



Platform 2014

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Message from the Leader

I would like to extend my congratulations to the Platform Committee for their work and effort in co-ordinating the Platform Document.

The conversation and engagement with the Party's Policy Committees, rank and file members and affiliates is a vital part of the Party's democracy and ensures that the decisions taken by the parliamentary arm of the Party are informed by a collective set of values and aspirations.

As we head toward the next Victorian State election in November, the parliamentary team will be working hard to prepare a costed and funded policy program to present to the people of Victoria.

The important ideas set out in the Platform will help inform this work and ensure that the voice of the Party is heard loud and clear as we set about the task of reclaiming government and advocating for the interests of all Victorians.

The Labor project has never been more important for the future of Victoria than it is now.

This conservative government has pursued a policy agenda that attacks working people, and compromises the integrity of the basic rights and expectations of all people: to be able to stay fit and healthy; to get a first rate education; and to get a decent job that pays a decent wage.

I want to lead a government that places these basic expectations right at the heart of its mission. To do that we must draw on a range of ideas from right across the community, and I congratulate the Party for its important contribution to this shared effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Andrews', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**HON DANIEL ANDREWS MP
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

Message from the Chair of the Platform Committee

Labor is the party of ideas.

Every few years, we get a real chance to refresh them.

As members, it's our duty to reaffirm our convictions and reach for reform.

The Platform Committee joins parliamentarians with our rank-and-file representatives to do just that.

The eventual product is more than just a document. It's the bedrock of our beliefs and the foundation of our future – the old and the new.

It's where our most enduring values of fairness, opportunity, dignity and diversity can meet our most pressing areas of reform.

It's our Platform.

Our convictions build it, the community guides it and party debate strengthens it.

And we need it, because Victoria is changing.

We face challenges that the founders of our movement could not have conceived.

To meet those challenges, members must arm the party with ideas.

That's the opportunity our democratic party and its committee structure can provide.

The process of this renewed Platform began soon after the 2010 Victorian State Election.

Policy Committees consulted with parliamentarians, experts and members of the community.

They developed ideas and tested them at ALP State

Conference.

This process was overseen by the Platform Committee.

Jane Garrett, Jaala Pulford, Wade Noonan and Gayle Tierney joined me on the Committee, representing the Victorian Labor Parliamentary Party.

Rosemary Barker, Marg Lewis, Raff Ciccone, Anne Black and Steve Michelson from the Agenda Committee and Simon Miller and Dimity Paul, represented the rank-and-file membership.

Many more volunteered their own hours to help compile the document.

I want to thank all of them. Theirs was no small task. That's a good thing.

It tells me our movement is real, vocal and healthy.

It tells me we're still as hopeful as the time our first platform was struck, well over a century ago.

It's now my privilege to commend this edition to – the 2014 Victorian ALP Platform.



HON JAMES MERLINO MP
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
CHAIR OF THE PLATFORM COMMITTEE

Message from the State Secretary

It was the French author Victor Hugo who made the universal observation that nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.

For the Labor Party, this power comes from our members in the form of an election year policy platform.

The platform builds on the passion, commitment and desire of every Labor member to create a better society for all Victorians.

It encapsulates the ideas and values that will shape a Labor Government's policies and priorities.

It also ultimately seeks to commence the election year conversation about the ideas and values we as Victorians want in our Government.

As such, the Labor Party has sought to provide a

meaningful platform that provides the blueprint for that important conversation.

Because nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.



NOAH CARROLL
VICTORIAN BRANCH SECRETARY

Labor's Values

Security

In our society, no one should be left on their own. Security is the knowledge that your job, your rights, your local schools, your health care and your community will still be there the next day, the next year and the next decade. It's the safety net, it's the fair go and it's something that Labor will always protect. Our opponents think people make their own luck. They think community doesn't exist. That's wrong. Governments have a responsibility to help secure our jobs, our schools, our welfare and our society.

Standing Up For You

Multiculturalism has made Victoria a better place, but we've got more work to do. Some are not at harmony amid our diversity. Governments have a responsibility to guarantee that everyone can live free from harassment, bullying and discrimination – that everyone can fully participate in our society and our economy regardless of age, gender, ability, background, sexuality or location. Our diversity is our strength. Labor celebrates it, and in Government, Labor will protect it.

Standards

Governments must work hard, all the time, in every corner of our state. They should do good. At the very least, they should do something. The right to govern is a privilege and it must never be taken for granted. Governments must also be honest and transparent. Respect for the Victorian people starts with respect for our democracy. Decisions shouldn't be made in the shadows, communities should always be consulted and the powers of the Parliament and the Government should never be abused.

Services

Only Labor can be trusted to deliver the most essential services in our community. In health, education, aged care, disability care and public and social housing, all Victorians deserve the best and Labor will always strive to deliver it. Our public schools should be as good as any private school. Our public hospitals should be as good as any private hospital. Our safety net must protect Victoria's most vulnerable people. Our community services must be equipped to support those in need.

Strength

A strong economy means more growth, investment and jobs. A strong workplace is one where employees are respected and rights are protected. A strong government works with businesses and unions to improve our economy. Victoria used to be a national leader in innovation, research and development. We used to be number one for jobs and major projects. In a time of economic crisis, only Labor has the vision and the leadership to protect jobs, support our traditional workplaces and encourage new industries to grow.

Sustainability

Management of scarcity is a primary role of government in partnership with the community. Meeting our environmental, social and economic challenges requires attention to inter-generational fairness, Victorians want to live in a manner that will enable them to pass on a vibrant healthy world to their children and grandchildren. In responsibly managing our economy Labor will balance the competing demands, be they financial, social or environmental - in a manner that is fair to all Victorians.

Jobs and Growth

Preamble

Victoria is in crisis. Over the past three years, thousands of jobs have been lost. Some of our most iconic companies have closed their doors.

Car manufacturing in Victoria will soon cease – devastating news for thousands of workers who spent their professional lives putting Australian cars on Australian roads.

New jobs aren't being created. Blue collar workers, service providers and professionals are joining the unemployment queue. Families are fragmenting.

Denis Napthine doesn't have a plan. The Coalition Government only wants to cut services, cut assistance and blame workers for the crisis.

Victorian Labor is standing up for jobs and standing up for workers. Labor understands the importance of a strong economy and believes that governments have a role to play.

Under Labor, Victoria was the nation's engine room for job creation. In 2009, 92 per cent of all new, full-time Australian jobs were created here in Victoria.

Labor maintained a Triple A credit rating, a budget surplus and a robust economy, even in the middle of the Global Financial Crisis.

Labor built a pipeline of major projects for Victoria, unlocking the economic potential of our entire state. But under the Coalition, our potential is under threat.

There are more than 50,000 unemployed people in Victoria today than when the Coalition took office three-and-a-half years ago.

In December 2010, the unemployment rate was 4.8 per cent. It has now jumped to 6.4 per cent. The Coalition Government is no friend of the Victorian worker. As the figures worsen, they remain unmoved. They don't believe they have a responsibility to step in.

Labor does. A Labor Government will never sit back and watch jobs disappear. A Labor Government will never loiter while economic growth grinds to a halt.

Only Labor has a comprehensive plan for major projects, putting more cranes in our skies and more jobs in our economy.

Only Labor can halt the job losses and cooperate with business and industry to get our state working again. Under Labor, no worker will be left behind.

Labor stands for fairness in the workplace. Employers, unions and workers should work together in the interests of our economy.

Labor believes in the work-life balance. Victorian families should not have to choose between secure work and a full, balanced and active life.

Under Denis Napthine, too many jobs aren't secure. Too many families wait by the phone, hoping a labour hire company will ring and offer one or two shifts a week.

Under Denis Napthine, youth unemployment has reached the highest level it's been in recent history. The gap between the haves and the have-nots continues to widen.

Labor wants all Victorians to have equal access to safe, secure jobs and a quality education, in an economy in which companies want to invest and innovate.

Labor wants to make Victoria the fairest, most prosperous, most efficient and most compassionate state in Australia.

A state that takes pride in the things we make and the things we do, with a Government that stands up for local products, local people and local jobs.

Our Values

Victorians want well-paid, meaningful jobs that are safe and secure. A strong economy means more jobs for Victorians. It also means that we can invest in health and education and address the needs of the most disadvantaged.

Governments have an important role in managing our economy. Labor will do this by creating jobs, building major projects and a culture of innovation, expanding our industries and making Victoria a better place to invest.

Job security is the key to the ongoing well-being of individuals, families, local communities and the economy. Labor has a plan to stem the offshoring and make the most of the power of the Government's purchase.

We must reduce entrenched disadvantage. No matter the age, location, ability or background, no worker should be left behind. All Victorians deserve access to the lifeline of employment and a lifelong education.

Skills and education are essential to the growth of our economy. Workplace training, the recognition of prior learning, and consultation with industry and trade unions will help us adapt to an evolving workforce.

Governments must constantly support new industries that will grow our economy. Meaningful partnerships must be struck with industry, unions and local communities to encourage research, innovation and skills.

Employees have a right to organise and bargain collectively. The principles of good faith bargaining must be respected by all parties. Employers should uphold work practices that meet ethical and social standards.

Delivering Our Goals

Jobs and People

Labor knows the value of work. A secure, meaningful job not only pays the bills and puts food on the table, it is also a fundamental source of self-respect and identity, providing a sense of purpose and belonging and fostering social inclusion.

Labor believes that government must partner with private companies to create high quality, safe, meaningful and diverse jobs. In a time of transition, governments must act to ensure that the changing structure of our economy does not cause workers to be excluded or forgotten.

In the past three years, thousands of Victorian workers have lost their jobs, businesses have closed and confidence has collapsed.

Creating jobs in Victoria is the single most important economic challenge facing Victoria. A Labor Government will undo the damage of the Coalition Government's failure to act, and immediately kick-start the local economy by implementing our already developed plans for jobs and growth.

Labor will:

- Deliver the commitments already announced in:
 - *Victorian Labor's Plan for Jobs and Growth*;
 - *Victorian Labor's Plan to Secure Local Jobs for Local Workers*; and
 - *Victorian Labor's Plan for Jobs and Growth – a Focus on Geelong*.
- *Project 10,000: Victorian Labor's Transport Alternative*.

Supporting Victorian Industries

The Victorian economy has a diversified industry structure employing approximately 2.9 million people. Industries include manufacturing, construction, agriculture, hospitality, retail trade, tourism and racing.

In the past 10 years the Victorian economy has become more services-orientated, with growth in the industries of health care and social assistance, finance, professional, scientific and technical services. In this time there has also been substantial

economic change, largely driven by globalisation.

Labor believes that government has a responsibility to respond to these changes, identify sources of growth, encourage investment and innovation, as well as develop strategies to retain local production and labour. Careful stewardship of the economy means paying attention to successful industries, as well as those that are struggling.

Labor will respect and encourage growth within industries that employ Victorians and contribute to the economy.

Labor's plans for infrastructure investment, skills, education and training, innovation, research and development, government procurement and targeted industry programs will ensure that no Victorian is left behind.

Financial and Service Sector

Two thirds of Victorian jobs are in the services sector – including banking, information technology and call centres. It is the largest sector of the Victorian economy in terms of employment and output. Labor wants these workers to continue to be employed locally.

The challenge for these industries is that it is becoming easier for multinational corporations to move jobs to countries with lower wages and poorer working conditions.

Labor believes action is needed to address the offshoring of high skill services and financial sector jobs. There should be achievable targets and policies to encourage the long-term viability of the Victorian services sector, and to protect jobs and workers.

The Victorian Government should be a responsible participant in the global economy, and, before signing contracts with international service companies, must ensure that they are not complicit in exploitative working conditions. To fulfil these obligations, government must commit to transparency and accountability in its own procurement processes, and promote better practices.

Labor will:

- Deliver the commitments to *Secure Local Jobs for Local Workers*, including:
 - Only awarding contracts for government service provision to companies that meet the highest ethical standards and preference those companies that provide job opportunities for local workers.

- Ensure businesses that tender for contracts from Victorian Government entities comply with all applicable collective agreements, employment legislation and Awards, including occupational health and safety standards, superannuation and workers' compensation obligations throughout the life of the contract.
- 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.
- Continually monitor the performance of companies that have government contracts against benchmarks for ethical business practices.
- 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 purchases.

Manufacturing

Victoria has a long and proud history in manufacturing. For decades, this highly skilled workforce has produced quality products and stimulated the economy.

However, 2013-2014 will be remembered as the period in which Coalition Government deserted the Australian manufacturing industry. Both the Abbott and Napthine Governments have shown they have no plan to protect Victorian manufacturing jobs.

Victoria is facing the exit of the car manufacturing industry and the tens of thousands of jobs that are reliant on the sector through the industry's supply chain. In addition, major aluminium smelters are pulling out of Victoria. This means thousands of jobs will be lost and thousands of families will be devastated both emotionally and financially.

Victoria has established diverse capabilities across the defence industry from vehicle, naval ship and aerospace design, production and support to autonomous systems' design and production.

Labor believes the food industry is a priority industry for Victoria. Not only is it important to maintain a reliable food supply, Labor believes Victoria has both competitive and comparative advantages in the food industry and significant potential for growth and exports.

Labor believes that skills and training are vital to ensure Victorians are capable of finding meaningful employment. Labor's commitment to TAFE funding will continue to develop the skills of workers facing an era of consolidation and innovation in manufacturing.

We have established plans for government to promote and build on continuing manufacturing areas as well as providing priority, support and pathways for displaced workers affected by manufacturing job losses.

Only Labor understands that a whole-of-government approach is needed to drive the manufacturing sector, and this means only Labor will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our manufacturing industry.

Labor will:

- Recognise the vital role played by the manufacturing industry in maintaining Victorian living standards and support industries, through policies which offset the impacts of externalities, such as a high Australian dollar
- Identify and invest in strategic industries of major significance to the state including defence, ship building, mining services and food sectors, and develop action plans around each sector that will foster growth and future exports
- Support local industry through government procurement by leveraging its role as a major procurer of goods and services. Enhancements to the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPPP) to increase the weighting accorded to local content for major projects will assist in this regard
- Ensure the defence industry continues to play a vital role in Victoria's economy and establish a Defence Contract Office in Geelong
- Develop a food export plan to take advantage of our food industry
- Meet the growing prosperity of Asia with local supply and capabilities by developing export plans for food
- Build links between industry and the research community to identify and harness the industries of the future and nurture them through targeted assistance
- Proactively engage with the Federal Government to support Victorian industry

- Provide support for workers in the automotive industry to transition to the next stage of their lives
- Commit to TAFE funding to continue to develop the skills of workers facing an era of consolidation and innovation in manufacturing
- Establish a truly representative Manufacturing Advisory Council, including industry associations, unions, employers and other organisations, to assist government in implementing a Victorian Manufacturing Strategy.

Tourism and Major Events

Labor understands the importance of the tourism industry to Victoria, which is worth approximately \$20 billion and generates hundreds of thousands of jobs. Collaboration between the sector and Government, together with investment in planning, marketing and infrastructure will see this industry grow.

A future Victorian Labor Government will ensure that tourism is a major component of its overarching investment attraction strategy.

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.

Increased visitation can only be secured when visitor expectation is met or exceeded. Labor understands government has a role in facilitating stakeholder participation and investment.

Labor will:

- Work with stakeholders to update Victoria's Tourism and Events Industry Strategy and focus on priorities such as:
 - enhancing Victorian's business events infrastructure
 - facilitating new investment in regional Victoria
 - improving the visitor experience in our nature-based parks
 - working with Melbourne Airport to improve transport connections
 - building on the work of recent governments to improve Victoria's presence in our fastest growing markets

- Undertake a review of regional tourism boards, to ensure boards are best placed to promote and capitalise on their unique assets
- Work towards developing destination management plans for individual locations and experiences
- Promote Victoria as a destination of choice for Indigenous tourism visitors
- Build on Victoria's reputation as a great sporting State and encourage active lifestyle tourism in Victoria, particularly in regional areas
- Retain and increase Victoria's major events calendar, attracting events that boost the economy and employ Victorians

Agriculture

Victoria is Australia's largest food and fibre exporting state. Victoria's largest export earner, the dairy industry, provides seven per cent of dairy products traded globally.

Victoria's agricultural sector alone produces \$9 billion worth of exports annually – higher than any other State - and 29 per cent of all farm exports from Australia.

Demand for regional and rural Victoria's exports will grow in coming years, bringing with it innovation and job creation opportunities.

Victorian Labor understands that to keep our agriculture industry moving, we must encourage and support young farmers and also provide research and development opportunities to keep the sector thriving.

Only Victorian Labor can be trusted to support farmers, primary producers and the agriculture industry with the right policies and decisions to create a sustainable and profitable sector.

Labor will:

- Support our farming communities by investing in the food and fibre industries
- Support young farmers and encourage them into an agricultural career to help maintain a sustainable and profitable sector
- Encourage research, development and extension programs to boost food and fibre production

- Establish a foundation to support research for the horticultural industry
- Encourage people to enter farming and help them maximise the benefits of Victoria's agricultural lifestyle
- Focus on ensuring local food production is made secure and accessible for domestic market
- Invest in infrastructure to boost aquaculture export opportunities

The Racing Industry

Racing is great for all Victorians, providing entertainment, generating tens of thousands of jobs, boosting tourism and placing Victoria on the world stage. Labor will work towards improving metropolitan and regional racetracks to deliver modernised facilities.

Labor supports a vibrant and active racing industry. The three racing codes, thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing, are major economic drivers for Victoria, in particular for regional Victoria.

The industry is not without its challenges however, and to ensure a strong and viable future, the government must provide leadership and support.

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
- Support governance structures for all three codes. This will ensure racing is managed by people with appropriate expertise and industry experience and allow those who are charged with responsibility for overseeing the industry to make decisions in the best interests of racing, free of undue political interference
- Work with Principal Racing Authorities, wagering operators, interstate authorities and the Commonwealth 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

The Digital Economy

The digital economy is about the economic and social activities that are enabled by networked technology, such as the internet and mobile networks.

The digital economy can drive productivity, create jobs and support new business opportunities. Access to effective technology means access to a larger, potentially global audience to collaborate and do business with.

The digital revolution has already transformed society. Information communication and technology will continue to create new opportunities and Victoria needs to be well placed to maximise these potential benefits.

Unlike the Coalition, Labor understands the importance of high speed broadband to drive Australia's digital economy. As the hub of Australia's ICT industry, Victoria is in prime position to drive the applications that will make the transition to a true digital economy a reality.

Labor will:

- Prepare an Action Plan that will detail the State's readiness for the digital economy and identify impediments and opportunities that the digital economy presents
- Work with industry and the community to harness the opportunities made available through the digital economy
- Ensure that all groups within our community enjoy the opportunity to engage online
- Ensure State Government services such as health care, aged care, education and emergency services are able to maximise the benefits of high speed broadband to improve accessibility for Victorians and potentially lower the long-term cost of service delivery

Innovation Opportunities

Labor recognises that innovation is a major driving force for economic growth, productivity and competitiveness in developed economies.

Innovation transforms good ideas into thriving industries and rewarding jobs. Innovation is the key to our response to several significant challenges facing Victoria and the international community – climate change, drought, energy, security and an ageing population. Supporting and encouraging further innovation will drive growth across our entire

economy ensuring a healthy, sustainable, and productive future for all Victorians.

Science and research, as well as clean technology, have enormous potential to bring economic, health and environmental benefits to Victoria. Regional Victoria in particular benefits from a Government prepared to invest in clean technology, such as wind farms, as such investment generates local jobs.

Research commissioned by the Clean Energy Council of Australia and released in 2010 revealed that under the policy settings of the former Victorian Labor Government, Victoria could have added 3,000 megawatts of clean energy capacity by 2016. The construction and operation of renewable energy facilities was expected to create 650 new jobs every year over the same period.

