VICTORIAN BRANCH
AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
PLATFORM 2018

Victorian
Labor

The Victorian ALP recognises
the Traditional Owners of the land.

We respect Aboriginal people,
their Elders past and present and
their ongoing connection to the land.

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MESSAGE FROM **THE CHAIR OF THE PLATFORM COMMITTEE**

The 2018 Platform builds on four strong years of Labor government here in Victoria.

The development of this document necessitated an examination of our achievements since 2014, and it revealed how comprehensively the Andrews Government had delivered on the vision outlined in the 2014 Platform.

This then allowed us to grow this vision further, to build on it, and to embrace new ideas as well. This is exactly what the 2018 Platform does.

It continues and grows our vision for a world-leading health and education system, underpinned by principles of equity and inclusion.

It maps a path for a public transport system that can meet the demands of a growing population , and services Victorians in the city, suburbs and the country.

Every chapter of this platform incorporates ideas for jobs growth, and the creation of better, safer and fairer working environments.

We have outlined a fresh vision across a range of important policy areas, including the environment, justice and manufacturing.

We have sought to meaningfully address the challenges confronted by the most vulnerable in our community, because that's what Labor is all about.

We couldn't have developed this vision without the policy committees, unions, MPs and rank and file Party Members who contributed passionately and diligently.

I owe a special thanks to all members of the Platform Committee and the Agenda Committee, in particular Marg Lewis.

The 2018 Platform is one we can proudly carry into the next election, confident that it represents the values that define our Party and a vision that serves all Victorians.

Gabrielle Williams MP State Member for Dandenong
Chair ▪ 2018 Platform Committee

MESSAGE FROM **THE PREMIER**

Our Labor Party encompasses many people, and many ideas, but we are bound by our belief in a fairer Australia, and our everlasting roots as the voice of working people.

We believe in secure jobs, safe workplaces, and fair wages and that the collective voice of workers is fundamental to achieving those goals.

We're delivering the best public education because every child deserves the best start in life, regardless of their circumstances.

We're investing in our hospitals and health workforce, because every Victorian should have quality and free healthcare, wherever they live.

We're building reliable and affordable public transport, and good quality roads - to keep people connected, to work, to family and to each other.

We believe a healthy environment and a clean energy future is critical for a strong economy.

We will always respect Aboriginal Victorians, while working towards self-determination.

We know that Victoria is stronger for our diversity, and that in our state equality is not negotiable. We believe – fundamentally – in fairness. From good jobs to schools, health to transport, Victorian Labor's 2018 Platform lays out this fairness agenda. As a document, it encapsulates the aspirations and values that bind us together.

I'd like to congratulate the Platform Chair, Secretary and Committee, and every rank and file member who contributed to its content. Together, we've created a positive plan for our future.

We're building a better, stronger, fairer state and delivering for all Victorians.

Daniel Andrews Premier of Victoria

MESSAGE FROM **THE STATE SECRETARY**

Our movement is united in the desire for a fairer society. It's what drives everything we do in government, and in seeking government.

In this document, the 2018 Platform, we are stating our values and our hopes for the future.

This document builds on everything the Andrews Labor Government has achieved since 2014, and represents a continuation of the vision of every Labor Government in Victoria.

It is the result of thousands of hours of passionate discussion and debate by Labor people from all walks of life.

I want to thank the Platform Committee, especially Marg Lewis and the Platform Chair, Gabrielle Williams, as well as the members of every policy committee for their contribution to this process. This is a clear statement of our intent as we head into the 2018 election.

Labor supporters all over the state are already telling their friends, family and community how an Andrews Labor Government will continue to deliver for all Victorians.

Please use this document to tell everyone you know exactly how we'll do it.

Samuel Rae Victorian State Secretary

OUR VALUES

We believe in secure jobs, safe workplaces, and fair wages.

We believe the collective voice of workers is fundamental to achieving those goals.

We believe in paying respect to the First Victorians, Aboriginal People and reaffirm our commitment to Aboriginal self-determination.

We believe in the power of a good public education system.

We believe that every child deserves the best start in life, regardless of their circumstances.

We believe that every Victorian should have quality and free healthcare, wherever they live.

We believe in reliable and affordable public transport to keep people connected, to work, to family and to each other.

We believe in securing a strong environment.

We believe in securing a strong economy.

We believe that we are stronger for our diversity.

We believe that equality is not negotiable.

We believe in fairness.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Throughout this document, some commonly used acronyms are expanded below:
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex - **LGBTI**
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse - **CALD**
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - **Aboriginal Victorian**

In addition, a key Labor value is Victoria's rich and diverse community.
When we refer to Victorians, this includes but is not limited to those who are young, older, women, men, LGBTI, have a disability, come from a disadvantaged or low socio-economic background, are Aboriginal Victorians and CALD, live in cities, towns and rural areas.

JOBS

PREAMBLE

Labor believes all Victorians and their families deserve access to secure and permanent employment.

A secure, meaningful job gives you a stake in society, fosters social inclusion and is the key to prosperity.

Employment strengthens our economy and binds our communities, which is why job creation is at the centre of Labor policy.

The Andrews Labor Government has created more than 330,000 jobs since coming to office, including more than 190,000 full-time jobs.

We have seen a tenfold rise in the number of regional jobs created relative to the number created under the Liberal and National Government.

Under Labor, Victoria's economy is thriving with the fastest economic growth of any state.

These figures are something we can all be proud of but Labor knows creating jobs and growing our economy is about more than facts and figures – it's about giving Victorians the dignity of work and the chance at a better life.

Labor is building a state where all Victorians can get a great education and a good job, whether it is in the city on in the country – we are now a state where companies want to invest and where companies are looking to establish.

A state where every Victorian can take pride in the things we make and the things we do, where we are proud to stand up for local product, local people and local jobs.

OUR VALUES

All Victorians deserve the opportunity to have meaningful and rewarding employment that is safe, secure and free from discrimination.

We believe in a model of industrial relations where employers, unions and workers collaborate to create more satisfying workplaces, which are flexible, inclusive, productive and have genuine equality.

Labor believes Government must take an active role in driving economic growth, jobs and prosperity through investment in large-scale infrastructure projects, utilising government social procurement processes, supporting small business and a strong public service.

In a time of transition, governments must act to ensure the changing structure of our economy does not lead to some workers and families being left behind.

Victorian Labor will lead the way in tackling inequality, and creating quality, local secure jobs.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

1.1 YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

Labor believes in the value and dignity of work. Victoria has become the great place it is today through the efforts of hard-working Victorians, working in both the public and private sectors.

Labor recognises the strong role unions have played over more than 100 years in standing up for the rights of working Victorians, and values meaningful discussions between the industrial and political wings of the Labor movement.

Labor recognises the right of unions to bargain collectively, and will fight any attempt by the Liberal Party to resurrect harsh and dictatorial individual employment contracts. Labor believes that co-operative work practices deliver innovative, high performing workplaces, with better productivity.

1.1.1 TACKLING INEQUALITY AND EXPLOITATION

Labor is committed to tackling inequality and exploitation, and protecting workers and unions under the Fair Work system. This includes providing practical support, information and resources to ensure that Victorian workplaces are operating fairly.

Labor will:

- create a statutory body to identify and highlight poor employment practices, provide advice to employees, take appropriate action to demand improvement and will criminalise wage theft;
- stand up for Victorian workers' penalty rates;
- play a leadership role in advocating for the strengthening of the Fair Work Act to stop the gaming of the system by corporations and the systemic wage theft that is rife across many industries; and
- lobby the Federal Government to restore balance in the industrial relations system and to protect penalty rates;

Labor is based on the principle of workers organising to overcome inequality and exploitation.

Labor will:

- oppose government initiatives and appointments that are actively hostile to workers or unions;
- encourage trade union membership across both the public sector and the broader economy; and
- consider legal and industrial relations records of law firms and other organisations and oppose engagement of those organisations found to have a history of anti-worker or anti-union activity.

Labor believes all workers, particularly of diverse backgrounds, must understand their employment rights.

Labor will:

- invest in education for employers across the Victorian economy to understand their obligations, and in education and legal resources for vulnerable Victorian workers on workplace rights, access to support and equality;
- ensure LGBTI staff are supported and enjoy an LGBTI-inclusive workplace in their employment;
- ensure government leads as a model employer providing LGBTI inclusive training for all public sector staff; and
- investigate the delivery of a compensation scheme for victims of Aboriginal stolen wages.

Labor intends to address emerging issues for workers.

Labor will:

- investigate providing public sector employees with blood donation leave and lead by example and investigate providing all employees with blood donation leave;
- prioritise the removal of asbestos during capital works projects at government facilities; and
- legislate under planning or other laws for free parking for employees during their shifts in shopping centres with car parking and request WorkSafe Victoria to develop standards for safety in shopping centre car parks for employees who work at shopping centres.

1.1.2 EMPLOYMENT

Victoria is the fastest growing state in the nation, moving rapidly towards a knowledge economy. However, there are members of our community that are not fully benefitting from this change. There are many jobseekers, including long-term unemployed, who are missing out on the dignity and satisfaction that comes from a secure and stable job.

Labor will:

- develop a robust and diverse program for supporting jobseekers at risk of being left behind;
- work with employers to create more opportunities for unemployed Victorians; and
- develop strategies for decreasing the high number of long-term unemployed and keeping that number low.

1.1.3 PROVIDING WORKER REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Labor understands that the perspective of workers is invaluable when boards are making decisions, particularly on matters of strategy, governance and risk management.

Labor will investigate a 'workers on boards' policy for Victorian Government boards.

1.1.4 EMPOWERING WOMEN WORKERS, YOUNG WORKERS AND VULNERABLE WORKERS

Labor supports the protection of Australia's most vulnerable workers – workers in precarious employment, workers with impairments or injuries, newly-arrived workers, workers on temporary visa arrangement or workers from a Non-English-Speaking Background.

Women workers face barriers that prevent their full participation in work and there is a lack of recognition for the important role women play in the community, whether they are in paid or unpaid work.

Labor will:

- support equal remuneration cases before the Fair Work Commission;
- require regular auditing and publishing of the gender pay gap and gender reporting across the public sector;
- develop gender equity criteria for contracts tendered through the Victorian Government procurement and purchasing system;
- support initiatives to overcome gendered violence in private sector workplaces, and encourage WorkSafe to raise awareness and compliance initiatives aimed at eliminating gendered violence in Victorian workplaces;
- place an emphasis on achieving gender equality at work, including through the Gender Equality Act; and
- consider best practice recruitment processes to support women's participation and advancement at work.

1.1.5 WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Victorian Labor recognises that changes in social, family and labour market structures mean that both partners of couple families are now likely to be employed, making balancing work, life and family a key industrial priority for workers.

Labor recognises the importance of enabling men and women to share caring responsibilities and the need to promote the increased participation of men in caring for dependents.

Labor believes that unions, employers and governments have a responsibility to support employees to balance their work and caring responsibilities.

The right to request a change to working arrangements to meet caring responsibilities still does not clearly set out an employer's obligations to properly consider and make reasonable efforts to accommodate a request, and does not provide employees with a right to appeal an employer's refusal of a request or extension of parental leave.

Labor will:

- lead by example as an employer by accommodating family friendly working arrangements across the public sector;
- investigate ways to increase the participation of men in caring responsibilities, both in the public sector and beyond;
- lobby the Federal Government to ensure employers are obligated to properly consider and make reasonable efforts to accommodate family friendly work arrangements, and all employees have a right to appeal an employer's refusal to accommodate;
- support Paid Parental Leave and continue to seek improvements to the Paid Parental Leave Scheme, including that it should ultimately be codified as a National Employment Standards entitlement of 26 weeks paid leave;
- enshrine in legislation Easter Sunday and Grand Final Friday as public holidays and Christmas Day when it falls on a Saturday or a Sunday as an additional public holiday;
- pilot a productivity program on shorter working hours; and
- retain all day shop closing on Good Friday and Christmas Day and until 1.00 pm ANZAC Day.

1.1.6 LONG SERVICE LEAVE AND PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE

The Andrews Labor Government recognises that long service leave provides many important benefits, including reduction in workforce turnover; encouragement and reward to employees for lengthy and loyal employment; and enabling employees a short 'career break' from which they can return refreshed and re- energised.

Unfortunately, these benefits of long service leave are not being realised. Only one in four Australian workers will be able to take long service leave. Portable long service leave is widely available within the public sector, with relevant clauses incorporated throughout various enterprise agreements. It is far less structured within the private sector and legislative amendment may be required to establish such schemes.

Labor will:

- enshrine in legislation that regular penalty rates and overtime are included in the payment of long service leave;
- review the definition of separate employer for franchised businesses or consider facilitating the accumulation and transfer of long service leave entitlements when a worker works between franchises;

- explore opportunities to expand portable long service leave schemes to additional industries including labour hire; and
- legislate portable long service leave for community service workers, security workers and contract cleaning workers.

1.1.7 ADDRESSING GENDER SUPERANNUATION INEQUALITY

On average, women retire with $90,000 less superannuation than men.

This is a national disgrace and institutionalised gender discrimination. While there are a range of factors that contribute to this disappointing statistic, most notably the gender pay gap, a further factor stems from employers not being required to pay superannuation to women whilst they are on paid parental leave.

It has long been the case that Labor governments act as model employers. Many industrial issues and advancements have risen out of the public sector. It's time to extend these benefits to all government employees.

Labor will:

- explore including superannuation payments for employees on paid maternity leave in new Victorian public sector EBAs;
- lobby the Federal Government to:
  - amend applicable legislation and regulations to mandate for paid maternity leave to be considered Ordinary Time Earnings, for the purposes of the Superannuation Guarantee;
  - pay Superannuation on the Federal government Paid Parental Leave Scheme;
  - pay superannuation on every dollar earned and eliminate the $450 minimum threshold for compulsory employee contributions;
  - increase the Superannuation Guarantee Contribution to 12%; and
- explore avenues for a 'superannuation boost' for low paid working women that would address lifetime super disadvantage.

1.1.8 FAMILY VIOLENCE LEAVE

The Andrews Labor Government has applied unprecedented attention and action to tackling the scourge of family violence through the establishment of a Royal Commission and other important initiatives.

The inclusion of family and domestic violence leave as an entitlement has ensured countless women who are experiencing and/or leaving domestic violence situations are supported, protected and able to maintain their employment and subsequent economic independence.

The Andrews Labor Government has rolled out a model Family Violence Leave clause for inclusion in all public-sector agreements which mandates 20 days paid family violence leave, as well as additional workplace supports and training, and supported the ACTU's case for family violence leave in all modern awards.

Despite all these efforts Labor still has more work to do to protect predominantly women and children from the impacts of family violence. There are too many employees who still don't have any support from their workplace.

Labor will support a paid leave entitlement of 10 days in the National Employment Standards so that all workers – predominantly women – who are faced with family violence situations can access paid leave.

1.1.9 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Labor believes that all Victorians are entitled to a safe workplace. It takes pride in the role successive Labor governments have played in establishing and resourcing the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Worksafe.

Long term investment by Worksafe in behavioural change campaigns has seen a reduction over time in workplace injury and death, however there remain some businesses which continue to show little regard for the safety of their workforce. Asbestos exposure and deaths on Victorian building sites are examples where the failure to provide a safe workplace by employers amounts to more than mere negligence and is akin to criminal behaviour.

Labor will:

- introduce Corporate and Industrial Manslaughter laws; and
- legislate tough penalties for those who contravene corporate and industrial manslaughter laws to reflect the community's expectation that companies place employee and public safety as their highest priority.

Labor believes that gendered violence at work, including sexual harassment, sexist discrimination and abuse, is a workplace health and safety issue and that institutions designed to keep workplaces accountable for the prevention of unsafe practices at work need greater training and support to ensure workplaces are preventing gendered violence on the job.

The rise of the "Me Too" movement has again put sexual harassment in the workplace in the global spotlight. It's clear that despite thirty years of sex discrimination and harassment legislation, existing laws are not keeping women safe or providing adequate recourse when they want to challenge sexual harassment in the workplace. Instead, a victim-blaming culture continues to pervade the prosecution and accountability of businesses for sexual harassment, violence and discrimination.

Labor will:

- ensure Worksafe is skilled to identify and act on gendered violence at work, including through the provision of respectful relationship education and other gender equality training;
- change the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Vic) to ensure that definitions of violence at work include gendered harassment and sexual violence;
- enact stronger penalties for sexual harassment and sex based violence in the workplace; and
- increase funding for education and investigations by the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner into sexual harassment cases.

Labor understands that WorkCover matters that cause harm to workers and their families, like delays in payment commencement, job insecurity, lengthy processes for disputes and insufficient compensation for impairments, compound the stressful experience of being injured at work.

Labor will:

- explore introducing provisional payments on claim lodgement to ensure workers receive an income while their claim is progressed;
- consider granting the Accident Compensation Conciliation Service arbitration powers, if conciliation does not resolve a dispute;
- consider extending employer obligation on return to work;
- consider increasing no fault lump sum dollar values for impairment;
- consider granting Authorised Representatives of the Registered Employee Organisations the power to issue Provisional Improvement Notices;
- fund an Injured Workers Support Network;

- ensure WorkSafe is skilled in ensuring work place safety for people of different backgrounds, including tackling things like workplace homophobia;
- legislate that employers are required to make up the difference between WorkCover and normal pay for the first 52 weeks of WorkCover payments; and
- consider the removal of limitations on claims of psychological injury.

1.2. LABOUR HIRE AND INSECURE WORK

The impact of insecure work on Victorian workers includes financial insecurity, difficulty planning and saving for the future, and stress.

This treatment extends to outright exploitation in certain sectors, such as the labour hire industry.

The Andrews Labor Government has shown real leadership in tackling the exploitation of labour hire workers by unscrupulous employers and companies though the *Victorian Inquiry into the Labour Hire Industry and Insecure Work - Final Report* that identified serious and widespread issues of exploitation and unethical labour practices within the labour hire industry in Victoria.

Victorian Labor notes the widespread exploitation of workers uncovered in the inquiry and the urgent need to regulate operators and stamp out unscrupulous conduct.

The Inquiry found rogue operators underpaying workers, not ensuring proper safety standards, abusing worker visas and undermining the minimum standards of employment.

Victorian Labor is committed to tackling insecure work and rising inequality.

Labor will:

- work with the Federal Government to increase the Fair Work Ombudsman's investigatory powers and to increase the penalties applicable under the Fair Work Act for award breaches and failure to maintain proper employment records;
- advocate for a national licensing scheme for labour hire operators;
- explore mechanisms to eliminate sham contracting in the state jurisdiction such as deeming certain workers as employees;
- fund workplace rights, safety and readiness programs for recently arrived migrant workers who are particularly vulnerable to unscrupulous labour hire practices;
- consider strengthening Victoria's occupational, health and safety laws to improve worker representation;
- increase OHS requirements and regulation of accommodation standards for labour hire workers;
- amend the Equal Opportunity Act to ensure it applies to labour hire employees to prevent discrimination;
- facilitate increased supply chain transparency including focusing on the major retailers;
- ensure that labour hire does not undermine employment standards and rates of pay; and
- reintroduce the Labour Hire Licensing Bill to protect workers.

1.2.1 ADVOCATING TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

A Labor state government will pursue initiatives with the Federal Government:

Labor will advocate to:

- strengthen the laws prohibiting sham contracting at the federal level, as well as ensuring that remedies to sham contracting are affordable and accessible to workers and their unions;
- provide for more resources to the ATO to stamp out phoenix activity;
- strengthen protections for casual and temporary workers in the National Employment Standards;
- oppose and reverse legislation which impedes the approval of employment agreements negotiated by unions and employees, or constrain the terms of those agreements on the basis that the relevant workplaces or industries contain volunteers;
- ensure certain visa workers can access the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Scheme;
- make it easier to pursue underpayments against Directors personally and stop the registration of directors who exploited works in the past;
- make 'phoenixing' unlawful under the Corporations Act; and
- grant casual conversion rights under national legislation.

1.2.2 THE SECURITY INDUSTRY

Victorian Labor understands that a more robust licensing system would support a reputable and professional security industry.

Labor will conduct a review of the licensing of individuals and companies and employment practices in the security industry.

1.3 INFRASTRUCTURE

Investing in major infrastructure projects creates jobs and make our state a better place to live.

Labor understands it is important for the economy to keep the investment pipeline full.

Labor will:

- pressure the Federal Government to stop short-changing Victorians - despite Victoria making up more than 25 per cent of the national population, it receives just 10 per cent of national infrastructure funding;
- invest in the infrastructure Victoria needs and improve the quality of the spend by taking short-term politics out of infrastructure planning and keeping a pipeline of major projects full to grow Victoria's economy and create jobs;
- use purchasing power to drive secure jobs; and
- work creatively with the industry superannuation funds to explore the possibilities for workers capital to be used to build community assets of value to all Victorians into the future.

1.3.1 INDEPENDENT INFRASTRUCTURE ADVICE

Labor created the independent Infrastructure Victoria to take short term politics out of infrastructure planning and give Victorians confidence the right projects will be built to help grow our economy, create jobs and improve our quality of life.

Labor will prioritise independently identified key infrastructure projects including:

- The Melbourne Metro tunnel
- North East link
- The West Gate tunnel
- Level crossing removal
- An airport-rail link
- Rural and regional transport

Labor has responded to the Infrastructure Victoria 30-year strategy with a 5-year plan, and will continue to update it every year.

Labor will:

- audit the procurement capacity of Victorian Government departments to ensure workforce planning is appropriately undertaken through the provision of mentoring programs, apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships across all government departments;
- work with independent infrastructure experts in developing a long-term, evidence based plan for prioritising and sequencing Victoria's major infrastructure projects; and
- support the infrastructure needs of communities in growth areas.

1.3.2 CREATING A COMPETITIVE VICTORIA AND REDUCING BUSINESS COSTS

Labor supports cutting red tape and making our public and private sectors more efficient, while protecting the integrity of the system.

We believe in improving the rules that govern business in our state, by listening to workers, business and regulators themselves.

Labor will:

- work to reduce regulatory approval times across jurisdictions and make it easier to comply with regulatory measures to help Victorian businesses;
- examine opportunities to lessen the load on small and medium business by reducing red-tape and levies; and
- only support an occupational health and safety harmonisation process that meets Victorian standards at a minimum.

1.3.3 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND EXPANDING OUR EXPORTS

In a global economy, Labor must ensure Victoria remains an attractive place to invest and that Victorian businesses are able to succeed internationally.

Labor values our deepened engagement with China, India and other regional economies and understands the importance of having a physical representative presence in the major cities of our trading partners.

Labor will:

- pursue interstate and international opportunities to drive new jobs and investment in Victoria, advocate for inclusive trade opportunities throughout Victoria and greater access to overseas markets and free trade agreements;
- showcase Victoria through inbound and outbound missions;
- support programs that drive greater connectivity with overseas markets;
- build this relationship by Labor representatives visiting China and India;
- expand the Victorian Government Trade and Investment (VGTI) network, with emphasis on major emerging economies; and
- create opportunities to invest through Brand Victoria.

1.3.4 THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

An effective digital economy will enhance ordinary Victorians' lives by driving productivity, creating jobs, encouraging inclusive growth and supporting new business opportunities. Labor has positioned Victoria as a key technology hub, making sure we have access to a global audience to collaborate and do business with.

Labor will:

- continue to digitise services to improve accessibility for all Victorians, and lobby the Federal Government for additional digital connectivity;
- ensure state government services can maximise use of the National Broadband Network (NBN) to improve accessibility for Victorians and look at ways that high-speed broadband can lower the long-term cost of service delivery;
- support projects that use high-speed broadband to improve service delivery and lifestyles in regional Victoria by government departments and agencies and, where appropriate, in partnership with the private sector;
- drive technology infrastructure availability by looking to leverage state technology infrastructure assets including collaboration with service providers and industry;
- take into account the need to train older workers to adapt to new technology;
- ensure the digital economy grows in a manner that provides fair employment benefits; and
- support small to medium businesses' transition to a digital economy.

1.4 PROCUREMENT, INVESTMENT AND VALUE FOR MONEY - LOCAL SPENDING MEANS LOCAL JOBS

The government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the state. The government also invests in the private sector. Governments should use this purchasing power to generate better jobs and conditions for all Victorians and ensure Labor Governments are best practice employers.

Labor will:

- set requirements for best practice employment standards and secure jobs, including compliance with all applicable collective agreements, all public sector industrial agreements with Occupational Health and Safety Act, Equal Opportunity Act, Workers Compensation, Superannuation and other relevant workplace legislation;
- require that contracting and tendering processes demand compliance by the prospective contractor with accepted industry benchmarks for workers terms and conditions;
- procure services from panels of contractors who demonstrate their compliance with accepted industry benchmarks;
- ensure contractors and tendering processes includes a 'no disadvantage' test for employee pay and entitlements prior to awarding contracts in low-paid labour intensive industries;
- set requirements on the use of labour hire;
- establish a single centralised office for the oversight of all contracts for goods and services;
- only award contracts for government service provision to companies that meet the highest ethical standards and preference those companies that provide job opportunities for local workers by ensuring the following matters where practical, are mandatory requirements to be considered by accountable officers pursuant to the Victorian Government Purchasing Policy:
    - a companies' occupational health and safety and secure employment record;
    - a companies' equal opportunity act record and gender pay gap reporting ;
    - evidence of workplace codes of conduct that value the diversity of workforces and do not tolerate any form of discrimination;
    - evidence of a local employment strategy;
    - commitment to preference the purchase of locally and ethically made goods and materials; and
    - preference the provision of local services;

- ensure that businesses that tender for contracts will be forbidden from utilising sham enterprise agreements and will apply collective agreements that reflect Victorian industry standards;
- continually monitor the performance of companies that have government contracts against benchmarks for ethical business practices;
- support capacity building for firms that focus on employing people with disadvantages; and
- support direct firm level subsidies, including subsidies to encourage firms to locate new operations within certain regions and/or to expand existing operations.

Labor understands that procurement practices have significant affects across industries.

