sectors
- reforming social housing to ensure that growth is achieved by maximising use of available land
- promoting economic and social participation of public housing tenants.

91 Labor believes that national leadership is required to support Australians who aspire to home ownership. Labor supports, and will continue to review and implement, strategies to make home ownership more affordable including:

- First Home Savers Accounts to provide incentives and assistance for young Australians and their families to long-term savings for a house deposit
- grants for first home owners
- programs to reduce the cost of new homes by improving the efficiency of the housing sector such as streamlining planning processes or defraying the impact of infrastructure charges
- national regulation of consumer credit to ensure that all home providers are appropriately regulated and that borrowers are protected as far as possible from taking on unsustainable home loans
- the development of pathways into home ownership for low and moderate income earners such as key workers and social housing tenants including shared equity products
- exploring tax relief mechanisms for first home owners.

92 Labor acknowledges that much of the urban infrastructure to support new residential areas is a long-term community asset. Labor will work with state, territory and local governments to:

- ensure that new home buyers do not unfairly bear the costs of such infrastructure, with infrastructure charges levied on developers appropriately reflecting the cost of infrastructure related to specific developments
- find better ways to finance infrastructure that has a broader community benefit
- reduce development costs by improving national consistency in building codes and urban design regulations and streamlining approval processes.

93 Labor recognises that most rental accommodation will be provided in the private rental market. Labor will monitor the rent costs in the private rental market and examine mechanisms to maintain affordability. Labor will maintain programs to improve the affordability of private rental accommodation. Labor is committed to providing rental assistance in a way that supports people to move from welfare to work.

94 Labor acknowledges that rent costs are an issue of particular relevance in mining and other resources boom communities, where high rents driven by booms have flow on effects for long-term residents, and on local communities generally. Labor will work to ameliorate the effects of sharply rising rent costs on local communities.

- 95 Labor is committed to encouraging greater private investment in the affordable rental sector. Labor established the National Rental Affordability Scheme and will continue to expand the Scheme to stimulate investment in affordable rental stock.
- 96 Labor believes that Australia needs a strong and vibrant social housing sector to improve housing affordability for low and moderate income earners. The social housing sector incorporates public housing authorities, community housing organisations and a range of other not-for-profit housing organisations.
- 97 Labor is committing to growing and improving the social housing sector. Labor has committed the greatest single capital investment in social housing in the history of the Federation. Labor will continue to work with all state, territory and local governments to expand, reform and improve the social housing sector including:
- setting targets for a growth in public and community housing stock in each state and territory, based on a national assessment of need
  - ensuring maintenance programs operate to keep social housing stock at acceptable standards
  - supporting the renewal of public housing estates, to create mixed communities and tenures and better access to jobs, transport and integration with services
  - promoting partnerships between the public, community and private sectors
  - supporting the substantial growth of the community and not-for-profit housing sector, which is able to better leverage housing assets to build more social and affordable housing for Australians in need
  - ensuring public housing rental rebate policies do not require tenants to pay more than 25 per cent of household income in rent, unless there is an agreement with the housing authority to charge a higher rate for the provision of additional services
  - ensuring that social housing tenants are supported to maintain their tenancy by linking tenancy management with health, disability and other support services, with specific support for tenants who are vulnerable or marginalised, including tenants with a mental illness
  - improving the capacity of public and community housing to help tenants move from welfare to work, including creating employment opportunities for public housing tenants
  - ensuring that public and community housing tenants in all states and territories have access to independent mechanisms to review decisions made by housing providers
  - supporting programs which ensure that people are made aware of and can access the various forms of housing assistance which are available
  - addressing employment barriers in the social housing system and maximising employment opportunities for social housing tenants
  - working with the states and territories to encourage social housing tenants to transition into affordable housing where appropriate so that social housing is accessible to those on the waiting list and can therefore act as a safety net
  - oversee a strong national regulatory system for the not-for-profit housing sector that both encourages the expansion of the sector by attracting private finance but also avoid unnecessary red tape.
- 98 Labor believes that the rights of renters must be protected. Labor is committed to funding adequate housing consumer services. Labor will improve the rights of renters through the application of appropriate regulation and standards and will work with states, territories and non-government organisations to:
- introduce national tenancy standards for all residential tenancies, including caravan park residents, boarders and lodgers, to 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

- ensure that all states and territories have independent review mechanisms for resolving tenancy disputes with the power to overturn evictions and unfair rents, determine bond or rental disputes and refer matters for prosecution where necessary
- support the regulation of tenant databases though stronger privacy protection including independent monitoring of compliance and access to affordable dispute resolution processes.