Labor will:

- Encourage collaboration in key sectors such as biotechnology and carbon fibre through the establishment of Industry Innovation Hubs
- Provide support for the start-up community to ensure that great ideas developed by Victorians can be taken to market
- Continue to support our world-class biotechnology industry
- Explore opportunities to grow Victoria's world-class science capabilities, both people and infrastructure
- Take advantage of Victoria's excellent wind and solar energy resources to build a strong renewable energy industry which generates employment and economic growth for the State and reduces our environmental impact
- Implement a Victorian Renewable Energy Action Plan to attract Victoria's share of the \$36 billion dollars of investment in renewable energies forecast (in Bloomberg New Energy Finance report 2011) to occur in Australia by 2020

Growing Rural and Regional Jobs and Economies

A strong economy means a strong community. Industry not only provides jobs; it ensures sustainable communities. Victorian Labor believes that no matter where Victorians live, it is essential they have access to good quality jobs.

Labor recognises that under the Coalition, youth unemployment in regional Victoria has reached an unprecedented level. Coupled with massive cuts to TAFE, many have been left without a job or pathway.

Labor is about maximising and creating opportunities. We want vibrant communities where local young people can choose rural and regional Victoria as their place to live, study and work.

Labor is committed to ensuring that regional and rural Victorians have equal access to employment opportunities that benefit individuals, families and communities.

Labor has always understood that a strong and vibrant regional Victoria is vital to the entire State's prosperity. Victorian Labor has a plan to ensure support for each individual regional area.

Labor understands that the needs of regional Victoria are as diverse as the communities and industries it supports.

Regional Victoria generates around \$70 billion worth of economic output each year, representing a quarter of the State's overall productivity, and is home to just over a quarter of the state's population.

Manufacturing and other businesses play an important role in small rural cities and townships. They not only provide jobs but contribute to the sustainability of communities.

Victoria's agricultural sector alone produces \$9 billion worth of exports annually – higher than any other State.

Demand for regional Victoria's exports will grow in coming years, bringing with it innovation and job creation opportunities.

Labor knows opportunities can only be fully realised by collaboration between government, communities and stakeholders to develop sound policies that support regional business, through investing in roads, important infrastructure and industries.

Labor will:

- Reinvigorate the successful Regional Infrastructure Development Fund to target priority infrastructure projects in each region
- Work with communities and councils to put in place individual plans to grow jobs for Regional communities, and where possible, boost public sector employment and access to services in regional areas
- Shift Regional Development Victoria to the heart of economic activity in government
- Resource the implementation of regional strategic plans across the state
- Introduce a facility for Treasury Corporation Victoria to undertake borrowing on behalf of municipal authorities for approved infrastructure, subject

to an assessment of the municipal authority's capacity to manage the liability

- Work with the Federal and State Governments and the Australian Local Government Association to establish a national debt product, backed by government guarantee
- Work in partnership with local municipalities and industries to ascertain the most effective use of State Government resources in supporting regional economies in transition
- Work with existing businesses in small rural and regional towns to utilise new processes and technologies to retain existing jobs and create new jobs.
- Support investment in timber processing and manufacturing that will create value and jobs in regional communities.

World Class Skills and Training

As detailed further in the Skills and Knowledge Chapter, Labor understands that Victoria cannot have a prosperous future without an educated, highly skilled workforce that is well-placed to seize new opportunities in a changing economy. Labor believes that making world-class training accessible to all Victorians is not just a matter of equality, but a matter of economic survival.

Labor understands that this cannot be achieved by Government alone; it must collaborate with employers, unions and professional organisations to predict areas of skills shortage and make sure that Victoria is not disadvantaged.

Labor will take responsibility for making sure that people gain the skills they need to succeed.

Labor will ensure that skills training is affordable and accessible.

Many rural Victorians have high levels of skills which are not formally recognised.

Creating opportunities for young people to develop their vocational skills is critical to the future of our economy, as our skills base is built on apprenticeships and traineeships.

Young people should have confidence that the skills they learn are the ones that they need to attract a quality job and to do it well.

Labor understands this, and will ensure that unscrupulous operators offering 'tick and flick' training are weeded out from the system so that all students and employers can be confident in the quality of their qualification.

Labor will:

- Partner with industry, unions and expert bodies to make sure that the Victorian training system is responsive to the rest of the economy
- Restore funding to TAFE, so that it can again generate the skills that Victoria needs to prosper
- Support TAFEs to establish one-stop-shop Industry Skills Centres, which will liaise directly with a broad cross-section of local industries, co-locate training facilities, and provide employers, apprentices and trainees with a single point of contact around their training needs
- Providing an automatic right to government-subsidised training for redundant workers to re-skill, regardless of prior qualifications
- Create opportunities for workers who have been made redundant, through improving our recognition of prior learning system and providing extra training options
- Monitor the performance of the Victorian training system, and continually work to ensure that it provides qualifications that lead to jobs
- Introducing a target of at least 10 per cent of the workforce on projects of state significance to be made up of apprentices
- Prioritise skills for young people by supporting apprentices and improving our VET system Reform recognition of prior learning (RPL) procedures by improving the process to ensure that only genuine competencies are recognised
- Introduce RPL programs that recognise skills held by rural Victorians and alleviate skills shortages in rural areas
- Establish a Skills Commissioner to provide oversight of the training market and to develop and access the best possible data to determine future skill shortage areas and appropriate workforce training needs
- Restore the funding of Industry Training advisory bodies which the Coalition Government foolishly removed
- Consider the standardizing of training certification, licences or professional registration, including the possibility of developing national or multi-state standards

Youth Unemployment

Under the Coalition, youth unemployment, disengagement and disadvantage has grown dramatically across regional and suburban Victoria.

Changes to the modern economy have made it harder for young people to get a start in the workforce. The cruel and senseless cuts by the Coalition to programs such as TAFE, VCAL, youth justice programs, youth employment and other programs have compounded this problem.

Young people facing extended periods of unemployment are at risk of generational disadvantage.

Victorian Labor is committed to making youth participation and engagement in our economy and community a right. This will be created by investing in work readiness amongst Victorian youth; supporting training, education, employment services and other tools to give these young adults the best opportunities in life.

Labor will:

- Build employable skills and experience amongst young people
- Promote mentoring, coaching and work participation schemes to build links and support structures for young job seekers
- Rebuild vocational training and TAFE systems
- Consult with young people and youth services to develop and accommodation participation programs and make best use of existing resources

Investment Attraction

Labor believes it is the role of government to compete nationally and globally to attract investments that stimulate employment and support the economic growth of Victoria.

Jobs that are created through investment attraction should be ongoing permanent jobs that stay based in Victoria.

Despite the global downturn, Labor was able to maintain considerable business investment in Victoria while in government.

Labor will:

- Develop an overarching investment attraction strategy

- Promote Victoria as an great place to invest to key overseas markets and provide a supportive pro-business environment
- Ensure Commissioner of Victoria positions and Victorian Government Business Officers are well placed to attract investment, business and trade opportunities for Victoria.

Creating a Competitive Victoria

Economic gains only lead to social gains when business is effectively regulated. However, we must acknowledge that regulation can carry a cost.

Unnecessary or inefficient regulation creates friction for businesses and reduces its ability to perform, grow, and employ Victorians. Labor believes in striking the right balance between accountability and allowing businesses the flexibility they need to thrive.

We recognise that the burden of excessive regulation disproportionately affects small business. Labor supports initiatives that streamline government regulation while protecting the integrity of our system. Where opportunities are found to improve efficiency in either the public or private sectors, it is incumbent on government to seize those opportunities.

We seek to continually improve the rules that govern business in our State, by listening to our workers, business and regulators.

Labor will:

- Seek to partner with other Australian governments and find opportunities to make regulation more consistent without compromising workers' rights or entitlements
- Be aware of the burden that extra regulation can create while implementing its legislative agenda and conducting the business of government. Labor will consult with business – particularly small business – about changes that will affect them
- Ensure that the regulations in place are fully enforced and set penalties for breaches of regulation that will satisfy the public interest and deter malfeasance

Building a Stronger Victoria

Victoria needs an infrastructure strategy that supports a broader vision for our State.

Significant new infrastructure projects create jobs and make our economy more productive, but only when they form part of a transparent, coherent plan. The Coalition Government's record on major projects has been defined by secrecy, inaction and cynical politics.

Victorians have a right to participate in an open, informed and inclusive discussion about the major projects that will best help Victoria meet future challenges, and how these projects should be delivered.

Labor is determined to eradicate undue political interference from Victoria's infrastructure planning process. Victoria urgently needs a specialist body to oversee project selection, and to provide independent and transparent advice to Government on the State's future infrastructure needs.

Infrastructure priorities that extend beyond a single electoral cycle must be pursued. The Victorian public is entitled to be satisfied that projects are the result of careful consideration, alternatives have been properly evaluated, and the most urgent projects are given the highest priority.

Government investment is vital to creating a pipeline of major projects to sustain Victoria's construction sector. Periods of prolonged inactivity in the construction sector quickly cost Victorian jobs and lead to the loss of expertise as workers move to other states.

Public investment in infrastructure projects can and should be used to cushion the economy against downturns and protect jobs.

Infrastructure Victoria

A future Victorian Labor Government will establish Infrastructure Victoria, with responsibility for providing independent, transparent advice on infrastructure projects and priorities. Labor will make Infrastructure Victoria's recommendations public and ensure government responds publicly to these recommendations in a timely manner.

Infrastructure Victoria will:

- Identify and prioritise infrastructure needs of state and national significance

- Evaluate proposals for or enhancements to state significant infrastructure
- Develop and publish research, involving all stakeholders, on the economic and social benefits of particular projects
- Advise government on appropriate funding and financing models for infrastructure investment, or any impediments to infrastructure delivery
- Coordinate infrastructure funding submissions from the State and its agencies to the Australian Government and other bodies

Projects Victoria

Labor will establish Projects Victoria, a specialist agency to deliver Infrastructure Victoria's priorities.

Projects Victoria will be required to publicly report on the performance of all capital works under its management and oversight.

Projects Victoria will:

- Oversee the scope, design and delivery of all major projects
- Act as a key project delivery body in the procurement of major infrastructure projects in Victoria
- Research and develop guidelines for applying appropriate procurement models for different types of projects
- Ensure workforce planning provides for mentoring programs, apprenticeships, traineeships and cadetships across all State Governments departments

Construction Code

The Coalition Government created uncertainty and confusion in the building industry in 2012 by introducing a \$7 million code of practice for the construction industry, as well as the compliance unit to oversee it.

The unit has not worked, has done nothing to create jobs or grow the economy and is simply an avenue to enforce the Government's anti-worker, anti-union industrial code.

It's clear that both the Federal and State Coalition governments have put ideology before infrastructure, choosing to play politics rather than create employment opportunities for Victorian workers. Labor is opposed to the Federal Government's reintroduction of the Howard-era Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) with all of its oppressive powers over workers.

Labor will:

- Abolish both the State Coalition's code of practice for the construction industry and the Construction Code of Practice Compliance Unit

Interface Connectivity

Melbourne's Interface councils include Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mitchell, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Yarra Ranges. They comprise areas with rapidly growing populations, productive rural land and some of Victoria's most significant and vulnerable conservation corridors.

Labor acknowledges that these communities face some of Victoria's greatest infrastructure challenges, including lack of transport connections, access to local health services, limited local employment opportunities and lack of investment in local roads. While the release and development of land for housing and industry grows, there has been a serious failure to keep pace with the resulting demand for the necessary physical and social infrastructure. Just as the needs and aspirations of these interface communities differ, so do their infrastructure needs.

Residents of Melbourne's outer suburbs who prefer to work locally can benefit from strategies that promote successful local businesses and projects.

Labor will consult with interface councils to:

- Establish a dedicated fund to support the infrastructure needs of interface communities.
- Encourage new and innovative business and economic development strategies

Local Spending Means Local Jobs

The Victorian Government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the state. Victorians expect to get value for money, which often means more than just the lowest price.

Labor believes that government should use its purchasing power to generate jobs for Victorians, and boost economic activity by procuring local products and local services.

Labor recognises that procurement practices in low-paid and labour-intensive industries can result in a race to the bottom for workers' pay.

Labor is committed to using its purchasing power to set high standards and ensure that workplaces are fair and safe.

Government procurement policies should not be limited to local products and services; they must also have a workforce inclusive profile. This means the employment of people with a disability and prospective mature age employees. Labor is committed to ensuring that local spending means local jobs.

Labor will:

- Emphasise the importance of the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPP) to all departments and agencies and ensure that appropriate resources and training are provided so that purchasing decisions can be properly assessed against value for money considerations
- Retain minimum local content targets in Strategic Projects
- Introduce a minimum 10 per cent formal weighting system for local content in the evaluation of all VIPP Plans and VIPP Local Industry Development Plans
- Ensure that procurers and their contractors do not procure dumped or unlawfully subsidised products under the terms applied by the Anti-Dumping Authority where there is an Australian industry that could supply the product when a product is confirmed by the Anti-Dumping Authority
- Ensure that the value of its purchasing over time is communicated to the market in order to improve investment and competitiveness and generate local jobs
- Cut red tape by streamlining VIPP Plans and Local Industry Development Plans
- Halve the value of thresholds for Strategic Projects
- Calculate minimum local content targets for Strategic Projects based on build rather than whole-of-life where appropriate
- Require the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation to develop a forward plan outlining expected future Strategic Projects
- Mandate the purchase of locally manufactured vehicles (where a fit-for-purpose vehicle is available) by all Victorian Government departments, statutory authorities and agencies (including executives entering into salary sacrifice arrangements) and Victorian Local Government Authorities
- Audit the current State Government purchasing practices regarding paper purchasing, then put in place a process to encourage local manufactured paper products. Labor State Government will also be willing to consider further steps to ensure the take up of these locally manufactured products
- Explore the viability of locally designing and manufacturing special purpose vehicles such as ambulances, fire trucks and buses
- Advocate through COAG for a national, rolling-stock Procurement and Maintenance Plan
- Commit to a program of comprehensive reform of procurement policies, to improve accessibility for SMEs, regional and niche suppliers, build greater planning capacity for assisting local enterprises of all sizes, and develop a final selection process based on the whole-of-life value, including job creation and economic growth
- 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 the contracting and tendering processes includes a 'no disadvantage test' for employee pay and entitlements, prior to awarding contracts in low paid, labour intensive industries
- Ensure that all government funded projects require contractors to use active Labour Market Testing to ensure that Australian citizens and permanent residents are given the opportunity to apply for jobs before applications for 457 visa workers can be approved
- Seek to ensure that before any Designation Area Migration Agreements (DRMA, formally Regional Migration Agreements) are applied for, all stakeholders including unions are consulted and a needs assessment undertaken, exploring other avenues for sourcing workers.
- Undertake a strategic review of all Victorian procurement policies to ensure they promote the employment of cohorts who face additional barriers to employment, including people with disability and prospective mature aged employees

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 (TCF) Ethical Procurement Register from which the Victorian Government will exclusively source its TCF 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.

Government as a Model Employer

The Victorian Public Sector

Victoria's public sector and funded agencies provide services that are essential to the community and play a fundamental role in promoting fair and co-operative workplace practices.

As the State's largest employer, the Victorian Government will set the example for all Victorians by recognising, valuing and rewarding the work of the Victorian Public Service (VPS) and its funded agencies.

Labor believes the Government should work collaboratively with public sector unions to resolve workplace problems and deliver improvements across the public sector.

Diversity in the public sector should be a priority and

aim to reflect the wider community, encompassing a broad spectrum of diversity, including Indigenous people, women, LGBTI, people with a disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Coalition Government has failed Victorian public sector employees. It has slashed 4,200 jobs through the so-called 'Sustainable Government Initiative' and either expected those who remain to pick up the slack or replaced the redundant positions with labour hire workers, who can be sacked on a whim.

The Coalition Government has dismantled the departmental body Industrial Relations Victoria and made the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) the sole agency for industrial bargaining and advice to Government. This has contributed to endless delays and industrial dispute after industrial dispute with public sector employees.

Sadly, our economy has slumped in recent years and services for Victorians have been cut or substantially diminished. The Coalition Government has stripped thousands of jobs from the public sector and taken an antagonistic approach to EBA negotiations with nurses, teachers, paramedics and other vital government employees.

Labor will:

- Establish a public sector committee to facilitate regular and constructive dialogue between the public sector unions, the Premier and Ministers
- Support the efforts of public sector workers and their unions to bargain collectively
- Strengthen the role of negotiating agreements and providing industrial relations advice to Government by moving this function from the DTF
- Work constructively with public sector unions to avoid unnecessary disputation
- Honour all terms collectively bargained for within formal agreements and not seek to use legal constructs to avoid these agreed obligations
- Commence EBA negotiations six months in advance of the nominal expiry date
- Ensure the public sector employment levels are based on needs not arbitrary caps
- Formalise and ensure the enforceability of agreed public sector redundancy provisions
- Examine model agreements and standard clauses across the public sector to streamline the bargaining process and promote equity across the public sector
- Seek to reduce, and where possible eliminate, the use of outsourcing of publicly funded employment

and workplaces covered by government wages policy; include a secure jobs clause during EBA negotiations, committing agencies to a secure employment recruitment target and improving casual conversion arrangements

- If outsourcing work, ensure that public sector terms and conditions of work transmit with employees to the new employer and are maintained with access to future wage improvements and including protections from unlawful discrimination and forced redundancy are established.
- Support employment opportunities for underrepresented groups across the public sector, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The Federal Public Sector in Victoria

The Federal public sector employs tens of thousands of Victorians in areas as diverse as Centrelink and Medicare, Quarantine and Customs, CSIRO and Meteorology, Defence, Tax and the ABC.

The Federal Coalition has announced large scale Commonwealth job cuts which are likely to include up to 4,000 Victorian jobs, significantly adding to the unemployment rate and having a negative impact on the delivery of services to people living in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

The Coalition is promoting a UK-style 'big society' austerity agenda, which means further job losses and large scale outsourcing of public sector work to multinational companies.

Labor will stand with communities to oppose the Abbott Government's cuts to jobs and services in Victoria.

Commitment to Secure Employment

Under a Coalition Government, the number of Victorian workers in insecure jobs has risen. Of the small number of jobs created by the Coalition, only a small fraction of those jobs have been in secure, full-time work.

Labor is committed to improving the job security of all Victorian workers, whether in the public or private sector, so that they can fully participate in the community and plan ahead for their future.

Employment binds our communities and strengthens our economy, and Labor will strive to ensure that all working Victorians have access to secure and permanent employment.

Short-term contracts, temporary and casual work may suit some workers, but many people engaged in

precarious employment suffer disadvantage, as they cannot rely on a regular pay check, don't know how long it may be between jobs, are denied the ability to accrue recreational, personal or long-service leave and are often unable to get a loan.

Low-paid workers in insecure employment are particularly vulnerable; they have no bargaining power and are at risk of exploitation.

Labor recognises that an unregulated labour hire industry with over 2,000 operators places a significant burden on those responsible for ensuring compliance with the industrial awards and agreements that underpin the Fair Work Act.

Labor will:

- Conduct a review into insecure work in Victoria, including issues of:
 - The operation of the labour hire industry and the business practices of companies in the industry;
 - Sham contracting;
 - Systemic misuse of various visas to avoid Australian workplace laws and undermine collective bargaining;
 - Issues of fairness and productivity outcomes of contracting out in the public sector;
 - The failure of legislation to comprehend insecure workers.
- Develop a licensing system for labour hire agencies to ensure that only properly accredited operators can provide third party labour in Victorian workplaces
- Give priority to secure and direct employment arrangements when awarding tenders for State Government procurement

Protecting and Promoting Workers' Rights

Labor believes in the value and dignity of work, and acknowledges the efforts of hard-working Victorians, working in both the public and private sectors.

Labor recognises the strong role played by unions for 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 Federal Government to resurrect harsh and dictatorial individual employment contracts or attack collective bargaining.

Labor firmly believes in maintaining the Fair Entitlements Guarantee and that where an employer goes into liquidation or is bankrupt, it is the role of Governments to help employees who lose their job and have outstanding entitlements.

Labor believes in the democratic right to take protected industrial action, protest and stand up for the rights of workers and community. The Coalition Government has criminalised such action and this was opposed by Labor.

Unlike the Coalition Government, Labor believes that a co-operative approach to workplace relations delivers innovative and high performing workplaces.