Labor will:

- require businesses that tender for call centre contracts from Victorian Government entities to comply with, and demonstrate, their commitment to the Victorian Government Call Centre Code at the pre-qualification stage of tendering and throughout the life of the contract;
- place data security on the COAG Agenda;
- establish a Services and Financial Sectors Procurement Register of suppliers from which the Victorian Government will source its services and financial sector purchase;
- establish objective social, economic and environmental performance criteria which includes robust work health and safety benchmarks and high labour standards for tenders for the use of wood and fibre from public land, with responses to the criteria to assist in determining that wood and fibre is awarded and allocated to forest and forest products industry participants in a way which maximises the benefit to workers and communities;
- maximise the use of locally produced steel in local infrastructure projects and ensure that contracts awarded will reflect this;
- ensure that training is directly tailored to individuals transitioning from sectors experiencing declining employment to expanding sectors (e.g. helping auto workers transition to advanced manufacturing); and
- support direct training subsidies for TAFEs to individuals on a needs basis.

1.4.1 EVALUATION AND MONITORING

The Victorian Local Jobs First Commissioner was created in the Andrews Labor Government's first term to monitor and enforce existing procurement obligations and oversee compliance of local workforce and content targets.

Labor will:

- require the Victorian Local Jobs First Commissioner to work closely with industry and departments to open-up opportunities for small and medium firms on government projects;
- monitor the costs and benefits of different procurement strategies;
- ensure that firms contracting with government comply with all procurement obligations – including the 10% Skills Training Guarantee, the requirement to purchase 1% from Aboriginal owned businesses and other social procurement obligations, and compliance with the Fair Work Act;
- increase Aboriginal owned business procurement targets;
- establish new programs to support and enhance Aboriginal opportunities for employment, small business activity and new enterprise including facilitation via regional employment agreements;
- support freedom of association and unions tackling worker exploitation;
- ensure that the public sector, its agencies and Local Government do not engage labour hire or contractors to undercut wages and conditions; and
- enforce local content policy during the manufacturing stage.

1.4.2 SUPPORT FOR SUPPLIERS

Labor understands that procurement practices, whilst being in line with its broader objectives, need to be as streamlined and administratively straightforward as possible.

Labor will:

- make all interactions with government as low cost and co-operative as possible, centralising interactions where possible to avoid administrative duplication;
- continue to enhance the social procurement framework so that it strengthens the social enterprise sector, with an emphasis on creating jobs for disadvantaged Victorians;
- make it easier for suppliers to work with government, including ensuring that State Government as a procurer is as connected, accessible and efficient as possible;
- continue to explore innovative procurement techniques, such as electronic auctions, that have the potential for provide better outcomes for government both in terms of price and the quality of goods and services received;
- ensure the government pays small business suppliers in a timely manner;
- implement systems that require compliance with applicable occupational, health and safety standards and labour rights;
- consider whether there are other tax incentives or tax credits, such as payroll tax, that could apply for businesses that increase their permanent workforce; and
- work with companies contracting for government work to provide secure employment.

1.4.3 TEXTILES FROM LOCAL AND/OR ETHICAL SUPPLIERS

Labor believes that governments, as a purchaser of textiles, clothing and footwear, should care about where products are made and under what conditions. The industry can be improved by promoting ethical and sustainable standards, supporting local businesses and creating transparency in the supply chain to monitor the treatment of workers.

Labor will:

- direct government departments and agencies engaged in textile, clothing and footwear procurement to ensure suppliers are accredited by Ethical Clothing Australia and encourage other suppliers to become accredited with Ethical Clothing Australia;
- ensure that businesses who tender for contracts from Victorian Government entities are accredited, or in the process of seeking accreditation, with Ethical Clothing Australia;
- only award contracts to suppliers who are accredited, such contracts will provide that the successful supplier and their supply chains will be required to remain accredited and be transparent to ensure that ethical standards are monitored and met throughout the life of the contract;
- establish a Textile, Clothing and Footwear Ethical Procurement Register from which the Victorian Government will exclusively source its textile, clothing and footwear products;
- require the purchase of locally manufactured textiles clothing and footwear (where the required goods are manufactured locally, meet all requirements of bid specifications and there is a genuine market) by all Victorian Government departments and agencies and Victorian Local Government Authorities;
- require contractors on publically funded projects to purchase locally manufactured Textile Clothing and Footwear (where the required goods are manufactured locally, meet all requirements of bid specifications and there is a genuine market) from businesses which are accredited by Ethical Clothing Australia; and
- continue the important financial support provided to Ethical Clothing Australia.

1.4.4 PRIVATISATION

Labor believes that the privatisation of essential services has failed to deliver the cost savings to Victorian consumers that was promised by increased competition. Since the privatisation of water, gas and electricity, the cost of services to Victorian people, has grown exorbitantly, with monthly payments equivalent to many mortgage repayments. Coupled with rising housing prices, price gouging by private operators of essential services is leading to financial stress on Victorians.

Labor opposes the further privatisation of public assets pending a review into the impact of privatisation on workers and their families.

Labor will:

- work to undo the damages caused by privatisation;
- seek to return public services and assets to public hands to manage and control services based on the needs of Victorian workers; and
- where there is an opportunity for a government tender, support and fully resource a public bid to demonstrate the benefits of returning services to public ownership.

1.5 INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Victoria is now home to many more co-working spaces, start-up communities, accelerators and incubators. Labor supports many initiatives designed to ensure that innovation is strengthened through diversity and increased women's participation.

Labor will:

- build on this foundation to attract more capital investment in our Victorian start-ups, enabling them to scale up and create high skilled and well-paid jobs;
- support agencies to provide training, mentoring and facilitate micro-finance loans to foster women's micro-entrepreneurship; and
- ensure start-ups are supported to comply with industrial laws.

1.5.1 SECTORAL STRENGTH

Victoria has natural sectoral strengths and world leading capability in technology sectors like medtech, biotech, healthtech, sportstech and agtech. These sectors create jobs and continual innovation and investment in these sectors will ensure that we're able to remain at the cutting edge and deliver growth and more employment opportunities for Victorians.

Labor will:

- help innovators turn research and development into commercially valuable solutions that will drive the economy;
- build on our world class biotechnology and life sciences sector to take the industry to the next level and drive the commercialisation of research and turn them into successful job creating companies in Victoria;
- build on the work undertaken in our start up sector to fill identified gaps; and
- invest in advanced technology capacity in fields such as cybersecurity capacity, both in terms of skills and industry building and for the security of key infrastructure assets.

1.6 REGIONAL AND RURAL VICTORIA

Labor believes that no matter where you live you deserve to have access to good quality jobs in strong and thriving communities.

A strong economy means a strong community. Industry not only provides jobs; it ensures small towns and regional cities across Victoria have a sustainable future.

We understand that the needs of regional Victoria are as diverse as the communities and industries it supports. Only Labor delivers the regional development opportunities to keep country Victoria growing.

Labor will:

- continue to target funding to projects that create new secure jobs and grow local economies in the regions making them even better places to live;
- ensure access to efficient and reliable public transport between regional cities and Melbourne and improve connectivity for other regional centres and towns;
- improve access to services, education and training via TAFE and employment opportunities;
- work with the Federal Government to improve digital connectivity for rural and regional people, including dedicating a portion of the total investment to removing black spots in areas of genuine need and existing and emerging tourism destinations; and
- deliver new public service roles in regional Victoria, including creating jobs hubs.

1.7 INDUSTRY AND MANUFACTURING

Victoria is the home of Australian manufacturing. Manufacturing is worth nearly $28 billion to Victoria's economy, with 13,000 manufacturing firms and employing over 286,000 people – our third largest employer with 80% of the jobs being full time.

Manufacturing matters to Victoria. It is a catalyst for innovation and research, creates full time, high wage jobs and connects us to the opportunities around the world. It is also diversifying, with manufacturers taking advantage of the opportunities presented in industries such as biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, defence and aerospace, transport, food and construction.

The Andrews Labor Government has supported Victorian manufacturers to grow, invest and create jobs through grant programs. Through the Labor Government's direct support of over $120 million in manufacturing we are creating more than 6,000 jobs which will generate at least $1.6 billion in private sector investment.

The Andrews Labor Government has also supported Victorian industry through Local Jobs First: Victoria's Industry Participation Policy. This has ensured that when the government spends money building the infrastructure and assets our community needs, such as the High Capacity Metro Trains, level crossing removals, road and rail upgrades, schools and hospitals, we create local jobs and opportunities for Victorian businesses, suppliers and workers.

Labor will:

- strengthen links between industry and research, design and engineering capabilities;
- facilitate improved access to risk capital for scale-up and start-up advanced manufacturing businesses;
- help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) boost their business capabilities to capture more market, domestic and global supply chain opportunities and exports;
- work with industry to facilitate the development of industry clusters;
- assist industry to manage the exposure to volatility in energy markets; and
- work with the Federal Government to enhance the benefit of its expenditure for Victorian manufacturers, and advocate for competitive national tax and regulatory settings.

1.8 SOCIAL AND CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISES

1.8.1 CO-OPERATIVES

Co-operatives offer a business model that is highly inclusive and an alternative basis for raising capital and risk.

The experiences of workers and their unions indicate that while they could have developed sustainable co-operative enterprises, they lacked a system of support required to become established.

Labor will:

- explore how we might develop policy settings in Victoria where co-operative social enterprises can thrive;
- consider how government can further support the establishment of co-operatives;
- facilitate and explore opportunities for workers and their representatives to establish co-operatives following the announcement of factory closures; and
- explore how the government might assist in the development of completely new co-operative enterprises.

1.8.2 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Victoria is now home to Australia's largest collection of social enterprises, with more than 5,000 operating state-wide, employing more than 75,000 Victorians.

In our first term, Labor required that construction firms working on level crossings removal projects develop and commit to social procurement strategies.

Labor will:

- recognise the invaluable source of security of income a government contract can provide to a social enterprise;
- monitor the progress of arrangements to accurately assess the overall impact of the government's procurement strategies and to share best practice across government agencies;
- work with the social enterprise sector to improve impact and innovation and help build the business skills and capacity of social enterprises; and
- work to improve market access for the sector.

POLICY IN ACTION

HIGH CAPACITY METRO TRAINS

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering the High Capacity Metro Train fleet – the first new train design in more than 10 years for Victoria. The 65 new trains are being built in Victoria, for Victoria, with 60 per cent local content.

Thanks to the Victorian Industry Participation Policy, these trains are made with more local content than any other project of this kind in Australia, with bogie frames being built in Bendigo, traction and electrical systems made in Morwell and key electrical components and pantographs from Hallam.

The project will create opportunities for a range of Victorians with at least 15 per cent of hours to be worked by apprentices, trainees or cadets thanks to the Major Projects Skills Guarantee.

JOBS VICTORIA

The Andrews Labor Government has helped more than 6,000 Victorian jobseekers find work through the landmark Jobs Victoria program.

Jobs Victoria provides tailored services to support and connect jobseekers with varying needs and employers. It helps jobseekers get job-ready through mentoring, training and development, and works with employers to identify exactly the types of skills and experience they are looking for.

SOCIAL PROCUREMENT ENTERPRISE

Victoria is home to Australia's largest collection of social enterprises, with more than 5,000 operating state-wide, employing more than 75,000 Victorians.

A highly effective procurement intervention by the government in its first term arose from the requirement that construction firms working on level crossings removal projects develop and commit to social procurement strategies.

Yarra View Nursery in Mount Evelyn – a wholesale supplier of tens of thousands of plants for the re-vegetation of the Bayswater Level Crossing Removal Project is a prime example of what can be achieved through procuring from social enterprises.

This social enterprise employs around 150 staff - with a high proportion of those staff members living with a disability - providing paid employment at award rates and training opportunities that result in many of its employees transitioning to other firms.

Securing the contract to provide seedlings to vegetate the completed Bayswater grade separation project provided $150,000 in income for the social enterprise. It also provided a highly secure source of income that was invaluable given that much of the firm's income was subject to the overall variability of the broader retail market (it also supplies major hardware store chains).

LOCALLY PROCURED STEEL

Labor's existing commitment to mandating the use of local steel for the West Gate Tunnel project as well as the 50 Rail Grade Separation projects has seen the creation of many jobs in the steel and associated industries. This is also helping deliver on the commitment to maximising local employment and local content in State Government infrastructure projects.

EDUCATION

PREAMBLE

Education is the foundation for social justice, social cohesion and economic prosperity. It is a key Labor priority and is the basis of The Education State Agenda.

Underpinning our Education State initiatives and investments is the simple fact that a high-quality education can transform a person's life and is key to breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

From early childhood education, through schools and into skills and higher education pathways, we are creating a culture of lifelong learning and an inclusive system of access and excellence that supports the individual learning needs of Victorians at every age and every stage.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested in the critical early years, in kindergarten and maternal and childhood health services, and we have set ambitious targets for our government school system.

Labor has saved our Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system by creating Skills First, a strong, stable, high quality education and training and TAFE system that gives all Victorians the opportunity to develop the skills they need for jobs they want.

The Andrews Labor Government is building new kindergartens and schools and upgrading existing ones around the state to make sure every Victorian child has access to great quality, modern facilities in their local community.

Labor knows that education is the foundation for a better life and a fairer society - Labor is strengthening this foundation and giving our kids the tools they need to thrive.

OUR VALUES

All Victorians have the right to high quality and affordable education and training throughout their life.

Labor believes in supporting families from birth with integrated health and education services and making sure all children can grow up accessing education and training that is inclusive, diverse and supportive of those in need.

Early childhood education is critical to setting children on the right learning path, and Labor knows that a focus on expanding delivery is the right one.

Labor will always make sure Victorians have access to universal, publicly funded, high quality education at modern and well-resourced government schools that encourage community participation and are staffed with a skilled and valued workforce with fair working conditions.

Labor also recognises the important role independent and Catholic preschools and schools have in our education system.

Labor believes in a strong and effective public TAFE system that is responsive to the needs of Victorian industry, employers, students and staff.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

2.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

2.1.1 SUPPORTING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH

Labor is committed to giving Victorian children the best start for learning through the provision of universal, comprehensive and balanced programs that motivate and engage children in play and learning.

Labor will:

- support parents to start new community playgroup with the resources they need, such as books, toys and play equipment and ensure eligible parents can access supported playgroups;
- introduce and progressively roll out School Readiness Funding in the early childhood education system based on children's level of need;
- maintain and ensure the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework reflects the latest research, practice and policy and guides the work of early childhood professionals including maternal and child health nurses, educators, primary school teachers, playgroup facilitators, cultural organisations and specialist support staff;
- make sure all early childhood facilities and services are inclusive, in policy and in practice;
- recognise the importance of parents as first teachers and the home learning environment; and
- work to strengthen the capacity of parents to nurture their child's wellbeing and development.

2.1.2 KINDERGARTEN

Children learn and play most successfully in pre-schools and early childhood settings that are well-led, well-funded, effective and inclusive learning communities where the participation of parents, teachers and the local community is encouraged.

Labor will:

- prepare kindergarten children for school, meeting their diverse needs;
- ensure the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework reflects the latest research to guide the work of early childhood professionals;
- support kindergartens to deliver high-quality early years education by improving service quality;
- maintain at least 1:11 staff to student ratio;
- investigate options to expand kindergarten provision; and
- lobby the Federal Government to commit to ongoing permanent and adequate funding for four-year-old kindergarten, providing support for a quality workforce and other important reforms to early childhood learning.

2.1.3 FACILITIES

Children learn and play best in facilities that are inclusive and flexible. Early childhood facilities need to meet the needs of all users and provide a safe and productive environment for children, staff, parents and the broader community.

Labor will:

- build new Integrated Children and Families Centres offering a range of community services, with a priority for co-location on a government school site; and
- build, expand and improve kindergartens and children's centres across Victoria to ensure that all families have access to the best quality facilities, including for children of all abilities, with a priority for colocation on a government school site.

2.1.4 ADDRESSING DISADVANTAGE

All children need to learn in a positive and supportive environment where barriers to access for children - whether that is disability, indigeneity, low socioeconomic or culturally linguistically diverse background- are identified and removed.

Labor will:

- deliver high quality early year services that are accessible and affordable for all families;
- boost Aboriginal Victorian participation in vital early childhood learning services through initiatives such as the Koorie Kids Shine program;
- boost kindergarten participation of children from culturally diverse backgrounds;
- provide additional support to children with a disability, high support needs or complex medical needs through the Kindergarten Inclusion Support program;
- assist Aboriginal people to establish playgroups and parent support groups;
- lobby the Federal Government to commit to ongoing permanent and adequate funding to provide support for a quality workforce and other important reforms to early childhood learning for three year old kindergarten for families, communities and groups experiencing disadvantage; and
- uphold child safe standards to make sure organisations working with children create a culture of child safety and protect children from all forms of abuse, including continuing mandatory reporting.

2.1.5 EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS

Children need to be taught and cared for by highly qualified and motivated teachers and educators who can meet the learning needs of every child, and are remunerated appropriately.

Labor will:

- ensure our early childhood education and care sector is world class and attract and retain the best early educators;
- support measures to value their work and call on the Federal Government to close the gender pay gap;
- build a strong, professional and high-quality workforce through initiatives like scholarships; and
- support culturally competent professional development for early childhood teachers and educators to boost their skills, to better support children who have experienced trauma and family violence and to identify children at risk of abuse.

2.1.6 TRANSITIONS

Better transitions between care, early education and school settings and services are essential for the learning and well-being of children and families.

Labor will:

- consider expanding the Early Ability Based Learning Educational Support (ABLES) learning assessment tool for children with special needs; and
- support teachers in kindergartens and schools to work together on transition between settings.

2.2 SCHOOLS

Every Victorian child should have the opportunities a high-quality education provides, regardless of their background or where they live.

Labor will help students to:

- understand themselves as active learners who can think, solve problems and make positive life choices;
- develop confidence, initiative, adaptability, self-discipline, responsibility, respect, kindness, honesty, tolerance, resilience and cooperation;
- develop their intellect, their imagination and their talents as they strive for excellence;
- become active, well balanced, knowledgeable citizens, able to participate fully in a democratic society; and
- be empowered with the knowledge and equipped with the skills to succeed in the modern workforce.

2.2.1 INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Labor wants all students to be able to reach their full potential regardless of their family's economic standing or where they live, their Victorian Aboriginal heritage, ethnicity, religion, language, ability, gender, sexuality or gender identity.

Labor will deliver education programs and resources that focus on disadvantaged students, and work towards a more equitable pattern of student enrolment of local kids going to local schools, real retention and educational achievement in Victorian Schools.

2.2.2 EQUALITY

For a true universal education system, our schools need to provide a great education to all Victorian students regardless of where they live, by teaching students to be respectful, tolerant and compassionate and to accept and celebrate diversity.

Labor will:

- make sure all school programs reflect the diverse nature of the Victorian community and encourage tolerance and appreciation of others;
- make sure schools offer a broad curriculum to attract all local students and cater for individual student need;
- strive to provide world class facilities for all Victorian schools, no matter their size or location; and
- support schools to demonstrate respect for others and to embrace and accept differences.

2.2.3 CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Labor understands the need to provide a safe and positive learning environment for students.

Labor will:

- make sure all schools have firm and fair discipline procedures that recognise the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community;
- make sure students can focus on learning in the classroom by engaging students and providing schools with resources, programs and support to assist schools and students to constructively resolve behavioural problems;
- reduce and eliminate restraint and seclusion in Victorian schools;
- work to prevent bullying (including cyber bullying) while promoting and supporting respectful relationships;

- ensure child-safe schools that prevent child abuse and neglect;
- promote student voice and agency in school decision-making and leadership;
- support leadership programs for young people to become advocates for fairness, diversity, and acceptance in their school and local communities; and
- engage students particularly in the middle years of high school, to grow into enthusiastic and self-directed learners for the senior years of secondary school.

2.2.4 ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Labor recognises the need to improve education equity for Aboriginal students, and that the pathway to reconciliation starts in our schools. Involving Victorian Aboriginal Elders can provide role models and foster a culture of academic success, while introducing an Aboriginal language recovery approach in schools supports the reconciliation process.

Labor will:

- support self-determination for Aboriginal Victorian students, staff and their families;
- support Aboriginal communities to take a leadership role in the implementation of Marrung, Victoria's new Aboriginal Education Plan, that seeks to ensure that our education system is inclusive, responsive and respectful of Aboriginal people at every stage of their education;
- support Aboriginal Victorian Elders and community members to become involved in the education process;
- commit to the reclamation, revival and maintenance of Victorian Aboriginal languages;
- develop curriculum and teaching materials that include positive Aboriginal Victorian role models, promote Aboriginal Victorian history and culture as an ongoing part of our national identity and reflect Aboriginal Victorian world-views, including the impacts of colonisation and racism; and
- encourage and support Aboriginal Victorian people to become teachers and early childhood educators across the sector.

2.2.5 RURAL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS

Students and their families shouldn't be disadvantaged by living in remote areas with small populations. We recognise that families want quality educational services in their own community.

Labor will:

- support remote, rural and regional school networks utilising IT and shared resources;
- promote enrolment and retention strategies in remote, rural and regional areas;
- develop community hubs around school facilities in small rural communities;
- recognise the role of small schools as a community hub, not just for young families but for the broader community; and
- work to ensure specialist services to support schools and students are available and accessible.

2.2.6 CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE FAMILIES

Labor knows that refugee children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds need extra support to enable them to reach their full potential.

Labor will:

- target extra support for students who have English as a second language;
- support refugee and asylum seeker children by helping with uniforms, books, camps and other school expenses; and
- make sure school staff are trained to support children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

2.2.7 STUDENTS AT RISK OF DISENGAGING

Some students are at risk of disengaging from education for a range of reasons including illness, family breakdown or detention in youth justice settings.

We know that young people in difficult situations need a range of specialist services to keep them engaged in education so that they have better opportunities in life.

Labor will:

- offer Flexible Learning Options to students in danger of disengaging from education;
- ensure individual learning plans or pathways are developed in conjunction with the student, their parents and appropriate specialist consultants;
- provide mentoring and pregnancy support programs to enable pregnant young women to continue to participate in education;
- provide support for students who live in out-of-home settings;
- ensure that students in youth justice settings have access to education programs in conjunction with vocational education and training, psychological support and medical and allied health professionals;
- develop a whole-of-government strategy to reduce contact with the youth justice system by young people from specific, over-represented backgrounds, including Aboriginal Victorian young people.
- develop culturally appropriate support programs to support Aboriginal young people at risk of disengaging;
- support interventions targeted at preventing leaving school early;
- support strategies aimed at re-engaging children and young people who have disconnected from school; and
- increase transparency on the number of young people disengaging from or leaving school prematurely and strengthening accountability for follow up action.

2.2.8 SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Labor will ensure students with disabilities and additional needs are given every chance to fulfil their potential either in mainstream or specialist schools by continuing investment in inclusive programs, professional training and infrastructure.

Labor will:

- provide on-going professional development for teaching and support staff in mainstream and specialist schools;
- consult with parents and schools to ensure flexible guidelines to assess access to disability funding and support;

- investigate an integrated sporting curriculum to ensure full engagement of students with disabilities;
- take next steps in funding reform to reflect assistance being provided based on functional need, not diagnosis; and
- support children in carer households.

2.3 ACHIEVING GREAT OUTCOMES

Our system should cater for all learners, whether they need additional support or extension. Labor values excellence in educational outcomes and is striving to improve outcomes for all students, including gifted students.

Labor will provide opportunities for students aspiring to excellence in any field to flourish.

2.3.1 HOW WE LEARN

A comprehensive and balanced curriculum with high standards of academic excellence and practical achievement is essential to motivate and engage students, create opportunity and a prosperous cohesive society.

Schools must provide the right conditions to enhance student intellect and reason, analysis and inquiry, understanding, integrity, character, resilience, independence, empathy, social interaction, spontaneity and imagination, aptitude and respect.

Labor will:

- make sure all Victorian students and their families have access to a broad and robust curriculum that provides every child with the skills and knowledge they need to pursue opportunities, further training and study and careers of their choice;
- always draw on the knowledge and experience of experts in decision-making.

2.3.2 CONNECTING SCHOOLING TO JOBS

Students need to have access to a range of meaningful learning and training opportunities to prepare them for emerging career opportunities.

Labor will:

- ensure all students have access to Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), school-based apprenticeships and Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) programs and qualifications;
- develop programs to ensure students have access to real-life educational activities that develop team work, personal responsibility, self-esteem and community skills;
- provide access to high quality contemporary, careers and vocational education, advice and support and a pathways plan from school to employment, training or further education; and
- ensure that vocational training in schools provides valuable skills and leads to real jobs after school, or further training that is meaningful and will put students on track to a career.

2.3.3 FUNDAMENTALS AND INNOVATION

Labor supports the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in the development of world leading curriculum and assessment. We also support a focus on strong resources and support to deliver the fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy, the foundation for further education, training and a world of meaningful work.

Labor will:

- promote research into innovation in curriculum and pedagogy;
- ensure strong delivery of the basics of literacy and numeracy; and
- provide life skills as part of schooling, including themes like financial literacy and workplace rights.

2.3.4 LANGUAGES

Labor understands there are many benefits to learning an additional language, from the cognitive benefits, to the improvement of understanding of the first language learned, international capability skills, cross cultural and economic benefits.

Labor will:

- encourage early childhood centres and schools to deliver language education in a co-ordinated way and with other local schools, to ensure the ability of students to continue their language study from primary school into secondary school;
- promote the expansion of bilingual programs;
- introduce an Aboriginal language recovery approach in schools, and create an Aboriginal Languages Week; and
- expand trials of Aboriginal language playgroups and language schools for children in conjunction with Aboriginal Victorian Elders and VCAL.

2.3.5 TECHNOLOGY THAT SUPPORTS LEARNING

Our schools need to provide students with the technical and personal skills to maximise the benefits of new technologies.

Labor will:

- ensure evolving technology is consistently updated and integrated into classrooms and learning supported by staff professional development; and
- encourage students to explore and experience the possibilities of technology through all aspects of life.

2.3.6 STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Labor understands the need to support students in their education by providing health and wellbeing programs.

Labor will:

- provide secular student welfare and school support services;
- address health issues that can impact on well-being, safety and education by providing medical access and care, including the provision of mental health professionals to support schools in times of crisis;
- assist students to develop healthy eating and exercise practices; and
- provide teaching resources and programs to develop healthy and respectful relationships, and ensure a safe respectful learning environment for LGBTI students.