## Indigenous housing

- 99 Labor believes that addressing the housing crisis in remote Indigenous communities is critical to Closing the Gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Labor recognises that chronic overcrowding, weak tenancy arrangements and poor quality housing stock contribute to the unacceptable levels of disadvantage faced by many Indigenous Australians, particularly those in remote communities.
- 100 Labor will continue to invest in new housing and in refurbishing existing housing stock to address chronic overcrowding in remote Indigenous communities. Through the National Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, Labor has delivered more than 800 new homes and completed refurbishments to 3100 houses since 2009. Labor has also delivered improved tenancy arrangements in remote communities which ensure that responsibilities for maintenance and repair on housing stock are clear and that governments are held to account for maintaining remote housing.
- 101 Labor recognises that many indigenous Australians live in our cities and regional centres, and that the housing challenges faced in these communities differ greatly to those in remote Indigenous communities. Labor will continue to work with Aboriginal owned and controlled housing providers to deliver accessible, affordable, appropriate and secure housing that meets the social, cultural and economic aspirations of Indigenous Australians.
- 102 Labor supports the aspirations of Indigenous Australians, including in remote communities, to home ownership. Labor will continue to work with Indigenous Australians to support this aspiration and increase home ownership rates, and recognises that this may require government support for new approaches to attracting private finance in remote communities.

## Women

- 103 Labor recognises that the work of courageous and inspirational women throughout our history has seen great achievements toward the equality of women and men in Australian society. However, much remains to be done to achieve equality between women and men in remuneration, sharing carer responsibilities and representation in civic and corporate institutions.
- 104 Society as a whole benefits from greater economic equality between women and men. Labor also recognises that women benefit from equality with better life opportunities, greater independence and higher incomes.
- 105 Labor believes we need to build a much stronger partnership between men and women to achieve our goals. Labor will do this through:
- an industrial relations system that protects minimum level of standards to protect the most vulnerable workers, many of whom are women
  - an industrial relations system that provides employees the right to request family friendly conditions such as extended unpaid parental leave, and flexible and part-time work following the birth of a child
  - regulation and education for employers to promote equal opportunity, gender pay equity and work and family balance

- policy and law that promotes diversity, including through the participation of women, on company boards
- a government-sponsored paid parental leave scheme for all parents
- improving the accessibility of affordable quality childcare and before and after school care
- promoting women's equal access to educational and training opportunities, particularly for women who have spent time out of the workforce to care for their children
- recognising and valuing women's paid and unpaid work
- supporting and encouraging men to take an increased role in care giving and domestic labour
- providing women access to financial literacy and superannuation information and tailoring that information to their needs, having regard to the disproportionate representation of women in part time and casual work and the long-term implications for their financial security and superannuation
- ensuring that all employees that worked for a small amount of hours in part-time or casual work will continue to receive compulsory superannuation contributions
- a government target to increase the representation of women on Australian Government boards to 40 per cent by 2015.

## Reducing violence against women and children

- 106 Labor believes women and men in Australia must work together to ensure women and their children are safe from violence in their homes and in their communities.
- 107 Labor is committed to reducing the incidence and impact of violence against women. Labor believes that reducing violence against women and ensuring women's equal place in the world are important steps towards achieving gender equality. Labor will work towards this goal through the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children. The national plan provides the framework for action by the federal, state and territory governments to reduce violence against women and their children. The central goals of the national plan are to reduce violence against women and their children and to improve how governments work together, increase support for women and their children, and create innovative and targeted ways to bring about change.
- 108 The national plan focuses on preventing violence by raising awareness and building respectful relationships in the next generation. The aim is to bring attitudinal and behavioural change at the cultural, institutional and individual levels, with a particular focus on young people. The national plan will also allow women who have experienced violence to rebuild their lives as quickly as possible as part of a community-wide response. This will enable mainstream and specialist services to work together to improve their responses so that women return to full social and economic participation as soon as possible.
- 109 Noting Labor's supported and funded commitment to equal pay, Labor will further ensure that the Fair Work and anti-discrimination legislation frameworks provide appropriate protection to victims of domestic violence in the workplace, including in relation to leave entitlements.

## Children

- 110 Labor believes that every child has a right to a safe, healthy and happy childhood. Labor will support families to give their children the best start in life, and will work in government for the protection of children at risk from disadvantage and abuse.
- 111 Having established the National Child Protection Framework, Labor is working closely with state and territory governments and non-government children's service providers to improve the way agencies, payments and programs interact to help prevent abuse and better protect children identified as being at risk. We are leading the way on reforms that protect and ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people across the country.