Labor believes in:

- A single, unitary national system of industrial relations which is fair and balanced, and which is developed through balanced and rational negotiations between the various stakeholders
- The right to be free from workplace harassment and bullying
- The right of workers to belong to a trade union and to have effective trade union representation
- A fair, comprehensive safety net of wages and conditions, including penalty rates
- Robust collective bargaining and good faith in the bargaining process
- Pay equity and equal pay for work of equal or comparable value
- Co-operative work practices that are fair to workers, improve productivity and encourage innovation
- The right of workers to take lawful industrial action
- The right of unions to lawfully enter workplaces
- The right of workers to organise
- The right of all workers to be protected through unfair dismissal laws
- Support for the role of an independent umpire such as the Fair Work Commission
- Opposition to the use of individual contracts or contracting arrangements that erode workers' employment conditions and undermine opportunity to secure employment

Labor believes that all workers should be afforded the right to a 'fair go' and access to secure employment and decent working conditions. However, there

are groups of workers more vulnerable and disadvantaged than others and Labor believes they should be supported, including but not limited to young workers, women workers, LGBTI workers, older workers, workers with disabilities or injuries, workers in precarious employment, indigenous workers, newly-arrived workers, workers on temporary visa arrangement or workers from a non-English speaking background.

Labor is committed to taking practical steps to inform industry and employers, and protect 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:

- Respond appropriately to protect the conditions of Victorian workers and ensure that industrial protections afforded to workers will remain and be enforceable, in the event that a future Federal Government makes changes to the Fair Work Act
- Provide practical support, information and resources to ensure that Victorian workplaces are operating fairly
- Repeal the Napthine Government's 'Move On Laws' and reinstate the democratic lawful right to protest
- Provide information and training so that young workers understand employment rights, pay and conditions, their obligations under contracts and agreements and the role of employers and unions
- Oppose efforts by the Liberal Party to retain wage inequities and cut penalty rate entitlements for workers and condemns their decision to slash funding from JobWatch
- Victorian Labor supports the maintenance of vital workplace award based protections and in particular, accident make-up pay, and will review the impact of any adverse changes to this condition at the conclusion of the award modernisation process
- Expose and repudiate the increasing use of so-called internships or work experience or other concocted forms of low-pay or no-pay employment arrangements cynically designed to exploit young workers
- Stand up for the rights of women in the workforce to equal opportunity and equal pay, including in

relation to the social and community services sector, and will ensure this occurs through funding its fair share of the Victorian component of the Equal Remuneration Order

- Provide information on support services for those experiencing workplace bullying, harassment, discrimination or reduction of employment rights
- Ensure that employers properly train new workers to ensure their safety
- Strengthen guidelines to protect outworkers, especially in regards to ethical clothing
- Promote and provide resources for special campaigns for vulnerable groups including s457 visa holders, international students and workers in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, outworkers and workers forced into sham contracting arrangements
- Support an appropriate body to identify and highlight poor employment practices, provide advice to employees and take appropriate action to demand improvement
- Support workers' rights to take paid leave to engage in activities that benefit the community, such as blood donor leave or volunteering for the emergency services

Supporting National Standards

Labor supports a stable, cooperative and fair system of industrial relations and believes that a single unitary national system provides the best framework for all Victorian workers, employers and unions.

Labor supports the Fair Work Commission as the national workplace relations tribunal to carry out functions relating to the safety net, enterprise bargaining, dispute resolution, termination of employment, bullying and other workplace matters.

Labor will:

- Ensure that no Victorian worker will be disadvantaged as a result of any national harmonisation of long service leave, equal opportunity and discrimination law, or OH&S that is pursued through the COAG process

Work/life balance

Labor believes employees are more productive and beneficial to the workplace when they enjoy a good work/life balance.

Many workers struggle to manage the competing demands of work and family/personal responsibilities. Workplaces who fail to provide family friendly environments risk their productivity and may lose skilled valuable employees. For employees, family friendly workplaces contribute to improved health and well-being, greater job satisfaction and increased performance.

Family Friendly Work Practices

Labor believes working arrangements such as part-time or flexible hours, home-based work options, paid and unpaid parental leave and carers' leave are good contributors to work/life balance which allow workers to participate in family, social and recreational activities.

Getting the right balance between work and family commitments, and accommodating the needs of business and the wider Victorian economy, can be achieved through cooperation between government, employers, unions and employees.

Labor will:

- Use its position as a major Victorian employer to show leadership and look for innovative ways to assist public sector employees to better balance work and family commitments
- Promote women with family responsibilities into senior positions in the public sector
- Advocate for sufficient Federally-funded childcare and outside school hours placements to meet the needs of Victorian parents

Public Holidays

Labor recognises that public holidays represent significant religious, national, state and local occasions. They provide the opportunity for families and friends to take a break from normal work or studies and join together as a community with common ideals. Public holidays perform an important role in uniting the community and providing people with family and leisure time.

The Coalition Government changed the laws in relation to Easter Sunday. However they refused to provide fair pay to those now forced to work on

Easter Sunday by failing to declare it a public holiday.

Labor will:

- Restore fairness and declare Easter Sunday a public holiday in Victoria.
- Declare the Friday before the AFL Grand Final Day as a public holiday in Victoria.
- Review the public holiday arrangements with respect to Christmas Day, when it falls on a weekend.
- Retain the designated shop closing on the whole of Christmas Day and the whole of Good Friday and on ANZAC Day until 1pm, to ensure that as many workers as possible are able to celebrate these significant days with their family and friends

Long Service Leave

Long service leave is an entitlement provided to workers after many years in the workplace and is an opportunity to take a break, rest and recuperate in order to maintain health and productivity.

Labor will:

- Support the creation of a uniform national minimum long service leave standard, provided that there is no diminution of standards for Victorians
- Facilitate employer schemes that provide portability of leave entitlements for workers as they move between jobs in the same or similar industry
- Reward Victoria's valuable community sector employees by re-visiting the implementation of a portable long service scheme for the community services sector
- Review the provisions in the Long Service Act and examine whether there should be amendments relating to:
 - Pro-rata access to long service leave after seven years in employment (not just on termination)
 - The calculation of long service leave entitlements with regards to penalty rates and accrual during parental leave
 - Employer and employee definitions

Workplace Safety and Compensation

Labor believes employers and employees all have a fundamental right to a safe and secure working environment. Significant advances have been made in injury and illness prevention, and compensation over the past two decades, and stand as a testament to previous Labor governments and the cooperative environment Labor has created amongst employers and unions.

Health and Safety at Work

Labor believes safety at work should never be compromised.

Labor believes it is vital to work with unions and industry to ensure that effective and acceptable OH&S standards are developed and enforced across the entire state. Labor will always protect the right of workers to have input into the health and safety matters designed to protect their health and safety.

Labor commits to effective action to protect both the physical health of employees in the workplace, as well as addressing the increasing risk to mental and emotional health – such as workplace stress, anxiety, depression and other disorders triggered in the workplace.

Safer workplaces are the key to WorkCover's financial sustainability. Fewer workplace accidents allow for both lower premiums for employers and increased benefits to injured workers.

Labor will ensure any surplus accumulated in the Victorian WorkCover Authority (WorkSafe) will be used only to:

- fund appropriate improvements to benefits and access to benefits for injured workers
- lower WorkCover premiums for Victorian businesses
- support programs to improve workplace safety and the health of the Victorian workforce, including an expanded and well resourced OH&S Inspectorate within the VWA

WorkHealth has been an innovative and successful preventative health program. Unlike the Coalition Government, Labor is committed to preventative health in the workplace.

Labor will:

- Re-establish and expand WorkHealth, and assess the possibility of aggregate data collection (subject to protection of privacy) being used to drive further public health initiatives

WorkCover

The Coalition has a long record of undermining WorkCover. During the Kennett Government, common law rights were removed. The current Coalition Government has raided the Victorian WorkCover Authority for over \$500 million to shore up the budget bottom line, and has also cut the innovative WorkHealth program.

The previous Labor Government was able to improve benefits for injured workers including the restoration of common law rights, sound management of the financials of the scheme and reduction in the average premiums six times.

Labor firmly believes that Victorian workers should have a right to fair compensation, including common law rights, while maintaining the financial health of the scheme. Labor will protect the rights, entitlements, methods of calculation and thresholds of access to benefits for injured workers.

Claiming compensation after a workplace injury or illness should be efficient and quick.

Where disputes do occur over claims, the Accident Compensation Conciliation Service must be well resourced, independent, fair and transparent – and with strong legislative authority.

Helping workers make an effective recovery from a work-related injury or illness, and an effective return to work, must be the key priority outcome of any health and safety legislative framework. The VWA has a key role to play in assisting successful returns to work through its Return to Work Inspectorate.

While the majority of injured workers successfully return to work, a minority face greater difficulties in recovering from a workplace injury. The 2013 WorkSafe Annual Report states that in 2012-13, 21.5 per cent of injured workers were unable to return to work within six months. The chance of an injured worker returning to work after 70 days off work was only 35 per cent. These many thousands of Victorians must not be left behind.

Labor will:

- Conduct an inquiry into the outcomes for injured workers and employers, focused on the transition points faced by injured workers and employers, including the lodgement and acceptance of claims, the ending of the obligation for employers to provide work and the end of weekly payments

- Review the effectiveness of occupational, health and safety legislation, regulation and enforcement by the Victorian Workcover Authority. The purpose of the review will be to ensure high safety standards in Victorian Workplaces.
- Review the effectiveness of legislation, regulation and enforcement in relation to employment by labour hire agencies
- Ensure that labour hire arrangements cannot be used to compromise workers' safety, suppress claims lodgement or avoid employer's responsibilities for premiums, return to work obligations and responsibility for workplace accidents

The Coalition Government has failed fire-fighters suffering from cancers caused by their work protecting the community.

The Government's response to this issue has highlighted the failure of Victoria to keep pace with the latest medical research on occupationally-linked disease.

Labor will:

- Establish an independent research council to report to Parliament on the latest research regarding workplace health and safety, including occupationally linked disease.

Skills and Knowledge

Preamble

Education is Labor's number one priority. It's the bedrock of social justice and cohesion in our society and it will build our 21st Century economy.

Labor will increase investment in Victoria's greatest strength – its people – so they may enhance their development and their participation in work and society.

Children's care and education are interdependent. Lifelong learning starts at birth and every child deserves the best possible start in life.

High quality and affordable early childhood education and care services must be available for all families, regardless of their circumstances.

Labor celebrates the diversity of education in Victoria. The variety of government, Catholic and independent schools in Victoria allows parents to choose what is best for their children.

The performance of all Victorian schools is critical to our success – as individuals, communities and as a State.

There are great schools and great teachers in our state school system and they deserve real support - something they aren't getting from the Coalition Government.

Labor knows that learning beyond secondary school is critical to the success of our society and our economy.

Whether at TAFE, or at work, or through further academic study at university, it's about giving young people the skills they need for the job they want.

Community and adult education also provide an important opportunity to people who are getting back into the workforce.

Under the Coalition Government, education in Victoria is barely recognisable. Three-and-a-half

years of cuts and neglect have put our kids' future at risk.

The worst thing a Government could do, in the middle of a jobs crisis, is cut funds to VCAL and TAFE and prevent young people from getting the skills they need to start their career.

That's precisely what the Coalition Government did. Their \$1.2 billion funding cut from TAFE has closed campuses, cut courses and completely gutted the system.

The Coalition has deliberately targeted our most vulnerable children. They abolished the programs that delivered basic needs like uniforms, books and excursions.

The Government even cut Reading Recovery, a children's literacy support program.

The Coalition has failed to invest in new school buildings and consequently classrooms are falling apart and schools are in disrepair.

It's worse in growth areas in suburban Melbourne and regional Victoria, where entire schools are still waiting to be built. You can't get a first rate education in a second rate classroom.

Only Labor will rebuild Victorian education and make our state number one again – in jobs and in learning. Only Labor built TAFE and only Labor will protect it.

Only Labor will stand up for schools, teachers, parents and students, because skills and knowledge are vital to our economy, and our kids deserve the best start.

Our Values

Labor believes all Victorians ought to have access to high-quality education and training, in a safe learning environment, at every stage of their lives. This is a fundamental right and students must never be discriminated against on the basis of socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexuality, age, ability or location.

We believe that it is the government's responsibility to provide the best possible free, compulsory and secular public education system in the developed world.

Families deserve a choice of flexible and affordable early childhood services which include an appropriate mix of centre care, preschools, kindergartens, family day care, outside school hours and occasional care.

A safe, positive and supportive classroom environment is the key to nurturing students and overcoming disadvantage. We must consider the needs of students with disabilities and impairments and those who speak English as a second language.

Labor acknowledges that a successful education and training system relies on its teachers and staff. We will support the ongoing development of a high-quality teaching profession. We will also encourage community participation in neighbourhood schools and higher education institutions.

We will provide a comprehensive and balanced curriculum, with high standards of academic excellence and practical achievement that motivates and engages students in learning for their own personal development and for enhancing their participation in the society in which they live.

Labor believes that the community is entitled to an open and transparent education system. A responsible school system will report to the community about progress and quality.

Labor understands that all schools should have high-quality facilities. School buildings must be safe, comfortable and welcoming.

Delivering Our Goals

Early Childhood

Children's care and education are interdependent.

Labor recognises that access to high quality early years services are central to giving every Victorian child the best start in life. Labor is committed to supporting families to achieve this goal.

Labor knows that a child's early experiences have a significant impact on their learning, development and future prospects.

Families deserve a choice of flexible, accessible, affordable and high quality early childhood education and care services that includes playgroups, kindergartens, long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, occasional care, maternal and child health, family services and early childhood intervention services.

Labor understands that high quality, affordable children's services must be available for all families, no matter where they live or what their circumstances may be.

Labor recognises that Victoria's baby boom is continuing, which requires a significant investment in early childhood services and infrastructure.

Labor recognises the importance of childcare in assisting parents to combine work and family responsibilities.

The primary responsibility for child care services lies with the Federal Government but Labor will continue to work with all levels of government to ensure the best outcomes for Victoria's children and families.

Labor understands that integrated early childhood education, health and children's services provide the best outcomes for Victoria's children and their families.

Labor was the national leader in early childhood services, having championed reforms that led to the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education.

Labor will:

- Invest in the provision of universal early childhood education and care programs such as kindergarten, maternal and child health services and community playgroups and ensure families have access to these services no matter where they live

- Improve the links and pathways to promote better integration of children's services with education and other early childhood services
- Invest in the development of modern and flexible early childhood facilities in partnership with community and local and federal governments
- Co-locate more early childhood services in the one location through building more Integrated Children's Centres in partnership with local government. These should be located at or near schools where possible.
- Invest in more supported playgroups.
- Ensure parents have access to appropriate services for advice and assistance with early detection, early diagnosis and early intervention and support for children with special needs
- Develop and implement targeted and co-ordinated strategies to support families with greatest needs
- Develop strategies to lift participation rates in accessing universal services in disadvantaged communities, including in Aboriginal communities and recently arrived migrants. Improve pathways between early childhood services and school.
- Keep children's services affordable for families while delivering high quality services
- Ensure more maternal and health home visits are available to mothers and families and provide support to new parents
- Support the expansion of universal access to kindergarten programs
- Provide material support to families for each new birth
- Support parents with the transition from hospital/ birth to home/family life
- Continue to build a strong, professional and high quality workforce.

Schools

Labor believes that education binds society together, aids prosperity and develops individual potential.

Under Labor schools will help students to:

- develop a sense of themselves as active learners, who can think, solve problems and make positive choices in life

- develop confidence, initiative, adaptability, self-discipline, responsibility, honesty, kindness, tolerance, resilience and cooperation
- develop their intellect, their imagination and their talents and strive for excellence
- become active, well-balanced, knowledgeable citizens, able to participate fully in a democratic society
- continue their education as they grow in maturity

Labor wants Victorian students to:

- value themselves and demonstrate respect for others
- listen and speak well, read with understanding and write with clarity
- use mathematics in simple and complex procedures
- develop skills in technology and appreciate its role in society
- understand our democratic multicultural society, recognising what should be conserved, changed or improved
- appreciate the cultural, scientific and historical heritage of our society and other societies
- understand and engage in our economy, our democracy and legal system
- communicate in a language other than English
- understand research and experimental procedures
- appreciate human discovery, innovations and inventions
- understand and appreciate the natural environment
- understand human interaction with different environments
- enjoy and understand the arts
- develop skills to enable them to make healthy lifestyle choices
- understand how the human body works and enable them to make healthy choices
- enjoy and participate in sporting and recreational activities

A Curriculum for Deep Engagement and Comprehensive Learning

Labor understands the importance of providing a holistic and balanced curriculum, with high standards of academic excellence and practical achievement that motivates and engages students in learning for their benefit and for the benefit of the society in which they live.

Labor knows that curriculum must be comprehensive, based on specific standards in all subjects, cater for different learning styles, recognise prior knowledge and allow for local content.

Labor acknowledges that developing strong literacy and numeracy skills establishes the foundations for success in other learning areas.

All students will have the opportunity to learn English, maths, civics and citizenship, history, geography, commerce, languages, science, the arts, music, health, physical education and technology, with particular emphasis on literacy, numeracy, creativity, and environmental sustainability.

Labor will:

- Ensure that school curriculum is comprehensive, has depth, is inclusive and caters for different learning styles, and is sufficiently flexible to enable the incorporation of local and culturally appropriate content
- Ensure through professional development, that teachers make effective use of recent innovations in teaching and learning
- Provide funding for research and implementation of curriculum innovation and organisational innovation which provides schools with the flexibility to best meet the needs of their community
- Adopt the best research in restructuring secondary education to provide a new focus in Year 9 on life skills and personal development experiences outside the normal school setting
- Ensure that curriculum allows for team-oriented project work in the community while ensuring academic rigour
- Provide support for initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for students

- Ensure all students in government schools have the opportunity to access quality coordinated and sustained languages programs, from Prep to Year 12.
- Restore VCAL to the status of a legitimate pathway as it was under previous Labor Governments
- Maintain rigorous marking criteria in VCE
- Promote the role of parents as partners in education with schools to improve student literacy, numeracy and learning through culturally appropriate programs
- Ensure that schools provide high quality reporting in plain language to parents on a child's intellectual, social and physical development
- Use information technology to optimise the literacy and numeracy skills of Victorian students
- Ensure that Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority has adequate power and resources and the Board is widely representative of those involved in education
- Support the preservation of Indigenous art forms and languages

Catering for the Needs of All Students

Labor understands that all students, no matter what their needs or backgrounds, are able to learn in a safe, positive and supportive classroom environment in the setting best suited to their needs, with special regard for students with additional needs and those in areas of entrenched disadvantage.