2.3.7 SCHOOLS AS LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Our schools are stronger, more inclusive and deliver better educational outcomes when they are a valued part of the community with participation from students, parents, teachers and support staff.

Labor understands students have better opportunities and learning outcomes when school communities collaborate, build relationships in the community and share resources across communities.

Labor will:

- ensure ethical, transparent and accountable decision-making is at the core of the management of a school;
- ensure every school will preference the enrolment of local students in accordance with enrolment policy;
- foster collaborative practices between schools to reduce the academic and social divide between schools;
- encourage schools to be open, welcoming community assets for all members of the community, with links to local government, community clubs, associations and groups; and
- ensure students who are home-schooled have the same standards of education, learning opportunities and personal support as students in government schools.

2.3.8 FUNDING

Labor will make sure schools are funded so Victorian students have appropriate class sizes, experienced teachers, an equitable share of the most highly skilled teachers in the state, sufficient curriculum support materials and appropriate educational support staff.

Labor will:

- advocate for equitable school funding agreements focused on improving education opportunities and outcomes for all Victorian students;
- pursue a 'needs based' Federal funding agreement that provides Victoria with significant additional resources as part of ongoing Federal school funding negotiations, with Victoria contributing 75% and advocating that the Federal Government provide 25% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS);
- provide the funding required to ensure the State Government meets its obligation to provide compulsory, free and secular education through a comprehensive provision of primary and secondary schools across the state; and
- ensure the efficient, effective and equitable use of taxpayer funds in all schools.

2.3.9 GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Parent, teacher, student and local community participation in school governance is important for effective, representative school councils and transparent processes.

Labor will:

- make sure school councils are equipped to address the changing needs of their communities and support them to develop strategies that enable all to participate in the formation, implementation and review of school plans and priorities;
- ensure schools operate as democratic workplaces, including supporting student voice;
- provide systemic support for government school councils; and
- remove discrimination against Department of Education and Training employees, mainly teachers, which prevents them from becoming members of local school councils.

2.3.10 PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Labor understands the role of parents in their child's education and the need for free-flowing dialogue between parents and teachers.

Labor will:

- ensure parents receive regular comprehensive feedback on their child's progress;
- provide opportunities for parents to engage in dialogue about their child's progress;
- investigate the creation of family engagement officers to assist schools to connect with families;
- promote the role of parents as educators and assist them to work in partnership with schools to improve student learning;
- engage parents in student decision-making processes regarding career advice and pathway selection;
- ensure a framework that supports open, transparent and accountable decision-making by school councils; and
- recognise the diversity of family structures.

2.3.11 MODERN BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Students thrive when they can learn in modern and well-equipped schools. Labor will ensure Victorian schools have shaded, attractive grounds and play spaces and attractive, technologically advanced, inclusive and accessible, and environmentally efficient buildings that can be adapted for community use and changed purposes.

Labor will:

- acquire sufficient land for Victorian government schools to meet population growth in existing communities and in new communities;
- ensure environmental factors and energy consumption minimisation strategies inform the design and materials of new schools and upgrades;
- plan new school facilities near other community facilities to create community focused activity hubs;
- make sure all new schools are built to be inclusive for the needs of students of all abilities;
- continue our commitment to make students and staff safe and remove dangerous asbestos from government schools;
- ensure existing school buildings and facilities are maintained to a level that promotes pride of place and the healthy physical and mental well-being of students; and
- act in a timely manner to correct inadequate conditions when they arise in our schools.

2.3.12 WORKFORCE

Highly able, motivated, trained and appropriately paid professionals are essential to meet the learning needs of all Victorian students.

2.3.12.1 TEACHERS

Teachers need to be supported by a system that values secure employment practices and maintains pay and working conditions at a professional level.

Labor recognises the need to continually raise the professional standing of Victorian teachers by investing in mentoring, peer-support and on-going professional training for all educators.

Labor will:

- ensure students have teachers who are able, dedicated, ethical and enjoy the professional autonomy needed to achieve high standards in both academic and practical domains;
- improve the attraction, retention, aspiration and diversity of entrants to the profession;
- provide the best educational leadership by promoting, supporting and retaining leaders of the highest integrity, intelligence and commitment to the principal class;
- support schools to engage well qualified and expert support staff to assist in their administration and the health, well-being and education of students;
- support specialisation in professional development for teachers including teaching students with disabilities or gifted students as part of their routine professional development; and
- support teachers to focus on delivery of high quality teaching and learning via professional practice days and collaboration between schools.

2.3.12.2 PRINCIPALS

Labor understands that great schools are led by great principals. Good leaders in schools are a crucial element when it comes to achieving outcomes in the classroom.

Labor will:

- support principals focusing on educational leadership by removing the burden of red tape as far as possible in individual schools;
- ensure new principals are appropriately trained and supported when taking up their first leadership role; and
- provide relevant support to principals recognising the unique role they hold as both a frontline worker and a system and community leader.

2.3.12.3 EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF

Labor understands that educational support staff are a diverse workforce and they perform many crucial, valuable roles in schools across the state.

Labor will support secure jobs, career structure and qualifications for educational support staff.

2.3.13 DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE

Labor supports a departmental structure capable of providing legal, strategic, financial, specialist and curriculum advice to ensure students, parents, teachers and schools are supported by a system that promotes co-operation, collaboration, professionalism and is responsive to the education community.

Labor will:

- resource regional offices so they can support school principals to provide strong and effective educational leadership in their schools and support teachers and support staff in their ongoing professional development;
- ensure strong and transparent accountability mechanisms are in place to protect the integrity of our education system; and
- remain committed to Victoria being an international leader in educational leadership, research and development.

2.4 SKILLS FOR VICTORIANS

2.4.1 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Labor believes in delivering a world class vocational education system that is responsive to the needs of entry level students, workers who are upgrading their skills or transitioning from one industry to another, employers and industry.

Vocational education is vital to ensuring all Victorians have the skills they need to get a job and enjoy better opportunities in life.

Labor will:

- maintain high standards of excellence for those occupations currently licensed and will investigate the expansion of publicly listed trades and vocations where industry stakeholders and community views indicate that licensing is in the public interest;
- keep out providers who exploit students, rip off tax payers and drive down confidence in the Victoria's VET system; and
- other than TAFE, give preference for government funding to training providers that are both:
  - not for profit; and
  - associated with a registered trade union.

2.4.2 TAFE

At the heart of our Vocational Education and Training System is a comprehensive and well-funded public TAFE system that gives all Victorians the skills and qualifications both they and industry need.

Labor will continue to build community and industry confidence in a system that was relentlessly attacked by the former Liberal Government.

Labor will:

- continue reforms focused on increasing the quality of programs on offer in Victoria;
- ensure our TAFEs deliver the services to support successful outcomes for students including student amenities, libraries, counselling services and specialist support for apprentices;
- build seamless pathways between schools and the higher education and training system;
- develop initiatives to attract new teachers and provide professional development for existing teachers;
- ensure TAFEs build and maintain relationships with business, industry and unions to deliver skills to support stable employment;
- build world-class facilities for Victorian TAFEs so students have the best possible learning environments and opportunities to meet the challenges of emerging technologies;
- work to strengthen the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQFT) controls; and
- ensure TAFEs work closely with disadvantaged student cohorts to create meaningful employment pathways.

2.4.3 SKILLS FOR VICTORIANS

Labor wants to make it easier for students to enrol in TAFE and to remove the barriers that exist to young people accessing VETiS.

We recognise some TAFE students may need additional literacy and numeracy support and will work to deliver this.

Labor will:

- enhance apprenticeship training and support for apprentices to boost completions;
- expand apprenticeship and traineeship options with new and emerging industries;
- restore confidence in the administration and quality of the apprenticeship and traineeship system to encourage the participation of apprentices, trainees and their employers; and
- make sure Victorians have access to the skills training they need to access the jobs in Victoria's economy - recognising that significant investment in construction, engineering and renewable energy projects is driving demand for skills as is the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and tourism growth.

2.4.4 ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Labor wants to see a range of diverse educational programs available to the whole community and to ensure local communities are engaged in the direction of their Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) providers

Labor will:

- support and strengthen the capacity of local community based providers of ACFE to meet the educational and personal development needs of their local communities and promote learning opportunities for adults in a style and environment appropriate to their needs; and
- encourage the sharing of TAFE and University expertise and resources to deliver a seamless learning experience to expand adult training and education to the community.

2.4.5 UNIVERSITIES

Labor values the academic rigour and independence of Victorian Universities and the opportunities they offer to local and international students for meaningful learning and career opportunities.

Labor will:

- urge Victorian universities to reduce their reliance on casual employment, short-term fixed contracts and teaching and research contracts;
- oppose the Liberal Party's sustained attack on the university sector, which is leading to an increase in casual and insecure work and a decrease in affordability and equitable access to higher education;
- make sure high standards of governance and accountability are maintained in higher education institutions, including gender balance in leadership roles, and maintain student and staff representation on university councils;
- support the experience of international students at Victorian universities; and
- work cooperatively with the university sector to harness their world-renowned knowledge.

POLICY IN ACTION

BREAKFAST CLUBS

Labor's school breakfast club program has now rolled out to 500 school communities across Victoria. One of them is Boronia K-12 College.

Ethan and Matthew attend the breakfast club at Boronia K-12, and they say 'breakfast is my favourite meal of the day'.

Now, breakfast is provided for students 5 days a week. The program is a bonus for parents who are time poor or experiencing food insecurity, knowing that their children will get a good start to the day, fuelled up and ready to learn.

The schools participating receive a variety of food from partner agency Foodbank, including tinned fruit, cereal, UHT milk, baked beans, and recently vegemite and honey for their toast have been added to the mix.

Inclusive Schools

Jack has cerebral palsy and attends Belgrave South Primary School, with his sister Lucy.

Belgrave South PS made an application to Labor's 'inclusive schools' grants program, and received funding to build a new inclusive playground, including a liberty swing for Jack, and any other children in wheelchairs, to play on.

His mum, Belinda Mullan says that Jack loves the swing, and the feeling of movement and the breeze when he is playing on it. She thinks it's fabulous that the government values and welcomes students with additional needs and is striving to make our schools inclusive.

SCHOOL BUILDING UPGRADES

Lyndale Secondary College hasn't had any new building works done since it was built in 1961.

The School Assistant Principal describes the school as being 'built for a different time and place'.

Labor's historic investment in school buildings is rebuilding Lyndale Secondary College, starting with a new science and technology building, performing arts centre, senior study centre and a new canteen.

These new facilities will be fit for purpose for 21st century learning, and give the students of Lyndale the facilities they deserve-world class.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

PREAMBLE

Every Victorian should be able to see a health professional and get the treatment they need, when they need it. Similarly, every Victorian should have access to the services they need to enable them to fully participate in our community.

That means our health system must be well funded with enough doctors, nurses, paramedics and health care workers to make sure Victorians get the care they deserve in world-class and safe facilities. It also means our human services system needs to be well resourced with enough child protection, mental health, drug, alcohol and disability workers to support vulnerable Victorians and help them lead fulfilling and productive lives.

Labor has invested more funding in Victoria's healthcare system than ever before, fixing the ambulance crisis and delivering the fastest ambulance response times Victoria has seen in almost a decade. Labor has delivered the most elective surgeries ever, introduced nurse to patient ratios, delivered world-class facilities and increased childhood vaccination rates.

Labor has opened a brand-new Bendigo Hospital and delivered major expansions of Casey Hospital, the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital. Labor is building Australia's first specialist stand-alone heart hospital, has built the Monash Children's Hospital and the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre and increased funding to the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

Labor is leading the nation and the world by establishing Victoria as a global centre for ground-breaking health and medical research. Under Labor, Victoria has become the first Australian state to legalise the use of medicinal cannabis – helping some of Victoria's sickest people.

Labor is putting people first, whether it's providing better health outcomes and tackling discrimination against Victoria's LGBTI community or more protection and support for vulnerable families and children, ATSI communities and Victorians struggling with drug use.

Labor has acted to reduce the number of Victorians dying from overdose by opening Victoria's first medically supervised injecting room. Labor has also acted to reduce the harm caused by addiction to ice and other harmful drugs, with new rehabilitation beds and thousands more treatment places and counselling services for Victorians.

Labor has boosted mental health support and invested in forensic mental health services to keep Victorians healthy and safe.

Labor has almost doubled Victoria's disability funding as part of the NDIS and has been a vocal advocate to the Federal Coalition Government for fairer pricing for vital disability services.

Labor is protecting the Victorian workers who devote their lives to helping other people.

Labor has boosted the number of child protection workers and early intervention services for vulnerable families.

Labor will always make sure Victorians have access to quality care in safe, well-resourced facilities.

OUR VALUES

Everyone deserves world-class health care, regardless of their age, income, location, background or circumstances – this fundamental belief is at the heart of everything we do.

Labor will make sure our hospitals are world-class, accessible and safe for both patients and Victoria's highly skilled health workforce.

Labor will underpin our health services with the latest research, teaching facilities and state of the art technology.

Labor will ensure our human services system is well funded and the workforce is well trained and supported to deliver high quality care for all Victorians.

We know people are at their most vulnerable when they turn to our health and human services system. Labor will always make sure all Victorians get the respectful care and support they deserve.

POLICY IN ACTION

MEDICINAL CANNABIS

Cooper is a little boy who used to suffer greatly. He would have up to 80 seizures a day. His parents, Cassie and Rhett sensed he was slipping away from them-he was tube fed and had little quality of life.

As a last resort, Cassie and Rhett begun to use medical cannabis for Cooper-it helped, and reduced his seizures to less than 10 a day. But, it was illegal.

Now they don't have to break the law anymore.

Labor's policy to legalise medicinal cannabis has been a relief for the family.

No parent should have to choose between saving their child's life and breaking the law like Cassie and Rhett had to.

Due to Cooper's improved quality of life, the family can now do things that they couldn't before due to his illness, like go on family holidays. Previously he was hospitalised every few days, making even a quick getaway impossible.

AMBULANCE RESPONSE TIMES

Ambulance response times are the best in nine years thanks to record Andrews Labor Government investment into our ambulance services. Despite increased demand, ambulances were arriving at the scene of life-threatening emergencies in an average of 11:21 minutes – an improvement of 41 seconds from a year earlier. Our paramedics are reaching emergencies within the benchmark 15 minutes, 83 per cent of the time – up from 80 per cent a year earlier.

Labor's record investment, reforms and respect for paramedics are ensuring the most critical patients are getting the care they need sooner, and lives are being saved.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

3.1 HEALTH

3.1.1 MEET GROWING HEALTH SERVICE DEMANDS

Labor will make sure more Victorians receive the care, treatment and surgery they need, sooner.

Labor will make sure Victoria's health system has the funding it needs for hospitals to expand services, open beds, cut waiting lists and treat patients faster.

Labor will invest in our health and human services workforce, services, research and infrastructure to keep Victorians healthy.

3.1.1.1 PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Our public hospitals are vital to ensuring health care is accessible and world-class.

Labor will:

- make sure Victoria has outstanding health facilities across the state through upgrades and new hospitals; and
- ensure the provision of non-medical services in public hospitals, such as access to television, are accessible and equitable for all Victorians.

3.1.1.2 HOSPITAL NETWORKS

Effective hospital networks are the foundation for a growing health system.

Labor will make sure Victoria's hospital networks have high standards of governance and accountability. Labor will provide better service delivery to care for more people with better access to information and services, less duplication and paperwork.

Labor will:

- strengthen hospital networks linking local primary health care providers with specialist aged care, mental health and disability services;
- review public health service board composition to ensure they reflect diversity, community engagement and a balance of skills; and
- seek to appoint local people to rural hospital boards.

3.1.1.3 EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY CARE

Timely access to quality emergency care can be the difference between life and death.

Labor recognises Victoria's growing and ageing population creates challenges for our hospitals and will make sure services are expanded, efficient and effective to help meet this demand.

Labor will:

- increase access to urgent after-hours care across the state;
- improve public access to defibrillator programs to save more lives; and
- cut wait times in Emergency Departments so patients receive quality care when they need it.

3.1.1.4 ELECTIVE SURGERY WAITING LISTS

It is vital that our health system keeps pace with Victoria's growing population.

Labor will prioritise cutting elective surgery waiting lists to help more Victorians get the surgery they need, sooner.

3.1.1.5 CANCER SERVICES

More and more Victorians are surviving cancer thanks to Labor's support for comprehensive, integrated cancer services and commitment to providing a world-leading precinct for treatment, teaching, research and innovative cancer services. Labor has also supported national cancer screening programs for breast, bowel and cervical cancer.

Labor will:

- prioritise treatment, research and social support for cancers with high mortality rates and less awareness;
- reduce the incidence of cervical cancer by continuing screening programs and increase immunisation rates for human papillomavirus (HPV);
- build on our world leading achievements in skin cancer prevention as a result of which melanoma rates are starting to decline in those under the age of 55;
- improve bowel cancer survival by investing in campaigns to increase participation in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program; and
- implement culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal Victorians and CALD Victorians.

3.1.1.6 AMBULANCE SERVICES

Labor will make sure paramedics have the right support, systems and training – Labor will look after those who look after us.

More funding for ambulance services means faster response times, more paramedics, more vehicles and better stations – which means more Victorians receive the best care when they need it most.

Labor will:

- assist those seeking patient transport across Victoria;
- ensure rostering models support appropriate service delivery for patients and paramedics, including consideration of minimum crew numbers;
- support innovative models of pre-hospital emergency care, such as Ambulance Paramedic Practitioners, across Victoria, including remote and rural areas;
- introduce two-officer paramedic crewing as a minimum standard across Victoria; and
- improve investment in emergency services telecommunications infrastructure.

3.1.1.7 MEDICAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

Victoria is recognised around the world as a centre of excellence for biotechnology, medical research and innovation, and as a leader in drug discovery, diagnostics, and clinical trials.

Labor will make sure Victoria continues to attract the most talented scientists by implementing a funding model that recognises and respects their invaluable work.

Labor will:

- invest in medical research utilising DNA sequencing technology in the areas of complex diseases;
- continue to explore models of translational clinical practice;
- continue to improve the availability of and access to high quality research and data; and
- develop an Aboriginal research accord to recognise and embed culturally sensitive practices and respect in medical research.

3.1.1.8 ELECTRONIC RECORDS

We live in a digital age and it is vital our healthcare system keeps pace with changing technologies to make sure Victorians get the best care, which includes the management of patient records.

Labor will work to implement electronic medical records at public hospital health services and electronically-stored patient records at public hospitals, while making sure patient privacy is protected.

3.1.2 MENTAL HEALTH

Labor will make sure all Victorians experiencing mental health problems and disorders can receive the help they need through a world-leading mental health system, with a skilled and properly resourced workforce.

Labor will:

- expand access to mental health services as Victoria's population grows;
- reduce risk of future harm and hospital presentation of public mental health patients by investigating the provision of discharge medications free of charge;
- make sure mental health funding, programs and services are age appropriate and targeted to specific areas of need, including perinatal mental health, Aboriginal Victorians, teenage eating disorders, asylum seekers, prisoners and members of the LGBTI community;
- expand the provision of integrated mainstream and specialist forensic in-patient and community mental health services;
- ensure the ongoing development and expansion of clinical community bed-based services with a focus on both short and long-term recovery and rehabilitation;
- make sure staff, female and other vulnerable patients in mental health facilities are safe;
- make sure regional and rural Victorians can access mental health support services and staff;
- make sure all mental health services are high quality, best practice, efficient, carer-friendly and support partnerships and collaboration; and
- make sure both Federal and State funded mental health services remain available to Victorians who are ineligible for a funded NDIS package.

3.1.3 HEALTH CRISIS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Victoria has experienced fires with prolonged periods of smoke haze, intense heat waves, flooding, and the epidemic thunderstorm asthma event in 2016.

These natural disasters and extreme events are particularly difficult for older, vulnerable and young Victorians, as well as those who are already struggling with health conditions.

Labor will:

- make sure there are enough places at suitable facilities for vulnerable Victorians during natural disaster emergencies; and
- continue to develop monitoring systems to track demand and ensure fast responses to large-scale emergencies, such as thunderstorm asthma.

3.1.4 PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTION AND PROMOTION

3.1.4.1 COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

All Victorians should have access to primary health care services close to where they live.

Labor believes community health services; preventative health initiatives and health promotion should be at the forefront of primary care.

Labor will:

- support and fund community health services and programs;
- promote strong connections between community health centres, state-wide prevention programs and health care systems;
- make sure wages and conditions of allied health professionals remain on par with colleagues in the public sector;
- fund 'Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault' to ensure equal access in the community to survivors of sexual assault; and
- make sure health services and workers effectively deliver services to the LGBTI community.

3.1.4.2 CHRONIC ILLNESS

Victorians can prevent some chronic illnesses by embracing healthier and more active lifestyles.

Labor will help Victorians achieve this by working to prevent chronic illness and supporting preventative health initiatives that tackle diabetes, obesity, stroke, cardiovascular disease and other preventable illnesses.

3.1.4.3 DENTAL SERVICES

Having good oral health is a key factor to overall general health and wellbeing.

Labor is committed to improving the oral health of Victorians and reducing the gap in oral health outcomes for people at higher risk of oral disease, particularly vulnerable Victorians who may find it difficult to access expensive dental services.

Labor will:

- expand the fluoridation in Victoria's water supply;
- provide public dental care in community health centres across Victoria to ensure eligible Victorians have access to emergency and ongoing dental care when they need it;
- lobby the Federal Government to significantly improve dental health funding; and
- increase dental service delivery to Aboriginal Victorians, including through partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.

3.1.4.4 IMMUNISATION

All Victorians, particularly children, have the right to be protected from vaccine-preventable illness.

The Andrews Labor Government introduced the 'No Jab, No Play' policy which is boosting immunisation rates and helping to protect the health and safety of all Victorian children.

Labor will:

- support compulsory vaccinations as a requirement for access to childcare;
- consider expanding the vaccination program to include other high risk preventable illnesses; and
- continue to promote and support allergy testing.

3.1.4.5 SMOKING

Labor is the party of tobacco reform and is a leader when it comes to reducing smoking rates in Victoria.

We have helped reduce the impact of smoking on the community through bans on smoking in outdoor eating areas, workplaces, pubs and clubs and in cars where children are present, as well as banning cigarette displays in shops and introducing the world-first plain packaging of cigarettes.

Labor will:

- support initiatives to cut the number of smokers in Victoria, with focus on at-risk communities where smoking rates are higher; and
- support Quit, Cancer Council Victoria and VicHealth in their efforts to reduce smoking and continue to adopt measures to reduce exposure to smoking in the workplace.

3.1.4.6 SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND BLOOD-BORNE VIRUSES

Labor is committed to preventing and reducing rates of sexually transmissible infections and blood-borne viruses (such as HIV, hepatitis B and C) in the community by increasing the sexual health literacy of Victorians.

Of specific concern is how to prevent STIs and blood-borne viruses, and where, when and how to get tested and seek treatment, which must be provided without discrimination or stigma.

Labor will:

- continue to promote Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to populations at high risk of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) to work towards eliminating new HIV diagnoses;
- investigate Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programs for men who have sex with men (MSM) through a research trial to monitor and reduce the risk of cancer caused by HPV;
- collaborate with drug support services to reduce the spread of blood-borne viruses by injecting drug users and sex workers;
- develop strategies to address the sexual health needs of men who have sex with men; and
- fund targeted communication strategies and community based interventions to increase testing and treatment in communities that have high rates of chronic hepatitis infection.

3.1.5 WOMEN'S HEALTH

Our health is influenced by a complex combination of social, environmental and economic factors – including gender and sexuality.

Labor will work to improve the health and wellbeing of Victorian women as an essential part of our Gender Equality Strategy.

Labor acknowledges that family violence is the most significant and preventable contributor to the ill health of Victorian women and will make sure our health system is equipped to properly identify and respond to family violence.

Labor will continue to break down the barriers women face when accessing contraception, fertility and sexual health services.

Labor will:

- expand funding and training within Victorian health services to identify, respond to and support patients experiencing family violence with compassion and respect;
- promote the use of Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) options to reduce unplanned pregnancies and work with health service providers and the Commonwealth Government to ensure LARC is accessible and affordable;
- support the right of Victorian women to access abortion services;
- provide funding to women's health services and clinics across Victoria specifically increasing access to specialist services for women in rural areas;
- make sure government health services are sensitive and responsive to the health needs of lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender women;
- provide support for those who have experienced female genital mutilation and undertake prevention measures; and
- provide culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal Victorians and CALD women.

3.1.6 MEN'S HEALTH

Labor supports a coordinated approach to improving and maintaining the health of Victorian men throughout their lives.

Labor will:

- actively promote men's health and improve awareness of morbidity, premature death, illnesses and general health among men;
- encourage health promotion programs on nutrition and exercise, delivered through workplaces, schools and community health services, with an emphasis on groups at risk;
- provide support to community organisations like men's sheds which provide support for socially isolated men by connecting them with their local communities;
- ensure health services are responsive to Aboriginal men, including gay, bi-sexual and transgender Aboriginal Victorians;
- ensure health services are sensitive and responsive to the health needs of gay, bi-sexual and transgender men; and
- develop programs designed to address accidents and suicide.

3.1.7 SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

3.1.7.1 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

All Victorian women should be supported in their reproductive health choices and access to contraception services.

Labor will:

- Implement the Victorian Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan, working alongside women's health organisations.
- provide reproductive health education services for men and women;
- ensure access to Assisted Reproductive Technologies to address infertility;
- ensure assisted reproductive services are accessible to, and inclusive of, all Victorians, including LGBTI, Aboriginal, culturally diverse and low-income Victorians.
    - support women's reproductive choices providing impartial education and counselling services on pregnancy options and:
    - improve the accessibility and affordability of medical and surgical terminations, including at public hospitals, while reducing unwanted pregnancies;
    - publicly fund pregnancy support and pregnancy loss counselling;
- support the removal of GST from all menstrual products to end gender discrimination in the taxation system; and
- stop and seek alternatives to the involuntary sterilisation of women with disabilities.