- 112 Through the National Child Protection Framework, Labor is committed to:
- improved prevention and early intervention through a national, collaborative approach
  - more effective responses for children in care and leaving care
  - improved outcomes for Indigenous children
  - attracting and retaining a skilled professional workforce to improve child protection systems.
- 113 Labor is committed to ensuring that children are adequately protected from exposure to inappropriate material over the internet, at home, school and at other public access points.
- 114 Labor is working with the states and territories to develop a uniform national system for adoption. This includes work to achieve harmonisation and best practice of fees and procedures for inter-country adoption, whilst always prioritising the best interests of the child and ensuring adequate safeguards against child trafficking.
- 115 Labor supports the development of a national approach to children and the law, which includes:
- 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
  - support for research into causes of juvenile crime
  - the appointment of a national children's commissioner.

## Young Australians

- 116 Labor believes that government should take active steps to ensure better representation of young Australians in national debate and policy development.
- 117 Labor's reinstatement of the Minister for Youth and establishment of the Office for Youth will ensure young Australians have their views considered as an important part of government decision making.
- 118 Through the Australian Youth Forum, an innovative approach driven by young people, Labor will continue to interact with young Australians on their own turf and through new technology.
- 119 Labor will ensure young Australians are supported to reach their full potential, by investing in education, training, employment and school to work transition support.
- 120 Labor will place a particular focus on young people's health needs, including physical and mental health, drug and alcohol education, the promotion of positive body image and a healthy lifestyle. Labor will work towards developing strategies to prevent and reduce the damage being caused by the increased sexualisation of children in the media and popular culture.
- 121 Labor recognises that violent activity, including street violence, is something that can affect Australians of all ages. To ensure that young people are not disproportionately affected by street violence either as victims or perpetrators, Labor will work in partnership with young people to tackle street violence and the perceptions of street violence in our community.
- 122 Through the reinstatement of funding to the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, Labor will ensure a national voice for the Australian youth sector.

## Removing discrimination

- 123 Labor supports the enactment of legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of a person's sexual orientation or gender status, and the removal of such discrimination from Commonwealth legislation.
- 124 Labor believes that people are entitled to respect, equality, dignity and the opportunity to participate in society free of hatred or harassment and receive the protection of the law regardless of their sexuality or gender identity. Consistent with this belief, in 2007 Labor audited Commonwealth laws to identify discrimination against same sex couples. In 2008, laws were passed to remove discrimination from 84 pieces of Commonwealth legislation.
- 125 Labor will ensure that all couples whether married or de facto do not suffer discrimination.
- 126 Labor will amend the Marriage Act to ensure equal access to marriage under statute for all adult couples irrespective of sex who have a mutual commitment to a shared life.
- 127 These amendments should ensure that nothing in the Marriage Act imposes an obligation on a minister of religion to solemnise any marriage.

## Justice in the community

- 128 Labor believes that access to justice is central to the rule of law and integral to the enjoyment of basic human rights. It is an essential precondition to social inclusion and a critical element of a well-functioning democracy.
- 129 Labor is committed to ensuring our justice system is fair, simple, affordable and accessible, and based on principles of early intervention to assist people to resolve problems before they escalate and lead to entrenched disadvantage.
- 130 People on the margins of society often have the highest levels of interaction with the justice system. Labor believes that Australia's system of justice must provide security for all Australians, protect their property, deter and prevent crime, compensate victims where appropriate and rehabilitate offenders.
- 131 Labor supports a charter of rights for the victims of crime based on the United Nations Charter of Victims Rights (Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power 1985), and 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.
- 132 Labor will continue to ensure that the Commonwealth's investigation, prosecution, defence and judicial processes are separate, independent, adequately resourced and appropriately accountable.
- 133 The independence of the judiciary is fundamental to the maintenance of both the rule of law and our democratic society. Labor believes that the courts should be accountable, and will continue to ensure judicial appointments made through a transparent and merit-based process and that all those eligible for appointment to judicial office have the opportunity to be fairly and properly considered. Labor will work with the judiciary to ensure that the judicial system is efficient and adequately funded. Labor will continue to work with the courts to evaluate and improve service delivery.
- 134 Labor will also ensure the leading law enforcement agency of the Commonwealth, the Australian Federal Police, is adequately resourced and supported.

- 135 Labor is committed to the rule of law and basic principles of justice including that people accused of a criminal offence are not compelled to incriminate themselves; that they are not subject to prolonged detention without charge; that they are given a fair trial including, in the ordinary course, the right to see and hear the evidence against them; that people charged with serious criminal offences are provided with legal representation if they are unable to afford legal representation of their own; and that evidence obtained illegally, by torture, coercive techniques or by improper investigative practice is inadmissible.
- 136 Labor is committed to providing national leadership to resource our system of legal aid in partnership with the states and territories. Labor will continue to support general and specialist community-based legal services and clinical legal education schemes.
- 137 The legal profession plays a fundamental role in the provision of access to justice. Labor supports the creation of a modern, efficient and accountable national legal services market, regulated by an independent body so as to be fully accountable and maintain the independence of the legal profession.
- 138 Labor is committed to the ongoing process of law reform so that our laws and legal system reflect the traditions, values and aspirations of all Australians, and meet the needs of our modern democratic society. Labor is committed to the adequate resourcing of the Australian Law Reform Commission, to enable them to provide independent and comprehensive advice on all aspects of law reform.