Safe & Supportive Schools

Labor will:

- Support a whole-school approach to building resilience and promoting respectful relationships that includes a range of initiatives and strategies to prevent and respond to bullying, cyber-bullying, abuse and unacceptable behaviour
- Support programs in schools that promote the safe use of digital technologies and focus on prevention of cyber-bullying and safe use of social media
- Support the expansion of Primary Welfare Officers across Victoria

- Promote the co-ordination and co-location of children's, families and allied health services on school sites
- Provide stronger health support services to primary schools with high social disadvantage to significantly enhance life-long educational and social achievements of students
- Ensure that students with learning difficulties are able to get extra assistance when it is needed, especially in the area of literacy support
- Provide support for nutritious eating, physical activity and healthy living programs
- Expand the Safe Schools program to all government secondary schools across the State, to combat homophobia and discrimination against same-sex attracted and gender questioning (SSAGQ) young people, and encourage private and independent schools to participate
- Ensure schools establish firm but fair discipline procedures which recognise the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community
- Ensure students can focus on learning in the classroom by engaging poorly behaved students and providing schools with resources, programs and support to assist schools and students to constructively resolve behavioural problems
- Ensure all school programs reflect the diverse nature of the Victorian community and encourage tolerance and appreciation of others
- Implement effective accountability mechanisms to ensure that funding and support services for students with disabilities and impairments focus on defined educational needs and individual programs
- Support students transitioning from primary to secondary school
- Support our students by ensuring improvement in special needs education
- Ensure that schools with special settings meet the highest standards in facilities, equipment and resources to enable them to cater for students with a range of disabilities
- Encourage best practice by assisting autism schools and other special settings to act as a resource hub to provide professional development and support to mainstream schools
- Work in cooperation with the Federal Government to ensure after school care programs are available for all students with disabilities
- Establish better consultative mechanisms between key special education stakeholders and Government
- Ensure that the human rights of every child is respected, regardless of their ability or background
- Create a single independent and reliable source of information about special needs education for families, students and schools
- Improve access to diagnostic and therapeutic services, particularly in regional and remote areas
- Ensure that appropriate special consideration is given when students with established special needs sit examinations, while maintaining rigorous academic standards
- Appropriately recognise schools that achieve excellence in inclusive education.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

Labor will:

- Provide effective funding and integration support to ensure students with disabilities and impairments achieve their potential in mainstream schools
- Work to make schools more inclusive
- Support parents to place their child in either a mainstream school or a specialised setting according to the needs of the child, based on sound professional advice
- Acknowledge dyslexia and other specific learning disorders as barriers to a child's learning and development

School Retention

Labor will:

- Address the issue of transition from Grade 6 to Year 7 for students at risk of disengaging from school during the transition process
- Provide pathways to ensure that flexible learning options are available to all students at risk of

disengaging from school. Alternative programs will have educational and behavioural objectives that focus on the social, physical, academic, cultural and emotional development of the student through individual plans and links to the mainstream school and local community

- Establish a pilot mentoring and tutoring project with mechanisms that link university students with school students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are at risk of disengaging from school
- Establish a 'Young Mums' program to ensure that young mothers are able to continue their education during pregnancy and while caring for their child
- Enhance the Managed Individual Pathways program to support students at risk of disengagement in the final years of school

Letting our Teachers Teach and our Principals be Educational Leaders.

Labor understands the importance of providing students with highly able, highly motivated and highly trained teachers, support staff and principals who are supported by the system to do their utmost to meet the learning needs of every student in our complex society.

Labor understands the need to lift the morale, goodwill and professional standing of Victorian teachers by investing in educators, respecting those in education, maintaining standards and ensuring that the security and predictability of employment, pay and conditions of our teachers are at professional levels.

Labor does not believe this can be achieved by implementing performance pay, and rather believes that a focus on staff development and support is the best way to improve performance.

The rhetoric about 'school autonomy' from the Coalition Government is nothing more than code for dumping more and more administrative and technical work on schools and removing any support networks, forcing our teachers to spend time away from the classroom and our principals to spend time away from their schools.

The best educators have never been further away from the most important thing – providing the very best education for Victorian children.

Labor will:

- Minimise the use of contracts and short term positions for teachers
- Reward outstanding teachers with incentives to stay in the classroom in a full teaching role and to share their expertise with other teachers and mentor student teachers and beginning teachers
- Provide resources to networks and to co-ordinating schools for the provision of School Support Services Officers
- Provide incentives to attract teachers to hard-to-staff disadvantaged schools
- Expand Secondary School Teacher Assistants and Primary Welfare Officers
- Promote the sharing of technical expertise between schools in areas such as finance, staffing and maintenance
- Provide support for high performing learning teams to assist other teachers in enhancing innovation and creativity, through professional development
- Provide adequate regional and school administrative staff to support principals, including support personnel in each principals' school network
- Introduce a system of mentoring for principals including mentoring by former school principals
- Commit to having elected teacher representatives on the Victorian Institute of Teaching Council

Schools as Learning Communities

Labor believes every school can be a great school. All schools in the Government system will provide free tuition, a comprehensive curriculum and right of access to local students – no matter where in Victoria people live.

Labor will ensure that every Victorian school, no matter what its size, sector, location or socio-economic status, is a well-managed, well-funded, efficient, effective and inclusive learning community. Every Victorian school will provide for the proper physical, emotional and intellectual care and development of young Victorians, celebrate their educational endeavours and learning excellence and value the democratic participation of parents, teachers and students.

Labor will ensure that the Education Department is the responsible authority for school compliance with Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority requirements.

Labor will provide adequate resources to the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority to ensure it can effectively monitor quality and financial viability of non-government schools.

Labor will:

- Ensure that schools are characterised by class sizes, equipment and facilities that optimise learning and teaching
- Ensure that schooling is relevant to life, focuses on the development of each child and equips students for active citizenship in the world in which they live
- Ensure that schools are resourced to enable them to work cooperatively, not as a set of competing small businesses
- Where feasible, establish pre-schools, primary schools and children's centres on the same site to provide maximum access to child and family services and allied health professionals
- Ensure schools have appropriate student enrolments in order to maintain a sense of community and belonging and avoid mega enrolments or a disproportionately large school
- Support small schools, particularly in rural areas, to provide curriculum and interaction opportunities for students, including through the provision of modern ICT facilities and assistance with transport costs
- Encourage schools to be open and welcoming community assets, available to the community outside school hours, allowing students, parents and others to benefit from after-hours opportunities. Schools will be encouraged to work with local government to help link schools with relevant services, clubs, associations and community groups

Labor recognises that some schools face significant difficulties in achieving their own and State-wide education goals due to a range of factors including geographic location, socio-economic background of the local community, high numbers of students at risk or with learning difficulties, high numbers of inexperienced teachers, difficulties in providing professional development for teachers, difficulty in attracting teachers into senior or specialist positions.

Labor will:

- Enable schools to meet the demands of local management and commit to continuous improvement, open processes and appropriate evaluation mechanisms
- Ensure that school leadership teams have access to high quality professional learning
- Ensure that teachers and support staff have access to high quality continuous professional learning
- Ensure School Councils have ready access to Education Department expertise

Democratic Governance

Labor recognises that successful schools operate as democratic partnerships in a democratic society and supports the participation of parents, teachers, students and the local community in their life and decision-making through representative institutions and open processes.

Labor will:

- Improve independent avenues for parents to deal with disputes and conflicts.
- Support local management of schools and ensure that each school has a school council to make sure that decisions are made by an organisation with democratically elected parent, teacher and student members with parents to form the majority
- Support parents, teachers and community members to participate, through the school council, in the development and review of school policies, needs identification, program planning, use of facilities and the strategic plan
- Empower school councils to make decisions on curriculum priorities, staffing needs, student welfare, reporting and local resource-sharing arrangements
- Develop programs and resources about the roles and responsibilities of school councils and strategies for developing positive school-community relationships, for school leaders and members of school councils
- Mandate that all secondary schools have elected student representative councils

First Class Buildings and Grounds

Labor recognises the need for every Victorian government school to have attractive, solid, technologically advanced and environmentally efficient buildings that can be adapted for community use and changed purposes, with shaded, attractive grounds.

Four lost years under the Coalition Government has seen the school capital program plummet to less than half of what it was under Labor.

Labor will:

- Provide 21st century school facilities for all Victorian students
- Work with both Government and non-Government sectors to ensure the needs of students are met
- Establish new facilities standards for Government school to meet the demands of a modern curriculum and a modern staffing schedule, which can be adapted for multipurpose community uses over time
- Support schools to install solar panels to reduce cost of power and water tanks to meet the needs of kitchen gardens and school grounds facilities
- Ensure there is community input into school design
- Establish an ongoing cyclical upgrade program to ensure that school buildings continue to meet the evolving needs of student learning
- Address long-standing maintenance issues to ensure that community standards are met
- Build new schools in close proximity to other community facilities and in cooperation with land development plans
- Improve planning for new Government and non-Government schools in our growth corridors
- Provide suitable facilities to schools with large numbers of special needs students to meet their needs
- Provide resources for necessary landscaping and replace lost playgrounds when new and refurbished schools are provided
- Ensure all new sporting facilities and ovals are of sufficient size to provide for use by community sporting clubs after hours

- Ensure that existing and new school buildings continue to be cleaned and maintained to a high standard and that cleaning staff wages and conditions are fair, equitable and consistent
- Work with school councils and local government to improve vehicle safety and pedestrian access to schools

Funding Schools to Meet Students' Needs

Labor understands that it is teachers who do the work of teaching and that all schools need an adequate number to ensure that all students can learn.

Labor will:

- Continue to fund government schools via the student resource package (with base, per capita and disadvantage amounts)
- Continue to fund non-government schools in accordance with the financial assistance model

Departmental Structure to Support Schools

Labor will ensure that students, parents, teachers and schools are supported by an Education Department that promotes improvement, co-operation and professionalism, is responsive to the needs of schools and is accountable to the community.

Labor will:

- Establish education regions that are consistent with other Government departments and based on local government areas, geographical considerations and communities of interest, to provide support to networks and schools
- Support networks of schools to enable them to co-operate to meet the needs of a local community, address professional development, develop joint curriculum programs, share facilities, resources and knowledge, form groups to work on issues of joint concern, form links amongst teacher training institutions, schools and post-school providers and support the development of mentor/advocacy and coaching programs.
- Support accessible, well-resourced network support hubs for counsellors, guidance officers,

curriculum consultants, clinical support officers and professional libraries.

- Establish a Victorian Schools Forum, including representatives of stakeholders, to propose research and advise the Minister on strategies to create a first-class education system and to redress the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on educational achievement
- Use leading research findings concerning the factors involved in producing and addressing educational disadvantage. These will be taken into account in all aspects of the ongoing development of the Victorian public education system
- Enhance system assessment and school achievements against defined goals and use valid and efficient accountability mechanisms and qualitative and quantitative data

Post Compulsory

At a time of the widespread manufacturing industry crisis and with major job losses across Victorian industry, high quality training and retraining is more important to Victoria's future job growth than ever before. Labor is committed to restoring confidence in the vocational education and training (VET) and adult and community education sectors, which have been devastated by massive Coalition Government funding cuts and public policy failure. Labor is committed to providing genuinely accessible, high quality education and training opportunities to all school leavers and adults across Victoria, including disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.

Labor acknowledges that TAFE institutes are more than high quality vocational education and training providers. They are also social hubs for the community, providing essential support for training and jobs, life skills which complement a student's formal learning and education, support services to students such as counselling services and libraries, and extra support for the most disadvantaged in our community.

Labor knows that public TAFEs are of critical importance to communities across Victoria. From regional towns where the TAFE campus is their only local option for education and training, to the suburbs of Melbourne where the closure of a TAFE impacts on the opportunities of thousands, TAFEs are fundamentally important community facilities.

Labor opposes the massive student fee increases which have made training unaffordable for so many people. It acknowledges that vocational education and training fees need to be structured so that all residents in Victoria have the opportunity to access VET and TAFE education and training, under the Victorian Training Guarantee, including disadvantaged students and those with disabilities and indigenous students

Labor is committed to restoring democratic governance processes for Victorian TAFE institutes and universities, and providing operational autonomy to public TAFE institutes.

Labor acknowledges the specific needs of the adult and community education sector, and is committed to supporting their role in providing accessible and local education and training options to vulnerable and disengaged learners in local communities.

Labor acknowledges the need to ensure that education providers are equipped to undertake research and deliver quality training to meet the needs of the digital age, with appropriate levels of face-to-face teaching support.

TAFE

Labor understands the need for Victoria to have strong, modern and vibrant TAFE institutes to meet the needs of the Victorian economy while also providing students with the best possible learning environment. Providing people with the skills they need to thrive in an increasingly globalised and changing employment market is vital for future employment prospects and for driving Victoria's economic development. Labor recognises that TAFEs are valued public institutions, and is committed to supporting TAFE institutes' role in strengthening communities.

Unfortunately the strength and capacity of Victoria's TAFE system has been severely compromised by the Coalition Government. Funding cuts of \$1.2 billion over four years from the 2012-13 State Budget are the most savage cuts to TAFE that Victoria has ever seen. These funding cuts, followed by further training subsidy cuts in late 2013, have drastically reshaped the TAFE landscape. The Coalition Government's announcement in March 2013 of a 'contestable fund' of \$50 million per year does nothing to reverse the damage to TAFEs, and will only provide rescue funding to TAFE institutes which are prepared to merge or sell off valuable community assets to survive.

The Coalition's damage to TAFE goes further, with attacks on proper governance structures and independence, removal of staff and student representation on TAFE boards and sacking of the chairs of outspoken TAFE boards.

Labor will:

- Restore funding for TAFE to address skills needs, support the development of work-ready training graduates, and lower barriers to participation for disadvantaged and high needs students across the state
- Provide direct investment in TAFE infrastructure, and support TAFE institutes in their capital investment needs
- Restore independence and proper governance to TAFE institutes
- Ensure that TAFE is the lead provider and benchmark in technical and further education in Victoria
- Ensure that TAFE institutes are part of a holistic approach to competency-based learning
- Support training programs in areas of emerging technologies, to meet the skills needs of innovative manufacturing industries, and emerging markets for elaborated manufacturing products and services
- Strengthen the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) controls, and improve coordination of the regulatory framework between the Victorian and the Commonwealth Governments
- Ensure that regional TAFE institutes are able to provide high quality and diverse training courses, to meet the needs of their local industries and communities
- Enhance the skills of Victorians by developing apprenticeships and traineeships with new and expanded subjects. Expand the range of course provision for apprenticeships and traineeships, and address cost pressures on apprentices
- Encourage improved collaboration and cooperation between education and training providers to achieve optimum learning outcomes, use of resources and meet industry skills needs
- Utilise the facilities of TAFE institutes and dual sector universities to strengthen student pathways between TAFE, higher education institutions and schools, and work with local

boards and regional councils

- Create an integrated government body that analyses, on an ongoing basis, industry needs, markets, reports on changing markets and products, emerging skills needs
- Strengthen links between TAFE institutes and local and regional industries, to ensure that skills training meets industry demand for work-ready graduates.

Vocational Education and Training

Labor recognises that access and equity, accountability and educational quality are the key determinants of the structure and resourcing of the VET system. In Government, Labor's investment in training helped hundreds of thousands of Victorians obtain the skills they needed to secure jobs for the future, and supported important transitions in the Victorian economy.

However, the Coalition Government's \$1.2 billion cuts to the TAFE sector and its ad hoc policy changes across the entire VET system have impacted so severely on training providers that the effective operation of the entire system has been compromised.

Victoria's VET system is increasingly characterised by poor-quality training, major regional skill shortages, financially bankrupt TAFE institutes, campus closures, unaffordable student fees, and robbing of taxpayer dollars.

Labor will:

- Reform the VET system to ensure Victoria's industry skills needs are met, and people gain meaningful qualifications to get a job or to retrain for the needs of industries in transition
- Ensure that the VET system is well-resourced and flexible, to respond to the training needs of workers and industry needs in a changing economic landscape for manufacturing industries
- Ensure that poor quality providers and those RTOs which rob the system are excluded from public funding
- Promote genuine partnerships between industry, schools, TAFE, employers and universities
- Provide support for initiatives that are focussed

on best practice in a particular industry (for example, the plumbing industry centre of excellence in Brunswick) or based on the industry skills needs of a particular region.

Adult and Community Education

Adult and Community Education (ACE) provides diverse and accessible educational opportunities to many of our most vulnerable and disengaged learners. It provides flexible and community-based vocational, social and community courses, using low-cost community infrastructure. Labor will promote learning opportunities for adults and encourage local communities to meet educational and personal development needs in local settings

Labor will:

- Slash red tape and onerous regulatory requirements which impact inappropriately on small, local community-based adult education providers
- Strengthen linkages between ACE providers and their local communities
- Ensure that ACE centres provide a diverse range of educational programs to the broad community
- Commit to sustainable funding to enable ACE providers to meet local learning needs, including the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners

Local Learning and Employment Networks

Labor acknowledges the role of Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) in establishing and facilitating partnerships between government departments, local government, schools, community service providers and industry to support the education, employment and well-being of young Victorians who are at risk of dropping out of education and employment.

Labor will:

- Review LLENs to ensure best practice across the network
- Ensure LLENs have the resources needed to coordinate support for young, at-risk Victorians

Universities

Labor recognises the importance of working with the Federal Government to ensure that Victorian students have access to modern and vibrant universities. Labor acknowledges that universities are independent civic institutions which play a major role in driving Victoria's future development.

The Bracks and Brumby governments expanded university research, and entered into strategic partnerships with the previous Labor Federal government to rapidly expand Victoria's science and research base and competitiveness.

Under a Victorian Labor Government, the international student industry grew rapidly, and the rise in the importance of education service exports was the most significant development in Victoria's export performance over the past 10 years.

However, the Coalition Government has all but abandoned universities' research funding needs and failed to harness the massive resources our higher education sector can deliver to improve Victoria's industry and science competitiveness.

In its changes to governance legislation in 2012, the Coalition set back centuries of university independence and achieved little except to rip democracy from universities. Labor opposes this attack on university independence, and commits to supporting universities' core roles of independent teaching and research.

Labor will:

- Bring democracy back to universities through elected student and staff representation on all university councils, to ensure relevance to the community and industry
- Support academic endeavours and independent research in universities
- Support international students by strengthening and improving the coordination of the international student industry
- Encourage closer linkages between universities and TAFE and other training providers
- Encourage training links with industry

Health and Wellbeing

Preamble

Nothing is more important to Victorians than their health. Everyone deserves world-class health care, regardless of their age, income, suburb or background.

Under Labor, modern, well-funded facilities and a skilled and educated workforce will provide the highest quality patient care.

Medicare will always remain the core of our system. Under Labor, all Victorians knew they could access publicly-funded services when they needed it.

But today, after three-and-a-half years of the Coalition Government, our health system is in pieces.

Victorians face overcrowded emergency departments and life-threatening ambulance delays. The elective surgery waiting list is the worst it's ever been.

Cuts to community health and preventative health programs, and the sell-off of public aged care services, have put our most vulnerable at risk.

Only Labor can be trusted with health. Labor rebuilt the health system after Jeff Kennett and Labor can do it again after Denis Napthine.

Under Labor, Victorian patients won't just enjoy the best standards of care in Australia, but some of the best in the world.

Labor recognises the needs of Victoria's ageing population and will improve the services that older Victorians rely upon, so they can enjoy a better quality of life.

Labor will invest in medical research and make Victoria a global centre for groundbreaking study and development into the health challenges of our future.

Victorians with a disability, and those with special care needs, must be supported. The life expectancy

gap for indigenous Australians must be closed.

Labor will tear down the barriers to high-quality health care, support programs for diverse community and family structures and provide focused support for LGBTI Victorians.

Victoria deserves better than a health system in pieces and a Government that doesn't care. Only Labor has a plan to protect the health and wellbeing of every Victorian.

Our Values

The responsibility of a Government is to provide quality health care to its people. Victoria's health system can be a world leader in prevention, innovation and clinical care. Health must never be neglected.

A strong and reliable health system is essential. Every Victorian has a right to hospital treatment or an ambulance when they need one. They have a right to know that care will be provided within a reasonable time and by highly skilled health workers.

Labor believes that a health system should be accessible to people regardless of their age, location or background. High quality and affordable health care services, with Medicare as the core of the system, should be available to all.

Prevention is always better than a cure. Prevention helps people live healthier lives and reduces the costs and overcrowding within our health system. Attacking the causes of ill health can also relieve pressure on the system

A highly skilled and world-leading workforce staffs our hospitals. Their dedication and effort drives our health system. They deserve our respect. We must honour their work and invest in their future, to deliver new standards of excellence.

Labor believes in a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. An increased focus on prevention, community and primary health services, care in the home and health promotion, while maintaining the highest standards of hospital care.

Our health services must be underpinned by evidence, comprehensive research and a focus on innovation. Our medical research facilities are world-renowned and we cannot allow this reputation to be weakened.

Delivering Our Goals

Acute Care

Emergency Care

Labor understands that timely access to quality emergency care can be the difference between life and death for some Victorians.

Labor will meet the challenge of increased demand on hospitals, caused by a growing and ageing population. With more and more people requiring care, Labor recognises the need to deliver efficient, effective and expanded services.