3.1.7.2 MATERNITY SERVICES

Women should have informed choice and involvement in decisions about their care during pregnancy and birth.

Maternity services in Victoria should be provided based on the safety and well-being of mothers and babies.

Labor will:

- expand midwifery models of care during pregnancy, child birth and the post-natal period;
- make sure hospitals have appropriate models of care for women at low and high risk of complications and refer women for care at tertiary hospitals where necessary;
- make sure maternity and post-birth services in rural and regional Victoria are safe, sustainable and culturally appropriate;
- encourage empathetic and sensitive support and specialist support services for breastfeeding for women when they are in hospital and back at home;
- increase the number of culturally supportive birthing suites for Aboriginal Victorian mothers; and
- consider ways to help more rural and regional mothers, particularly Aboriginal Victorian mothers, accompany their babies when transferred to major metropolitan hospitals.

3.1.7.3 PARENTAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Labor wants all Victorian parents to be confident and happy in the knowledge they are doing the very best for their child and their own wellbeing.

This means providing all new parents with the high quality, affordable family services they need to give their children the best start in life, including extra help for families needing the most support.

Labor will:

- ensure continuity of care after a baby is born, with seamless transition from culturally appropriate postnatal to maternal and child health services, with increased specialised support services in the weeks and months following the birth;
- improve the sustainability of birthing services and midwifery care in rural and regional Victoria;
- reduce mortality rates and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal parents and babies;
- improve health outcomes for lesbian and same sex attracted people and their babies;
- improve the promotion and provision of perinatal mental health services, including depression screening, prevention and treatment;
- strengthen the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service and MCH Phone Line to improve parents' access to reliable, evidence-based information and advice from MCH nurses; and
- expand the Enhanced MCH service to provide additional targeted support to 15 per cent of Victorian families who have children from birth to three years of age, such as families with babies who were born prematurely or with a low birth weight, children with a disability or parents experiencing mental health issues.

3.1.8 FAIR AND EQUAL HEALTHCARE FOR ALL VICTORIANS

3.1.8.1 RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH

Victorians living and working in remote and isolated areas have higher levels of preventable illness and disease.

Labor will target health programs in regional and rural Victoria to make sure people can get the right care close to home, and can access specialist care in major hospitals.

Labor will:

- support the provision of specialised medical and clinical services in regional areas;
- consider incentives to get more health care professionals in rural and regional communities; and
- develop an LGBTI health promotion strategy focusing on the special needs of people in rural and regional communities.

3.1.8.2 ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS HEALTH

Labor acknowledges and is committed to addressing the gap between health outcomes and mortality rates for Aboriginal Victorians, as compared to non-indigenous Australians.

Labor will:

- work towards closing the life expectancy gap and significantly reduce the mortality rate for children under five;
- increase the participation of Aboriginal Victorians in health policy development and service delivery;
- develop cultural protocols within the Victorian health system to increase accessibility and responsiveness to Aboriginal Victorians;
- work with Aboriginal organisations to improve education, develop targeted prevention and health promotion strategies to address health status inequity;
- improve access to mental health and drug and alcohol services, linking Aboriginal organisations with other drug and alcohol service providers;
- ensure funded service providers understand the impact of colonisation and inter-generational trauma;
- improve referral pathways for Aboriginal Victorians to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation drug and alcohol service providers;
- develop early intervention strategies with the younger Aboriginal generation to build resilience;
- work with the Aboriginal communities to develop and implement strategies to reduce the incidence of self-harm and suicide;
- increase the level of dental services for Aboriginal people including by ensuring all public dental services actively work with Aboriginal communities to improve access to dental care;
- deliver incentive-based programs to increase the number of Aboriginal Victorian health professionals, and
- work with LGBTI and Aboriginal Victorians to support and improve their health and wellbeing.

3.1.8.3 CALD COMMUNITIES HEALTH

Victoria is proudly home to people from hundreds of different nationalities, faith and language groups. Our multicultural communities have contributed significantly over many generations and are a valued part of our Victorian community.

Victorian Labor will always make sure Victoria is a safe and welcoming place for people of refugee, migrant and seeking asylum backgrounds and will tackle the difficulties and inequalities Victorians of different cultures and heritage can experience in our health system.

Labor will:

- make sure all people from CALD communities can receive culturally sensitive health services with appropriately trained staff and translation services; and
- make sure specialised services are available for people who are isolated, have left war torn areas or who have suffered torture.

3.1.8.4 LGBTI HEALTH

Labor is committed to increasing the health and wellbeing of LGBTI communities.

Labor will:

- promote and encourage inclusive workplace practices and activities across public sector health services;
- promote best-practice inclusive health care, including in reproductive health services; and
- support transgender transition services.

3.1.9 END OF LIFE CHOICES

3.1.9.1 ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVES

Labor believes all Victorians are entitled to compassionate end-of-life care, which relieves pain and suffering, and provides empowering support to family, friends and carers.

Labor has given Victorians the certainty they want and need when it comes to their end of life care.

We have enshrined advance care directives in law, allowing Victorians to articulate their preferences for future medical treatment in a legally binding document, and we have legalised Voluntary Assisted Dying for Victorians with a terminal illness.

Labor will always make sure we put an individual's preferences and values first when it comes to medical treatment and end of life decision-making.

Labor will:

- promote the use of advance care directives for all public patients;
- encourage discussion about advance care directives at various points in the health system; and
- recognise and support the specific end of life needs of Aboriginal Victorians; and
- provide support and training to medical professionals to deal effectively with requests for access to voluntary assisted dying.

3.1.9.2 ORGAN DONATION

While not all organ donation takes place upon the death of a donor, encouraging donation at this stage is a significant policy challenge.

Labor recognises that organ donation and transplantation is an important treatment for a variety of conditions but is a complex issue that goes beyond personal wishes.

It involves clinical practice, hospital structures, systems and a professional culture – and we understand the solutions are not always clear-cut.

Labor will:

- make sure existing Transplantation/Organ Donation Coordinators and Services are adequately resourced and supported to meet demand;
- explore options to increase organ donation and transplantation rates, including collaboration with the Federal Government; and
- support hospitals to better identify potential donors and manage sensitive conversations with a patient's next of kin.

3.2 HUMAN SERVICES

3.2.1 SUPPORTING VICTORIANS WITH A DISABILITY

Access to quality services for people with a disability has a significant impact on their quality of life and ability to participate in the community.

Labor believes a fair and high-quality NDIS will improve the lives of some of Victoria's most vulnerable people and will continue to work to ensure no Victorian with a disability, or disability worker, will be worse off under the NDIS.

Labor recognises that the NDIS is only one element of Government's role in supporting people with disabilities.

Labor will:

- make sure Victorians with a disability have access to a range of specialist services, improved advocacy, opportunities for paid employment and individual choice in their services, including public provision of services where available. Labor recognises that these are key to building the independence and social inclusion of people with a disability;
- increase access to all aspects of life and mainstream government services, such as transport, housing, health, justice and education for people with a disability and make sure services are integrated;
- work with Federal and local governments, community housing providers and investors to improve accommodation options for people with a disability and their families, including young people;
- protect people with disabilities from abuse with a mandatory reporting scheme for abuse and a mandatory disability worker registration and accreditation scheme;
- make sure those ineligible for NDIS funding are still supported;
- be an effective market steward under the NDIS and work with the NDIA to ensure a provider-of-last-resort for people with a disability in thin markets; and for those with complex needs;
- continue to support the not-for-profit disability services sector as it transitions to the NDIS; and
- make sure all Victorians with a disability are supported by helping Aboriginal Victorian organisations participate in NDIS service delivery and providing education programs for disability workers about the additional needs of LGBTI people with disabilities.

3.2.2 DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES

The abuse of alcohol, illicit and prescription drugs impacts all Victorians – users, their families and loved ones, and the broader community.

It leads to more physical and mental health problems, can contribute to violent behaviour – particularly family violence, and avoidable deaths and injuries.

Labor will:

- support models of service delivery that reduce the number of alcohol and drug-related hospital admissions;
- invest in flexible drug treatment and other support options for all patients including those in transition between withdrawal and rehabilitation services;
- ensure patients have access to clinicians specifically trained in alcohol and other drugs; and
- expand culturally appropriate rehabilitation and withdrawal services for Aboriginal Victorians.

3.2.3 PROBLEM GAMBLING

Gambling addiction can destroy lives, contributing to relationship breakdowns, financial hardship, criminal activity and alienation from friends and colleagues.

While gambling is a legitimate recreational activity, risks must be managed and addiction must be treated.

Labor will:

- strengthen obligations on Electronic Gaming Machine license holders to respond to suspected problem gambling;
- work with sporting and other clubs to identify new revenue streams;
- work with the Federal Government and other State Governments to address emerging issues arising from the growth of online gambling;
- support health professionals, alcohol and drug services and family service to minimise and treat the harm caused by problem gambling; and
- work to address problem gambling in vulnerable communities, including women, CALD, Aboriginal Victorians, low income, regional and LGBTI Victorians.

3.2.4 CHILD PROTECTION

Labor believes protecting children and supporting vulnerable families is everyone's business.

When we act early to make sure Victorian families are safe, capable and provide supportive environments for children to grow up in, they will thrive.

Labor will work hard to address the issues that lead to child abuse and neglect, including family violence, homelessness, substance abuse, poor mental health, unemployment, poor education and lack of family supports or social mobility.

For children who can't remain safely with their parents, Labor affirms that children do best when cared for in a loving family, kinship care is the preferred placement followed by foster care.

Labor will:

- implement the 'Roadmap for Reform' to transform child protection and family services from crisis response to an early intervention and prevention focus;
- work to reduce the number of children in residential care and divert them into culturally appropriate home-based placements or return them safely to family;
- address the over-representation of Aboriginal Victorian children in the Out of Home Care System and ensure Aboriginal Victorian children in the system have Aboriginal child placement principles consistently applied and monitored, and remain connected to their culture;
- transform residential care so it becomes a short-term intervention for children with complex needs before placing them in a loving family;
- expand evidence-based models that achieve positive outcomes for vulnerable families and children, including professional foster care and programs to build family capability;
- expand home based care options by recruiting more foster carers, including LGBTI people;
- ensure both foster and kinship carers are adequately supported to provide excellence in care and support to Victoria's vulnerable children;
- increase support to children ageing out of the care system to enable strong transitions to independence and explore extending the leaving age to 21 years; and
- continue to lobby the Federal Government to improve support for children in Out of Home care, such as a dedicated Medicare item number and support to carers including the expansion of the Centrelink grandparents' helpline.

3.2.5 SENIORS AND OLDER VICTORIANS

Senior Victorians have helped make our state and nation strong and prosperous. They should be able to lead a healthy, dignified and productive life whether in work, retirement, volunteering or caring roles.

Labor will:

- make sure older Victorians are well supported with the services they need in their homes and that services within the community are accessible and feasible; and
- foster and support initiatives to address social isolation and loneliness among senior Victorians and promote age friendly communities.

Labor is opposed to the privatisation of Victoria's public sector residential aged care facilities, including aged care mental health facilities, and believes people should have a choice of private or quality public aged care services.

Labor will:

- recognise the current crisis within the non-government aged care system, particularly relating to the current state of the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI); and the exponential decay in care, caused by reduced ACFI funding;
- investigate e-health and tele-health solutions to increase access to services for older Victorians;
- improve coordination between hospitals, residential aged care and General Practitioners so older Victorians receive better, fully coordinated care;
- lobby the Federal Government to introduce mandatory aged care staff : resident ratios for private aged care facilities to free up public hospital emergency rooms and ambulance services;
- consider introducing baseline standards through Worksafe, as well as legislative change through the Occupational Health and Safety legislation, in order to implement minimum ratios for Personal Care Workers to residents in the non-government aged care sector in Victoria;
- consider further amendments to the Safe Patient Care Act to ensure residents receive high quality care; and

- support the move to amend Federal legislation to provide for mandatory minimum skill mix nursing and care staff ratios so as to guarantee the quality of services in non-governmental religious and charitable and privately owned and operated aged care facilities.

Many older Victorians are no longer able to live independently in their home.

Labor will:

- build on the Federal Labor reforms to acknowledge the special needs of LGBTI seniors in accessing appropriate aged care services, free from discrimination;
- work with the Federal Government to ensure governance standards in privately owned residential care facilities are maintained and continue to be met through unannounced rigorous accreditation and auditing; and
- work to make sure older Victorians who cannot be managed in mainstream aged care residential services due to their level of persistent cognitive, emotional or behavioural disturbance, have access to Aged Persons Mental Health nursing homes and hostels.

3.3 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS

3.3.1 BUILDING A SKILLED AND SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Labor values the hard work of our dedicated doctors, nurses, paramedics, allied health, disability workers, aged care workers, child protection workers, children's services workers and support staff.

The quality and strength of our health and human services is dependent on the workforce. Labor will make sure Victoria's health and human services workforce is well trained, supported and resourced, with secure jobs, less casualisation and reduced use of temporary and agency staff.

Labor will:

- expand the bullying and harassment prevention strategy across all public-sector health and human services;
- increase the number of medical training places available in metropolitan and regional Victoria;
- improve education and training for workers in disability services;
- support the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria and the Victorian Doctors Health Program;
- expand implementation of Nurse Practitioners across specialist public health services;
- investigate improving Nurse-Patient Ratios across the public health sector and clinical areas;
- investigate new staffing models of care, including the role of nursing assistants across general wards of public hospitals to ensure patients receive high quality care;
- explore access to additional graduate entry positions and further career pathways in mental health for nursing and allied health professionals;
- support the re-establishment of a nursing undergraduate major in mental health to address workforce supply shortages; and
- investigate the establishment of a cadetship model and training pathways in mental health for people from diverse backgrounds to achieve qualifications in nursing and allied health.

3.3.2 KEEPING HEALTH, HUMAN AND EMERGENCY SERVICES WORKERS SAFE

Every Victorian has the right to be safe at work. Our healthcare, emergency services and human services workers care for us at our most vulnerable and deserve to be safe and respected in the workplace.

Labor will:

- work to reduce violence and aggression in all healthcare settings;
- help all healthcare workers manage and protect themselves from incidents of occupational violence;
- ensure greater cooperation between hospitals and police to better protect staff and patients at hospitals; and
- ensure adequate safety and security measures are in place across public hospital emergency departments.

3.4 SUPPORTING UNPAID CARERS

Labor recognises the work and care provided by thousands of family and friends supporting people living with mental illness, a disability or chronic health issue.

This can be a trying time for those providing care as they approach the end of their own lives and are faced with securing the best possible future for their dependant.

Almost 800,000 Victorians take on the day-to-day caring responsibility for a loved one with a disability, mental health issue or chronic health condition.

This often comes at a significant emotional, physical and financial cost. Labor believes Victoria's unpaid carers need more support.

Labor will:

- make sure the health and human services system is alert and responsive to the mental, physical and financial needs of unpaid carers;
- make sure services and support are targeted to unpaid carers in their own right;
- lobby the Federal Government to improve funding and support for unpaid carers;
- promote greater respect within our health and human services system for the contribution of unpaid carers in the day-to-day care of Victorians in need, including those with episodic illness who are often less visible;
- ensure young carers get the support they need so their education, mental and physical health does not suffer; and
- advocate to the Federal Government to reassess the eligibility criteria for Special Disability Trusts for persons with severe mental illness.

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TRANSPORT

PREAMBLE

Labor is making sure all Victorians have a better quality of life and our public transport and road networks are essential to this.

Building new roads, removing dangerous level crossings and modernising our public transport network creates thousands of jobs for Victorians and helps get them home sooner and safer.

Labor is fully funding the Metro Tunnel, extending the South Morang line to Mernda, building three new train stations in Melbourne's northern suburbs, and duplicating track on the Ballarat and Hurstbridge lines.

The Andrews Government is purchasing new trains and E-class trams to increase the capacity and reliability of our public transport network - and is building them in Melbourne and Ballarat to create jobs and support local industry.

The Andrews Government is building better roads, including North East Link and the West Gate Tunnel, a long-needed alternative to West Gate Bridge, Mordialloc Freeway and widening the Monash Freeway, Tullamarine Freeway, M80 Ring Road and suburban and regional roads.

Labor is also giving Victorians confidence that the right projects are being built to benefit all Victorians.

Labor established Infrastructure Victoria (IV) to provide expert independent advice to government, the public and Transport for Victoria (TFV) to provide a long-term coordinated approach to transport planning.

Labor will continue to build better roads and the world-class 'turn up and go' train network Victoria deserves – with more jobs, more stations and more trains to give Victorians a better quality of life.

OUR VALUES

Whether it's going to work, school, the doctor or weekend sport – every Victorian relies on our transport network.

Labor believes having an efficient, integrated and sustainable, train, tram, bus, road, cycle and pedestrian network can improve our quality of life and keep Victorians connected to work, family and friends, particularly in the growing outer suburbs and regional communities.

Labor understands the important role that our public transport, road and active transport networks play in tackling congestion and improving our community's health and sustainability. Labor also understand the importance of providing an effective transport network and managing Victoria's environment and carbon footprint.

Labor knows that building key road and public transport projects will create jobs, support local industry and the economy, and make sure Victorians spend less time commuting and more time with family and friends.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

4.1 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PLANNING

Labor will make sure all Victorians benefit from improvements to our transport network with projects that are based on independent expert advice and integrated, long-term planning.

Labor will:

- engage in meaningful consultation to deliver the best outcomes for all Victorians;
- ensure all large-scale transport infrastructure projects are integrated across multiple modes of transport;
- undertake a long-term, strategic, integrated approach to planning and engage independent expert advice; and
- undertake long term planning for an integrated sustainable transport network to guide Victoria's planning for the coming decades.

4.1.1 LEVEL CROSSINGS

Labor is removing 50 dangerous and congested level crossings in Melbourne and has upgraded regional level crossings across Victoria. Our Level Crossing Removal Program is helping Victorians get home faster and more safely, and creating thousands of local construction and manufacturing jobs.

Labor will:

- continue the current program to remove 50 level crossings by 2022;
- make sure public spaces and amenities are realised through the level crossing program;
- maximise the use of local content - including 100% Australian steel through the program;
- investigate and consider future need to remove additional suburban level crossings; and
- commit to additional level crossing upgrades across regional Victoria to boost the efficiency and safety of the regional network.

4.1.2 PROCUREMENT

Labor understands that Government has an important role to play in supporting local industry and we will make sure Victorian industry is prioritised for transport projects.

Labor will:

- maximise local content in new trains, trams and buses manufactured in Victoria;
- work with the manufacturing industry to build Victoria as a centre of rail manufacturing and support business development in this sector;
- promote positive social outcomes through compliance and further development of Victoria's social procurement framework; and
- maximise local content in new trains, trams and buses manufactured in Victoria by adopting a local content minimum of 70% whole carriage where applicable.

Labor believes in supporting local industry through government procurement by leveraging its role as a major procurer of goods and services. Enhancements to the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) to increase the weighting accorded to local content for major projects will assist in this regard.

Labor will:

- mandate, where possible, local content for all buses purchased by the Victorian state government;
- ensure that local content is being met through a robust auditing process; and

- where there are shortfalls in the supply chain, work with Unions and other stakeholders to fill the void by helping diversify existing businesses and attracting new businesses to the sector.

4.1.3 JOBS

Labor has created thousands of construction and manufacturing jobs by investing in large-scale infrastructure projects and will continue to create more jobs and opportunities for all Victorians with a pipeline of transport projects.

Labor will:

- increase diversity and support apprenticeship, trainee and cadet job targets on major projects;
- ensure the public transport network is staffed at appropriate levels and investigate measures to improve workforce stability, including additional full-time roles;
- ensure employees on Government transport projects and the public transport network are employed under best practice industry conditions in safe working environments and prioritise employers with existing enterprise agreements;
- ensure staff across the public transport network are safe at work, implement significant measures to protect frontline workers from assault and investigate further penalties for individuals who assault public transport workers;
- ensure safety critical work on the public transport network is provided under best practice conditions by appropriately trained permanent employees; and
- promote secure work by providing better statutory entitlements and providing transitions between industries.

4.2 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT

4.2.1 METROPOLITAN RAIL NETWORK

Melbourne's metropolitan rail network is a critical part of the transport network, with thousands of passengers relying on trains for work and education opportunities every day.

Demand for train services is increasing, particularly in the outer suburbs, and interface Councils. Labor will invest in modernising and upgrading services to increase capacity on the network.

The removal of physical impediments, bottlenecks and addressing staffing requirements critical to maintenance and service delivery is a key focus of delivering a 'turn up and go' service.

Labor will:

- maximise the use of existing rail infrastructure and add additional train services;
- investigate expanding modern high capacity signalling;
- develop a coordinated plan for network development and improvement;
- assess opportunities to expand and extend the network;
- continue implementing a 'turn up and go' service across the metropolitan rail network through investment in rolling stock, infrastructure and additional staff;
- work towards the duplication of single line sections of track across the network;
- work with the Federal Government to progress a future rail link to Melbourne airport; and
- progress planning for future rail capacity upgrades including further cross city rail connections.

4.2.2 METRO TUNNEL

The Metro Rail Tunnel is essential to the future development of Victoria's metropolitan rail network and will allow an extra 39,000 passengers to travel by train during peak periods.

The new underground rail line and five new underground stations through Melbourne CBD will ease overcrowding across the entire network, allow more services to run on every line and help connect outer suburban communities to job and education opportunities.

Labor will:

- ensure the benefits of the Metro Tunnel are fully realised for commuters across the network, particularly for the outer suburbs; and
- maximise local content, particularly steel, in the construction of the Metro Tunnel, including employment opportunities.

4.2.3 NIGHT NETWORK

All Victorians must be able to get home from Melbourne's CBD safely and easily after a night out or a night at work.

Labor will:

- continue to provide 24-hour public transport on weekends with trains, trams and buses running across Melbourne, as well as shuttle services to key regional centres; and
- ensure the night network is adequately staffed with Authorised Officers to manage staff workload and fatigue and ensure a safe and smooth journey for passengers.

4.2.4 TRAM NETWORK

Melbourne's tram network is an important part of the city's transport network. Labor understands demand for tram services is growing and ongoing investment is required to ensure it is adequately resourced.

Labor will:

- invest in Melbourne's tram network to improve services and reliability;
- implement additional tram priority signalling at suitable intersections;
- ensure there are enough new trams to meet the future needs of the network;
- expand and extend the tram and light rail network, including the key education and employment hub around Monash University; and
- investigate options for more separation of trams and traffic on the network.

4.2.5 SAFETY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

All Victorians have the right to feel safe on public transport and Labor has helped make our trains, trams and buses safer by recruiting more Protective Service Officers and reforming training procedures for Authorised Officers to deliver improved passenger outcomes.

Labor believes every person providing and travelling in commercial passenger vehicles should be able to travel safely, without experiencing discrimination.

Labor will:

- maintain Protective Services Officers on stations and ensure they are well trained, culturally competent and adequately resourced as well as ensuring stations maintain a strong customer service staff presence;
- continue to ensure Authorised Officers are well trained and culturally competent, and examine opportunities to support them in performing their role, including growing the workforce;

- support ongoing safety improvements as part of upgrades to public transport infrastructure;
- improve safety measures for members of the LGBTI community across the public transport network including ensuring relevant training for Protective Services Officers and Authorised Officers to manage incidents which adversely affect members of the community; and
- use existing complaints mechanisms to require commercial passenger vehicles to provide safety measures to protect passengers including members of the LGBTI community.

4.2.6 ROLLING STOCK

Labor recognises that purchasing new, technologically advanced and fit for purpose trains, trams and buses is critical to improving services and reliability, increasing capacity and providing better passenger experiences.

Labor will:

- ensure there are enough new trains, trams and buses to meet the future needs of the network;
- continue to develop and deliver new high capacity metro trains;
- make the best use of new technology to improve passenger experience;
- invest in new train stabling where required;
- explore options to maintain and refurbish existing stock;
- continue planning for the next generation of regional trains; and
- ensure that manufacturing and maintenance of rolling stock is performed locally.

4.2.7 PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONTRACTING

Labor will continue to ensure the benefits to public transport users are maximised in public transport contracts and that network operators adhere to their contractual obligations.

Labor will explore options to provide more efficient public transport services, including considering returning the operation of services into Government hands.

4.3 URBAN ROADS

Easing congestion on our roads will make sure Melbourne remains a liveable city that is easy to get around. Labor is tackling congestion by removing dangerous level crossings, upgrading and duplicating local arterial roads and building major road projects, including the West Gate Tunnel, North East Link and widening the Tullamarine and Monash Freeways, the M80 Ring Road and the Mordialloc Freeway.

Labor will:

- invest in large-scale road projects;
- upgrade existing roads in outer suburban communities;
- use existing infrastructure and new technologies to improve traffic flow and tackle congestion;
- build on the streamlining of Hoddle Street to reduce congestion on this vital north-south link;
- ensure road planning has an integrated whole of government approach that takes into consideration alternative means of transport; and
- ensure that contractors delivering these projects conduct themselves ethically, safely and co-operatively with their employees and unions and are respectful and inclusive of a diverse workforce.

4.3.1 NORTH-EAST LINK

The North-East Link is the critical missing link that Melbourne's road network needs and will create a link between the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway.

Labor has invested in planning, design and the early works required to build the North-East Link, which will unclog roads in the north-eastern suburbs, take trucks off local roads, provide a new freeway connection for 100,000 vehicles per day and create 5,000 local jobs.

Labor will continue to advance the development of this project and take the next steps towards delivery.

4.3.2 WEST GATE TUNNEL

The West Gate Tunnel will take thousands of trucks off residential streets in Melbourne's inner west and slash congestion along the M1 corridor from Pakenham to Geelong.

Construction of the six-lane tunnel will provide an $11 billion boost to the Victorian economy, creating 6,000 new jobs, including 500 jobs for people entering the workforce, and up to 150 jobs for former auto workers.

Labor will:

- deliver this important project using state of the art freeway management technology to enhance traffic flow and make sure benefits are maximised for the entire Melbourne road network; and
- ensure the West Gate Tunnel project minimises traffic impacts on inner city roads, particularly West Melbourne.