## Custody and sentencing

- 139 Labor recognises the principles of sentencing as deterrence, punishment, retribution and rehabilitation and supports the just and humane treatment of accused people in custody and offenders in prison. Labor's policies and practices will conform to Australia's international human rights obligations and strive for world's best practice in its treatment of prisoners.
- 140 Labor supports the sentencing principle of prison as a last resort and the appropriate use of noncustodial sentencing options for all offenders. Labor recognises that the way in which the criminal justice system treats juvenile offenders greatly influences whether they will re-offend. The incarceration of juveniles should be a last resort, and all efforts should be made to divert children from long-term involvement in the criminal justice system. Labor will take all reasonable steps to ensure that minors are not incarcerated in adult prisons.
- 141 Because they are often discriminatory in practice and have not proved effective in reducing crime or criminality, Labor opposes mandatory sentencing and detention regimes.
- 142 Labor supports:
- efforts to reduce the unacceptably high rates of incarceration of Indigenous Australians and in particular, Indigenous young people
  - special attention to prevent deaths in custody, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
  - training of police and prison officers in understanding Indigenous culture and the Indigenous social context
  - Indigenous legal aid services that are efficient, culturally appropriate and recognises the over representation of Indigenous people with the criminal justice system
  - the adoption of international treaties allowing the repatriation of Australians in overseas prisons

- the ongoing development of ensuring consistency in sentencing so that the judiciary retains a sufficient degree of appropriate discretion so as to enable sentences to be tailored to the circumstances of each individual case
- 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
- the principles of restorative justice as a just and effective way to be tough on crime
- the introduction of programs that are consistent with victims' rights, based upon restorative justice.

## Family law

- 143 Labor believes that the best interests of children must be the paramount consideration in Family Law disputes. Labor believes that the resolution of family disputes should focus on counselling and family dispute resolution with litigation as a last resort. Labor will ensure community-based services such as counselling and family dispute resolution are accessible, affordable and equipped to resolve entrenched disputes.
- 144 Labor will continue to develop and implement measures to ease the anxiety and stress of family breakdown. In particular, Labor will ensure that:
- the rights of children are paramount
  - there is a just and equitable division of relationship property
  - the Family Law system protects those at risk of family violence or child abuse
  - the particular needs, customs and practices of diverse cultures are appropriately respected
  - disputes are resolved in a timely, effective and affordable way.
- 145 Labor will continue to encourage all states to be a part of the national uniform system, implemented in 2008 for de facto couples.

## Migrants and refugees

- 146 Labor recognises the economic and social contribution that has been made by migrants and refugees throughout our nation's history. Labor regards Australia's diversity as a source of national strength and a critical factor in nation-building.
- 147 Australia is and will remain a society of people drawn from a rich variety of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Australia is and will remain a multicultural society.
- 148 To support Australia's multicultural society, Labor's migration policies will:
- remain non-discriminatory
  - respect the heritage and traditional customs of migrants and their children
  - recognise the importance of all aspects of the migration program, including skilled, family and humanitarian streams
  - be evidence-based, supported by rigorous research and evaluation
  - support Australia's social cohesion by encouraging universal respect for Australia's democratic beliefs and laws, and the rights, responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship
  - promote our cultural diversity and combat prejudice and discrimination
  - consistently oppose those who foster extremism, hatred, ethnic division or incitement to violence.

149 For the Australian people to have confidence and trust in the integrity of our migration system, it must be built upon rigorous procedures and processes which protect our national interest and our national borders while also treating individuals with fairness, dignity and humanity. Labor will conduct an independent review into existing decision making processes under the Migration Act, including primary decisions, merits review and judicial review, with a view to ensuring that principles of procedural fairness, natural justice and genuine independence are upheld. The review will include the interaction between the Migration Act and mainstream administrative law and the operation, structure and efficacy of the Migration Review Tribunal and the Refugee Review Tribunal. The review is to be commissioned in the first half of 2012.

To this end Labor will ensure that applications for refugee status are processed speedily, fairly and impartially based on individual merits.

150 Australia will adhere to its international protection obligations under the Refugees Convention and other relevant international instruments to which it is a party.