Labor will:

- Reduce waiting times in our Emergency Departments, so that patients can receive quality care when they need it
- Promote close partnerships with primary care providers who can provide services commonly requested at emergency departments
- Improve patient transfer procedures at the Emergency Department interface
- Provide a safer environment for patients in emergency departments and improve workplace safety for all emergency personnel

Waiting Lists and Elective Surgery

Under the Coalition Government, elective surgery waiting lists have soared to their highest ever levels – peaking at over 50,000 people,

Labor recognises the importance of having a health system that keeps up with the challenges posed by population pressures.

Labor will:

- Develop and fund initiatives to reduce the number of Victorians waiting for elective surgery
- Ensure the provision of greater capacity within hospitals to deal with specific elective surgery waiting list backlogs and seasonal pressures
- Equip the health workforce with the best training and facilities to assist in the timely delivery of services

Public Hospital Infrastructure

The major redevelopment of the Victorian health system capital works program and ongoing investment in hospital infrastructure has stalled under the Coalition.

Labor has a strong track record of delivering world-class health and medical research facilities.

Labor is committed to continue our efforts of modernising hospitals in Victoria. This task was started by Labor in 2000 and saw over \$7.5 billion invested in rebuilding, upgrading and expanding hospitals and health services such as the Royal Children's Hospital, Royal Women's Hospital, Austin Hospital, Werribee Mercy, Sunshine Hospital, Casey Hospital, Bendigo Hospital, Geelong Hospital and Warrnambool Hospital. When Labor left office in 2010 it committed to build the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre and Monash Children's Hospital and rebuild the Box Hill and Bendigo Hospitals. Unfortunately, the Coalition Government has not completed any of these works during its term.

Labor will:

- Commit to significant investment in public hospital infrastructure to increase the capacity of the system and ensure that health care is accessible to all Victorians

Health Services

Labor believes that hospital networks provide an important foundation for increasing access to services and reducing duplication. By creating an improved model of service delivery through hospital networks, better care can be provided to more people.

Labor also believes that high standards of governance and accountability are essential for the delivery of quality health services. Network and hospital boards should be guided by 'best practice principles.' This will ensure that these governing bodies are broadly representative of the diverse communities they serve.

Labor will:

- Strengthen hospital networks linking local providers of primary health care with specialist aged care, mental health and disability services
- Ensure that good governance is reflected in annual reports of all health services

Ambulance Services

The Victorian ambulance system is in crisis. The Coalition Government has failed to manage growth and demand. Ambulances are ramping at major hospitals for hundreds of additional hours each month, forcing ambulance response times for life-threatening emergencies to blow out.

Labor will work to restore public confidence in the ambulance service to ensure that Victorians receive timely access to the highest quality emergency care. This includes developing initiatives designed to reduce ambulance response times for life-threatening emergencies.

Record workload demands are placing increasing pressure on paramedics. High levels of physical and psychological work-related injuries, stress and absences have led to unacceptable levels of unfilled shifts.

Labor will:

- Increase ambulance resources
- Recognise the value of highly trained paramedics and develop strategies to increase retention levels by supporting their health, wellbeing and professional development
- Reduce ambulance transfer times at emergency departments to alleviate unnecessary ramping and allowing ambulances to get back on the road to attend the next callout
- Establish more community emergency response teams in more remote parts of the State to respond to medical emergencies

Guaranteed Network of Services Available Across the State

Primary Health Care through Community Health

Labor recognises that community health services should be at the forefront of primary care, preventative health initiatives and health promotion.

Labor will ensure community health services are well supported to provide Victorians with access to primary health care close to where they live.

Labor will ensure there are strong networks between community health centres, general practice

divisions, primary health care providers, hospitals and IMedicare Locals.

Labor will:

- Fund community health services properly so that they deliver quality primary health care at the local level, especially to those most in need
- Support the development and delivery of integrated and innovative primary health care through community health services
- Enhance the role of community health services to deliver more comprehensive preventative health programs, such as diabetes management, dental health programs, physical activity and osteoporosis prevention programs, self-esteem programs, healthy mother healthy baby programs, chronic pain management and a wide range of other health promotion activities.

Rural and Regional Health

Labor recognises the difficulties that Victorians in regional and rural areas face in accessing health care and the subsequent effect this has on poor health outcomes. Labor supports specific programs in our regional and rural health services so patients get the right care close to home and can access specialist care in major hospitals.

Labor recognises that Victorians living and working in remote and isolated areas are particularly vulnerable and record higher levels of preventable illness and diseases.

Labor will:

- Invest in infrastructure and new technology to expand hospitals, primary health services and facilities, training facilities and other health services in rural and regional Victoria
- Invest in training the regional and rural health workforce and in providing programs designed to bolster the health workforce in rural and regional areas
- Work with health providers and Medicare Locals to coordinate services between large regional hospitals and smaller local health services and re-invest in innovative models of service delivery in isolated areas
- Deliver health promotion strategies to address the inequity of health status among Victorians in rural and regional areas particularly relating to asthma, cardio-vascular disease, farm accidents, road trauma, suicide, depression and

other mental illnesses

- Provide support to ensure that the needs of farmers and their families are met through advocacy and the provision of services
- Ensure that rural patients have timely access to the Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme

Cancer Services

Labor is proud of its emphatic support for providing comprehensive, integrated cancer services and its commitment to provide a world leading precinct in treatment, teaching, research and innovative cancer services.

By contrast, the Coalition Government has not demonstrated this level of commitment and has abandoned the Victorian Cancer Action Plan.

Labor will:

- Reduce smoking rates
- Promote awareness of preventable cancers and known risk factors
- Increase community participation in breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening, and the use of new genetic and predictive tests
- Commit to reduce the number of cancer-related deaths of Victorians
- Increase immunisation rates for human papillomavirus (HPV) to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer
- Fund vital cancer research and translate that research into real clinical outcomes for patients
- Boost access to cancer services in rural and regional Victoria
- Support collaboration between our great cancer institutions

End of Life and Palliative Care

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

To better deliver legal frameworks and care programs, Labor will:

- Support better community education efforts to improve knowledge and use of the existing legislative provisions of the Medical Treatment

Act, particularly for institutions, health professionals and the wider community

- Support the introduction of statutory recognition so competent Victorians can use an Advanced Healthcare Directive to refuse or request treatment for a future condition. These arrangements should be subject to appropriate checks and balances, including regular reviews
- Work to help people understand treatment options to ensure they can have informed discussions about their future preferences (including end-of-life care) with their health professionals, families and carers
- Expand palliative care services and options across Victoria, such as in-home palliative care, to ensure it is culturally and age-appropriate and accessible in rural and remote areas
- Work to ensure these services are available in perinatal and children's settings, and that support is provided for families of dying infants and children
- Develop palliative care training for obstetric professionals and midwives and services involved in the care of pregnant women and newborn infants.

Specific Health Priorities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

The gap between the mortality rates and health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is unacceptable.

When in Government, Labor worked hard towards closing this gap, including funding successful programs in maternal and child health, reducing smoking rates and improving eye health among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within Victoria.

Labor will build on past achievements and is determined to overcome the unacceptable health disparity and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

Labor will:

- Work towards closing the life expectancy gap within a decade and significantly reduce the mortality rate for children under five

- Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community ownership and participation in the development of health policy and service delivery and build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to manage and drive change
- Increase accessibility and responsiveness of the Victorian health system amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians by developing cultural protocols with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Promote the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and their children by improving access and choice in birthing services
- Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to improve education, and develop and deliver targeted preventative programs and health promotion strategies to address the inequity of health status among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians, particularly in relation to diabetes, kidney disease, asthma and cardio-vascular disease
- Improve access to mental health and drug and alcohol services linking in with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and other drug and alcohol service providers.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities

Labor acknowledges the many cultures that are reflected in the growing diversity of our community. Some newer Victorians, particularly some refugees, have had devastating experiences in their countries of origin or in transit and have complex needs. Victorians of different cultures and heritage often experience particular difficulties when encountering our health system.

Labor will:

- Ensure culturally sensitive health services are provided for CALD communities and that staff are appropriately trained
- Provide access to translation services for people who speak languages other than English
- Provide specialised services for those who are isolated, have left war torn areas or who have suffered torture
- Promote the development of culturally relevant services for those who are now ageing

Women's Health

Labor understands that a person's health is determined by a range of social, environmental and economic factors, including gender. Labor will work to improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorian women by implementing strategies ranging from community education, preventative health and empowerment programs through to diagnostic and clinical approaches designed to meet women's needs.

Labor will:

- Provide funding for women's health services and clinics across Victoria with an additional aim of increasing access to specialist services for women in rural areas
- Ensure that all government health services are sensitive and responsive to the health needs of lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender women
- Promote access to accurate, current information in languages and formats that are readily accessible to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Maternity Services

Labor believes that women should be provided with choice and informed consumer involvement in decisions about 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
- Ensure that hospitals have appropriate models of care in place to care for women at low and high risk of complications, and where necessary, refer women for care at tertiary hospitals
- Work to ensure safe and sustainable maternity and post-birth services are available in rural and regional Victoria
- Encourage empathetic and sensitive support for breastfeeding in hospital and specialist support services and ensure empathetic and sensitive support is available for women once they are back at home.

Maternal and Child Health

Labor believes in providing new parents with the support they need so their children receive the very best start in life. We want mothers to be confident and happy in the knowledge that they are doing the very best for their child's and their own wellbeing.

Labor will:

- Provide maternal and child health services for all Victorian mothers and babies through local councils
- Ensure continuity of care after a baby is born, so there is a seamless transition from postnatal care, to maternal and child health care services
- Work to improve the sustainability of regional birthing services, and increase midwifery care across rural and regional Victoria
- Develop and implement special programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and babies, to reduce mortality rates and improve health
- Improve the promotion and provision of perinatal mental health services, including depression screening, prevention and treatment
- Increase the number of specialised support services for parents in the weeks and months following the birth of their child
- Ensure that support is available for all women and their families following hospital discharge

Reproductive Health

Labor believes that all Victorian women should be supported in their reproductive health choices.

Labor will:

- Support women's reproductive choice and access to contraception services
- Ensure that women are provided with real and informed sexual and reproductive health choices, including equity of access to Assisted Reproductive Technologies and impartial education and counselling services on pregnancy options
- Ensure pregnancy support counselling and pregnancy loss counselling is publicly funded and freely available
- Work with women's health and family planning services to identify and reduce the factors contributing to unwanted pregnancies

- Stop the involuntary sterilisation of women and seek alternatives to the sterilisation of women with disabilities
- Support women's reproductive choice through access to safe and affordable termination procedures

Men's Health

Labor supports a coordinated approach to improving Victorian men's health throughout their lives.

Labor will:

- Encourage health promotion programs on nutrition and exercise, delivered through workplaces, schools and community health services, with a particular emphasis on groups at risk
- Address prostate and bowel cancer as priority areas for treatment, research and social support
- Ensure that health services are sensitive and responsive to the health needs of gay, bi-sexual and transgender men
- Develop programs designed to address accidents and suicide

Organ Donation

Labor acknowledges the importance of organ donation and transplantation as a treatment for a variety of conditions, and will take steps to increase the availability of organs for transplantation. Labor will ensure that existing Transplantation/Organ Donation Coordinators and Services are adequately resourced and supported to meet the demand.

Public Health and Preventative Health

Dental

Labor is committed to improving the oral health of Victorians. A person's oral health is a key factor to their overall general health and wellbeing.

Labor will:

- 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

- Continue to promote and fund school dental programs through community health so that all that children and young people have every opportunity to achieve optimum dental health. This includes dental hygiene programs and immediate access when necessary for dental treatments
- Work with the Commonwealth to ensure that the level of dental health is significantly improved, with particular reference to children, regional Victorians, older Victorians and indigenous Victorians
- Urge the Commonwealth to ensure that significant gaps in provision of services are addressed, particularly where there are shortfalls in public dental services
- Expand the program of water fluoridation to areas of Victoria yet to benefit from this important public healthcare measure

Immunisation

Labor believes that the community - and especially children - has the right to be protected from vaccine-preventable illness. Labor will continue to strongly promote immunisation as a way of protecting our community.

Labor believes that is the responsibility of parents to ensure their children's immunisations are up to date so that their own children, and all children in the community, are protected from preventable infectious diseases.

Labor will:

- Change the law to require children to be fully immunised before they can enrol in childcare or kindergarten, in an attempt to boost vaccination rates across the community. Children who are not fully immunised will not be able to enrol unless they have an approved exemption for a medical reason or their parents have a conscientious objection. To receive this exemption, parents must receive counselling from a medical practitioner and state they have been advised of the risks of not immunising their child
- Develop a campaign aimed at prospective and new parents debunking immunisation myths and promoting immunisation throughout the community
- Strongly promote immunisation among health care workers, and people working in children's settings

- Ensure that health services are working with migrant and refugee communities to ensure that “catch-up” vaccines are provided at the earliest opportunity
- Reinstate the whooping cough vaccine for parents and carers of newborns

Smoking

Labor is the party of tobacco reform and is a leader when it comes to reducing smoking rates in Victoria. Over many years, Labor has taken action to reduce the impact of smoking on the community, through bans on smoking in workplaces, pubs and clubs, in cars where children are present, banning cigarettes displays in shops, and introducing the world-first plain packaging of cigarettes.

Currently 13 per cent of Victorians smoke on a regular basis, with higher rates in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and amongst young people.

Labor will continue efforts to reduce tobacco-related harm in Victoria by:

- Funding advertising campaigns encouraging smokers to quit, and to stop young people from starting smoking
- Working with communities with higher smoking rates, to reduce the number of smokers
- Supporting Quit, the Cancer Council and VicHealth in their efforts to reduce smoking

Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Blood Borne Viruses

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

Labor will:

- Work with healthcare providers, and community and advocacy groups, to coordinate plans for prevention and management of Sexual Transmitted Infections and blood-borne viruses, and promote the best standards in testing, treatment, and support services
- Invest in public campaigns to promote safe sex practices, particularly targeting young people
- Work with drug support services to reduce the spread of blood-borne viruses by injecting drug users

- Deliver a new HIV strategy and additional resources to address the increasing rates of HIV infection and to meet the care needs of HIV-positive Victorians

Emergency Management and Health

Labor recognises the significant impact on Victorians from natural disasters, extreme weather and the risk of infectious disease outbreaks. In recent times Victorians have experienced bushfires with prolonged periods of smoke haze, intense heat waves and flooding, as well as the swine flu outbreak of 2009. These situations can be particularly difficult for the aged, the very young and others who are vulnerable or whose health is compromised.

Labor will:

- Ensure that in assisting Victorians to develop emergency plans, emphasis is placed on the health needs of the most vulnerable Victorians
- Develop community emergency management response plans that highlight the needs of the vulnerable for first evacuation
- Ensure there are sufficient places available that provide suitable facilities and care for vulnerable Victorians
- Use all available public health resources to provide information on the impact of health emergencies on the community

Mental Health Services

Labor is committed to providing a world-leading mental health service system for Victorians experiencing mental health problems and mental disorders.

Labor will provide leadership in mental health policies and programs based on a comprehensive approach to research, evidence, innovation and service delivery. Labor understands that this demands appropriate models of engaging consumers and carers, more coherent and comprehensive mental health promotion and information programs and rigorous evidence-based processes of review and benchmarking practice models in mental health.

Labor will ensure mental health services meet their obligations under the new Mental Health Act. This demands a workforce that is skilled and resourced

to respond to the needs of consumers and their families and provides a modern recovery-focused service system.

Australia's ageing population and population growth is driving demand in Aged Care Services. More than ever, specialist aged persons mental health residential services are needed to support the residential aged care sector and provide clinically supported exit options from aged acute care beds. As part of the public health system, Labor will retain Aged Persons Mental Health nursing homes and hostels that specialise in caring for older persons with a mental illness.

Labor recognises the key challenges in mental health including suicide rates among young men, perinatal and post-natal depression, eating disorders, confidence, identity and self-harm issues for and within the LGBTI community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

Labor recognises that treatment of mental illness should be provided by practising mental health clinicians, psychiatrists, nurses and other allied health practitioners.

Labor will:

- Improve early mental health identification and assessment services across the age range
- Enhance clinical community and disability support services' capacity to intervene before a crisis point is reached with the aim of reducing preventable emergency departments presentations and inpatient admissions
- Ensure that aged 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
- Strengthen collaboration between drug and alcohol services and mental health services and maintain dual diagnosis treatment services
- Introduce specific initiatives to reduce the time people need to wait for psychiatric assessments and mental health interventions in emergency departments and strengthen arrangements for pre and post admission
- Ensure that mental health inpatient facilities meet contemporary standards regarding physical amenity, space and safety for patients and staff, and that community-based mental health

services are located in the community they serve

- Give more emphasis to crisis assessment and treatment teams and mobile support and treatment teams
- Ensure clinical community mental health service reconfigurations do not result in a reduction in access or quality of service provision, especially for those with continuing serious mental illness
- Ensure Community Care Units maintain their focus on providing extended treatment, the management of complex clients exiting acute and secure settings and as a 'back up' to residential rehabilitation services
- Ensure appropriate mental health services and women's health services that address the specific needs of CALD communities
- Ensure that facilities protect the safety of female patients
- Enable practices that are gender, LGBTI and culturally sensitive and meet the needs of people of all ages
- Promote the extension of Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC step-up/step-down) services within our communities
- Improve the availability and quality of mental health secure treatment options for high risk forensic patients and improve the availability and quality of mental health care available to correctional facilities and both transitional and post release environments
- Increase the capacity of child and adolescent mental health services to provide outreach services. Early intervention will be strengthened with a focus on primary school age children
- Expand infant mental health care and the mental health support services for perinatal and postnatal women
- Implement a comprehensive mental health workforce strategy across the state to attract and retain high quality people
- Support partnerships between clinical and non-clinical services to further develop recovery focused care. Partnerships that result in cost-cutting and a diminution of treatment options and clinical capacity will be reviewed
- Labor will seek to improve productivity in Victorian mental health services by securing efficiencies through the use of technology and

streamlining documentation processes, thereby reducing workforce paperwork and increasing direct care time

- Strengthen collaboration between mental health, police and ambulance services to improve emergency responses to people with acute mental illness in the community.
- Promote the development of carer-friendly practices system and programs in the mental health system.
- Support the public health system and avoid further privatisation or contracting out of mental health clinical treatment and rehabilitation services.

Drug and Alcohol Services

Labor recognises that the misuse and overuse of alcohol illicit and prescription drugs leads to adverse outcomes in the community. This affects the user, their family and the broader public and results in poorer health, increased violence (especially family violence), and avoidable injuries and deaths.

Labor will:

- Develop innovative models of service delivery to reduce the number of alcohol and drug-related hospital admissions
- Build new partnerships with health promotion organisations to deliver cultural change and education and support programs that promote healthier attitudes to excessive drinking and drug abuse
- Implement strategies to tackle the rising misuse of prescription medicines
- Improve the availability of services across the state
- Increase investment in flexible drug treatment and other support services, including residential beds, outreach case management services and step-down places for clients in transition between withdrawal and rehabilitation services

Problem Gambling

Labor recognises the catastrophic consequences that gambling addiction can have for some people. While gambling, including playing the pokies, is a legitimate recreational activity, risks must be managed and addiction must be treated.

There are estimated to be 29,000 problem gamblers in Victoria and a further 97,000 moderate risk gamblers. While only representing two per cent of the population, their gambling represents a disproportionately large share of total losses from gambling. In addition to time and money spent chasing losses, problem gamblers may experience great financial hardship, relationship breakdown, involvement in criminal activity and alienation from friends and workplaces.

Around 40 per cent of expenditure on electronic gaming machines (EGMs) in Victoria is undertaken by problem gamblers. EGMs represent half of all gaming expenditure in Victoria.

Experts agree that problem gambling has both social and psychiatric elements and Labor will tackle the problem in a multi-faceted way.