4.3.3 SAFER ROADS

Thousands of lives have been saved by investing in road safety upgrades and initiatives in Victoria. This includes the Towards Zero partnership, which Labor funded and supports to find new ways to reduce the road toll and create safer Victorian roads.

Labor has invested a record amount on road safety and will keep working to make our roads safer and save lives.

Labor will:

- support measures to improve road safety, including new infrastructure, initiatives and programs for safer drivers, safer vehicles and safer roads;
- upgrade regional roads and freight corridors to make them safer;
- support appropriate fatigue management for transport workers;
- work with road safety experts and local communities to reduce road trauma; and
- consider prevention programs and stronger punishments for dangerous and unsafe drivers.

4.3.4 INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

New technologies can offer new opportunities to improve our road network so that it is safer and more efficient.

Labor will:

- consider how Intelligent Transport Systems can be used in Victoria to improve freeway management and traffic flow;
- consider the opportunities arising from automated vehicles; and
- ensure that automated vehicles do not add to congestion on our roads.

4.4 REGIONAL TRANSPORT

4.4.1 REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK

Public transport helps connect rural and regional communities to each other and to Melbourne, making them more liveable and supporting economic growth.

Labor recognises how important efficient and reliable trains and buses are to rural and regional communities across Victoria and will continue to invest in and deliver better public transport services.

Labor will:

- make regional rail services more comfortable and reliable with extra services, better connections between buses and trains, modern signalling and infrastructure, real-time technology and better phone and internet coverage;
- install boom gates at regional level crossings to make them safer;
- introduce new modern trains across the regional passenger rail network;
- extend regional passenger rail services on the Mildura line;
- further separate regional and metropolitan lines to provide faster and more reliable services; and
- provide more frequent, reliable and connected bus services to increase regional public transport options.

4.4.2 REGIONAL RAIL REVIVAL

Labor believes all Victorians need to have access to reliable and efficient public transport, including those in regional Victoria.

Regional Fast Rail and Regional Rail Link have connected Victoria's regional centres with contemporary transport technology and laid the foundations for major economic growth.

Labor is building on this with the Regional Rail Revival, which will improve every regional rail line to help meet growing demand and improve services to regional communities and create over 1,000 jobs in regional Victoria.

Labor will

- work with the Federal Government to make sure the project delivers significant benefits to regional communities and supports the ongoing rollout of upgrades and improvements for passengers; and
- ensure skills developed by Victorian workers during the project will be retained in Victoria for future rail projects.

4.4.3 REGIONAL ROADS

Safe and efficient roads are vital to the economic growth, sustainability and liveability of rural and regional communities in Victoria. Labor believes the regional road network should be well maintained and managed to ensure drivers experience safe and smooth journeys every time they sit behind the wheel, and to improve connectivity between thriving regional centres.

Country Victorians are four times more likely to die on our roads than people who live in metropolitan Melbourne. Labor believes more must be done to drive down the road toll in our regions.

It is crucial that recent investment in road maintenance is sustained to lift the quality of rural roads and to protect key industries including tourism and agriculture.

Labor will:

- invest in regular maintenance of regional and rural roads;
- upgrade the key arterials which will improve connectivity between the regions and meet the demands of future growth;
- protect primary regional freight corridors to enable industry to access facilities such as ports, intermodal terminals and other key infrastructure; and
- continue to improve safety on regional roads by installing safety infrastructure, upgrading level crossings and removing dangerous black spots to help reduce the unacceptable number of deaths on country roads.

4.5 ACCESSIBLE AND EQUITABLE TRANSPORT

4.5.1 WALKING AND CYCLING

Walking and cycling are important parts of Victoria's transport network, which benefit people's health the environment and reduce traffic.

Labor recognises Government has an important role promoting the benefits of walking and cycling and will make it easier and safer for people to ride and walk where they need to go.

Labor will:

- provide better infrastructure, including footpaths, bike paths, separated bike lanes and pedestrian crossing;
- improve cycling and pedestrian links to public transport, schools and public amenities;
- expand and link up the existing bike path network;
- look at ways to improve pedestrian safety around congested intersections;
- make sure options for cycling and walking are factored into road upgrades;
- encourage safe and efficient use of shared paths and roads through improved design and communication;
- promote active transport to school; and
- ensure that road design encourages pedestrian and cycling amenity.

4.5.2 FARES AND TICKETING

Many Victorians rely on public transport to get to school, university, work and to access health care. Labor will make sure public transport is easy to use and more accessible for all Victorians.

Labor will:

- make sure the public transport ticketing system is easy to access and use with fair pricing;
- review fare structures to ensure they are fair and accessible for all Victorians including regional passengers, seniors, concession holders and students;
- investigate incentives to encourage more families to use public transport; and
- support improved customer service, network knowledge and better staffing practices.

4.5.3 NEW TECHNOLOGY

Labor will investigate how new technologies can be used to improve Victoria's transport network to make it easier for people to access information and move around the network.

4.5.4 STUDENT TRAVEL

Victorian families rely on the student travel system to get their children to and from school safely – it must be an equitable, fair and accessible system.

Labor will make sure student safety, affordability and accessibility are prioritised and that the school transport system is easy for all Victorian students, parents and schools to understand and use.

4.5.5 AN ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Victoria's public transport network must be accessible to all Victorians, including people with a disability. Providing a more accessible network is an essential part of delivering a better transport network.

Labor will:

- rely on independent expert advice to create a public transport system that is accessible to people with disabilities, older people and vulnerable Victorians;
- make sure new and upgraded tram, train and bus infrastructure has better access for people with a disability;
- use new technology to make the network more accessible; and
- make sure new trains, trams and buses are accessible to all Victorians.

4.6 LOCAL TRANSPORT

4.6.1 BUSES

Bus services are vital for connecting Victorians to jobs, education and health services - particularly in our growing outer suburbs and interface councils.

Labor is committed to expanding and improving bus services in Victoria, and making sure our buses are safe for drivers and passengers.

Labor will:

- provide more buses, more often to more areas with better connections to train services and key nodes including health and education services;
- make sure bus drivers are safe and consider greater protections from assault; and
- look at options to expand high frequency shuttle services and increase capacity on key routes, including bus rapid transit lanes.

4.6.2 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

All Victorians deserve access to public transport, including those living in small rural and regional communities where the demand for services is not as great.

Labor is committed to finding new and innovative solutions to improve transport options for smaller communities in a way that is affordable for passengers with fair work practices for providers.

This could include on demand flexible public transport and using existing resources such as school buses for local transport outside of school times.

4.6.3 BETTER TRAIN STATIONS

As Victoria's population grows and demand for train services increases, we need to make sure our rail network is modern, fast and efficient, which includes train stations that are comfortable, safe and accessible.

Labor will:

- upgrade and improve train stations across the network;
- improve walking, cycling and bus connections to train stations;
- provide more car parking and better controls to make sure parking is used by commuters;
- make sure train stations have enough customer service staff to meet demand; and
- improve passenger information systems, signage, lighting, staffing, public announcement systems and toilets.

4.7 FREIGHT

Freight is vital to Victoria's economic prosperity and the prosperity of regional and rural communities.

Labor will boost productivity and support the freight network with improved links between Victoria's ports, airports, rail terminals and regional centres and new infrastructure to reduce congestion and direct trucks to freight and logistics centres.

Labor will:

- encourage greater movement of freight on Victoria's rail network and improve rail access to ports;
- work towards establishing Melbourne as a 24-hour freight city;
- improve links between regional areas and freight centres;
- cut red tape and upgrade roads and rail to improve the efficiency of the freight network and increase capacity;
- work to improve health and safety for freight and logistics workers; and
- support the development of intermodal freight terminals to improve the efficient movement of goods across Victoria.

4.7.1 COUNTRY FREIGHT LINES

Freight links connect Victorian farms with export opportunities and are vital to rural and regional communities.

Labor will support our farming communities and make sure the Murray Basin Rail Project provides greater reliability on the rail freight network, with more choice and capacity for freight operators.

We will make sure Victoria's rail freight network is properly maintained and will invest in rail gauge standardisation and the use of convertible sleepers where appropriate, to support the growth and development of Victoria's rail freight industry.

4.7.2 PORTS

Labor recognises the importance of Ports to Victoria's ongoing economic prosperity.

Labor will:

- ensure the movement of freight in and out of the Port of Melbourne is by rail and on dedicated roads to meet increased demand and take trucks off local streets;
- maximise the productivity of all Victorian Ports to expand markets and create local jobs;
- support the coastal shipping industry; and
- support investment and development in Victoria's regional ports.

4.7.3 AIRPORTS

Labor will make sure airports across Victoria are better utilised to support economic development and the needs of all Victorians.

Labor will:

- restrict urban growth encroachment into the flight paths of airports;
- support the development of airports to meet the needs of industry and communities and ensure that airports meet environmental and safety standards;
- support the development of air freight;
- support upgraded facilities and regional airports; and
- support the development and retention of training opportunities for apprentices and pilots in the aviation industry.

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A SAFE AND FAIR COMMUNITY

PREAMBLE

In Government, Victorian Labor has been working hard to tackle the causes of crime, reduce repeat offending, and provide support to victims of crime.

Labor has invested to recruit 3,135 new police officers and give Victoria Police the resources it needs to keep our community safe. No state government has ever dedicated such funding to the policing frontline.

Labor has led and delivered an ambitious legislative reform program, which has seen Victorian Labor develop the nation's strongest bail and sentencing laws and stricter parole. These large-scale reforms have put the safety of individuals and the community at the very centre of our decision-making, and more importantly, delivered results with a fall in crime rates.

Labor recognises that a key responsibility of Government is keeping people safe by ensuring Victoria Police, prosecution services and our courts are appropriately resourced to enforce and uphold law and order; and our laws meet community expectations in relation to bail, sentencing and parole.

Equally, Labor recognises that a crucial element of maintaining community safety is the prevention of reoffending. Reducing recidivism relies on appropriate funding of prison programs, education and skill development, sporting and community activities and supporting successful resettlement. Labor will continue to promote and develop initiatives that reduce recidivism.

Victorian Labor has a proud history of tackling discrimination head-on. Labor has pioneered anti-discrimination legislation and acted to remove discriminatory hurdles from every-day life. There is still much more to do to ensure our community is inclusive and embraces difference.

OUR VALUES

Labor first and foremost values the safety of members of the Victorian community.

Labor's approach to justice is driven by the key imperatives of keeping the community safe, one of the most sacred obligations of any Government.

Our system should focus on holding offenders to account, putting victims first and preventing the cycle of reoffending.

Labor knows that it is vital to ensure there is equitable access to justice for all.

Labor supports a system that protects the independence of our courts while at the same time ensuring that the law reflects community expectations and will foster a community attitude that has strong support for our police, courts and emergency services.

Victorians rightly expect to feel safe in their communities.

Labor believes that the community must have confidence in the justice system. This is enhanced when we have an independent judiciary and Labor will always defend and promote the independence of our courts.

Our justice system relies on and is strengthened by the independence of the judiciary. Labor will always defend and promote the independence of our courts, ensuring they remain free from inappropriate political commentary and interference.

Victorian Labor has spent the last three years in Government leading the discussion about better support for victims of crime, holding offenders to account, system resourcing, access to justice, support for the community legal sector and redress for victims of child sexual abuse. We have a proud record of achievement and acknowledge there is much more to be done.

When Labor came to Government in 2014, Community Legal Centres (CLCs) were on the brink of losing substantial funding from the Federal Government. The threat of cuts left CLCs with an uncertain future, and the clients who rely on their services were left in limbo.

Only Labor will ensure the provision of free and low cost legal advice and services for those who are experiencing hardship or disadvantage.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested significant funding to legal assistance services through Victoria Legal Aid, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services (VALS) and CLCs to continue the essential work they do for our most disadvantaged Victorians. The Andrews Labor Government has also funded grants through the Victorian Legal Services Board, resourcing projects that support some of the most vulnerable people in our community, including people with disability, indigenous people, young people and victims of family violence.

POLICY IN ACTION

NEW CUSTODY OFFICERS TO FREE UP FRONTLINE POLICE

More than 400 Police Custody Officers (PCOs) have been deployed at police stations across Victoria to free up police officers so they can return to the frontline and protect the community.

The number of police officers performing custody shifts at police station jails has dropped by more than 90 per cent at the 22 stations where PCOs are stationed.

PCOs have delivered more than 90,000 shifts since January 2016, helping to release police officers from custody duties so they can focus on catching criminals and target their attention on keeping communities safe.

PCOs are now in place in areas across Melbourne and regional Victoria including Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Sale, Mildura, Bairnsdale and Wangaratta.

PCOs and Supervising PCOs have become a valued and skilled part of some of Victoria's busiest police stations – by managing prisoners in cells, supporting police, supervising offenders and transporting them to and from court.

EQUALITY

Amy is a young Victorian and part of the LGBTI community.

She is grateful for the community leadership shown by Labor, and for the investment that the government has made in supporting LGBTI people and prioritising their health and wellbeing.

She cites things like investment in the Pride centre, specific LGBTI mental health, community grants, the apology to gay men convicted under homophobic laws, rolling out safe schools across the state, as things that are not just about economics or legislation, they are about dignity.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

5.1 KEEPING VICTORIANS SAFE

5.1.1 POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

5.1.1.1 RESOURCING

Labor has committed to take the politics out of policing, by giving Victoria Police the resources they need to address any law and order issues that the community may face.

Labor will:

- deliver in full the record investment of 3135 additional police officers;
- ensure that Victoria Police will always have the resources they need to keep the community safe, proactively engage with the community, address crime hot spots, as well as tackle new and emerging trends in crime;
- take a systemic approach to tackling high-harm offending; tackling serious and organised crime networks responsible for the high-harm offending in our community including violent crimes, drug and firearms trafficking and money laundering;
- make sure that police time is not diverted away from frontline duties through the provision of an effective and efficient bureaucracy that supports them, as well as through technological innovation that aids police operations and helps secure convictions and justice outcomes; and
- support ongoing professional development for police members.

5.1.1.2 COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

Labor understands that it is of the utmost importance for the community to have faith in and respect for our police force that is based on a comprehensive approach to police standards.

Labor will:

- ensure strong independent oversight for serious complaints against police, using an approach consistent with human rights that;
  - provides for independent investigation powers;
  - has the ability to initiate binding recommendations and prosecutions;
  - will be victim-centred; and
  - protect whistle-blowers;
- for other types of complaints delivers an efficient and expedient police complaint resolution process that maintains public confidence in Victoria Police while maintaining the workplace rights of the police member;
- fully rollout of body-worn cameras to police on the frontline, to deliver better justice outcomes and increased confidence and transparency in police and community interactions, while at the same time ensuring no diminution of individual rights;
- ensure that the internal culture is free from discrimination and harassment; and
- respond to the over-representation of people with a disability, including mental illness, in the criminal justice system by ensuring the protection of their rights in all police interviews through the attendance of an appropriately qualified independent third person.

5.1.2 REDUCING CRIME AND RE-OFFENDING

Labor understands the harm caused in the community from crime. Data from the independent Crime Statistics Agency confirms that new laws and investment in Victoria Police is reducing crime and undoing the damage of the six-year upwards crime trend that began in 2011. Central to continuing to drive down crime is the need for Victoria Police and other stakeholders to maintain positive links throughout our diverse community to promote crime prevention, social cohesion and community safety.

The Andrews Labor Government has already put in place stronger sentencing, is overhauling our bail system and our parole system is now the most stringent in the country. Labor will continue to make the changes necessary to keep Victoria safe.

Labor has made significant changes to the criminal justice system to prioritise community safety, including:

- the creation of new offences such as carjacking and home invasion;
- sweeping reforms to the youth justice system to increase consequences for serious young offenders;
- new laws to stop courts from using community correction orders (CCOs) for the most serious crimes, including rape, murder and sexual offences involving children;
- a new standard sentencing regime to increase the sentences for the most serious crimes; and
- new public order laws which protect peaceful protest but which make it clear that violent protest will not be tolerated.

Labor will:

- ensure Victoria Police develop a comprehensive community engagement strategy to work with disaffected and vulnerable communities to prevent crime and stop victimisation, including supporting and encouraging community participation through sport, arts or cultural activities; and
- develop local engagement strategies to work with community members on local crime prevention initiatives, including a state wide Active Neighbourhood strategy to encourage information reports that will aid in criminal detection and support those who may be isolated and therefore vulnerable such as the elderly.

5.1.2.1 SPECIALIST COURTS AND LISTS

Labor will continue to support and where possible expand specialist courts, court lists and programs which lead to a reduction in reoffending and reduced costs for the taxpayer.

Labor will:

- support the Melbourne Drug Court to build on the proven success of the Dandenong Drug Court and extend drug courts to other areas, including regional Victoria;
- invest in programs which integrate treatment services with judicial processes;
- continue the Court Integrated Services Program (CISP) and CISP Remand Outreach Pilot (CROP), and the Assessment and Referral Court List, which have a proven track record of reduction in re-offending rates;
- continue an enhanced response to Aboriginal offenders with dedicated roles focusing on identifying culturally appropriate referral options and allowing longer episode lengths when required;
- continue supporting court diversion programs, specialist courts and lists;
- support programs that target offenders transitioning from the justice system back into the community;
- continue the roll out of the Koori Court model;
- increase the number of Judges and Magistrates in line with case load guidelines; and
- increase support for legal assistance, duty lawyers and other legal caseworkers to alleviate pressure on the system.

5.1.2.2 YOUTH JUSTICE

There are a small group of young people that make bad decisions and commit offences that can have a significant impact on the community. Labor believes that while most young Victorians make the right choice, for victims of violent crime, the age of the offender is irrelevant.

Youth crime has a range of contributing factors including unemployment, poor educational experiences and attainment, family breakdown, discrimination in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, peer groups and role models that encourage and enable anti-social and criminal behaviour and lack of positive, productive activities.

It is possible for many young offenders to develop into valuable members of the community. Some young offenders should be given the opportunity to participate in employment, education and training, and incarceration must be the ultimate sanction for those who reject that opportunity.

While Labor believes that early intervention is the best defence against a cycle of crime and violence, unfortunately, for some young offenders, incarceration is the only appropriate option.

Labor will:

- support prevention and early intervention strategies and programs targeting at risk youth;
- support stronger criminal justice responses for serious youth offenders through a presumption of uplift of the case to a higher court in certain circumstances and a requirement for the court to consider community safety in sentencing;
- commit to diversion of young people by supporting court-based diversion schemes;
- continue to support the sentencing jurisdiction of the Children's Court to impose youth justice detention from two years to three years for a single offence and from three years to four years for multiple offences;
- provide appropriate general and mental healthcare services to young offenders in custody and post-release supports;
- support targeted educational pathways for young people, particularly disadvantaged and at-risk youth;
- consider the needs of minority groups, like LGBTI, Aboriginal Victorian and CALD youths in all youth justice policies and procedures;
- provide safe and secure accommodation in youth justice facilities and ensure custodial staff are appropriately trained in how to be LGBTI inclusive;
- ensure that staff who work in the community youth justice system as well as counsellors and other related service providers are trained on how to be LGBTI inclusive;
- recognise the special health needs of Same Sex And Gender Diverse (SSAGD) young people and work with the Rainbow eQuality guide; and
- provide support for post-release support services for children and their families, including education, health, drug rehabilitation and housing service.

5.1.2.3 CORRECTIONS

Labor believes that keeping Victorians safe from harm is one of the highest priorities of Government, and Government must do everything possible to prevent violent acts against innocent people.

In many cases, prison is the only appropriate option to protect the community from serious offenders. A growing prison population is not a marker of success, but neither is an overcrowded system which fails to rehabilitate prisoners or provide a safe workplace for staff.

Indigenous people or those with a disability in Victoria are more likely to be imprisoned than the general community. The male indigenous recidivism rate is also higher and statistically, indigenous offenders are less likely to complete their community based orders. These people need case management and wrap around services to prevent further incarceration.

Women are the fastest growing prison population – increasing 49 per cent in the last five years. Nearly half of women in prison are there on remand and an overwhelming proportion of them have experienced family violence as either an adult or in their childhood. Case management and support for women exiting prison is critical to reducing family breakdowns and reoffending.

Labor acknowledges the devastation criminal behaviour has on victims and the community and believes that when appropriate offenders should give back to community as part of their punishments to restore some of the harm inflicted.

Labor will:

- investigate developing a basic functional assessment for every prisoner on admission to ensure that those with an intellectual disability get the supports they need whilst in prison and their NDIS eligibility is assessed;
- consider reforms to parole that set clear goals from the outset of a prisoner's sentence that tackle the causes of reoffending;
- work to develop enhanced mental health programs in prisons across Victoria;
- strive for low recidivism rates by investing in prisoner support programs delivered during the custodial sentence and post release with an emphasis on the needs of indigenous, disabled or female prisoners;
- consider expanding the Corrections Independent Support Officer Program to all prisoners with a disability in Governor's Discipline Hearings;
- consider therapeutic interventions and rehabilitation for the juvenile justice system;
- seek to reduce the number of women in remand for low-level offending consistent with the Bail Act; and
- increase transitional support that assists people who leave prison with housing, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

5.1.2.4 PRISONER HEALTH

Labor recognises health care is a human right. Everyone is entitled to fair and equal health care, including those in the criminal justice system. Labor will continue to ensure proper medical treatment is provided to individuals in the corrections system, balancing this right with community safety.

Labor will:

- ensure those convicted of crimes who require medical treatment, including the health needs of transgender prisoners, have access to adequate care;
- ensure access to mental health, wellbeing and drug rehabilitation services for individuals in the criminal justice system;
- lobby the federal government to grant access to Federally funded healthcare and improve the screening and treatment capacity of forensic services and the health of Victoria's prisoners; and
- seek to reduce recidivism by increasing the availability and quality of mental health care for prisoners transitioning back into society post-release.

5.1.3 ACCESS TO JUSTICE

5.1.3.1 AFFORDABLE JUSTICE

Victorian Labor has a long, proud history of investing in the community legal sector and will continue to fight for every Victorian's right to access affordable justice.

Labor will:

- continue to ensure adequate funding for Victoria Legal Aid community legal centres, and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services and that the Federal Government pays its fair share;
- monitor funding for VALS and CLCs to ensure those most in need receive representation in the justice system;
- engage with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal Legal Services to design and deliver justice programs that will help address Aboriginal Victorians overrepresentation in the criminal justice system including primary prevention and diversion; and
- review the demands on and processes of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to ensure it remains a quick, low cost and user-friendly alternative to the courts, by ensuring that:
  - appointments of members keep pace with workload demands;
  - fees are kept to a minimum;
  - there is a strong financial hardship policy to keep it accessible for low income people;
  - lawyers are not allowed except with a written all-party agreement; and
  - procedural resources and support are made available to those seeking to use the jurisdiction.

5.1.3.2 STRENGTHENING ACCESS PATHWAYS

To further enhance our legal system's accessibility, the Andrews Labor Government has conducted a wide-ranging review into Access to Justice, delivering major new investments in access to legal assistance, online legal information, duty lawyers, telephone advice services, translators and interpreters.

Labor will:

- strengthen the viability of CLCs by providing greater encouragement for lawyers to work in the community sector;
- engage the whole Victorian legal sector in our law reform process while we work to modernise our laws and the legal system and provide greater access to justice; and
- continue to deliver on the review's wide-ranging recommendations to improve access to justice for vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians, including:
  - additional support for legal assistance with priority for duty lawyers services;
  - family violence-related services;
  - Aboriginal legal services and integrated service provision partnerships; and
  - support moving to four-year agreements with community legal centres.

5.1.3.3 SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF CRIME

Labor stands shoulder to shoulder with victims of crime. We are committed to ensuring they receive the support and care they need. The Andrews Labor Government has embedded in legislation the role of the Victims of Crime Commissioner and the Victims of Crime Consultative Committee. The committee has proven to be a valuable forum bringing victims of crime, judges and magistrates and criminal justice professionals together to discuss policy and services for victims of crime.

Labor understands that the justice system can be daunting, particularly for victims and children.

Labor will:

- continue to look at ways to help remove barriers, support victims and make the experience less traumatic;
- make it easier and faster for victims of crime to access financial assistance through the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT);
- take advice from the Victorian Law Reform Commission on ways to improve the experience of victims of crime who engage with VOCAT, including whether existing formulas for calculating awards are appropriate;
- ensure that victims of crime can access state-funded assistance in a way that is fast and fair and minimises any additional trauma; and
- continue to improve services for Victims of Crime via the Victims Support Agency.

5.1.4 ABORIGINAL JUSTICE

Labor is proud to have introduced the first Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA) in 2000. Since then, the Aboriginal community and governments have reviewed and built upon the achievements of the AJA.

It is a partnership established to achieve improved justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. This fits within the framework of self-determination that puts Aboriginal experiences and voices at the centre of decision-making.

Aboriginal Victorians are over-represented in the criminal justice system and Labor remains committed to working with the Aboriginal community to change this. The Victorian AJA is the key to this goal.

Labor will:

- continue working with Aboriginal Victorian communities to develop the fourth Aboriginal Justice Agreement, including youth justice;
- prioritise the further implementation of the recommendations from the report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCADIC) and ensure annual reporting by the Victorian Government on the implementation of the recommendations;
- work with Aboriginal Victorians to discuss the establishment an independent Commissioner for Aboriginal Social Justice;
- support initiatives to reduce the number of young Aboriginal Victorians in the criminal justice system;
- increase the quality and effectiveness of education and training (including cultural awareness training), for all working in the criminal justice system;
- deliver culturally appropriate programs for prisoners; and
- ensure effective case management and wrap around services post release to assist in community reintegration and reduce recidivism.

5.1.5 RESPONDING TO THE FAMILY VIOLENCE CRISIS

Family violence is the number one law and order issue in Victoria. The Andrews Labor Government has made an historic commitment to addressing family violence and to helping ensure that victims of family violence are supported.

The Andrews Labor Government established Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence and has committed to implementing all 227 report recommendations.

The Andrews Labor Government has provided unprecedented funding for family violence services, an investment that will help to save lives by responding to the needs of victims including children, and holding perpetrators to account.

The Andrews Labor Government has also responded with legislation to increase protections for children subject to family violence, make service of Family Violence Intervention Orders more straightforward and make it harder to abuse the intervention order appeal process.