## Maintaining the integrity of our migration system

151 Labor will ensure that all Australian jobs are regulated under Australian migration laws, consistent with Australia's international obligations. To this effect, Labor will review the *Migration Act 1958* (Cth) with a view to ensuring that the definition of migration zone encapsulates all offshore Australian jobs and industries where possible.

152 For the Australian people to have confidence and trust in the integrity of our migration system, Labor will fund and maintain robust border security measures that support the orderly processing of migration to our country and protect our national interest and our national borders.

153 To support Australia's strong border security regime, Labor will maintain:

- an architecture of excised offshore places
- the non-statutory processing on Christmas Island of persons who arrive unauthorised at an excised place, except where other arrangements are entered into under bilateral and regional arrangements

Labor is united in its commitment to prevent further loss of life at sea of vulnerable children, women and men.

Where the Australian Government is unable to implement arrangements that might be entered into under bilateral and regional arrangements, Labor is committed to:

- mandatory detention for initial health, security and identity checks for asylum seekers who arrive by boat
- using all available instruments under the Migration Act including community detention and bridging visas
- ensuring asylum seekers on bridging visas have access to the right to work and basic health and support services
- moving to a single protection visa process for asylum seekers who arrive by boat, using the current onshore arrangements for application and independent review through the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT).

Such arrangements will result in asylum seekers who arrive both by air and sea being treated the same when it comes to the processing of their claims and access to support while on bridging visas.

154 Labor recognises that the phenomenon of people smuggling has a long history arising from the need for people to escape from danger and persecution. Labor also recognises that those who decide to leave a country in perilous circumstances have the right under the Refugee Convention to determine their means of departure:

- Recognising the risk to life of people travelling on unsafe, unseaworthy and overcrowded boats, Labor will work with the United Nations High Commission of Refugees and countries of the region to expedite the claims for refugee status by asylum seekers in the region to eliminate any pull that people smugglers may have over vulnerable protection claimants.
- However, recognising the risk to life of people travelling on unsafe, unseaworthy and overcrowded boats, Labor will:
  - consider introducing further penalties for serious people smuggling offences
  - ensure repatriation of crew members who are proven to be juveniles. Crew members assessed to be minors will not be held in immigration detention centres or adult prisons.
- Labor is committed to ensuring Australia meets its obligations to the maritime principle of safety of life at sea which requires a response to assist in the rescue at sea of vessels in distress.

155 Labor will continue to take all necessary steps to eradicate people smuggling by:

- promoting effective law enforcement measures, with people smugglers subject to prosecution and harsh penalties to deter their activities
- working in close cooperation with our regional neighbours to address people smuggling at its source and prevent attempts at dangerous sea journeys by people seeking to enter Australia unlawfully
- working with regional neighbours to develop their capacity and enhance projects in home and transit countries to assist people displaced by conflict who may be vulnerable targets of people smugglers and traffickers
- pursuing strong regional and international arrangements to deter secondary movements of asylum seekers
- increasing Australia's capacity to prevent illegal fishing and smuggling operations.

## Protection and humanitarian assistance

156 Labor will treat people seeking our protection with dignity and compassion and in accordance with our international obligations and core Australian principles of fairness and humanity.

157 Australia will comply with the non-refoulement and all other protection obligations we have voluntarily assumed in signing the Refugee Convention and other relevant international instruments and actively engage in the work of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and other relevant international and regional agencies.

- Labor will continue Australia's generous humanitarian program, including providing appropriate support for the travel and resettlement of refugees and others requiring Australia's protection, and contribute to international aid efforts to alleviate the pressing humanitarian needs of displaced persons
- Labor will seek to lead debate on the new agreements and understandings required to ensure that the Refugee Convention and the international protection system function effectively over the long-term, including encouraging countries in our region to provide protection to those in need
- Labor will contribute to the development of further multilateral solutions, recognising the importance of regional neighbours, with the aim of eradicating people smuggling, deterring secondary movement and enabling refugees to access appropriate processing and settlement outcomes