Labor will:

- Monitor the prevalence of problem gambling and develop targeted information campaigns
- Provide support to problem gamblers
- Work with industry and problem gambling experts to prevent and minimise harm
- Be responsive to community concerns about EGMs
- Explore the efficacy of further limiting in-venue cash withdrawals
- Introduce penalties for EGM licence holders that fail to respond to suspected problem gambling
- Work with sporting and other clubs to identify new streams of revenue
- Work with the Commonwealth and other States to address emerging issues arising from the growth of online gambling
- Support health professionals, including alcohol and other drugs, and family services to minimise and treat the harm caused by problem gambling

Seniors and Ageing

Senior Victorians who have contributed to the State and nation's strength and prosperity should be able to lead a healthy, dignified and productive life whether they are in work, retirement, volunteering or caring roles.

Labor recognises the needs of our ageing population and is committed to the provision of aged care,

health services and appropriate community facilities. Labor believes that people should have a choice when it comes to private or public aged care services

Labor is opposed to the privatisation of Victoria's public sector residential aged care facilities, including our aged person's mental health facilities. Labor believes that Victorians should have a choice about whether they stay at a public or private aged care facility. Labor is committed to delivering the services older Victorians need in their homes and in the community where it is accessible and feasible, and will ensure recipients are well supported and have choice of service.

Labor will:

- Invest in home based services to ensure senior Victorians can 'age in place' and remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible
- Promote positive ageing through activities and preventative health strategies
- Deliver e-health solutions to assist older Victorians, in their home and in aged care facilities, to access services including the personally controlled electronic health record, monitored medication records and tele-health services for specialist medical care;
- Provide additional personal alert service alarms to assist seniors to live securely and independently for as long as possible
- Fund seniors groups and U3As
- Improve coordination between hospitals, nursing homes and General Practitioners together with Medicare Locals so that older people receive better, fully coordinated care

When older Victorians are no longer able to live independently in their home, Labor will:

- Build on the reforms of Federal Labor to acknowledge the special needs of LGBTI seniors in accessing appropriate aged care services free from discrimination
- Ensure that public residential care facilities are of high quality with appropriately qualified staff and provide a suitable environment for care, particularly for those who are frail and require support
- Work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure that standards of governance in privately owned residential care facilities are maintained

to ensure that these standards continue to be met by rigorous accreditation and auditing

Child Protection

Labor knows there is no greater responsibility than protecting our children and supporting families. Children who are in State care must always be in a safe and supportive environment.

Labor reaffirms the importance of positive kinship relationships and placements as the first form of child protection intervention.

Labor is committed to tackling child abuse and neglect as well as the causes of child abuse and neglect – poverty, unemployment, family violence, substance abuse, health problems, poor education and lack of family supports or social mobility.

Labor will:

- Ensure that the our child protection system is focused on a child's best interests
- Deliver a whole-of-government, integrated and coordinated approach to supporting vulnerable families and at risk children
- Enhance early intervention services to prevent abuse and neglect before it occurs
- Strengthen the Children's Commissioner's independence
- Support kinship carers and foster carers with better training, support and advocacy
- Seek to recruit and retain more foster carers from a wider diversity of backgrounds, including carers from Aboriginal communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Advocate to the Commonwealth Government and through COAG to deliver an Australia-wide model of support for foster carers that will enable more foster carers to be recruited and retained in the future
- Ensure that residential care provides a supportive and safe environment for children
- Ensure that children are placed in the most appropriate therapeutic out-of-home care placement and ensure that stability in placements and individualised responses to the needs of children are a key focus
- Ensure that children in out-of-home care receive educational and other opportunities

- Support the principle that Aboriginal children will be placed with Aboriginal families where possible
- Ensure that all Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse children in out-of-home care remain connected to their community and culture and that carers undertake appropriate cultural awareness training
- Ensure that families with children in out-of-home care are supported to enable reunification
- Provide better transitional support for care leavers once they reach 18
- Review Adoption Laws to bring them up to date and remove discriminatory clauses against parents who were affected by former and now discredited adoption practices
- Invest in the child protection workforce with better support and more training
- Work closely with community sector organisations providing child protection services to promote innovation and build capacity to deal with the growing number and complexity of child protection cases
- Work closely with government, community sector and tertiary education providers to address workforce retention issues common across the child protection workforce

Disability

Labor recognises access to quality services for people with a disability has a significant impact on their quality of life and ability to participate in all aspects of the community.

Labor strongly believes improving the lives for the most vulnerable in Victoria. The creation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a great Labor achievement delivered in close partnership with the community. The NDIS will deliver support and care for Australians with a disability to ensure that no-one is left behind.

Under Labor, Victoria became the National leader in the provision of care and support to Victorians with a disability. Labor recognises that for Victoria to continue to lead the way, provide choice and be a driving force in quality disability service provision, it must retain involvement in direct services delivery as a service provider, influence funding arrangements to State services and ensure quality standards are applied to all services supporting Victorian citizens with a disability.

A future Victorian Labor Government will work hard to ensure that the ongoing roll-out of the NDIS is a success.

Labor recognises that the NDIS will result in a significant increase in service and workforce demand and understands that the key to the successful implementation of the NDIS is having sustainable service providers and a stable, skilled and properly remunerated workforce.

Labor will:

- Increase access and participation for people with a disability in all aspects of life and to all Government services
- Work closely with municipal councils, developers and transport providers to ensure better access to services, transport and new housing
- Ensure that Victoria is again recognised as the leader in the provision of care and support for Victorians with a disability
- Ensure that people with a disability have greater individual choice in the delivery of disability services and that a client-centred focus supports their greater independence and social inclusion
- Ensure that there are more Individual Support Packages available for people with disabilities who need support
- Ensure that there is a range of specialist services in the community available to support people with a disability
- Expand access to and type of accommodation options available to people with a disability and their families;
- Expand access to appropriate care for young people who require supported accommodation, removing the need for young people to be accommodated in aged care facilities
- Invest in new respite and emergency accommodation services to support the growing number of individuals and families who require such services
- Expand early intervention services and support for families who have a child with a disability to ensure that early diagnosis and planning occurs
- Support young people with disabilities to transition from school to higher education or employment or other activities that suit their needs

- Implement strategies to improve the number of people with disabilities in paid employment in the public and private sectors
- Expand the powers and jurisdiction of the Disability Services Commissioner
- Advocate to the Commonwealth Government for effective funding for and timely commencement of the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Advocate to the Commonwealth Government for effective funding and support for carers
- Enhance choice and service options for people by continuing to support the existing balanced service system between direct government and non-government 'not for profit' service provision and avoid further privatisation or contracting-out of existing disability services
- Support the sustainability of the 'not for profit' disability services sector through appropriate funding to ensure the delivery of quality disability services
- Work with training providers, key stakeholders and relevant unions on a workforce strategy to target new workers, provide training and support, as well as providing ongoing support for existing staff

Quality and Sustainability of Services Workforce

Victorian 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. Labor believes an effective health and community service workforce has to be well educated, supported and resourced.

The strength of our health and community service systems and high standard of care for Victorians is heavily influenced by the performance of our health and community service workforce.

Labor recognises that we need to train and recruit and retrain more doctors, nurses, disability workers, aged care workers, mental health workers, child protection workers, children's services workers and allied health workers into the system. More professionals in the system will ensure Victorians do not have to wait too long to see their clinician or allied health practitioner nurse, and will receive a better quality service. And those who require aged,

disability, mental health, children's or child protection services receive the appropriate service and level of care when they need it.

Labor believes that all health and community service workers have a right to a safe workplace.

Labor recognises that workforce shortages can have a significant impact on services, particularly in regional areas.

Labor is proud to have assisted greater numbers of students from regional Victoria to undertake medical and other health studies at universities in regional Victoria. This will ultimately contribute to greater numbers of medical and other health professionals living and working in regional communities.

Labor will:

- Actively engage with unions, health services, community services and disability services to develop a strategic response to emerging workforce issues
- Work with services providers to enhance secure employment and mitigate against increased casualisation
- Require that indexation increases to funding and service agreements are passed on to staff
- Support a highly skilled workforce, which is crucial to the provision of high quality services to people with a disability or other specific need and their families
- Implement a comprehensive mental health workforce strategy across the State to attract and retain a workforce that feel supported and are provided with the skills to achieve the highest quality clinical outcomes for their patients
- Support programs that encourage more young people to consider careers in health, mental health community services and allied sectors
- Look at new ways of treating patients to make the best use of the workforce and give patients access to the best new methods
- Implement an improved security coding warning system in our hospitals, mental health and community service facilities
- Work with the Commonwealth to ensure that there are adequate training places in Victorian Hospitals to meet the needs of all new graduates from medicine from Victorian universities
- Support the ongoing work of our regional health and medical schools

- Work to ensure the sustainability of rural health services, through increased specialist and GP proceduralist training posts
- Support the ongoing work of the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria and the Victorian Doctors Health Program
- Encouraging expansion of the dental workforce, particularly in rural and regional areas
- Ensure the Health Services Commissioner and Consumer Affairs Victorian have the necessary powers to investigate people conducting unregulated and unproven therapies, such as 'gay-conversion therapy' or 'miracle cancer cures'
- Support the ongoing development of peer worker roles and consumer and carer consultants in the mental health workforce

Research, Development and Innovation

Victoria is world-renowned centre of excellence when it comes to biotechnology, medical research and innovation. In areas such as drug discovery, diagnostics, and clinical trials, Victoria is internationally recognised as a leader in health and agricultural biotechnology.

Victorian Labor has been the key driver of this leadership with a proven track record of significant investment in infrastructure and program funding, through the Synchrotron, the \$1 billion Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre and the IBM Life Sciences Super Computer.

Labor wants Victoria to once again attract Australia's most talented scientists by implementing a funding model that recognises and respects the valuable work they do.

Labor will:

- Support world class medical research by providing increased funding and resources to Victoria's leading research institutions
- Encourage and support cross-collaboration between medical researchers, both domestically and internationally
- Explore models of translational clinical practice
- Improve the availability of and access to high quality research and data

World Class Public Transport

Preamble

Improved public transport and roads will give all Victorians more than a better commute to work – it will give them a better quality of life.

Melbourne is home to 4.2 million people and Victoria is home to just over 5.6 million people. More people are driving and more people are using public transport.

Under the Coalition Government, Victorians are spending too long stuck in traffic, too long waiting for delayed and overcrowded trains, and not enough time with family.

Labor will build a world-class public transport system for Victoria – frequent, convenient, reliable, affordable and safe.

It will help our economy. It will help people in growth areas and regional Victoria to access jobs, education and services.

Traffic congestion is a major problem and it's only getting worse. We need a real plan to fight congestion and get our roads working again.

Labor will invest in public transport. Trains, trams and buses will become a real, practical option for more Victorians, which will make our roads less congested.

There's a lot of work to do. The Coalition Government has failed to deliver the major transport projects that Victoria desperately needs.

Denis Napthine is obsessed with his \$8 billion tunnel in the inner city – a project for only one part of Melbourne, a project that no one voted for. It simply isn't a priority for Victoria.

Labor believes major projects should be chosen by merit and priority, not by politics. Governments come and go, but long-term infrastructure needs will always remain.

Labor will embark on a plan to transform our roads and public transport system and create 10,000 construction jobs.

Our Values

Labor believes that transport is fundamental to facilitating the economy, creating jobs and enabling people to participate in the community. It's how people get to school, work or major sporting events. Efficient transport can reduce the isolation of communities and deliver a greater quality of life.

Labor recognises that congestion is a major problem. It affects our economy and workers stuck in their cars have less time for family and social activities. Tackling traffic congestion will support Victorian industries and help employees, families and communities.

Every Victorian has a right to accessible and affordable public transport and every Victorian has a right to be treated with respect on the roads – that includes pedestrians and cyclists.

Labor believes that every public transport user has a right to feel safe and secure on their way home. Labor is committed to extending public transport hours of operation to improve liveability and safety.

Major road and public transport projects aren't just an investment in the system, but an investment in the State of Victoria. A modern, world-class public transport system will improve our cities and their economic potential.

Our major projects should be governed by our priorities, not our politics. They must meet the needs of Victorians – now and for future generations. The road and rail projects that shape our cities and towns must be based on independent and expert advice and delivered in a timely and efficient manner.

Labor wants Victoria to receive its fair share of road and public transport funding from the Commonwealth based on rigorous assessment of need and cost. Genuine partnership between governments are needed to deliver major projects.

Victorians deserve better than the deteriorating condition of Victoria's roads, in Melbourne's suburbs and across regional and rural Victoria. To ensure driver and passenger safety, road quality must be improved and maintained. Accessible public transport is essential for social connectedness and a high quality of life for all Victorians.

Delivering Our Goals

Project 10,000

In November 2013 Victorian Labor released Project 10,000.

Project 10,000 commits a future Labor Government to:

- Removing 50 of the most deadly level crossings – to enable traffic to flow again in our suburbs and hundreds of extra trains to run
- Starting work on Melbourne Metro Rail – which will double the size and capacity of the City Loop
- Removing 5,000 trucks a day from the West Gate Bridge by building the West Gate Distributor
- Dedicating \$1 billion to suburban roads and \$1 billion to country roads
- Establishing the Victorian Transport Building Fund – a dedicated investment fund to support delivery of new transport related capital projects

Project 10,000 will deliver at least 10,000 construction jobs and unlock congestion and building capacity.

Labor believes that world-class public transport can be achieved for Victoria.

Melbourne Metro Rail

Use of Melbourne's metropolitan train system has experienced dramatic growth in the past 10 years. There has been a 70 per cent increase in the number of people catching Melbourne's trains. Demand is particularly high in the peak periods. Population growth will only add to these pressures. The Napthine Government has abandoned Melbourne Metro and its own Network Development Plan.

Construction of Melbourne Metro Rail will enable 20,000 extra passengers to travel at peak travel times. For a network that is expected to grow over the next two decades and support 1.7 million trips each day, this project is essential.

Labor will:

- Commit to one third of the construction cost of Melbourne Metro Rail
- Instruct Infrastructure Victoria to develop options for engaging the private sector in the delivery of this project

- Aggressively seek a one-third Commonwealth co-investment toward the construction cost
- Build new stations at Arden, Parkville, CBD North, CBD South and Domain
- Double the size of the City Loop by building Melbourne Metro Rail

Labor recognises the need for enhancements to the metropolitan rail network, particularly in Melbourne's growth areas. Public Transport Victoria has identified a list of long-term projects that will be enabled by the construction of Melbourne Metro Rail.

Labor will:

- Invest in additional rolling stock, and expanded and extended metropolitan rail services where appropriate, in line with our prudent approach to budget management
- Fully review the current PTV priority list and associated timeline
- Closely examine the status of the Mernda Rail Extension and the transport needs of a rapidly growing population in Melbourne's north

Level Crossings

Labor knows that Victorians are sick of the chaos and congestion at level crossings, and of trains that are overcrowded, late or both.

Melbourne has approximately 180 railway level crossings, most of which are controlled by boom gates. During peak times, these boom gates can be down for 30 to 40 minutes an hour, causing major traffic congestion and public safety problems.

There have been too many fatalities and injuries at level crossings.

The cost of congestion to the Victorian economy is estimated to rise to \$6 billion by 2020.

Grade separations will unlock congestion, enabling more trains to run and the roads to move more freely, transforming local communities across Melbourne.

Labor will:

- Remove 50 of the most dangerous and congested level crossings on the metropolitan rail network, to increase train capacity and reduce congestion on the roads
- Unlock land at, or close to, train stations to create additional public car parking

- Actively pursue appropriate development opportunities that arise from level crossing upgrades, and reinvest the proceeds back into the public transport system
- Investigate cycling links alongside VicTrack corridors

Roads

Labor recognises that roads are vital for our communities, cities and State.

In Melbourne, private car transport accounts for 77 per cent of all weekday trips, and 81 per cent on weekends. Roads therefore will continue to form a vital aspect of our transport infrastructure.

Victorian roads have been allowed to deteriorate, putting drivers, passengers and other road users at risk. Labor will reverse this trend.

Tackling Congestion on our Roads

Labor will take a comprehensive approach to tackling congestion in our cities, suburbs and towns, wherever it occurs.

For thousands of Victorians, their working day is spent on the road – getting to the next client or customer, making deliveries, driving the school bus, as part of our emergency services workforce or for many other reasons. All Victorians will benefit from Labor's plan to tackle congestion.

The Coalition Government has abolished all Travel Demand Management measures including: Travel Smart, car-pooling, transit and express lane extensions, parking policies and studies of road pricing.

Labor will:

- Ensure that responsibility for a whole-of-government approach to reducing congestion is assigned to a single Government agency
- Give greater priority for vehicles during morning and afternoon peak
- Establish a Travel Demand Management Unit in Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure to ensure that continual improvement can be made to traffic flow on our roads and that hot spots are quickly identified and responded to

- Reduce overall travel demand by implementing planning and infrastructure policies that ensure communities have access to the local schools, shops and services they need close to home

Tullamarine Freeway

In recognising the importance of Melbourne Airport as a strategic national asset and the growth in freight and commuter traffic expected in the coming years, Labor will:

- Add additional lanes to the northern section of the Tullamarine Freeway between the Western Ring Road and Melbourne Airport
- Increase capacity using active lane management technology
- Ensure availability of a minimum of six lanes on the Tullamarine Freeway between the CBD and the airport to address the congestion bottleneck currently restricting access to Melbourne Airport.

Hoddle Street

Labor acknowledges the importance of Hoddle Street as a major arterial road and is committed to reducing the congestion afflicting it.

While improving public transport will help alleviate Hoddle Street congestion, an innovative approach is required to tackle this problem. Engineering analysis suggests that 'continuous flow' technology has big potential to increase traffic throughput, reduce delays and prevent accidents.

Labor will:

- Pilot the introduction of 'continuous flow intersections' at key junctions along Hoddle Street, utilising computerised traffic management systems and modified turning lanes.

Westgate Distributor – Better Freight Efficiency and More Liveable Suburbs

The West Gate Bridge is under pressure. A significant number of trucks accessing the Port of Melbourne do so from the west of Melbourne and Victoria.

Both the numbers of trucks and the size of their loads are increasing.

For residents in Melbourne's inner western suburbs, the impact is significant and growing. For commuters from the west, congestion continues to worsen.

What is needed is a major road project that will reduce truck use of inner-western residential streets, improve freight access from the west to the Port of Melbourne and ease congestion on the West Gate Bridge.

Labor will:

- Take 5,000 trucks a day off the West Gate Bridge
- Create a new CBD gateway for road commuters from Geelong, Ballarat and the western suburbs into Docklands
- Deliver West Gate Freeway on and off ramps and an elevated road along Hyde Street
- Upgrade and duplicate Whitehall Street between Francis Street and Somerville Road
- Strengthen Shepherd Bridge and upgrade into Footscray Road

Congestion on Regional Roads

Almost one quarter of Victoria's population lives in regional and rural Victoria. Regional communities contribute around \$70 billion worth of economic activity each year.

Congestion hotspots exist in cities and towns and this problem is worsening.

Under Labor, regional Victoria will receive a dedicated level of road funding to relieve congestion and improve safety on regional roads.

Road Funding

Under Labor, regional and outer suburban areas will receive guaranteed, consistent and ongoing funding.

Labor will:

- Guarantee funding for the repair and upgrade of roads in outer suburban and interface communities
- Guarantee funding for the repair and upgrade of roads and level crossings in regional communities
- Legislate to guarantee the proportion of funding for these communities in perpetuity
- Confirm in legislation the compulsory payment of traffic camera and speeding fines into the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account.

Buses

Victorian Labor believes that comprehensive bus services are vital for growth, connectivity, equity and employment in communities across Victoria.

Bus services that are frequent, direct and connect to major activity and employment centres and other transport nodes, as well as residential areas, can provide real alternatives to private car transport and greatly improve access to health and education services, as well as employment.

Labor is committed to improving service levels to meet patronage growth.

Victorian Labor is committed to an expanded and improved bus network which provides vital public transport services to our growing population and city.

Labor recognises the transport challenges faced by many growth areas and fringe suburbs, and is committed to improving services in these areas to bolster connectivity and community, and improve access to education, health services and employment.