Labor will:

- support Family Safety Victoria, the state-wide agency responsible for implementing the Family Violence Royal Commission;
- support Respect Victoria, the state-wide prevention of violence agency to coordinate and deliver state wide prevention of family violence campaigns;
- aid victims of family violence to escape from these situations and build new lives free from abuse, through practical and therapeutic support, by providing culturally appropriate refuges or ensuring they can remain safe in their own home;
- ensure victims of family violence have access to legal help they need;
- support those affected by family violence to participate in the criminal justice system;
- develop initiatives aimed at increasing the economic participation and therefore the economic independence, of victim survivors;
- support the skills development, growth and recruitment of the family violence workforce;
- oversee programs to prevent family violence including in rural and regional areas;
- develop programs in conjunction with communities most affected by family violence such as the disabled and indigenous aimed at early intervention, eradication and prevention;
- commission research to ensure Victoria is a world leader in the prevention of family violence;
- develop culturally appropriate perpetrator behaviour change programs and ensure culturally appropriate refuges are available for victims;
- research the development of a Family Violence Index to monitor and report to parliament on the prevention of family violence; and
- implement all recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family violence by 2023 and the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy by 2021.

5.1.6 SAFE IN NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural disasters and emergencies are an ever-present challenge for all Victorians.

Victoria's emergency services are vital in protecting communities across Victoria as well as helping them to recover from natural disasters. Labor is committed to providing practical support to our emergency services workers and volunteers.

5.1.6.1 FIRE SERVICES

Labor understands that Victoria and our major cities, including Melbourne, have changed. We also need to change our fire services to meet the needs of a large and diverse community across the state.

Labor will:

- continue to work towards the modernisation of our Fire Services;
- continue to seek, support and retain a diverse workforce and volunteer base in our Fire Services and undertake programs to encourage the recruitment of new volunteers;
- establish a body to review fire standards and fire service delivery, which will be instrumental in achieving and maintaining modern urban fire services, by recommending fire service boundaries which are informed by response time targets, population increases, extreme weather events and other fire and emergency risk factors; and
- continue to roll out the Emergency Medical Responder program to CFA stations.

5.1.6.2 FIREFIGHTERS

Labor has always believed we must act to support and stand with those who put their lives on the line to protect us.

Labor will:

- legislate to provide a legal presumption of occupational cancer for all firefighters;
- ensure firefighter numbers are sufficient to meet demand and that they are equipped with the resources and training they need;
- invest in the latest technology to support the work of firefighters on the front line including ensuring that their communication systems have interoperability;
- ensure that firefighters who work on Crown land and parks receive the recognition, support and training they need;
- increase superannuation for forest firefighters to 13.5% in recognition of the critical emergency response roles they undertake; and
- establish a Professional Firefighters Registration Board to be overseen by firefighting professionals, for the registration and accreditation of Victorian firefighting professionals and to develop, approve and accredit training and professional standards in consultation with firefighting professionals.

5.1.6.3 STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Labor values the role our State Emergency Service (SES) deliver to Victorians, particularly for those impacted by floods, severe storms and other emergencies.

Labor recognises the strong contribution the SES makes to Victoria's emergency response capacity and the integral role in building community preparedness and resilience.

Labor will:

- continue to build, support and resource a sustainable volunteer and employee workforce;
- develop emergency plans for flood, storm, and other emergencies in partnership with the community; and
- ensure an all hazards, all agencies approach to emergency management.

5.1.6.4 LIFE SAVING

Labor acknowledges the job our lifesavers do to prevent water related deaths and injuries in all Victorian communities.

Labor will:

- expand the support for in-school water safety education programs;
- allocate resources for a continuing public education campaign about water safety;
- work with Victoria's tourism agencies to educate visitors to the state about water dangers and safety;
- continue to invest in essential rescue equipment and infrastructure;
- target communities with a higher risk of drowning, like CALD communities, to reduce incidents of drownings;
- ensure water safety education extends to inland waterways, dams and swimming pools as well as our coastal regions; and
- support the Nippers surf education program.

5.2 SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL VICTORIANS

5.2.1 ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND COUNTRY

5.2.1.1 SELF DETERMINATION

Labor supports the development of a treaty with our first nation's people.

Labor will:

- resource and support the Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission to develop a representative structure to negotiate the terms of a Treaty with Victoria;
- support the representative structure to negotiate a treaty;
- work with Aboriginal Victorians to determine a process that reports against a set of key indicators and monitors government efforts to improve outcomes across the Victorian Aboriginal Community: and
- consider establishing an independent Parliamentary officeholder.

5.2.1.2 LAND RIGHTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Labor acknowledges and supports traditional owners and their connection to land, culture and heritage.

Labor will develop and lead a policy reform that provides self-determined land-based initiatives, aimed at providing economic development and employment opportunities and reaffirming the access and development rights of traditional owners of the land estate of Aboriginal Victorians.

Labor will:

- accelerate the negotiation and resolution of outstanding Traditional Owner Settlement claims;
- investigate the application of a revenue scheme for traditional owner groups, incorporating best practice from other models and jurisdictions;
- work with Traditional Owners as equal partners in the management of public lands and natural resources, planning and management;
- ensure that Caring for Country will become embedded as the best practice approach to land and sea management in Victoria;
- support Victorian Aboriginal landholders to map their cultural heritage including intangible cultural heritage;
- acknowledge, recognise and remember our Aboriginal legacy and history in partnership with Aboriginal Victorians and follow appropriate protocols to create lasting memorials and markers that recognise and contribute to Reconciliation with the legacy of the past;
- continue and expand the practice of having Traditional Owner Country plaques/signs at geographic markers at government boundaries or Traditional Owner boundaries;
- roll out State-wide initiatives across cemeteries to ensure culturally appropriate resting places;
- work with relevant Aboriginal groups and individuals to establish codes of conduct that ensure consent of Aboriginal Victorians is obtained when collecting and using Indigenous information for research; and
- promote and resource Victorian Aboriginal Languages Week.

5.2.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

Victorian Labor is committed to strengthening human rights and equal opportunity for all Victorians.

The Andrews Labor Government has conducted a review of the operation of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (the Charter) and provided funding for the expansion of human rights education in the Victorian Public Service. The Andrews Labor Government has appointed a new Commissioner and Chairperson at the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) who have overseen several important reviews into public sector workplace culture and discrimination.

Labor will build on this work by increasing understanding and application of the Charter within the public service.

Labor will not stop striving to make Victorian workplaces fairer and more inclusive and ensuring that workers' human rights are protected.

Labor will:

- continue to prioritise the development of a human rights culture in Victoria, using the legal framework of the Charter and the education role of VEOHRC to foster and focus change;
- prioritise human rights education and compliance for all government departments and agencies;
- support the VEOHRC to build on its expertise reviewing public sector workplace culture and discrimination;
- ensure that all public facing workers in the public sector, from disability carers to Protective Services Officers, have embedded skills to interact appropriately with all the diverse people they serve;
- ensure that human rights and anti-discrimination obligations of government are always met;
- ensure that human rights and anti-discrimination obligations are not evaded by outsourcing; and
- recommend that the Victorian Law Reform Commission consider decriminalisation of all sex work in Victoria as per other systems recognised internationally by human rights organisations.

5.2.2.1 DELIVERING EQUALITY FOR LGBTI VICTORIANS

Victoria proudly leads the nation when it comes to delivering equality for all members of our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender Diverse and Intersex (LGBTI) communities.

Labor has delivered on our 'Equality back on the Agenda' commitments, and has provided record funding for programs and projects designed to ensure LGBTI Victorians receive the respect, inclusion, health and happiness all Victorians are entitled to.

When elected, the Andrews Labor Government acted swiftly to introduce laws to remove discrimination against LGBTI Victorians.

The Andrews Labor Government delivered adoption law reform early in the term, to support the wider and ever-increasing diversity of families in Victoria.

The Andrews Labor Government made a formal State apology to those convicted under unjust and prejudiced criminal laws and practices that discriminated against homosexual Victorians before decriminalisation in 1981 and has implemented the historical homosexual conviction expungement scheme to help those affected.

Unfortunately, the makeup of the parliament meant that the Andrews Labor Government could not accomplish all the planned reforms. Labor won't stop fighting for the rights of trans, gender diverse and intersex Victorians.

Labor created the first Cabinet position for Equality and the role of Gender and Sexuality Commissioner – both Australian firsts – to actively champion the rights of the community, as well as LGBTI-inclusive practices across the community.

Labor will continue to work hard to ensure Victoria remains the safest and most inclusive place for our diverse LGBTI communities.

Labor will:

- develop a whole of government LGBTI Strategy that will inform Victoria's equality agenda for years to come;
- sustainably fund LGBTI community led organisations to provide specialist services that are culturally informed by the LGBTI community;
- fight for legislative reform through the Parliament to remove discrimination for LGBTI people;
- strengthen LGBTI organisations through capacity building and more opportunities for networking and peer support;
- increase opportunities for emerging leaders within LGBTI communities;
- reduce the over-representation of LGBTI Victorians with poor physical health and mental health outcomes, homelessness, and socio-economic disadvantage;
- build awareness and to improve training and provision of inclusive services in multicultural and multi-faith organisations;
- improve the provision of inclusive health practices, and expand health services for the trans and gender diverse community;
- work with ageing and disability providers to ensure they are providing inclusive, sensitive, and tailored support services to LGBTI people;
- support LGBTI young people by continuing to invest in anti-bullying and mental health initiatives that aim to ensure every child feels safe, supported and included when they go to school;
- reduce workplace discrimination in every workplace and break down barriers to employment for the LGBTI community, providing mentoring, training and career pathways to ensure greater workplace diversity and visibility;
- provide support and opportunities to allow LGBTI Victorians to celebrate their unique culture whilst encouraging a greater diversity of creative and artistic expression; and
- ensure LGBTI Victorians in rural and regional communities have access to more services and support to reduce disadvantage and isolation.

5.2.2.2 DISABILITY RIGHTS

The NDIS provides a once in a generation change that will ensure that the people with a disability are accorded the dignity, lifestyle choices and human rights protections that other Victorians take for granted however there is still work to be done to protect and support these community members.

Labor will:

- explore options for the provision of civil legal aid for those with disabilities and/or mental illness or impairment;
- lobby the Federal Government to ensure that NDIS transition and interface issues are dealt with effectively to ensure that no-one with a disability currently receiving services is disadvantaged;
- develop a protocol between Disability Services and the Health system including mental health to ensure that their needs are properly addressed and health staff are adequately trained to care for people with a disability; and
- ensure the oversight of all restrictive interventions in schools for children with a disability comes under the Disability Act.

5.2.3 CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Labor understands the importance of consumer rights for all Victorians, particularly with respect to the rights of the most vulnerable in our community.

Labor will:

- develop a consumer charter that sets out the community service obligations for all consumer-facing companies, with consequences for businesses that fail to meet their obligations under the charter;
- lobby the Federal Government to adopt a similar charter for telecommunications companies;
- address the growing problem of online scams, particularly through education and advice to the community;
- review the Motor Car Trades Act and examine options for a specialist, binding dispute resolution service for motor vehicles that is funded by the industry;
- examine the merits of reinstating the licensing regime for travel agents and the Travel Agents Compensation Fund for Victorian consumers;
- consider the current private toll operator fines enforcement regime with a view to making it fairer for lower income people and those experiencing hardship and special circumstances; and
- consider reforms to Victorian Civil Appeals Tribunal (VCAT) to restore the original purpose of a low cost streamlined process.

5.2.3.1 PROTECTING OLDER AND VULNERABLE CONSUMERS

As people age, their consumer rights need to be protected as they enter into long term financial arrangements and plan for end of life arrangements like funerals. Labor understands that vulnerable people need additional consumer protections to ensure they are not preyed upon by unscrupulous service providers.

Labor will:

- consider a review of services provided to older Victorians such as retirement villages and prepaid funerals to assess whether any of the contracts used are unfair or unconscionable, including considering establishing an independent advocate role;
- reform the rooming house sector by implementing a charter and improving access to dispute resolution; and

- investigate ways to better protect Victorians from exploitative sales tactics and protect Victorians from the high cost of pawn broking by investigating the most effective way to regulate and cap the interest and fees charged by this industry, complimented by a review of the Second-Hand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act.

5.2.4 CONFIDENCE IN OUR INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY

Labor has done much to restore confidence in our legal and democratic institutions, systems and processes after inheriting a system at an all-time low.

5.2.4.1 POLITICAL DONATIONS

Labor will deliver a comprehensive package of political donation reforms that will ensure Victorians can continue to have confidence in the electoral system, parliament and their elected representatives.

Labor will:

- cap donations at $4,000 over a four-year parliamentary term, eliminating large donations to political parties, and third-party campaigners;
- reduce the disclosure limit from $13,500 to $1,000 per financial year; and
- ban foreign donations.

POLICY IN ACTION

MULTI DISCIPLINARY CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Victims and survivors of family violence no longer have to tell their story over and over to different support services.

Six Multi Disciplinary Centres have been established across Victoria, offering holistic and tailored support for victims family violence.

Victoria Police, dedicated trauma counsellors and child protection workers are located together under one roof providing one-stop support to those experiencing family violence.

Remote witness facilities are being incorporated into these centres to allow victims of family violence to provide evidence via a video -link instead of having to attend court.

CONSULTATION WITH ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS ON TREATY

The Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission will continue to lead engagement on the treaty process and the development of the Aboriginal Representative Body with the Aboriginal Community.

Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Owners are being supported to engage further on the state's Treaty process through Treaty Circle Grants that will fund smaller consultations or 'Treaty Circles' on key matters relating to Treaty, while Treaty Engagement Grants that will support deeper, ongoing consultation, as well as strategic planning and research in the areas of self-determination and Treaty.

CRIME PREVENTION GRANTS TO BOOST COMMUNITY SAFETY

Councils and community groups across the state can apply for up to $250,000 under the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund (PSIF), which provides funding for security infrastructure that supports safe communities.

Projects that could receive funding include lighting upgrades, streetscape and other amenity improvements, or the installation of CCTV technology in high risk areas.

Community Safety Fund grants enable community groups and local councils able to apply for up to $10,000 for projects that help prevent crime and strengthen community safety.

Projects that may be funded include new security equipment and infrastructure, education and awareness campaigns to help prevent motor vehicle and property theft, and small-scale, physical improvements and upgrades to public spaces such as streetscapes, parks and reserves to improve community use of these areas.

Oakleigh's Eaton Mall, received a $250,000 grant which will ensure pedestrian-only access at three key intersections, to reduce hoon behaviour and improve community safety and confidence.

The PSIF and the CSF are part of the Andrews Labor Government's $25 million package in the Victorian Budget 2018/19 for local crime prevention initiatives, including youth crime prevention projects, and support for Crime Stoppers and Neighbourhood Watch.

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

PREAMBLE

All Victorians deserve access to a safe environment, good public services, secure jobs and a safe community.

For the last seven years, Melbourne has been voted the world's most liveable city. That is a great vote of confidence in our city, but we want the whole of Victoria to be the most liveable place in the world.

Labor understands that no matter where Victorians live, they have the right to expect reliable and safe roads and public transport, world class health and education facilities, job opportunities, a clean and healthy environment and access to a variety of leisure activities.

Labor has focused on delivering for all Victorian communities, from the inner city, to the outer suburbs of Melbourne, our regional cities, towns and rural communities across the state.

OUR VALUES

There is a critical inter-relationship between the environment, society and the economy and, regardless of where people live, Victorians deserve access to a safe environment, good public services, secure jobs and a safe community. Labor has a strong record of protecting and safe-guarding our community assets.

Having a home is a basic need, so Labor is committed to ensuring housing is affordable and accessible, and to tackling homelessness.

Thoughtful and long- term planning will build a liveable state, years into the future.

Providing opportunities to participate and volunteer in the local community is central to liveability and social cohesion.

Providing great sporting facilities will ensure the leisure and health of millions of Victorians, and supporting the creative industry both creates jobs and brings enjoyment to many.

Ensuring local government is well equipped to deliver local services is crucial.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

6.1 PLANNING

Planning should support economic, social and environmental development in a way that is fair and timely. Labor understands that this means building partnerships between state and local government and engaging communities to ensure transparent and consistent decisions.

All Victorians deserve access to secure jobs, housing, a safe community, transport, health and education facilities and a clean environment, and proper planning has a role in delivering this.

Labor will:

- update state-wide planning policies for land use in Victoria and require councils to regularly update their Municipal Strategic Statements:
- reform and simplify planning requirements through the Smart Planning process;
- protect third party rights to ensure access and fairness at both local government and VCAT, with the outcome of well-founded decisions on land use application;
- benchmark council planning processes to ensure transparent, timely and effective planning administration by local government; and
- ensure our planning system includes recognition of Aboriginal culture and values, and symbolic recognition such as naming of places in growth areas and community spaces.

6.1.1 RURAL AND REGIONAL VICTORIA

Labor recognises that the development of the state requires an effective balance in development between metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria's regions.

Labor has established regional partnerships to engage with regional communities and take their priorities straight to the heart of government decision-making.

Labor understands that integrated land use planning for regional cities and small rural towns supports growth in jobs and housing, as part of making local communities stronger and more sustainable.

Victoria's economy prospers from a growing rural economy underpinned by expanding our sustainable food and fibre production. Applying the precautionary principle to planning in rural and regional areas will protect the environment and ensure sustainability of food and fibre production.

Labor will:

- work with rural and regional councils to develop future growth plans that will stimulate economic opportunities as well as protect what makes places special;
- carefully plan the growth of regional areas so that it is at a manageable rate and not at the expense of existing regional residents;
- improve access to rail transportation for regional cities, connecting to strategic employment, tourism, gateway and industrial locations to create more regional jobs;
- work to develop neighbourhoods that provide quick and easy access to transport, schools, health providers and shops;
- ensure that future planning protects agricultural land and the 'food bowl', including renewing older infrastructure to meet the changing needs of food production and transport; and
- ensure adequate and healthy water supplies whilst protecting surface and ground water ecosystems.

6.1.2 METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

Planning plays a critical role in maintaining Melbourne's status as the world's most liveable city. Plan Melbourne 2017-2051 establishes a clear framework for future growth underpinned by the concept of providing quick and easy access to services in local neighbourhoods, linked by a greatly improved public transport system, focussing on key activity centres and seven employment and innovation precincts.

Labor will:

- ensure that the strategic planning decisions are consistent and deliver the outcomes set out in Plan Melbourne;
- manage Melbourne's continuing record growth in a manner that is sustainable, matched by plans to expand transport, housing and community facilities that can be delivered within the urban growth boundary by the better utilisation of land;
- utilise the advice of metropolitan partnerships in decision-making;
- strengthen planning strategies for transportation, health, education and community services across the state through forward plans, within the framework established by Infrastructure Victoria for our longer-term needs;
- respect the urban growth boundary and protect Melbourne's Green Wedges from urban and inappropriate uses; and
- prioritise infrastructure planning and investment for urban growth precincts and outer-growth area communities.

6.1.3 STRENGTHENING SUBURBS

All levels of government have a responsibility for the delivery of services, infrastructure provision, the management of our natural resources and the protection of our natural and cultural diversity. Working though the Metropolitan Partnerships, Labor will develop local strategies and priorities to maintain and further improve urban amenity and character in each metropolitan sub-region.

Labor will:

- support communities to engage with government to identify and address challenges and opportunities in Melbourne's suburban communities;
- develop Five Year: Jobs, Services and Infrastructure Plans that will deliver the identified community priority outcomes;
- review planning laws relating to overshadowing to ensure that residents get the full benefit of their solar panels for power generation and storage; and
- strengthen requirements for footpath access adjacent to retirement, aged care, nursing homes and kindergartens.

6.1.4 PLAN FOR NEW GREEN SPACES FOR MELBOURNE

Melbourne's liveability is built around its location on Port Phillip Bay, the rivers and creeks that flow into it and the open spaces set aside by generations of Victorians to create a huge network of parks and sporting facilities connected by bike paths and walking trails.

Labor will:

- further expand the network of parks as new growth corridor communities are planned;
- link up existing trails and encourage greater use of existing parklands with new activities and events;
- plan for future sporting requirements for recreational land, as demand patterns change and surplus land becomes available for diversified uses; and
- promote the greening of existing suburbs through programs to encourage new plantings, improvement of degraded parklands and the creation of "pocket parks" in communities with lower than average open space provision.

6.1.5 HERITAGE PROTECTION

Victoria has a rich history and many significant heritage places and buildings protected by state and local laws.

Labor will:

- provide protection to heritage sites and assets by strengthening the role of Heritage Victoria and the Heritage Council;
- review and improve the role and responsibilities for the maintenance and protection of significant built and natural assets and environment;
- support a program to facilitate facade restoration and rejuvenation of verandas on heritage buildings; and
- review heritage protection processes to include LGTBI social history.

6.1.6 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Recent events involving combustible cladding on buildings have highlighted weaknesses in non-compliance with the National Construction Code by practitioners and a failure of the building regulator to properly police the industry. The failure to properly enforce existing laws and the importation of non-compliant building products has resulted in a serious problem for building owners.

Labor will:

- strengthen building legislation to achieve more protection for consumers and implement the findings of the Victorian Cladding Taskforce to ensure that buildings are safe for their use;
- work with the National Building Ministers' Forum to improve product labelling and prevent materials from being used in a non-compliant manner; and
- strengthen enforcement to prevent the importation of products containing illegal asbestos.

6.1.7 EQUITY IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Labor recognises that women have not always benefited from the same levels of infrastructure investment as men, including the distinct ways in which women experience public transport and roads, sporting and other entertainment facilities and public buildings

Labor will task Infrastructure Victoria to do a gendered analysis of the physical infrastructure in the state, to inform future planning and reconfigure public spaces to be safer and more accessible to women.

6.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Labor acknowledges the vital contribution local government provides through a wide range of community services, infrastructure provision and community development across Victoria.

Principles which define Labor's policy for local government include:

- autonomy and independence to undertake its duties and functions;
- community engagement;
- excellent governance principles, transparency and financial management;
- equitable Industrial Relations;
- support for rural and regional councils; and
- leadership in gender equity.

6.2.1 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Local Government is a key part of our democratic system. Labor believes councils should comply with principles requiring transparency, accountability, strong public consultation and sound financial management.

Labor will:

- support the capacity for councils to be collaborative and innovative, both with other government entities, each other and the private sector;
- support ministerial oversight of councils including the ability to suspend a councillor in cases of governance failures or breach of the Local Government Act; and
- support the power of the Minister to suspend and dismiss a council where there is evidence of significance governance failures or breaches of law, subject to parliamentary approval.

6.2.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Strong community engagement is vital for councils to be able to provide efficient and effective services and infrastructure for their communities.

Labor will:

- ensure a clear objective and scope – participants are aware from the outset what the consultation hopes to achieve;
- ensure informed participation – participants will be kept up to date on any developments to support their decision-making;
- support diverse representation – ensure a true representation of those effected by decision outcomes;
- provide a supportive and inclusive space – so participants are encouraged to contribute without bias, and given adequate resources to make informed decisions; and
- ensure transparent and accountable outcomes – councils are held accountable for the outcomes of the consultation process.

6.2.3 EXCELLENT GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES, TRANSPARENCY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Councils need to have clear governance rules that demonstrate how councils will operate and make decisions. Labor supports public accessibility of council decision-making and believes that this should be transparent.

Victorian Labor supports the 'fair go' rates system and performance reporting of councils through the 'Know Your Council' website. Labor believes that there must be a consistent policy across all councils for financial hardship considerations when it comes to rates.

Labor will:

- ensure council meetings are open and that reasons for their decision-making known to the public;
- support councils to develop four-year plans with annual budgets and require a long-term vision with a 10-year financial outlook and financial management plan; and
- encourage increased community engagement in forward planning.

6.2.4 EQUITABLE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

As a large employer, councils must be able to demonstrate compliance with industrial contracts.

Labor will:

- ensure councils have a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Employment and Remuneration policy consistent with the principles in the Public-Sector Commission's Policy on Executive Remuneration for Public Entities;
- ensure that council CEOs need to adopt workforce plans in consultation with staff and the appropriate union representative, including setting out their future workforce needs;
- support the protection and improvement of long service leave entitlements for local government staff, including correcting anomalies and establishing a portable long service leave scheme for the community sector;
- require councils to enable flexible working arrangements for all positions;
- support council provision of 20 days per annum paid family violence leave and support to employees who have been impacted by family violence;
- ensure Councils develop workforce plans setting out their future workforce needs and how these needs will be met, including Councils offering apprenticeships and traineeships; and
- ensure councils do not use rate capping to lead to service reduction.

6.2.5 SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL COUNCILS

Labor recognises the unique financial, operational and social challenges that rural and regional councils face. Labor is dedicated to helping councils achieve sustainable and effective delivery of services to their communities.

Labor will support a rural and regional council reform program to help these councils achieve long term sustainability.

6.2.6 LEADERSHIP IN GENDER EQUALITY

Labor is committed to gender equality in local government.

Labor will:

- encourage councils to meet a gender equity target of 50/50 for councillors and mayors by 2025;
- support councils to model gender equality in the workplace through equity in employment, by establishing an aspirational commitment towards 50 per cent women in executive roles and all roles as flexible;
- fund and support projects that encourage women from Aboriginal, LGBTI, with a disability or a multicultural background to participate in decision-making to ensure diversity of decision-making in local government; and
- aid local government to develop mechanisms to ensure councils engage women across their planning, programming, service delivery and interactions with clients in early years, MCH services, youth services, sports and recreation and Home and Community Care services.

6.2.7 HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

Labor understands the need to support local government in the provision of Home and Community Care (HACC) and in childcare services.

Labor will:

- work with local government and affiliated unions to protect the Victorian HACC system;
- advocate to the Federal Government that block funding arrangements for HACC must continue after 2019;

- amend any state policies, such as competitive neutrality policy, to encourage Council to remain HACC providers;
- recognise that frequent changes to community sector funding arrangements do not deliver certainty to those Victorians dependent on community services;
- recognise the diversity of people, partners and families accessing these services; and
- work with the community services sector and unions to deliver greater funding stability to those community sector organisations contracted by the state government to provide community services.