- Labor aspires to progressively increase Australia's humanitarian intake to 20,000 places per year, should bilateral and regional arrangements prove to be successful in reducing irregular migration to Australia
  - Labor recognises that, under the Refugee Convention, asylum seekers have the right to seek protection and asylum
  - Labor will ensure that asylum seekers who arrive by irregular means will not be punished for their mode of arrival.
- 158 Recognising that irregular movement is a regional issue that requires a co-operative regional approach, Labor will engage with Australia's neighbours to seek innovative and effective solutions to the irregular movement of people through the region. This approach will include multilateral engagement, particularly through the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, and bilateral arrangements of a type envisaged by the Regional Co-operation Framework agreed at the Bali Process Ministerial Conference in March 2011.
- 159 Labor's policies with respect to asylum seekers who travel to Australia irregularly by boat will be based on the following considerations:
- irregular boat travel to Australia, particularly when facilitated by people smugglers, is extremely dangerous for asylum seekers and Australian rescue personnel. As demonstrated by a number of high-profile tragedies, including SIEV X, SIEV 36 and SIEV 221, such ventures often result in deaths at sea. A genuinely humanitarian policy must discourage such methods of travel, subject to compliance with Australia's international obligations under the Refugee Convention
  - cooperation with regional partners to improve living standards and protection outcomes for asylum seekers in transit countries is an important disincentive for those considering the dangerous boat journey to Australia
  - increasing the humanitarian intake of genuine refugees from source and transit countries creates an orderly pathway to resettlement in Australia and provides asylum seekers with an alternative to irregular boat travel to Australia.
- 160 Labor's protection policies will be based on the following principles:
- access to protection in countries of first asylum and transit will be supported so as to reduce pressure for dangerous irregular movement
  - protection visa applications made in Australia will be assessed by Australians on Australian territory
  - those found to be owed Australia's protection under the Refugee Convention and other international instruments will be given permanent protection under the *Migration Act 1958* and will be provided with appropriate settlement support and services
  - those not found to be owed Australia's protection under the Refugee Convention and other international instruments will be promptly returned
  - the Temporary Humanitarian Visa will be retained for situations where temporary safe haven is required.
- 161 For the Australian people to have confidence and trust in the integrity of our migration system, protection claims made in Australia should be assessed and reviewed in a manner which balances efficient decision making with procedural fairness and ensures that our international human rights obligations are met.
- the assessment and review of protection claims should be underpinned by robust, efficient and transparent processes that ensure fair and consistent outcomes, including access to review and independent advice

- the assessment and review of protection claims must be independent and free from any political or diplomatic interference
  - the processing of protection claims must be streamlined to improve client service, to enhance the quality of decision-making, to provide more efficient pathways for prompt resolution of visa status and to alleviate the courts' immigration case-load burden
  - to this end Labor will ensure that applications for refugee status are processed speedily, fairly and impartially based on individual merits
  - Labor will require the National Security Legislation Monitor to advise on establishing a mechanism for independent review of the adverse security assessments that ensures procedural fairness while recognising that processes may be required to protect intelligence sources and methodology
  - Labor will explore options other than indefinite detention including third country resettlement to deal with refugees with adverse security assessments in a way that does not jeopardise Australia's national security interests.
- 162 Exercise of personal ministerial intervention powers should be limited to cases raising claims that are unique or exceptional for humanitarian or other compelling reasons, and which cannot be appropriately resolved through normal processes. Under legislation passed by Labor, complementary protection claims will be considered by way of the protection visa framework.
- 163 Labor recognises that people residing in the community should not be arbitrarily deprived of the right to work while their claim is being processed, as occurs under the 45-day rule. Labor has abolished the 45-day rule and introduced arrangements that reflect relevant international obligations and grant work rights to all people who have actively and genuinely pursued resolution of their claims.

## Compliance and immigration detention policy

- 164 Labor expects that people who come to Australia enter and leave in accordance with their visa conditions.
- 165 Labor is committed to the integrity of Australia's visa programs, including student visas.
- 166 Labor's immigration processes should be underpinned by robust, efficient and transparent processes focused on prompt and fair resolution of status for those seeking migration outcomes.
- 167 For the Australian people to have confidence in the integrity of our migration system, Labor will:
- employ a risk-based approach to the management of immigration clients which emphasises robust, efficient, consistent, independent and transparent processes which support the prompt resolution of immigration status
  - enforce compliance with visa conditions that support the orderly processing of migration to our country.
- 168 Under Labor's policies, the presumption will be that unauthorised arrivals who enter for the purpose of seeking asylum will, after appropriate checks are undertaken, be granted bridging visas with work rights and means-tested access to migration assistance while the merits of their applications are assessed: persons will be detained only if the need is established.
- Labor's humane and risk-based immigration detention policies and practices will be guided by key immigration detention values:
- to support the integrity of Australia's immigration program, three groups will be subject to mandatory detention:
    - all unauthorised arrivals, for management of health, identity and security risks to the community. Labor will strive to ensure this is for 90 days only