Labor will:

- Improve service levels across the State, making buses more frequent, reliable and responsive to traveller need
- Improve governance and operation of bus contracts to ensure local community involvement in the development, improvement and delivery of local bus routes where they are needed
- Improve the bus network to better connect Melbourne's North, South-East and West
- Reform and improve the bus network to better service Melbourne Airport
- Improve bus efficiency and reliability for all travellers with on-road priority measures, a smartphone bus tracking system and better route and timetable information at bus stops
- Improve transport connections between bus and rail services to major towns
- Work with local communities to enhance regional bus services
- Improve all modes of transport, particularly buses and ensure they're synchronised with each other to save time and increase efficiency

Community transport

Labor believes that there is considerable scope to make better use of community connections to provide transport solutions where there are none.

Labor will:

- Explore innovative, flexible partnership funding models to make public transport available to support those at risk of isolation

Integrated transport planning

Victoria is suffering from a transport infrastructure backlog. Expertise and independent advice to Government is needed to ensure better long term planning for and delivery of large-scale transport infrastructure projects.

Labor's new approach will take the politics out of transport infrastructure planning.

New independent agencies Infrastructure Victoria and Projects Victoria will develop and oversee the delivery of large-scale transport projects that will transform our road and rail networks.

All Victorians benefit from improvements in our national and urban road and rail systems – through reduced congestion, increased productivity, happier communities and better environmental outcomes.

This stands in stark contrast to the Coalition Government's secretive conduct around the proposed East-West tunnel.

Many benefits will flow from having a long-term, strategic and coordinated transport plan.

Supporting better decision making

In addition to the work of Infrastructure Victoria, Labor will:

- Take a long term, strategic and coordinated approach to transport planning and engage in meaningful consultation
- Restore transparency to decision making, seek expert advice and deliver the right projects at the right time, for the right price
- Enhance the consumer and workforce voice within Public Transport Victoria decision making

- Establish a Ministerial consultative group including public transport users, network operators, the RACV, unions, industry and local government
- Work with Vic Roads on noise wall policy to better protect the health and wellbeing of residents on adjoining roads

Travelling well

Homesafe

Labor understands the need for people to leave Melbourne's CBD after a night out and return home safely more easily and cheaply.

Labor will:

- Introduce 24-hour public transport across Melbourne with trains, trams and buses running all night on weekends
- Develop a dedicated *Homesafe* mobile app to provide timetable information
- Provide a 2am *Homesafe* shuttle service to Bendigo, Ballarat, Traralgon and Geelong.

A Modern Tram System for Melbourne

Labor will ensure that Melbourne's unique tram system is adequately resourced and modernised so that it can deliver services as part of our world-class public transport system.

Melbourne's tram system is an important part of the city's transport network. Consistent with its approach to sound financial and economic management, Labor will consider measures and projects to improve services across the tram system, expanding and extending services where and when appropriate to do so.

An Innovative Approach to Train Station Design

As part of *Project 10,000*, Labor will pursue all appropriate opportunities to best use the space around level crossings and deliver innovative railway station precincts.

A number of Labor's proposed level crossing replacements will result in the construction of new train stations. This program provides an exciting opportunity to deliver innovative approaches to the

design of new train stations, resulting in safer and better community use of spaces, creative design and mixed use opportunities.

An Equitable Public Transport System

Labor believes that a world-class public transport system should cater for all Victorians, including people with a disability. An essential pillar of the modernisation of the public transport system is delivering better infrastructure and services to support accessibility for all Victorians.

Labor will:

- Invest in measures to improve access for people with a disability across the public transport system and ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act
- Ensure the regulatory environment and industry frameworks are responsive to the needs of people with a disability, including the taxi industry

A Thriving Public Transport System in Rural and Regional Victoria

Labor is proud to have rebuilt regional rail services in Victoria. Regional fast rail to Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Traralgon improved travel times, increased reliability and made journeys safer and quieter.

Regional fast rail contributed to a renaissance for regional Victoria – a return of confidence, investment, economic growth and better liveability for our regions.

In the last three years these rail lines have been beset with problems: punctuality, reliability, price, travel times and cancellations. By any measure, regional rail services have deteriorated.

Labor believes that strong vibrant communities in rural and regional Victoria must be served by quality local services, inter-connecting services across the regions and direct services to Melbourne.

Labor will prioritise the delivery of additional and better public transport services and infrastructure for regional Victorians to move people where they want to go within their communities, across the regions and in and out of the city.

Labor will:

- Restore confidence in V/Line
- Invest in additional rolling stock, and expanded and extended regional rail services where appropriate, in line with our prudent approach to budget management
- Improve service frequency, reliability and punctuality
- Guarantee ongoing public ownership of V/Line
- Continue to improve the on-board experience for travellers

Cycling

Labor supports cycling as a sustainable and healthy transport mode, which produces no direct pollution or greenhouse gas emissions. Labor will encourage continued growth of cycling as a mode of transport across the whole of Victoria, not just in inner city suburbs or Melbourne.

Labor will:

- Improve the bicycle network, including the provision of marked bicycle lanes on roads, extensions to the off road networks and improvements to existing routes
- Ensure that new or rebuilt roads contain measures to improve the safety of cyclists
- Improve signage on bike paths
- Support measures that will increase access to bike parking
- Improve maintenance schedules on off-road trails
- Develop cycling strategies including bike paths along rail reserves

Pedestrians

Everyone is a pedestrian at some stage. For some people it is their preferred method of transport. For some people it is their only mode of transport as they may live too far from public transport, may not be able to afford to have a car or may not be able to hold a drivers license.

Some people walk to the shops, school or work. For some people there are barriers to walking including poor local footpaths, or no footpaths at all, or roads

that are too busy to cross safely. For people who need to wheel around, such as children in prams or on bikes or people in wheelchairs, there are even more barriers.

Labor supports walking as a sustainable and healthy transport mode. Labor would like to see more people walking more often and will help make walking a transport mode of choice.

Labor will remove barriers to walking so that everyone has the option to walk safely.

Labor will:

- Work with local communities to improve recreational walking routes and walking environments around schools and shopping centres and other public places
- Ensure walkability is factored into making decisions about community facilities
- Improve pedestrian amenity and safety and continue to support lower speed limits around vulnerable road users

Parking

Labor believes all people should be provided with safe, convenient and appropriate access to parking while enabling adequate road access for pedestrians, cyclists, emergency vehicles, trams, buses and street maintenance and delivery vehicles.

Labor will:

- Introduce more appropriate levels of parking at new hospitals and health precincts, needed by vulnerable user groups and shift workers
- Increase the requirements to provide adequate ratios of disability car parking at places of high demand
- Ensure that appropriate levels of parking are provided with new developments

Car Sharing

Labor supports car sharing as a way of reducing the number of cars needing parking in local neighbourhoods, as well as reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

Labor will:

- Support and promote car sharing programs

Congestion and Safety Around Schools

There are over 860,000 children attending school in Victoria each school day. A high proportion arrive by car, more than any other mode, and only two children out of ten walk or ride a bike.

Enormous pressure is placed on our local roads by transporting children to school. This creates a traffic hazard and affects parents, children, teachers, neighbours, police and local councils.

Labor is committed to improving the safety of school crossings via the installation of more electronic signs around schools to alert motorists to reduced speeds at certain times.

The health benefits of walking or riding to school are well known but for many this is not an option – often because of safety concerns.

Access to transport and school drop off and pickup locations is critically lacking at some schools.

Labor will:

- Support schools in developing congestion and safety plans in conjunction with local councils, VicRoads, transport operators and their school community
- Promote secure bicycle storage in schools
- Work with schools to create incentives for both children and parents to use public transport, walk or ride instead of driving
- Improve road safety in school zones
- Promote a range of transport modes for students and parents - including walking and riding - to improve safety.

Student Travel

The cost of transport to the closest appropriate school should not disadvantage families. Free school buses, school bus routes, and conveyance allowances should be based on principles of equality and take into consideration the distance of the child's principal residence from the school.

A school transport system that is equitable and fair and ensures students get to and from school in a timely way, wherever they live in Victoria, will be implemented under a Labor Government.

Labor will:

- Simplify school transport services
- Provide equity in funding of transport assistance to students, no matter where they live, so they can

travel easily to engage in their education

- Recognise the rights of parents to choose their nearest appropriate school for their children

Maintenance

Labor understands the relationship between track and signalling maintenance and the reliability of our public transport service.

Labor will:

- Ensure there are adequate maintenance programs to support the system and equipment to ensure minimal disruption to the travelling public

A Safe, Strong and Sustainable Statewide Taxi Industry

Labor acknowledges the important role taxis play in our public transport network and complementing mass transit.

Labor will ensure the regulatory environment supports a strong taxi industry and service across the whole state, including in regional cities and across rural Victoria.

Labor will:

- Ensure that Victoria's taxi industry is strongly consumer-focused, delivering a reliable and cost-effective service across metropolitan and regional Victoria
- Support a sustainable industry that is safe for both passengers and drivers
- Consider closely-targeted assistance to alleviate particular hardship brought about by recent reforms in relation to the reduction in taxi licence values

Enabling Economic Growth

The strength of the Victorian economy is underpinned by the efficiency of its transport networks. Roads, rail, ports and airports share Victoria's growing freight load but increased congestion, inefficient ports and crumbling freight infrastructure mean greater costs to industry.

The challenges to keep up with growth are immense and there is a pressing need for solutions.

In Victoria, freight traffic is fast increasing. The number of heavy vehicles on Victoria's roads is projected to at least double by 2025. The number of containers currently moving through the Port of Melbourne is set to quadruple over the next two decades, and freight trucks are likely to account for about 20 per cent of all travel on Melbourne's roads by 2020.

In that context, it is more important than ever that a future Labor Government gets the planning and the infrastructure investment future of the freight and logistics industry in Victoria right.

Freight

Labor is committed to improving management of our existing freight network and developing new infrastructure to bypass residential areas, reduce heavy traffic and trucks in activity centres and suburban streets and reduce congestion on the WestGate Freeway. An integrated freight system will boost productivity by improving links between Victoria's airports, ports, freight and logistics centres, rail terminals, regional centres, and interstate transport corridors.

Key strategies to achieve this include managing the key routes for freight, developing integrated freight activity centres and investigating Bay West as a second container port option.

Labor will:

- Support the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's programs for a safer road freight industry, inclusive of safe rates and improved regulation for the maintenance of trucks
- Assess the road safety of routes and roads that heavy vehicles (B-triples) are using in Victoria
- Ensure Labor's State Freight Plan is compatible with Infrastructure Australia's National plan and Victoria's urban planning
- Investigate current Port rail links with a view to improving the movement of freight across the State
- Provide investment and support for intermodal terminals to reduce congestion and improve efficiency of the Victorian freight industry
- Investigate and support off-peak freight handling
- Continue to support the expansion of the standard rail gauge network

Ports

Victoria prides itself on being the freight and logistics hub of Australia.

Labor understands the pressing need for a ports strategy to inform Government about how to meet future growth and facilitate greater port capacity. Labor believes that efficiency in Victoria's ports is essential to grow export markets and create jobs.

Based on the advice available so far, studies that have already been undertaken and the views of expert stakeholders, the case for a Bay West site is compelling.

It is clear that the Bay West option requires significant further investigation to test the information currently available. Labor believes that the Bay West is likely to be the best option for future container port development.

Labor will:

- Investigate long term freight needs
- Seek independent expert advice from Infrastructure Victoria about the viability of Bay West as an alternative site for Melbourne's second container port
- Address the logistics needs of the State, including future bulk capacity at the Port of Hastings and Port of Geelong
 - Use existing infrastructure for short shipping of containers from Webb Dock, Swanson Dock, Geelong and the alternative container Port

Country Freight Lines

Following the Fischer Report, considerable improvement was made to country freight line maintenance. Ongoing annual maintenance is required, without which freight journey times become slower and less-competitive, leading to greater numbers of B-double and B-triple trucks on our roads.

Labor will:

- Maintain and improve country freight lines by regular annual budget allocations
- Allocate adequate funding each year in the State Budget to the routine maintenance and upgrading of country freight lines
- Work to ensure that more Victorian freight is moved by rail.

Roads to Sustain Rural Industry and Rural Communities

Labor believes that local communities and industry need to be better supported to ensure roads that connect primary production to freight hubs are maintained to an adequate standard. Labor will provide better access to markets, including export markets so that the Victorian economy can grow.

Labor will:

- Meet the needs of primary producers to have good farm gate access
- Meet the needs of major industry to access ports
- Balance the amenity of rural communities with the productivity of farming and primary industries
- Continue to support rail freight and improve routes to the Port of Melbourne
- Work with rural councils and industry to ensure proper maintenance of local roads

Aviation

Labor will implement a long-term strategic approach to aviation to achieve the greatest benefit from Victoria's strong network of airports and strengthen our links with the rest of the world.

Melbourne Airport is a major hub in the national and international aviation network, and Victoria's main international gateway providing critical links to the world for exports and the tourism industry.

Melbourne Airport is growing rapidly with over 4,000 international and domestic services arriving and departing each week. In 2013 Melbourne Airport had over 30 million passenger movements, including a seven per cent increase in international passenger arrivals on the previous year.

For around 14,500 Victorians, Melbourne Airport is their workplace. Melbourne Airport is an important source of skilled employment through maintenance services, training and value added manufacturing, supported by a network of regional and general aviation airports.

Avalon Airport is a privately owned and operated airport. Avalon has considerable capacity for expansion for either domestic or international air travel.

Aviation also now accounts for eight per cent of Victorian freight.

Labor will:

- Ensure urban growth does not encroach into flight paths at any airport
 - Protect Melbourne Airport's curfew free status and ensure that Avalon Airport is curfew free
 - Work with Melbourne Airport, Avalon Airport, the Federal Government and the aviation industry to attract additional flights
 - Support the development of air freight and better integrate air freight services with road, rail and maritime services
 - Support the development of Avalon as a viable second international airport for Victoria
 - Monitor pricing and service quality at airports to ensure strict environmental and safety standards are met
 - Advocate for ongoing improvement at Point Cook, Moorabbin and Essendon
 - Support the improvement of Victoria's regional airports, in recognition of their role as critical hubs for emergency response and economic growth
- Improve access to Melbourne Airport

Procurement

Labor believes there is an important role for government to support local manufacturing jobs in transport purchasing. Please refer to the Jobs and Growth Chapter of this document for more on Labor's ethical and strategic purchasing plan.

Safety on Public Transport

Labor believes that all public transport users have the right to feel safe and secure at all times in their journey.

Labor will:

- Ensure there are adequate and well trained Authorised Officers
- Ensure there are adequate and well trained Victoria Police resources
- Maintain Protective Services Officers on stations
- Explore ongoing safety improvements on public transport and in areas managed by Victrack

Safety at Level Crossings

Under Project 10,000, Labor will remove 50 of Melbourne's most dangerous level crossings to improve road and pedestrian safety, reduce congestion and enable a more frequent rail service.

For the remaining level crossings, Labor will

- Ensure the next 'arrive alive' action plan includes a trial for break-in radio warning systems and cameras at level crossings to minimise the risk of train/vehicle collisions

Rural Level Crossings

The Victorian Parliamentary Road Safety Committee inquiry *Improving Safety at Level Crossings* recommended ongoing improvement of public safety at rural level crossings.

Labor will:

- Audit rural level crossings to identify non operative crossings
- Continue to upgrade safety warnings at level crossings
- Where possible use new technology developed in Victoria

Safer Roads

The Victorian road toll has decreased by more than 54 per cent from 444 in 2001 to 242 in 2013. Overall, thousands of lives have been saved in Victoria since Labor's first road safety strategy began. Labor believes it is imperative that this work is continued.

Victoria is in a strong position to reduce its road toll to below 200 by 2020. This is an ambitious goal, but it can be achieved if communities work together to improve the safety of Victoria's roads.

Labor will:

- Create a Minister for Road Safety to oversee the implementation of road safety initiatives undertaken by various public sector departments and agencies
- Collaborate with experts and the community on road safety strategies
- Continue to build on completed upgrades to metropolitan freeways and intercity highways to guarantee motoring safety

- Encourage preventative measures for road rage and dangerous driving, and punish those who put the safety of other members of the community at risk
- Where not undertaking grade separations, trial break-in radio warning systems and cameras at level crossings to minimise the risk of train/vehicle collisions
- Encourage the purchase of safer cars by ensuring motorists registering a new five star car should receive a TAC premium reduction
- Target motorcycle safety and consider the implementation of a graduated licensing system for motorcyclists
- Support the continued roll-out of truck exclusion lanes on freeways and highways and engage in industry partnerships to promote new safety technologies for heavy vehicles
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for young drivers
- Build upon the work to safeguard pedestrians
- Guarantee the financial stability of the TAC so that those affected by road trauma have access to the support they need
- Reverse the cruel changes the Government made to deny the grieving families of people who die or are severely injured in transport accidents the right to seek compensation for mental injury or nervous shock

A Safe and Fair Society

Preamble

Every Victorian has the right to feel safe - in their homes, on the streets, in schools and workplaces and online.

Every Victorian has the right to be respected, celebrated, welcomed and included, whatever their background.

Victorians need a Government that stands with them, delivering services and support to protect our most vulnerable.

Unfortunately, the Coalition Government isn't making our communities safer. Denis Napthine has thrown our justice system into chaos.

Through devastating cuts to TAFE, VCAL and other vital services, the Coalition has cost Victorians jobs, education and opportunities.

More people are becoming alienated from their own community. More young people are turning to a life of crime.

Crime has increased every year under this Government. Courts and prison systems are under huge pressure.

Victoria's parole and justice system has failed catastrophically. Incidents of family violence continue to increase.

Cuts to fire services and the police force are keeping our emergency service members off the street. They can't do their job without the Government's support.

Victoria isn't transparent. Freedom of Information has turned into a farce, the Law Reform Commission has been nobbled and the Parliament is in a near-constant state of chaos.

The Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission was botched from the beginning. It's a toothless body, powerless to investigate misconduct in public office.

The Coalition Government talks about being tough on crime. They aren't. Our community is less safe and our crime-fighting agencies are under more pressure.

The Coalition has failed to prevent crime and has ignored the causes of crime. Only Labor will give our justice system decency, fairness and funding.

Only Labor will rebuild our society, create a safer community, and put in place the programs that can actually reduce crime.

Our Values

One of the most sacred obligations of any Government is keeping communities safe and the justice system fair. No headline and no simple slogan can reduce crime. It requires a comprehensive approach, implemented right across our society.

Safety and security means addressing the causes of crime, not just its perpetrators. We must be tough and smart. We must give police and the justice system the resources and support they need to do their job.

All Victorians deserve full access to a system that welcomes diversion and rehabilitation where it's appropriate – a system that both protects the independence of our courts and respects the views of the community.

Criminal acts deserve to be punished and victims of crime deserve the full support of the Government and the justice system. However, we must not be afraid to ask the hard questions about why criminal acts occur and why the crime rate is increasing.

The best defence against crime is the power of education and the dignity of work. Cutting funds to TAFE, discouraging learning and losing thousands of jobs will turn more young people toward a life of crime.

Labor stands with our dedicated police and emergency services personnel. They deserve more support for the work they do. When Government cuts keep police off the streets, the community misses out.

A strong Government should lead by example and help build resilient local communities that are actively engaged in planning, preparing, responding to and recovering from emergencies and disasters.

Labor always stands up for human rights, confronts discrimination, celebrates our democratic values and respects our diversity. Labor believes in our public institutions and our Parliament. They should never be misused and abused.

Delivering Our Goals

Youth Justice

Labor acknowledges that while an overwhelming number of young people in the community make the right choices, a range of complex factors impact on the capacity of a small minority of young people to do so. These include being trapped in a cycle of poverty and/or abuse, mental illness, substance abuse, exclusion from social or educational opportunities, family breakdown and alienation from the broader community.

Labor believes that early intervention is the best defence against a cycle of crime and violence.

One of the most important approaches in keeping the community safe is to provide young people with opportunities to encourage them to make positive choices for their future, rather than being caught in a spiral of crime and incarceration. It is vital that young people are empowered to be the best they can be through education, job and social opportunities.

The Coalition Government's cuts to VCAL, TAFE, school reading programs and at-risk youth agencies, as well as their failure to respond to rising youth unemployment, has removed the opportunities and support that help keep vulnerable kids out of trouble.