6.2.8 SERVICE DELIVERY

Labor recognises that local government, particularly in rural and regional Victoria, directly and indirectly supports thousands of secure jobs for Victorians.

Labor will:

- consult with relevant unions and stakeholders to develop guidelines on the sensible use of shared services in the procurement of goods;
- ensure Councils are not able to exploit shared services as a means of undermining worker's pay and conditions or as a way of outsourcing, eliminating or reducing services;
- support Councils in continuing to provide services via an in-house service delivery model; and
- encourage Councils to bring services back in-house and to place the in-house service delivery model as the default service delivery model for local government.

6.3 HOUSING

All Victorians have a right to secure, affordable and appropriate housing throughout their lives. Labor recognises that having a home provides the foundation for social and economic participation and security.

Home ownership rates having been falling for younger and lower-income families. The private and public rental markets have not provided adequate alternatives.

6.3.1 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Labor believes that all Victorians have a right to safe, affordable and secure housing. Having a home provides the foundation for financial, social and emotional security. A strong and sustainable housing sector is critical to ensuring that all Victorians can own or rent housing that meets their needs.

Labor will:

- lobby the Federal Government to continue to play an active role in social housing;
- consider policy settings that allow for institutional investment in rental housing, including build-to-rent schemes;
- assist low income Victorians to buy affordable housing;
- ensure that Development Victoria and other statutory authorities deliver a range of housing options at suitable sites across the State using the redevelopment of under-utilised urban sites to achieve appropriate urban densities of housing, including social housing;
- ensure Victoria's planning system and building regulations require new construction to incorporate universal design principles that facilitate better access for persons with disability and older persons;
- explore further mechanisms to underpin long term, sustained investment in affordable housing measures; and
- consider extending stamp duty concessions for individuals who have been impacted upon by family violence to give them the chance to start a new chapter in their lives.

6.3.2 SOCIAL HOUSING

Ensuring a strong and sustainable social housing sector is critical to ensuring that all Victorians have access to housing that meets their needs. Labor is committed to upgrading and strengthening our public and community housing system for future generations. Public and community housing plays an integral role for people on Centrelink payments and low incomes.

Labor will:

- support, maintain and grow Victorian's public housing stock;
- expand Victoria's social housing assets through its contribution to the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) and State initiatives;
- promote and expand not-for-profit, community Housing Associations and Housing Providers;
- develop an Aboriginal Victorian housing and homelessness strategy with Aboriginal Housing Victoria, that increases stock, responds to demands and addresses Aboriginal Victorians' barriers to securing housing;
- enable organisations providing Aboriginal housing to provide Aboriginal-specific case management support services, including for Aboriginal Victorians on waiting lists and current public and social housing tenants;
- increase the supply of community housing through the Social Housing Growth Fund, the Victorian Property Fund, loan guarantee and loan facility;
- strengthen the protections and rights for those who reside in community housing;
- encourage local government to develop policies that facilitate investment in social and affordable housing through Affordable Housing Agreements, enabling inclusionary housing policy outcomes at the local level;
- develop a Homelessness Strategy that addresses LGBTI Victorians as a specific cohort and works with LGBTI community organisations to address barriers to securing safe and inclusive housing;
- support energy efficient changes to social housing; and
- apply inclusionary zoning principles to ensure affordable rentals are incorporated into major developments.

6.3.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

Labor recognises the need to continue urban renewal to ensure that areas with high concentrations of public housing enjoy increased amenity, access to public open spaces and a mix of housing tenures, density and social mix to better integrate surrounding communities.

Labor will:

- protect the rights of existing tenants through this process; and
- consider partnering with registered housing agencies and the private sector to increase social housing.

6.3.4 TENANCY AND PRIVATE RENTAL

Labor believes the provision of more secure, affordable and appropriate housing in the private rental market is essential. Labor will make renting fair.

Labor will:

- implement further reforms to the Residential Tenancy Act and Residential Tenancies Regulations to ensure greater consumer protection and improved housing standards;
- introduce a standard form long term lease agreement which will ensure renters can have stability and security;
- ensure access to transparent and independent mechanisms for reviewing rental increases;
- strengthen maintenance regimes for rental properties;
- reform minimum standards for rental properties to improve water and energy efficiency standards;
- outlaw the practice of rental bidding or rental auctions;
- work with all levels of government to encourage greater investment in affordable rental housing, increasing the supply of homes available for private rental across a diverse range of sizes and locations;
- improve protection of people living in relocatable housing and caravan parks, by allowing compensation when parks close, strengthening pre-contractual disclosure and improvements to their rights.
- ensure that public housing tenants are not discouraged from social and economic participation by the prospect of immediate rent rises when their income increases; and
- eliminate bias in private rental market applications for people from diverse backgrounds.

6.3.5 HOMELESSNESS

Having a home is a basic human right. Labor believes that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should be supported to achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion.

Labor will:

- continue to implement a Housing First model to ensure that secure affordable housing is offered as quickly as possible to Victorians in crisis;
- focus on prevention and early intervention to stop people, particularly young people, becoming homeless;
- work with relevant organisations to support strategies that break the cycle of homelessness;
- improve and expand the service response to homelessness, with the goal of providing long-term, integrated housing to those in need;
- ensure that crisis and transitional housing accommodation is in locations where it is needed;
- support tenants in crisis and transitional housing to obtain longer-term housing by providing support with rental bonds; and
- ensure drug and alcohol and mental health treatment and support are available for people who are homeless or transitioning into accommodation.

6.4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community participation is at the heart of a healthy and vibrant society.

Labor will:

- continue to support important community organisations like neighbourhood houses in recognition of the important work they do in being places of inclusion for many people, as well as assisting in social cohesion, the provision of education and the opportunity to volunteer in local communities; and
- continue to provide support to men's sheds in recognition of the important role they play in enhancing the health and wellbeing of men and connecting men with their local communities.

6.5 ARTS, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

A strong, vibrant and diverse creative communities are essential in building a more inclusive and connected society. Every Victorian should have the opportunity to participate in, or enjoy the best of what our arts, culture and creativity has to offer.

Labor will:

- strengthen and revitalise the assets and infrastructure of our major cultural institutions and agencies to ensure they are world class;
- ensure our major cultural agencies create opportunities to collaborate with our medium and small creative organisations, especially those in regional and suburban areas, to advance the whole sector;
- stimulate local economies and grow tourism by offering a greater diversity of cultural events in rural and regional areas;
- support individual creative practitioners in their important work, so that they may take the next steps in their career;
- continue to grow our State's live music sector, ensuring both long-term sustainability, growing new audience and market opportunities and making Melbourne's live music scene one of the best in the world;
- expand opportunities for Aboriginal Victorians to express their history, culture and creativity, through a range of artistic mediums;
- increase the diversity of the creative industries, giving greater opportunities and voice to those with disability, Aboriginal Victorians, CALD communities, those from the LGBTI community, and women in traditionally under-represented creative industries;
- expand Victoria's presence in the screen industry, opening new markets for our games, TV and film sectors and growing jobs in these industries; and
- create further opportunities for creative industries to collaborate and co-work in shared spaces.

6.6 SPORT AND RECREATION

Sport brings communities together, and creates a sense of belonging. It is essential to our health and wellbeing as well as bringing significant economic and cultural benefits to our state,

Labor will:

- support the development of athletes through the Victorian Institute of Sport and its regional academies;
- encourage and support sport across Victoria;
- ensure that community facilities are accessible to people with disabilities; and
- address the gender inequality in sports administration and encourage mainstream media to program more women's sport and fledging sporting codes.

6.6.1 SPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Labor understands that participation in sporting and recreational activities is important for social inclusion and personal health and wellbeing and that sporting facilities must be available to all Victorians.

The Andrews Labor Government has delivered the biggest boost to community sport in the state's history to upgrade facilities at suburban ground, local clubs and high-performance centres across the state.

Labor will:

- support programs to build capacity of sport and recreation infrastructure to support the increasing number of Victorians participating in sport;
- encourage local government to develop multipurpose sporting facilities to benefit more members of their local communities, whatever their chosen sport; and
- invest in a network of local metropolitan and regional infrastructure.

6.6.2 COMMUNITY SPORT

Neighbourhoods thrive when residents are involved and live in safe, active and healthy communities. Community volunteers spend countless hours at local sporting clubs, which are a major point of social connection for people of all ages and all backgrounds.

Labor believes that sport should be inclusive and accessible.

Labor acknowledges that women's and men's enjoyment of these activities is shared equally and participated in equally.

Labor will:

- ensure that women and girls are properly nurtured and supported and can participate in sport and recreation at all levels;
- encourage local sporting clubs to develop programs and activities that include women and girls including the provision of culturally diverse activities that increase opportunities for involvement;
- work with local government and other bodies to ensure equitable access for women and girls to playing fields and facilities;
- provide opportunities for young people to participate in recreation and sport;
- work with sporting bodies to deliver gender inclusive education programs for sporting players, coaches, managers and promoters across all sports and levels;
- support programs to increase participation of Aboriginal Victorians;
- provide support and flexible participation options for other under-presented communities including people with a disability, LGBTI people and disengaged youth;
- support sport and action recreation organisations to address racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination and harassment; and
- investigate programs to address rising club fees.

6.6.3 VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

Volunteers play a valuable role in community sport.

Labor will:

- support people contributing to their local sporting organisations through volunteering;
- encourage a more diverse range of people, especially young people, to volunteer and support local sporting organisations; and
- recognise and support people who are already contributing to a local sporting organisation.

6.6.4 RURAL AND REGIONAL RECREATIONAL WATER FACILITIES

Labor acknowledges the importance of rural and regional towns having access to adequate and fit for purpose recreational water facilities that help them to cope with emerging weather conditions brought on by climate change.

Labor understands the importance of safe reliable recreational water facilities to meet social needs in communities.

Labor will:

- support swimming pools in small rural communities; and
- ensure recreational and environmental flows maintain lakes used as community recreation areas.

6.7 TOURISM AND MAJOR EVENTS

6.7.1 TOURISM

Labor understands the importance of the tourism industry to Victoria, particularly through the hundreds of thousands of jobs it generates. Collaboration between the sector and Government, together with investment in planning, marketing and infrastructure will see this industry grow.

Labor will:

- work with Melbourne Airport to improve transport connections;
- work to improve Victoria's presence in our fastest growing market;
- ensure regional tourism boards are best placed to promote and capitalise on the unique assets of a region;
- develop destination management plans for individual locations and experiences;
- promote Victoria as a destination of choice for Indigenous tourism visitors; and
- build on Victoria's reputation as a great sporting State and encourage active lifestyle tourism in Victoria, particularly in regional areas.

6.7.2 MAJOR EVENTS

Having a significant sporting and cultural events program stimulates the tourism industry across a wide range of businesses including transport services, primary producers, accommodation providers, restaurants and retail.

Labor understands the importance of working with stakeholders to ensure Victoria's Tourism and Events Industry Strategy is world class.

Labor will:

- enhance Victorian's business events infrastructure;
- facilitate new investment in regional Victoria;
- improve visitor experience in nature-based parks;
- develop lasting memorials and markers of Victorian Aboriginal heritage for visitors to experience;
- support the redevelopment of our major stadiums to give sporting fans access to their favourite sports at the best venues and continue to attract major events;
- retain and increase Victoria's major events calendar, attracting events that boost the economy and employ Victorians;
- ensure that our support for tourism and major events results in the creation of good secure jobs; and
- continue to grow Victoria's art and cultural events calendar.

6.8 THE RACING INDUSTRY

Labor understands the value and contribution that racing brings across our regional and metropolitan areas by generating tens of thousands of jobs, significant community participation and a global platform for tourism

Labor has provided strong leadership and support to the racing industry across thoroughbreds, harness racing and greyhound racing. We will continue to work with all industry participants, clubs

and racing authorities to ensure that the racing entertainment provided by the thousands of participants remains world-leading.

Labor will:

- ensure that the highest priority is placed on the welfare of and conditions for, all participants in the racing industry, including horses, jockeys, trainers, strappers, stable hands, barrier attendants, betting operators, off-track hospitality workers and all other staff;
- ensure racing continues to be managed by people with appropriate expertise and industry experience to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of racing, free of undue political interference; and
- encourage all racing clubs to maximise their interaction with local communities and investigate means to ensure that government support to racing facilitates broader community use of racecourses and facilities.

Labor is committed to ensuring that Victoria remains Australia's preeminent racing state.

Labor will:

- work with principal racing authorities, wagering operators, interstate authorities and the Federal Government to ensure that revenue to the industry is maintained at the highest possible level;
- provide racing authorities with the necessary powers to ensure that the integrity of the sport is of the highest standard; and
- ensure a transparent and accountable industry through the Racing Integrity Commissioner and further strengthen the integrity frameworks of the racing industry.

Labor acknowledges the role of greyhound racing in Victoria.

Labor will:

- Work with Greyhound Racing Victoria to ensure it has the right powers and resources to enforce the highest standards of animal welfare; and
- investigate ways to further support greyhound racing industry participants to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the code, especially in regional Victoria.

Labor understands the importance of Harness Racing in Victoria.

Labor will work with Harness Racing Victoria and industry participants to ensure a strong and vibrant code into the future.

6.9 RESPECTING AND RECOGNISING VETERANS

Labor recognises the sacrifices and contributions made by our war veterans. Communities across Victoria acknowledge the debt owed to our veterans with educational and commemorative programs to promote awareness throughout the community.

Labor will:

- support communities to recognise and commemorate the service of veterans and preserve their war heritage;
- support the Shrine of Remembrance to enable it to undertake vital educational and commemorative work;
- work with veteran groups in relation to State programs delivering services for veterans;
- work with Vietnam Veterans to provide for transition to the next generation of Returned and Services League personnel; and
- work with the Federal Government to maximise support for our veterans.

6.10 BUILDING STRONGER MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Victoria's rich and diverse multicultural community is a strength of our community and is based on the values of respect, co-operation and fairness.

Labor knows that Victoria is a fundamentally accepting and egalitarian society with the values of a 'fair go' and support for racial equality and equal opportunity deeply ingrained.

Labor is unequivocally opposed to the expression of intolerance in any form.

6.10.1 RESPECT AND FAIRNESS IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Labor acknowledges that migration promotes significant long term social and economic benefits to our society. Labor welcomes migrants into our community - including many who come as refugees or people seeking asylum.

Labor understands the need to raise awareness of the benefits of a vibrant and tolerant community that balances cultural identity with the need to recognise and respect the beliefs of others.

Labor will:

- encourage Victorians to participate in culturally diverse activities;
- support community projects across Victoria that promote community harmony;
- provide information and community education around racial and religious understanding;
- highlight the economic and social contribution and benefit CALD communities bring to our state;
- highlight how fostering multiculturalism assists the integration of CALD communities;
- support CALD representation across police and emergency services;
- develop community safety strategies that bridge the gap between CALD communities and police and government agencies; and
- foster cross cultural connections and understandings.

6.10.2 SUPPORTING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Labor recognises that CALD communities need support services to ensure all members of the community have the skills and opportunities they need to build a fulfilling life in Victoria.

Labor will:

- ensure English language programs and interpretation services are available to CALD communities across Victoria;
- enhance support to migrant and refugee women's groups;
- ensure support for victims of family violence in CALD communities and those who as refugees have suffered torture and trauma;
- support students who have suffered from a disrupted education;
- ensure appropriate supports are provided to small businesses operated by CALD community members;
- fund programs which foster entrepreneurship amongst CALD communities;
- recognise the double discrimination that people of CALD backgrounds experience when they are LGBTI and support programs that address the impact of the intersections of multiple disadvantage and discrimination;
- develop and implement specific programs for refugees and other newly arrived Australians who are LGBTI; and
- ensure Government Departments have CALD Diversity Plans to foster cross-cultural responsiveness to our multicultural populations.

6.11 YOUTH AFFAIRS

Every young person should have the opportunities and support they need to reach their full potential, including those who face disadvantage.

Labor recognises that young people across Victoria have diverse needs.

Young people are the future of Victoria and must be considered across all aspects of government.

Labor will:

- implement the Youth Policy: Building Stronger Youth Engagement in Victoria which amplifies the voices of young people and sets out ways to engage with them more effectively when developing government policies, services and programs;
- support vulnerable young people to strengthen their health and wellbeing, engage with their community, and particularly in education, training and employment;
- support and encourage community participation, including sport, arts, culture, volunteering, mentoring and other engagement and learning activities;
- invest in mentoring and support programs for young people as an early intervention and prevention strategy to engage young people at risk of community disengagement; and
- celebrate and recognise the achievements of young people, highlighting the important role they play in the broader community.

6.12 STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

6.12.1 VICTORIAN CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL (VCAT)

Labor recognises the need to protect and strengthen third party rights to provide access and equity at both local government and VCAT. The reform of planning laws and administrative processes is needed to make VCAT more accessible and effective in resolving planning disputes:

Labor will:

- provide greater guidance on the interpretation of planning policies to ensure greater consistency in outcomes;
- improve support for community representation and put parties on a more equitable footing before the tribunal;
- provide faster and direct avenues to resolve simpler disputes through mediation; and
- recruit members from the wider community to VCAT.

6.13 VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers sustain a range of programs and services that many in our community rely on. Volunteerism in communities has many benefits including building social capital, engagement and improving health outcomes and well-being for both individual volunteers and the communities they serve. Volunteering also builds links to disaffected or disconnected individuals and communities.

Labor will:

- develop a Volunteer Strategy to support and enhance volunteerism in Victoria;
- coordinate volunteering policy across government to ensure a consistent strategic direction across portfolios;
- explore initiatives that will build capacity and improve governance in volunteer involving organisations, including the use of technology platforms that may assist in tracking and recognising volunteer effort, managing regulatory requirements and measuring impact; and
- explore initiatives that encourage volunteerism among under-represented cohorts and address unmet or emerging community needs.

POLICY IN ACTION

RUPANYUP COMMUNITY RETAIL HUB

The drought-affected town of Rupanyup has been facing the loss of its only supermarket, putting it at risk of losing existing families and further population decline - which would threaten the viability of the town.

Instead of just accepting the loss of services to their community the people of Rupanyup came up with an innovative solution.

The local community, in partnership with Bendigo Bank, Yarriambiak Shire and Enterprise Rupanyup raised more than $700,000 to develop a 'mall-style' retail hub which could include additional services such as a pharmacy, cafe and community spaces.

The Andrews Labor Government has contributed $500,000 to this development which is expected to generate six full-time jobs and build on the visitor growth of the Silo Art Trail.

DROUGHT-PROOFING FACILITIES FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES

The Andrews Labor Government understands that sport and recreation facilities are important to rural cities and towns and that these facilities are often the cornerstone of local communities and a meeting place for locals of all ages.

Victorian communities in the north-west region have borne the brunt of recent droughts, which have affected community sporting facilities such as, Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre.

A grant from the Sustainable Water Fund is building drought resilience in Maryborough and other regional towns by investing in alternative water supplies to ensure local sport and recreation facilities have access to water all year round.

The Maryborough Sports and Leisure Centre Rainwater Harvesting project includes the installation of five 22,500 litre rainwater tanks to capture rainwater to be used for the indoor pool system, used frequently as a leisure facility by the community.

This doubles the water storage capacity at the centre to 225,000 litres and delivers a sustainable reduction in the use of potable water in the pool facilities at the centre, which relies on urban water for use.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

PREAMBLE

There is a critical inter-relationship between the environment, society and the economy and, regardless of where people live, Victorians deserve access to a safe environment, good public services, secure jobs and a safe community.

Labor has a strong record of protection and safeguarding of our environmental assets.

Labor acknowledges that climate change is largely contributed to by human activity, and the science of climate change is being continually updated. There is a need to address climate change and prepare effective and equitable adaptation plans to meet the changing needs of the environment, society and the economy.

OUR VALUES

Labor knows that to build the best society possible, we need to be aware of the cost of using resources, and move towards sustainable measures wherever possible, whilst prioritising the lives and wellbeing of people.

Labor will never make decisions about environmental matters in a vacuum that gives no regard to the impacts on people, nor will we put our fingers in our ears and ignore scientific evidence that demonstrates that as a society, we need to collectively change our habits to become more sustainable for the long term.

Actions to address climate change must make our lives healthier and safer, create new jobs across Victoria, and preserve our natural environment for future generations.

Victoria needs to increase its reliance on renewable and low emissions sources of energy and when economic systems change, vulnerable sections of the community must be protected and supported.

Our natural assets and biodiversity must be protected through measures such as national and marine parks, and policies to support diverse and thriving ecosystem services with good legislation.

Food and water security is one of our state's unique strengths and must be protected by Government.

It is essential to promote healthy eco-systems that provide us with clean air and water, clean food production and support biodiversity, to ensure that the essential needs of our society are met.

Resource based industries and primary producers must be supported to be productive and environmentally sustainable.

All Victorians have a right to a healthy and safe environment.

Environmental policy and standards should be enshrined where possible in legislation to render it more difficult for future governments to reverse the protection of our citizens and environment.

Water assets and their management must remain in public hands.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

7.1 DELIVERING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a problem of critical significance to Victoria's economy, society and natural environment. Victoria is expected to warm at rates comparable to the global average and is also at high risk of experiencing continued declines in mean rainfall and streamflow, especially in winter and spring, as well as increased occurrence of rainfall extremes, both high and low.

Labor will ensure Victoria plays its part in the global effort to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by committing to a target of net zero emissions by 2050.

Labor recognises that action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will be most effective if replicated at a national and international level.

Labor will:

- work collaboratively with other jurisdictions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- work with any Government that is prepared to commit to emission reduction targets aligned to the Paris Agreement to keep warming below 2 degrees.

7.1.1 A JUST TRANSITION TO A NET-ZERO EMISSIONS SOCIETY

Labor recognises that action on climate change will pose challenges.

The transition to a net-zero emissions society will open many economic opportunities in Victoria.

Labor will:

- grow electricity supply from low or zero emissions sources and strengthen the electricity grid to improve capacity for energy storage;
- continue to transition energy markets to facilitate the incorporation of low or zero emission energy generation; and
- ensure workers and communities have a voice in the transition.

7.1.2 BUILDING A CLIMATE-RESILIENT FUTURE

Labor understands that significant change is inevitable over the next 50 to 100 years. Extreme climate events are responsible for heavy economic costs and can cause major casualties and adverse health impacts.

Labor will:

- make infrastructure climate-resilient;
- reduce the exposure of the community to extreme climate events; and
- develop strategies to mitigate the impact of heat-waves and other climate-related natural disasters.

7.1.3 CLIMATE, PLANNING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Labor recognises that planning plays an important role in an effective response to climate change. Planning policy can assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the impacts of climate change and provide resilience to extreme climate events.

Labor will:

- improve energy efficiency of Victorian building stock;
- make effective use of climate-sensitive urban design;
- reduce demand for transport through effective urban planning; and
- support renewable energy and storage development through planning laws.

7.1.4 LEADERSHIP

Labor understands the role of government leadership in the adoption of innovative and practical emissions reduction practices for its own assets and Departments.

Labor will:

- establish the Victorian government as a leader in this field;
- work towards all government departments and agencies being carbon neutral by 2025; and
- promote the involvement of the workplace (employees and management) in tackling climate change including by providing for employee representation in respect of environmental issues in workplaces.

7.2 A JUST TRANSITION TO VICTORIA'S AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

7.2.1 VICTORIA'S LOW EMISSIONS FUTURE

Labor understands the need for transition to an environmentally sustainable, reliable and affordable energy system in Victoria. Labor knows there are vulnerable sections of the community that must be protected and supported under the principles of a just transition.

There must be investment in the development of innovative energy technologies and building and supporting the energy industry through policy development and regulation. Victorians will be empowered to manage their own energy use.

Labor will:

- support moving Victoria's generation stock towards renewable and low emissions energy, including household and community renewable generation;
- promote the uptake of electric, hybrid and clean fuelled vehicles, as well as the regulatory framework and support industry and services;
- address barriers to distributed generation and storage;
- investigate other alternative sources of renewable energy and develop these where viable, environmentally sustainable and cost effective such as appropriate energy from waste opportunities;
- ensure that demand management is an essential component of any energy system and expanding its use; and
- ensure that the National Energy Market (NEM) works to the benefit of all Victorians ensuring security and affordability and crucially delivers increasingly sustainable energy.

7.2.2 JUST TRANSITION FOR WORKERS

Victoria's strong economic position and Labor's commitment to social justice will enable a fair and just transition.

Labor reserves the right to intervene in the public interest to deliver an essential service in an affordable, reliable and sustainable manner.

Labor will:

- encourage job creation in new energy industries;
- provide for workers displaced from current energy employers to transition into new energy industries, other energy employers and other industries;
- support redeployment across sites and energy employers, ensuring no forced redundancies, and provide training and placement in new energy generation industries;
- use expenditure on public facilities to promote both a low carbon economy and employment opportunities;
- introduce a Victorian Climate and New Energy Jobs Target of 100,000 new jobs by 2030;
- identify opportunities to use innovative finance to fund large scale low to medium skill employment projects which assist Victoria becoming a carbon neutral state; and
- prioritise the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, to support technological innovation and large scale renewable projects.

7.2.3 JUST TRANSITION FOR CONSUMERS

Labor wants to encourage a swift, secure and just transition to a carbon neutral Victorian economy.

Labor will:

- maintain the Victorian Renewable Energy Target of 25% by 2020 and 40% by 2025 as a minimum;
- establish Energy Storage Targets to keep pace with the increased reliance on renewable energy and achieve energy security for Victoria;
- explore means of supporting low income households to invest in renewable energy generation and storage; and
- support fair and reasonable energy prices for consumers.

7.2.4 JUST TRANSITION FOR COMMUNITIES

Labor will encourage public and community ownership of energy assets where possible.

Labor will:

- explore the effectiveness of providing an appropriate low cost, not-for-profit retail option for consumers who do not have the time and resources to meaningfully participate in the market;
- encourage co-operative and community owned electricity generation and infrastructure projects, including through regulatory support e.g. rights regarding grid connection and rights to enter guaranteed power purchase agreements with retailers;
- phase in and encourage the uptake of direct subscription to off-site solar power for households and other energy users (known as virtual net metering), particularly those who occupy premises which may be unsuitable for solar generation for whatever reason; and
- insure local manufacturing facilities receive priority in supplying materials and goods for publicly-funded renewable energy projects.