- unlawful non-citizens who present proven unacceptable risks to the community
  - unlawful non-citizens who have been proven to persistently refuse to comply with their visa conditions
  - children, and where possible their families, will not be detained in an immigration detention centre (IDC) and, wherever appropriate, will be released on a bridging visa
  - detention that is indefinite or otherwise arbitrary is not acceptable and the length and conditions of detention, including the appropriateness of both the accommodation and the services provided, will be subject to regular review
  - detention in an immigration detention centre is only to be used as a last resort and for the shortest practicable time
  - people in detention will be treated fairly and reasonably within the law
  - conditions of detention will ensure the inherent dignity of the human person.
- 169 The management of immigration detention centres will remain with private sector management for the term of the current contracts. A government evaluation to determine the future form of detention facility and detention services management will be commenced no later than two years prior to the end of the term of the current contracts. The evaluation process must take into account the views of all stakeholders, including the relevant trade unions.
- 170 Recognising the inequities of the policy of charging immigration detainees a daily maintenance rate while in immigration detention, Labor has extinguished such detention debts and will oppose any attempts to reinstate this practice. Labor supports existing specialised and tailored government services for those most in need to connect new arrivals to Australian society and to ensure that there is a seamless transition to mainstream services provided for by other levels of government. Labor will review the financial and other assistance to people coming to Australia under the Special Humanitarian Program to better address instances of financial hardship.
- 171 Settlement support services include:
- orientation courses for humanitarian entrants prior to arrival in Australia
  - initial intensive settlement assistance for humanitarian entrants for up to 12 months after arrival
  - specialised case management services in circumstances where there are significant barriers to successful settlement
  - orientation and referral services to build self-reliance in individuals and families and foster community participation and development
  - access to the Translating and Interpreting Service.
- 172 English language tuition is an essential settlement service and critical to the achievement of full social and economic participation. Labor will continue to provide:
- tailored language programs within a settlement context combined with appropriate support through childcare and case management
  - opportunities for eligible migrants to continue to learn English while developing knowledge, skills and experience in the Australian workplace
  - language training framed to introduce new entrants to Australian workplace culture and practices delivered through a range of formal and informal settings.
- 173 Labor recognises the importance of access to culturally appropriate employment services in achieving full participation.

- 174 Labor policy will improve the availability and integration of Commonwealth-funded migrant and settlement services. Labor will ensure settlement service policies are:
- informed by advice from the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, the Settlement Council of Australia and other key stakeholders and the community
  - coordinated in partnership with state and territory governments, local councils, community organisations and service delivery providers.
- 175 Labor acknowledges the positive effect regional settlement can have on rural locations. Labor supports the settlement of suitable humanitarian entrants in regional locations with the support of state and local governments and local communities.
- 176 Labor is committed to ensuring that services across government are culturally responsive and universally accessible. Consistent with Labor's social inclusion agenda, government policies will be receptive to the needs, circumstances and backgrounds of all members of Australia's culturally diverse population.
- 177 Labor will develop a Pacific Climate Change Strategy, which will include:
- taking a leading role in working with the international community on planning for the impacts of climate change
  - a continuation of the proposed long-range climate change prediction project
  - assistance for mitigation, adaptation and emergency response efforts, such as protecting fresh water sources from salt water contamination and dealing with infrastructure decay caused by coastal erosion
  - assisting with intra-country relocations when citizens have to be moved from low-lying areas to higher ground
  - building resilience to climate change in the Pacific region
  - if in the longer term permanent migration becomes necessary for some Pacific Islanders, working in close consultation with the region to ensure that Pacific Islanders' key interests are recognised, noting that Pacific Island nations have expressed a clear desire for Pacific peoples to continue to live in their own countries where possible.

## Sport

- 178 Labor will continue to entrench sport and physical activity as a central part of the preventative health agenda and encourage a lifelong love of sport.
- 179 Labor believes that sport is a vital tool in facilitating outcomes in health and mental health, social inclusion, tourism, education, community capacity building, multicultural affairs, Indigenous affairs, regional development, trade, foreign affairs, and creating cultural identity.
- 180 Labor recognises that sport is an important platform for social inclusion in the settlement of young migrants and refugees, and can provide opportunities for engagement with their local community. Labor is committed to ensuring all levels of sport in Australia are inclusive of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians.
- 181 Labor will continue to support young Australians, including young people in regional areas, to participate in physical activity and to compete in recognised sporting competitions.
- 182 Labor is committed to supporting Indigenous sport and using participation in sport to contribute to the Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

- 183 In recognition of the need to further increase the profile of women's sport in Australia, Labor will continue to support the promotion of women's sport and efforts to increase its media coverage.
- 184 Labor is committed to greater leadership and mentoring opportunities for women in sport.
- 185 Labor is committed to supporting sport for people with disability and establishing pathways for athletes with a disability.
- 186 Labor values the role of the coach, officials and volunteers and believes they should be supported.
- 187 Labor will continue to work to maximise the water safety of Australians, especially children.
- 188 Labor is committed to keeping Australia at the forefront of Olympic, Paralympic and other international sport and maximising our success on the international stage by continuing to support our elite athletes and ensuring elite pathways.
- 189 Labor believes success on the international stage creates role models for young Australians and encourages participation in grassroots sport.
- 190 Labor is committed to strengthening Australia's sporting systems and will continue to ensure that the Australian Institute of Sport is a world-class facility for elite athletes.
- 191 Labor will ensure that Australia is at the forefront of anti-doping and fighting match fixing in sport and will provide leadership in anti-doping and the fight against match fixing on the international stage.
- 192 In partnership with sport, Labor will continue to tackle the issue of illicit drug use and binge drinking by athletes and in the wider community.