7.2.5 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Labor understands that Victorians want reliable and affordable energy from low or zero emissions energy sources.

Labor will:

- support consumers to develop greater awareness and uptake of renewable energy options;
- maintain environmental guidelines for electricity retailers including annual reporting of energy generation sources and consumption destinations and report this as part of customer billing;
- continue an energy smart homes program in conjunction with Local Councils;
- maintain Sustainability Victoria;
- maintain and monitor a Greenhouse Rating Scheme for commercial buildings;
- assist government departments to identify and harness effective opportunities for reducing energy use in Victorian Government buildings;

- regularly revise a target for the consumption of Green Power for government;
- require electricity generators and retailers to produce greenhouse gas reduction strategies to achieve a reduction in per capita greenhouse gas emissions;
- support the development of a National emissions trading system;
- upgrade the energy smart business program to help companies reach world class standards in energy use;
- expand the Green Power Program;
- facilitate the further development of the use of co-generation in Victorian workplaces;
- provide funding assistance and support services to businesses to assist with the implementation of accredited energy efficiency improvement projects;
- support high emitting companies to develop action plans to reduce their emissions through energy efficiency; and
- require companies to implement actions that are cost effective.

7.2.6 FAIR GO FOR VICTORIAN HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES

Labor understands that the energy system must offer the fairest and best possible protection for the Victorian consumer through regulation, appropriate standards, timely and relevant information and community education. Disconnection will always be a last resort and every effort should be made to assist, not punish consumer experiencing hardship.

Labor will:

- protect consumers by monitoring markets and ensure contract offers are written in clear and simple language, with penalties for using high pressure sales tactics;
- ensure vulnerable consumers can access free, impartial and informed advice about energy contracts;
- develop mandatory disclosure at point of sale of the energy star rating of all homes and trial a world first concession bundling scheme to allow low income households to pay for energy efficiency retrofits;
- provide encouragement to enable landlords to improve the energy efficiency of properties; and
- enhance energy efficiency and design standards in the building and construction of new homes, renovations and businesses, including in the production of materials used in construction.

7.3 CLEAN AIR

Clean air is critical to our health and wellbeing and our capacity to contribute to the social and economic prosperity of our community.

Labor understands that our standards, laws, regulations and institutions must be sufficiently robust to ensure that air quality is the highest standard.

Labor will:

- ensure that air quality standards comply with the world's best practice;
- implement a long-term air quality strategy through integrated transport planning, better public transport, industry controls, vehicle improvements, community education and regulation; and
- advocate tougher national emissions standards for motor vehicles.

7.4 VICTORIA'S BIODIVERSITY

Labor recognises the principles of environmental justice and the intrinsic value of nature, and hence the importance of protecting Victoria's biodiversity.

Labor understands the uncertainty posed by climate change for ecosystem stability, the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity, and for the human benefits derived from them

To improve the care and protection of Victoria's natural environment the Andrews Labor Government has reviewed the native vegetation clearing regulations, reviewed the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and developed "Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037"

7.4.1 PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

Labor understands the need to continue to protect and restore Victoria's biodiversity.

Labor will:

- research, monitor, manage and report on pressures, drivers for risks to biodiversity and on the state of biodiversity;
- promote and reward responsible management of natural ecosystems on public and private lands;
- link our society and the economy to the environment and develop approaches to investing together to protect our environment;
- minimise risks to biodiversity from massive bushfires;
- promote the conservation, repair and sustainable use of our Wetlands; and
- ensure that species survival and maintenance of biodiversity are the main objectives for keeping wildlife in captivity.

7.4.2 INVASIVE SPECIES

Labor recognises that invasive exotic and native species are a threat to native biodiversity and ecosystem health in Victoria. However, in a period of climate change and potential ecosystem instability, biodiversity management responses to invasive native species need to be exercised with caution.

Labor will:

- prevent the introduction of invasive species of plants, animals and insects into Victoria and actively manage them on Crown land;
- ensure that control of invasive native species does not inhibit evolutionary and adaptive adjustment by native flora and fauna to changing climate and habitat conditions;
- reduce the impact from domestic pets on biodiversity; and
- support the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Parks Victoria permanent employee numbers to better target threats to biodiversity and biosecurity.

7.4.3 TOP PREDATORS

Over the past two decades, ecological research around the world has increasingly focused on the importance of the conservation top predator populations for terrestrial and marine ecosystem health and the preservation of biodiversity.

Labor will:

- recognise and protect the ecological function of existing dingo populations within Victorian ecosystems as part of biodiversity programs and management initiatives;
- ensure ongoing consultation between the Victorian government and environmental dingo conservation experts, stakeholders, wild dog controllers and their employee representatives;

- respect the aspirations of Aboriginal Victorians to protect the dingo as part of their cultural heritage and their stewardship of the natural environment;
- demonstrate Victorian government commitment to ending international and local trade in shark fin products; and
- ensure that Victorian commercial and recreational fishing activities minimise shark by-catch and are consistent with marine top predator threatened species protection.

7.4.4 AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY

Labor believes that it is important to promote healthy eco-systems that provide us with clean air and water, clean food production and support biodiversity, to ensure that the essential needs of our society are met.

Labor will:

- ensure the protection and maintenance of biodiversity in the Victorian agricultural landscape by ensuring that genetically modified crops are not to be released unless they are safe to health and the environment while beneficial to the economy;
- continue to ensure all new genetically modified crops proposed for release by the Federal Regulator into the Victorian marketplace are tested against a transparent process;
- ensure changing agricultural practices are compatible with a sustainable environment;
- encourage transparent, sustainable and environmentally responsible agricultural burning practices; and
- ensure the commercial fishing industry maintains sustainable catches and environmentally appropriate methods of operating.

7.5 COASTAL AND MARINE

A healthy marine environment is an essential component of a healthy biosphere which sustains humanity and other life within it. We also need a healthy and sustainably managed marine environment for both our social and economic wellbeing.

Labor has a proud record of achievement in Victoria with the creation of marine national parks.

Labor recognises that sea level rise associated with climate change will place additional pressure on the coastal environment.

Recognition of the ancient relationship our indigenous people have with marine and terrestrial environments is at the core of Victorian Labor's approach to our coastal waters.

Labor will:

- require environmental approvals for all major works impacting on the coast;
- maintain and strengthen Victoria's marine and coastal research program, including active scientific monitoring of Victoria's marine and coastal environment;
- ensure the long-term protection of significant Aboriginal, conservation, social, and heritage values on privately owned coastal freehold: and
- continue to investigate measures to protect marine biodiversity and maintain existing Marine National Parks and reserves.

7.5.1 FORESHORES

Labor understands the importance of establishing public ownership of a foreshore strip for the full length of the Victorian coastline.

Labor will investigate the rights of way along the Victorian coastline.

7.5.2 RECREATIONAL FISHING

Labor acknowledges the contribution recreational anglers make to Victoria's economy and the need to maintain sustainable use of coastal and marine resources for coastal -dependent economic activity.

Labor will:

- maintain and expand recreational fishing only zones within Port Phillip and Western Port bays and other coastal areas to improve fishing opportunities for Victorian anglers; and
- support planning and environmental controls on mariculture and aquaculture to ensure environmental protection and subject initiatives to environmental assessments.

7.5.3 POLLUTION

Labor is concerned that our marine ecosystems are not endangered by pollution generated by human activity.

Labor will:

- develop strategies and policies designed to address the prevention and the removal of marine pollutants; and
- advocate for national and international approaches to address damage to and exploitation of our marine environment.

7.6 LAND AND FORESTS

Nature has an intrinsic value but our catchments, landscapes and forests also play a vital role in protecting biodiversity and water systems and in mitigating the effects of climate change.

Labor has a strong record of protection and safeguarding of our environmental assets but recognises that more needs to be done.

Food and water security is one of our state's unique strengths and needs to be protected by Government. Primary producers need to be productive and environmentally sustainable and recompensed for the ecosystem services they provide.

Labor understands the need for long term protection for land with conservation or heritage values of National, State or Regional significance.

Labor will:

- retain and protect land which has conservation or heritage values of National, State or Regional significance;
- protect freehold land of National, State or Regional significance;
- increase investment in covenanting of high conservation significance lands and develop stewardship programs that prioritise permanent protection; and
- continue to pursue programs to preserve biodiversity values.

7.6.1 LAND MANAGEMENT

Labor acknowledges that more sustainable land management practices are required to support the ecosystems that underpin key rural industries, such as agriculture, horticulture and tourism.

Labor will:

- continue to develop the framework for market-based instruments through which these ecosystem services can be delivered; and
- consider extending programs such as Bush Tender, Bush Broker and EcoTender to operate at a greater scale of effect and as an option for landholders at all levels.

7.6.2 FOREST MANAGEMENT

Labor recognises the importance of keeping native forests in public ownership and will continue to provide leadership which ensures ongoing sustainability of the environment, forestry and forest product industry dependent communities and the broader community.

Labor will:

- take all possible steps to ensure ongoing secure wood and fibre supply for the timber industry whilst continuing to protect rare, old growth forests;
- identify opportunities for consensus of major stakeholders which may result in agreed changes to the protected reserve system using up to date scientific information;
- promote a range of uses that includes tourism, recreation and ancillary forest products;
- comprehensively survey, monitor and manage the forest estate for threatened species and their protection and other values to support the case for ecologically sustainable extractive management in non-reserve areas; and
- investigate the establishment of a rehabilitation and reforestation system to apply to Crown Land.

7.6.3 FOREST MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY VALUES

Labor understands that forest management practices need to reflect the values of the community.

Labor will:

- provide encouragement and support to the private sector to establish and grow private forests and plantations;
- ensure that decision-making and data relating to native forests, multiple use forests and the timber industry is open, transparent and accessible;
- ensure that forests are managed in such a way as to protect, social and economic values;
- foster community understanding and support for ecologically, socially and economically sustainable forest management, including awareness of environmental values, including old growth, wilderness, endangered species, national estate values and world heritage values; and
- undertake an audit of private forestry holdings.

7.6.4 JOBS

Labor recognises the need to ensure safe and secure jobs for workers in the forests and forestry products industry.

Labor will:

- recognise Forest Firefighters as emergency service workers and establish a transparent process of review of the number of permanent and seasonal Fire Firefighters employed to protect Victoria;
- require employers in the forestry industry to sign up to and comply with a Forest Products Industry Code of Practice in Employment, to include forest operator licensing, developed by Government with input of employee and employer representatives; and
- provide a just transition for any workers and communities negatively impacted due to changing resource profiles and availability.

7.6.5 CROWN LAND

Labor acknowledges that Crown Land tourism and grazing leases do not compromise the values which warrant the land's retention as Crown land.

Labor will:

- ensure effective long-term control of Crown Land is not surrendered to private interests;
- ensure that a statement of the land's values is appended as a schedule to all Crown leases;
- ensure that Delegated Managers will act in the public interest and consent to leases will be contingent upon demonstrable consistency with policy; and
- ensure that tenants have the confidence to invest while maintaining regard for the values of the land.

7.6.6 CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

Labor understands the need to strengthen and support environmental volunteers, such as Landcare and community conservation networks.

Labor will:

- continue to support environmental volunteers; and
- deliver an environmental volunteering strategy to ensure that environmental volunteers, networks and groups are supported to deliver environment projects.

7.6.7 GOVERNANCE

Labor understands that environmental regulation must remain in accountable, democratic institutions. Attempts to remove control including through misuse of Australia's international obligations by the Federal Government will be resisted.

Labor will:

- ensure effective and modern regulation of timber industry operations;
- modernise operating arrangements to reflect accountability and oversight expectations of a modern regulator; and
- consider internationally regarded ecosystem accounting methods to inform natural resource management and investment.

7.6.8 COMMUNITY AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The work of our professional scientists is immensely valuable especially, in a time where many have come under serious political challenge.

Labor believes members of our community who have the passion and the expertise can play a valuable role in the development of our scientific knowledge and understanding.

Volunteers can never be a substitute for the essential and rigorous work of our professional scientists but often the data and research generated by community members can complement their work in various fields. Indigenous people and informed landholders often have valuable wisdom and knowledge to share about their local environment that may also assist with scientific research and policy making.

Labor will work with community organisations, relevant government agencies and scientific and learning bodies to develop capacity building programs for community members.

7.7 NATURE-BASED TOURISM

Labor recognises that one of the best forms of environmental protection is for people to know and understand their natural environment. Sensitive, well-resourced and well-structured nature-based tourism can achieve this while also providing benefits to regional and local economies with sustainable local jobs.

Labor will:

- better promote and support tourist sites of ecological significance; and
- ensure crown land leases and facilities that support nature-based tourism activities are environmentally and culturally sustainable.

7.8 WASTE MANAGEMENT

There must be a strong commitment to ensuring productive development and community prosperity while protecting our natural environment from any unsustainable demands of human production and consumption.

Labor will:

- commit to the minimization of harmful environmental impacts of waste associated with economic production and consumption;
- commit to the further development and refinement of waste mitigation standards and regulations in both the commercial and private spheres;
- recognise the need to not only maximise the recycling of waste materials, but to reduce the unnecessary production of waste materials and to reducing waste per capita; and
- commit to the legislation of appropriate waste mitigation and reduction standards.

7.8.1 MINIMISING WASTE

To minimise all waste entering our ecosystems through regulation, recycling, community education and market development mechanisms,

Labor will:

- provide Victorians with the opportunity to avoid the purchase of unwanted and unnecessary end user waste products;
- ensure that all government agencies, businesses and households are supported to reduce the volume of waste to landfill and to maximise the level of recycling;
- minimise biodiversity and ecosystem damage from waste products and management processes;
- ensure that Victorians are protected from toxic and other industrial waste;
- consider the introduction of polluter pays mechanisms to help fund local government domestic waste management; and
- establish a best practice Alternative Waste Technology evaluation program.

7.8.2 RECYCLING AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

Labor recognises that exporting our waste to foreign countries is not going to be a viable option in the long term. Labor will invest in a resource recovery sector to be developed in Victoria, setting the highest environmental standards.

Labor will:

- provide support for the private sector to invest in the technology needed to process recycling of paper, glass, plastics and metal to meet international standards;
- encourage Local Government to engage in collaborative tenders for kerbside residential and commercial waste recycling and organic material services collection;
- ensure recyclable and compostable organic material are not burnt to provide a one-off energy source;
- establish a new advisory group comprising sector experts, academics and industry leaders to support Local Councils with waste recovery; and
- commit to using Australian-made recycled material and products in government departments and projects wherever possible.

7.9 AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

7.9.1 AGRICULTURE AND CHANGE

Agriculture is one of the fastest growing industries in Australia, however Victoria's farmers are facing significant changes to the climate, their communities, new technologies and changing consumer expectations about animal welfare, food safety and chemical use.

Labor will work with farmers to support responses to changes that protect agricultural land, support productivity and deliver clean and green food and fibre to consumers across the globe.

A greater understanding of the likely impacts of climate change in Victoria is needed to inform land use planning to optimise food and fibre production to take advantage of this to increase agricultural production.

Labor will:

- support continued research and on-farm actions to understand and adapt to the impact of climate change in agriculture;
- improve our understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on existing agricultural systems;
- plan for the introduction of new systems more appropriate to future conditions;
- work with Universities, farming communities and farmer based research organisations to collect further evidence of the impact of climate change on agriculture; and
- provide information to farming communities that will support farmers to plant the right crops and put in place the right infrastructure.

7.9.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

Food security is essential for the health and well-being of Victoria's growing population.

Victoria's growing population requires increased food production for a market with a growing awareness of food production and marketing systems. Labor recognises that there are opportunities in urban areas to help meet the needs of Melbourne's growing population.

Labor will:

- ensure that changing agricultural production methods meet community expectations and have a social license to operate;
- support the Environment Protection Authority to enforce the current regulations for intensive animal industries and ensure that the codes of practice establish standards that meet community expectations of environmentally sustainable, non-polluting production systems;
- introduce intensive horticulture into metropolitan industrial areas where there is a permanent water supply, waste disposal system, transport infrastructure and an existing local workforce;
- develop a program to support the redevelopment of brownfield industrial sites in the metropolitan area to convert them to intensive horticultural production;

- encourage small scale food production by individuals and community groups in urban areas through community food gardens, school food gardens and the planting of food production plants in communal spaces such as nature strips and street planter boxes; and
- ensure genetic diversity within a commodity, cereal or stock type.

7.9.3 SUPPORTING FARMERS

Farmers manage a large area of Victoria and create the food and fibre needed to support Victorians and deliver to export markets. Labor understands there is a role for Government to ensure farmers are supported to achieve environmental and economic outcomes that benefit the broader community with research and on farm support needed to respond to change.

Labor will:

- investigate and promote the opportunities for renewable energy to reduce costs and improve reliability on farm;
- research and promote the potential of digital technologies on farm to improve farm productivity, farmer safety and environmental management; and
- assess the education and training available to the farm sector to ensure accessible, current and relevant training is available to develop the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing sector.

7.9.4 FISHERIES

Labor understands that our fisheries need to be well managed to ensure they remain sustainable.

Labor will:

- ensure the industry maintains sustainable catches and environmentally appropriate methods of operating;
- work with the Federal Government to develop seamless integration between State and National fisheries management agencies to reduce regulatory costs and maximise sustainability of the fishery;
- ensure the proper resourcing of the vital protection, compliance and regulation of fisheries and resources;
- support aquaculture and mariculture initiatives within planning and environmental controls that ensure environmental protection; and
- recognise the important contribution recreational anglers make to the State's economy and maintain and expand recreational fishing only zones to improve fishing opportunities for Victorian anglers.

7.10 MANAGING WATER RESOURCES

The health, wellbeing and social fabric of our communities, the liveability of our cities and towns, the environment and economy all depend on access to safe, reliable and affordable water.

Victoria faces two big challenges in managing our water resources – climate change and population growth. Victoria is becoming warmer and drier and is now the fastest growing state in Australia.

As climate change continues to impact with more frequent extreme weather events, such as drought and flooding, we also need to understand diminishing in-flows to our catchments.

Water services need to be kept affordable for all sectors of the community, support a healthy environment and a prosperous economy including a thriving agricultural sector.

7.10.1 TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

The water sector makes a significant contribution to greenhouse gases through energy use and sewage treatment. An ambitious target to achieve net zero emissions before 2050 is in place and Labor will continue to make sure Victoria is on track to achieve that.

Labor will:

- require water authorities to continue developing plans for reducing emissions that are appropriate to the nature of each system and that together meet the 2050 target; and
- improve capability in the water sector to predict future rainfall and runoff.

7.10.2 INVESTMENT FOR A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

It is important that investment in waterway and catchment health is maintained. This will help improve water quality and catchment health and protect our environment and biodiversity.

Labor will:

- improve waterway and catchment health;
- explore opportunities to return more flows to the environment; and
- empower the Environment Protection Authority to effectively control waterway pollution.

7.10.3 WATER FOR LIVEABILITY AND RECREATION

We want our communities to be able to enjoy healthy parks, gardens, sporting fields and recreational activities, and to engage in fishing, camping, bushwalking and water sports in areas where there are healthy water supplies and resources.

Labor will:

- improve water conservation and efficiency in the urban environment;
- continue to put downward pressure on water bills; and
- improve long term liveability outcomes for all Victorian communities – including using alternate sources of water such as storm water and recycling.

7.10.4 RECOGNISING ABORIGINAL VALUES OF WATER

Water for Victoria has given a clear roadmap to deliver water for Aboriginal cultural, spiritual and economic values.

Labor will:

- support Aboriginal communities to access water and achieve economic development outcomes; and
- build capacity to increase Aboriginal participation in water management and use.

7.10.5 MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE WATER GRID AND MARKETS

Victorian Labor has and will continue to develop the water grid for the benefit of cities, towns and rural communities across the State.

Labor will:

- clearly identify potable water requirements for the next 50 years, based on climate science and population predictions and future planning for urban areas;
- support the development of alternate sources of water such as recycling and storm water capture; and
- continue to support farmers, rural communities and regional centres by expanding the water grid, investing in irrigation infrastructure, modernizing systems and keeping water services affordable.

7.11 MINING AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Labor recognises that our resource rich industry must be fostered to offer prosperity for all Victorians and that prosperity cannot come at the expense of local communities, the environment and the critical agricultural sector.

Labor will:

- maintain a ban on hydraulic fracturing to protect our land and water resources relied on by our critical agricultural sector;
- support the development of offshore gas exploration and underground storage to provide Victorian households and business with an affordable gas supply;
- engage local communities in environmental and planning processes for new mining and quarrying projects;
- ensure Victorians get a good deal out of mining our resources and foster best practice in social licence development;
- require mine operators to maintain substantial rehabilitation bonds and satisfy rehabilitation obligations; and
- improve the regulation of the earth resources sector to provide materials for affordable homes and infrastructure investment while protecting communities' interests.

Labor acknowledges that Victoria's rich resources have underpinned many of Victorian industries including manufacturing.

Labor will:

- create an industry plan for resource based industries with a focus on how this can benefit regional communities; and
- establish a taskforce of government, unions and stakeholders to examine opportunities for job creation in the resources sector.

7.12 GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION

7.12.1 DECISION-MAKING, WORKPLACE INVOLVEMENT

Victoria will be a leader in effective, inclusive and responsive environmental decision-making based on rigour, fairness and good governance.

Labor will:

- establish the overarching consideration for decision-making that decisions will not adversely affect the environment unless no reasonable options are available to avoid adverse consequences;
- establish the Victorian government as a leader in the adoption of innovative and practical emissions reduction practices for its own assets and Departments; and
- promote the involvement of the workplace (employees and management) in tackling climate change including by providing for employee representation in respect of environmental issues in workplaces.

7.12.2 REGULATION AND OVERVIEW

The regulatory mechanisms for environmental protection in Victoria will offer the highest levels of protection to our citizens and the environment.

Labor will:

- provide clear management guidelines that ensure that conserving the environment is separate from resources use, with a Triple Bottom Line focus in all decision-making;
- work to remediate contaminated environment sites and areas, and investigate the creation of a dedicated Superfund and/or other types of revolving funds to provide resources for this;
- support a revitalised, strengthened and well-resourced Environment Protection Authority capable of tackling contemporary threats to wellbeing;
- advocate for the Federal government to expand the application of its Petroleum Resource Rent Tax and other revenue raising measures to recover revenue from oil and gas production; and
- advocate for the Federal government to expand the operation of the "water trigger" under the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act enhanced to cover oil and gas exploration and production.

7.12.3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Labor recognises that communities needs appropriate access to the legal system to pursue environmental justice.

Labor will:

- develop Australia's first Environmental Justice Action Plan, which requires Department of Environment Water Land and Planinng and the Environment Protection Authority to have dedicated resources for environmental justice research, public education and enforcement;
- enact Australia's first 'environmental right to know' law; and
- review relevant legislation and dispute, court and other processes with a view to strengthening environmental justice and outcomes.

POLICY IN ACTION

FRACKING

Alison from Mount Moriac was overjoyed when she learned that Labor had put an end to fracking, for good.

Her community knew it was important to protect our agriculture and tourism, and the certainty of a ban was what they were seeking.

The relief for her community was overwhelming, and she says that "Generations to come, 30-40 years from now, will thank the premier for this decision."

DEVELOPING NEW MARKETS FOR RECYCLABLES

The Resources Recovery Market Development Fund has been established to boost research and development in recycling materials.

Major road builder Downer is trialling an asphalt mix containing recycled plastic bags, printer cartridges and glass in road surfacing.

Downer received funding to assist with equipment to develop a plastic additive used in an asphalt mix for road making. Downer estimates up to 15% of asphalt can contain soft plastics such as plastic bags and printer cartridges, meaning up to 10 million tonnes of recyclable waste could be diverted from landfill every year.

COMMUNITY BIODIVERSITY GRANTS

Community and Volunteer Action Grants assist volunteer and community-based groups to deliver a range of activities to help protect and expand habitats for Victoria's native plants and animals.

The grants are part of a broader $25.7 million Andrews Labor Government package to support our native species through community action grants, support programs and regional partnerships.

Funded initiatives include:

- the Friends of Merri Creek for their project The Secret Seven: Seeds for our Flora's Future
- the Ultima Landcare Group to protect the threatened Buloke Woodlands
- rehabilitation and monitoring of Fairy Tern breeding sites
- the Sandy Point Community Group for restoration of koala habitat and population monitoring

POLICY IN ACTION

LEADING CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIONS

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering action on climate change by helping Victorian organisations lead the development of new ideas to help Victoria reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change with Climate Change Innovation grants.

The grants program is designed to foster action, innovation and collaboration between businesses, industry, researchers and government and drive greater investment.

Grant recipients include:

- Precision Agriculture Pty Ltd, for their project, which will demonstrate on dairy farms how variable rate application of fertiliser can reduce the amount of free nitrogen released into the atmosphere
- Deakin University for the Fridge Off Grid project, which will show a reduction in expenses, power consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by removing refrigerators from the grid through development of a portable solar panel & power storage units
- Wodonga City Council, for their community solar project, which is implementing a working example of a community renewable energy model not seen before, that provides benefits to the entire community, including helping adaptation for low income households.

VICTORIA'S 12TH RAMSAR SITE

Glenelg Estuary and Discovery Bay has been approved for listing as Victoria's 12th Ramsar site.

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance listed by Australia under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The area listed stretching more than 22,000 hectares and includes part of the Lower Glenelg National Park, Discovery Bay Coastal Park and the Nelson Streamside Reserve. It is known for its rare dunes that home a variety of threatened species including plants, waterbirds and fish.

The site meets five of the required Ramsar criteria by supporting unique wetlands and providing habitat for 95 birds – with 24 species migrating from Russia and China.

The site has three main systems, including the freshwater wetlands of Long Swamp, Bridgewater Lakes and Swan Lake, the Glenelg Estuary, Oxbow Lake and the dune fields, as well as beach along 50 kilometres of the Discovery Bay Coastal Park.

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