## Arts and culture

- 193 Labor recognises the important role played by Australia's cultural institutions and commits to supporting these institutions to collect, preserve and make available Australia's cultural heritage. Labor believes arts and culture contribute to building a more creative and productive nation. People of all ages and from all walks of life can participate in arts events and education and can express their creativity in an array of different cultural forms. Labor believes cultural policy is not just about supporting the arts, it is about strengthening communities and developing our creative culture so that we are ready to take on the challenges and opportunities of modern life. Labor also understands that arts and culture drive innovation across the nation and contribute to productivity. The Labor Government committed to a new National Culture Policy in the 2010 election Arts Policy document Investing in Creative Australia. This will be the first comprehensive cultural policy since the Keating Government's Creative Nation.
- 194 A new National Culture Policy will reflect the important role that arts and creativity play in the daily lives of all Australians, and it will help to integrate arts and culture policy within our broader social and economic goals. It will strengthen the links between creative culture and priorities to boost productivity, drive innovation and strengthen community cohesion.
- 195 The National Culture Policy will relate to core arts, creative industries and cultural heritage, in particular Australia's Indigenous cultural heritage. The National Cultural Policy will take into consideration a number of other important reviews and initiatives:
- the review of Private Sector Support for the Arts
  - the review of Major Performing Arts Sector

- a Creative Industries Strategy for 21st Century Australia
- the Convergence Review
- the review of the National Classification scheme
- the National Design Policy
- the National Arts Curriculum.

196 The National Culture Policy has four goals:

- to ensure that what the government supports — and how this support is provided — reflects the diversity of a 21st century Australia and protects and supports Indigenous culture
- to encourage the use of emerging technologies and new ideas that support the development of new artworks and the creative industries, and that enable more people to access and participate in arts and culture
- to support excellence and world-class endeavour and strengthen the role that the arts play in telling Australian stories both here and overseas
- to increase and strengthen the capacity of the arts to contribute to our society and economy.

197 In the context of the development of the National Culture Policy, Labor remains committed to:

- an active role for public arts and culture programs in schools, regional communities, Indigenous communities and throughout our cities and suburbs
- measures to maximise the participation of all Australians, especially in disadvantaged and marginalised communities, in Australia's cultural life
- supporting and funding the Australia Council as an independent and expert grant making body which works closely with arts organisations and individual artists
- ensuring that the Commonwealth maintains and develops the great national collecting institutions, and that they are able to tour their collections to ensure access by all Australians
- supporting and financing the film and television industry, encouraging increased private investment, training further talent and assisting market development through Australian local content requirements on free to air and pay television as well as diverse new technologies
- measures to ensure Australian stories continue to be created and told by Australian performers and crew in Australian film and television production
- the role of strong local markets in supporting the development of the Australian music sector. Labor will maintain and strengthen access to local markets and support for independent and emerging artists building overseas careers.

198 Labor supports the legal framework of copyright as 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 affirms that a successful copyright framework will support the education, arts, culture, and heritage of Australia through:

- the development and maintenance of a national identity in the Australian creative industries
- the development of new and emerging Australian creative talent
- the meeting of consumer expectations in speed to market
- certainty of supply and diversity of Australian-produced intellectual property
- the promotion of competitive, sustainable and innovative Australian creative industries
- the promotion of exports of Australian creative product to foreign territories.

## Assistance to families

- 199 Labor recognises the developmental, health, and social benefits of children participating in sport and other cultural activities. Labor recognises that the financial cost to families of their children participating in such activity can be an obstacle to participation. Accordingly, Labor will examine ways to assist families to maximise their children's participation in sport and other cultural activities.

## Animal welfare

- 200 Labor believes that all animals should be treated humanely and will work to achieve better animal welfare through harmonisation of relevant federal, state and territory laws and codes to ensure consistent application and enforcement of animal protection statutes. Labor will establish at a federal level an independent Office of Animal Welfare to monitor, investigate and be able to make recommendations to government regarding matters impacting on animal welfare across all areas of animal use.