When young people do engage in criminal behaviour, Labor believes in diverting low-risk youth away from the justice system and providing genuine rehabilitation programs.

Labor will:

- Provide properly funded and targeted educational paths for young people, particularly disadvantaged and at-risk youth
- Invest in State-wide youth diversion programs to reduce recidivism in young offenders
- Amend the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 to allow for mandated diversion options in the Children's Court
- Support and expand programs that target offenders transitioning from the justice system back into the community
- Invest in education and learning programs for young offenders with speech, language and communication difficulties to promote their rehabilitation prospects

- Support and encourage community participation, including through sport, arts, culture, volunteering and other engagement and learning activities
- Have an integrated and multi-faceted approach to dealing with those affected by family violence
- Develop effective responses for repeat offenders who refuse to access or complete diversion programs and other opportunities
- Invest in a range community crime and violence prevention initiatives to engage with at risk children in a pro-active manner and develop a strategy of interventions targeting violent offending by young people
- Develop a whole-of-government strategy to reduce contact with the youth justice system by young people from specific, over-represented backgrounds, including Aboriginal young people and culturally and linguistically diverse youth

Police Resourcing

Labor values the extraordinary and often dangerous work performed by the dedicated men and women of Victoria Police and recognises their outstanding contribution to the safety and security of our community.

Labor is proud of its record in police resourcing while in Government, where Victorians saw a steady and significant increase in police numbers and 10 years of reduced crime rates.

The Coalition Government has managed to unravel this good work by cutting the Victoria Police budget by \$100 million and slashing more than 800 Victoria Police and Department of Justice staff. This has contributed to the increase in the crime rate every year since they came to office. Instead of supporting the men and women who make up our police force, the Government has asked them to do more with less.

The Coalition Government has failed Victorians by allowing unprecedented and scandalous political interference to dramatically undermine and compromise the Office of the Chief Commissioner. These actions gravely impacted on the delivery of justice in this State and shook public confidence in one of our most important public institutions to its core.

Labor believes that an independent operational command and a well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing, is critical to keeping the community safe. It is a Government's responsibility to ensure the police force has the tools and autonomy to perform its duties, as well as accountability to the people they protect.

Labor will:

- Invest in police and PSOs to protect our community
- Reverse the drain on police resources being diverted to the corrections system
- Work with Victoria Police command to respond quickly to crime hot spots and significant trends in crime, such as the emergence of ice and other drugs
- Address the effect of the Coalition Government's cuts to Victoria Police, and the loss of hundreds of jobs
- Respond to the fact that too much police time is being taken away from frontline duties
- Ensure Victoria Police maintain positive links into Victoria's diverse communities to promote crime prevention, social cohesion and community safety.
- Seek to expand police programs that liaise with the gay community with an aim of making reporting of violence and discrimination easier
- Work with Victoria Police to ensure that people with a disability have their rights protected in police interviews and such interviews are attended by an independent third person.

Safe in our Homes

There is no greater violation of trust than becoming a victim of crime in your own home.

Family violence has devastating consequences and it affects every culture and group in society. Victims and women at risk deserve a comprehensive, sustained and cross-sectional Government commitment to tackling and preventing this crime.

The Coalition Government loves to attribute the rising crime rate to family violence incidents, but refuses to follow this up with action and meaningful solutions.

While in Government, Labor knew that Victoria's proactive response to tackling family violence would lead to an increase in reporting. It knew that as a Government it would need to ensure that the services were available to meet the increased demand.

Preventing and responding to family violence requires a concerted and collaborative whole-system response. This should involve police, courts, Government and community-based agencies working together to provide the best response to those affected by family violence.

Labor recognises and values the important work of organisations who, day in day out, deal with victims and their families and aim to stamp out family violence.

Labor will:

- Have a dedicated member of the Cabinet with responsibility for co-ordinating a whole-of-government approach to family violence
- Explore options for strengthening penalties for family violence to ensure a strong message is sent that this form of violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- Provide support and options for women and children to escape from violent situations
- Reinstate dedicated funding to enable the important work of the family violence death review to recommence
- Build a meaningful partnership between the Government and the community sector to facilitate an effective, integrated response to family violence and develop policy and programs

Protecting children from sexual abuse and predatory behaviour is of primary importance for any Government.

Labor will:

- Enhance the resources available and improve court processes to significantly assist children who have been victims of abuse to tell their story in the legal system
- Introduce jury involvement in sentencing to ensure that penalties given for convicted offenders reflect community standards and expectations

Labor acknowledges that the nature of a home setting can vary greatly for people, particularly those who require assisted care or who need to access emergency accommodation and foster care.

Further, Labor acknowledges that many people grew up in State-run and religious institutions that failed in their duty of care in the most heinous of circumstances. As a community we must respond to the damage that has been caused in a meaningful and comprehensive manner.

Safe in our Streets and Neighbourhoods

Communities throughout Victoria are being increasingly affected by street violence, particularly alcohol and drug fuelled confrontations between young men.

In addition, young men are overrepresented in unsafe driving practices and subsequent tragic road accidents.

Labor believes that a comprehensive and multi-layered approach needs to be taken to address these issues, including education, alcohol regulation and criminal justice responses. Too often, tragic consequences are occurring as a result of intoxicated young people engaging in physical altercations.

In particular, more needs to be done to teach boys from a young age about values, behaviour and consequences. They need to learn throughout their school years about the importance of respecting women, taking responsibility for their conduct and understanding the consequences of their actions.

Labor will:

- Introduce a new crime – causing death by assault
- Implement a 'how to keep you and others safe' education program for boys to stamp out anti-social behaviour before it takes hold
- Develop and adopt a best practice, comprehensive education campaign with a focus on school-aged students at primary and secondary levels. This campaign will include detailed information and discussion about alcohol-fuelled violence and illicit drugs.
- Talk to young people about safe driving practices and the risks of speeding and driving under influence of drugs and alcohol and using mobile devices.

Safe in our Schools, Workplaces and Online Communities

There is growing community recognition of the insidious nature and impacts of bullying behaviour, which often occurs in schools, workplaces and online interactions.

Labor believes young people should feel safe and secure and not be subjected to homophobic, racist, or sexist words and actions. However if they are, or they witness such behavior, they should be empowered to respond appropriately.

Labor understands that while the explosion in technological advancement and the rapid changes to communications have delivered many benefits, they have also opened up new avenues for exploitation of our young people.

One of Labor's primary aims is to make sure that kids are safe online and that they are aware of the importance of looking after their digital footprints.

Unfortunately, there has been a disturbing trend of bullying online which has had many tragic consequences for individuals and their families.

There have been changes to young people's behaviour arising from the increased prevalence of new technologies, such as sexting, or posting compromising or explicit photos or materials online. Again, this can lead to devastating and lifelong consequences for those affected.

Labor will:

- Introduce comprehensive education campaigns against bullying, including physical, verbal and cyber bullying at every level of the school curriculum
- Promote education in the early years of primary school through to year 12 which addresses the issues of cyber safety and digital footprints
- Examine whether existing laws are adequate to deal with cyber bullying and the dissemination of compromising and explicit images without consent
- Enhance protections for victims of bullying in the workplace, particularly apprentices, and make sure whistleblowers have the protections they need
- Expand education and training in workplaces across Victoria about the insidious, unacceptable and unlawful nature of workplace bullying

Problem Solving Courts

Under the former Labor Government, Neighbourhood Justice Centres, Court Integrated Service Programs, Koori Courts, the drug court, and the sex-worker list were all introduced. The Coalition slammed many of these initiatives while in Opposition but have embraced them in Government. Because they know they work.

Often the criminal justice system is the first point of contact between an offender and the State and therefore it is an opportunity to connect that person into the services they need to address the reason why they offended in the first place.

Labor will:

- Build on the positive lessons learned through innovative courts and lists and seek to integrate the successes through the broader court system

Sentencing and Parole

Labor understands that the community is deeply concerned about some recent sentencing decisions and alarmed by the instances of horrific crimes that have been committed by parolees.

While the independence of the judiciary is a crucial tenet of democracy, it is also imperative that judges are highly trained, keep pace with what the community expects of them and that the community has public confidence in our justice system and its outcomes.

Labor will:

- Introduce meaningful jury involvement in sentencing – this proposal will ensure that the community has a seat at the table during the critical process of sentencing offenders who have committed violent crimes
- Promote a parole system that is transparent and effective and which puts the focus firmly on community safety
- Ensure that penalties for crimes against children reflect community standards

Victims and their Families

Labor is proud of its record of commitment to victims of crime and their families. Labor restored crimes compensation and oversaw steady increases to these benefits during its time in office. Labor expanded support services including counseling and a 'victims of crime' helpline.

Labor reformed the justice system to promote victim participation, making it easier for victims to give evidence and convey to the court the impact of that crime.

In a continuation of this approach Labor will:

- Ensure that the views and rights of victims of crimes are heard and acted upon throughout Government
- Work with key stakeholders in the justice system and victims advocacy groups to ensure victims' rights are respected and that victims and their families are getting the support they need

Corrections

Labor believes that keeping Victorians safe from harm is one of the highest priorities of Government. Innocent people must be protected from violent acts.

In many cases, prison is the only appropriate option to protect the community from serious offenders. But a growing prison population is not a marker of success.

Most Victorians want to live in a community that spends more money on its schools and hospitals than it does on its jails. To that end, the community benefits from a proactive and holistic justice response that is capable of diverting low-level offenders out of a cycle of recidivism and ensures that fewer prisoners go back to a life of crime after they are released from jail.

The Coalition Government's policies have contributed to prison demand and they have failed to keep step with that demand. When a Government vacates the crime prevention field the prison budget will continue to rise, along with the crime rate.

Labor acknowledges the rising number of indigenous people in Victoria's prisons and that Indigenous people are more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous people.

The Government's management of the prison

system has been appalling, with police resources being diverted away from the front line and into holding cells.

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:

- Strive for low recidivism rates by investing in prisoner support programs delivered during the custodial sentence and post release
- Support the Adult Parole Board and ensure that victims voices are heard through the Victims Rights Commissioner
- Ensure that Corrections Victoria deliver offending behaviour programs specifically for indigenous prisoners that encompasses culture, family and community
- Engage Indigenous staff and provide Koori specific services to prisoners and offenders to reduce the extent to which they perpetrate crime or re-offend

Delivering Vital Emergency Management

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

Fires, floods, major storm events, and other emergencies over recent years have highlighted the need for Government and agencies to build community resilience and adopt an all-hazards all-agencies approach to improve protections for Victorians.

Labor believes that emergency services must work together to help communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters and other emergency events.

Labor will ensure that there is a well-coordinated effort towards recovery, ensuring that affected communities are adequately supported.

Victoria's emergency services are vital in protecting communities across Victoria. As such, Labor is committed to providing practical support to our emergency services workers, both career and volunteers.

Fire Services

The Napthine Government's \$66 million cuts to our fire services are being felt on the frontline by career and volunteer fire fighters.

Unable to obtain new or replacement equipment, undertake vital training, or see promised fire stations built or upgraded, Victoria's fire fighters are unfairly bearing the brunt of these cruel cuts.

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

Labor will:

- Provide more firefighters and equip them with the resources they need
- Invest in the latest technology to support the work of firefighters on the front line
- Prioritise resources for growing communities in outer metropolitan and regional areas
- Return all fire services property levy revenue to fire agencies and ensure that Victorians are provided with a cost effective service by their fire and emergency agencies
- Work with our dedicated firefighters who work on Crown land and parks to ensure they receive the recognition, support, equipment and training they need
- Review the superannuation entitlements of DEPI and Parks Victoria emergency services employees, when compared to that of MFB and CFA career fire-fighters
- Initiate an independent review of the health and safety concerns at the CFA Fiskville training operations
- Where appropriate, pursue co-location opportunities for CFA brigades, SES units and Ambulance Victoria stations
- Provide effective support and investment to maintain and build emergency services volunteer capacity to meet the challenges inherent in a growing Victoria and environmental changes

State Emergency Services

Labor values the critical role our State Emergency Service (SES) delivers to Victorians, particularly for those impacted by floods, severe storms and other emergencies, and the critical role they play in support of other agencies, particularly the police.

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

Labor will:

- Build, support and resource a sustainable volunteer and employee workforce
- Develop emergency plans for flood, storm, and other emergencies in partnership with the community
- Ensure an all hazards, all agencies approach to emergency management

Volunteer Coast Guard

Labor recognises and values the role of the Volunteer Coast Guard in marine safety, search, rescue and other emergencies in liaison with Victoria Police, CFA and SES as well as Commonwealth agencies.

Labor will:

- Continue to support and resource the volunteer Coast Guard;
- Invest in essential rescue and communications equipment as well as provide financial support in the acquisition of water craft
- Strengthen its operational integration and interoperability with police and other emergency services as part of an all hazards, all agencies approach to emergency management

Life Saving

Labor acknowledges the outstanding job our lifesavers do to prevent water-related deaths and injuries in all Victorian communities. Labor acknowledges that water safety and education extends to inland waterways, dams and swimming pools as well as coastal regions.

Labor will:

- Support water safety education programs
- Invest in essential rescue equipment and provide support to help upgrade clubhouses

Emergency Services Telecommunications

Labor recognises that effective emergency services telecommunications is fundamental to effective emergency management and is the vital link between the public and its police and emergency services including ambulance.

Labor will:

- Give the highest priority to investment in and delivery of a dedicated statewide emergency services telecommunications network for reliable emergency call taking, alerting, dispatch and command and control
- Maintain the operation and control of such services through a publicly owned agency
- Invest in the latest proven technology to ensure effective voice, visual and data communications capacity that meets the needs of the public and the police and emergency agencies

Restoring Confidence in Victoria's Institutions and Democracy

Confidence in Victoria's institutions, systems and processes is at an all-time low under the Coalition Government, and costs and delays in our court and justice system are at an all-time high.

Labor believes these issues must be addressed as a matter of priority and there are a range of agencies whose role needs to be strengthened in order to ensure that proper access to justice is restored to those who need it most.

Access to Justice

Access to justice is vital to ensuring that the rights of our citizens are protected. Under the Coalition Government's approach and savage cuts in this area, access to justice for Victorians has been greatly diminished.

Labor recognises that, if Government wants to be tough on crime, both sides of the system must be adequately funded. This is a fundamental difference between the Labor and Coalition approach and their failure to do this has led to the Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) funding crisis.

VLA has been forced to reduce services, cut jobs and close offices. It has also reduced services at the

Children's Court with many children under 10 no longer able to access a lawyer. Our courts are dealing with unprecedented numbers of unrepresented parties and there have been major case delays as judges are concerned about proceeding with some matters without legal aid assistance.

The Coalition came to Government claiming it had a tough law and order agenda, however, its performance has been very different from its pre-election rhetoric, particularly with respect to its failure to provide sufficient resources to the justice system.

The Labor Opposition's calls for an inquiry into legal aid funding and resource allocation have been rejected by the Coalition Government.

Further, those vulnerable and disadvantaged people who come into contact with the justice system are not getting the support they need to navigate its complexity.

Labor will:

- Conduct a full inquiry into improving access to justice, including with respect to the availability of Community Legal Centres (CLCs) and the manner in which these are resourced
- Ensure adequate funding for VLA and demand that the Commonwealth pays its fair share
- Ensure that the funding VLA receives is spent fairly, wisely and efficiently on matters that reflect community concerns and priorities
- Address the clogging of the court system
- Address the problems being encountered by VCAT which is intended to be a quick, low cost and user-friendly alternative to the courts but which has been severely hampered as a result of the Coalition Government's cuts and fee hikes
- Strengthen the viability of CLCs by providing greater encouragement for lawyers to work in the community sector, including through scholarship schemes, pro bono schemes, HECs rebates, and the CLE points system.
- Examine the merits of a spent and mistaken convictions regime in circumstances of non-violent and low-level convictions where no re-offending has occurred.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Labor understands the value of helping Victorians avoid and resolve disputes. To do this, Victorians need clear laws to help them to avoid conflict and so they understand their rights and responsibilities.

Where disputes occur, Government should provide Victorians with options to resolve them at the earliest

stage to avoid the cost, stress and delay that is often a feature of traditional court proceedings.

Labor will:

- Promote mediation to assist parties resolve their disputes
- Restore VCAT to its intended role as a simple, low cost jurisdiction that assists parties seeking speedy resolution of their matters in a less formal and intimidating environment

The Parliamentary Law Reform Committee

The Coalition has wound back the role of law reform in Victoria by abolishing a stand-alone parliamentary Law Reform Committee.

Labor believes this is a retrograde step that will hamper the advancement of legal reform and changes necessary to ensuring our laws remain in step with our community.

Labor will reinstate this vital committee.

Consumer Affairs

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

Labor will:

- Address the growing problem of online scams, particularly through education and advice to the community
- Improve protection of people living in residential villages (that is where the resident owns the demountable building but rents the land) through new standalone legislation.
- Implement improved protection for older renters
- Reform the rooming house sector by implementing improved standards and a Charter
- Act on areas of poor practice and complaints against real estate agents
- Protect Victorians from unfair and misleading practices of some private car parks and implement measures required to deliver real consumer protection in this area.

A Robust Regulatory Framework for Liquor and Gaming

Labor recognises that the gaming and liquor industries are an important part of our community and provide significant jobs, entertainment and tourism opportunities.

Labor also understands the insidious nature of problem gambling and that programs and policies must be targeted towards the minority of people who develop addictive and destructive behaviours.

With respect to alcohol, Labor recognises that the community must confront a myriad of social problems that arise from excessive alcohol consumption.

Labor also acknowledges that there are ongoing, significant risks of corrupt and nefarious activity within these industries if a vigilant and robust regulatory environment is not maintained.

The Coalition Government is fundamentally failing in its responsibilities to provide a strong regulatory environment in both these industries. It has botched the merger of the Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation and Liquor Licensing Victoria into one body, the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (the VCGLR).

Labor will:

- Fix the disastrous VCGLR merger
- Reinstate the vital role of regional inspectors
- Allow VCGLR inspectors to get back out on the beat, visiting venues and enforcing strong codes of conduct in both liquor and gaming
- Reinvigorate the Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council to provide greater representation for problem gambling advocate groups
- Give the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation an advocacy and policy role (*Labor understands that problem gambling is also a health matter and further initiatives are contained in the Health and Wellbeing Chapter*)

Rights and Services

Feeling a sense of belonging to the community and a respect and engagement with others is critical to personal wellbeing and success.

Society has come a long way in acknowledging and addressing discrimination. Labor is proud to have pioneered anti-discrimination legislation and acted to remove discriminatory hurdles that existed throughout rules and regulations, particularly in respect of the LGBTI community.

Labor is also proud to have introduced the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement, which is considered the best of its kind around Australia and internationally renowned as best practice.

Unfortunately, there is still much more to do to ensure the community is inclusive, tolerant and open. Under the Coalition, we have witnessed the winding back of the Equal Opportunity Act – the first time we have taken a retrograde step in discrimination law in decades.

Labor believes that Governments are there to stand with the community and to stand up for peoples' rights.

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity

The introduction of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities in 2006 was intended to, and did, begin an era of social change and development of a human rights culture, but that progress and growth has greatly slowed and been sidelined since the end of 2010.

Labor believes that it is necessary to refresh the Charter, restore human rights standards to their proper place in the public service and local government and resume public education to embed the values of freedom, respect, equality and dignity in society.

Labor is committed to a fair go for all Victorians and believes equal opportunity laws should exist to promote recognition and acceptance of everyone's right to equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination.

Such laws should be modern and reflect community attitudes. This is why in 2010, after extensive consultation, Labor introduced new laws aimed at stamping out entrenched and systemic discrimination against minority groups and gave the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission powers

to investigate systemic discrimination, without the need for a formal complaint.

Shamelessly, the Coalition Government repealed these important reforms before they were even enacted.

Many Victorians are concerned about the Federal Government's proposals to dilute Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws and remove the legal protection against racial insult, humiliation and offence. Labor believes that everyone, particularly minority groups, should be protected from bigotry and hatred and these changes would be a backward step.

Labor will:

- Make the development of a human rights culture in Victoria a key priority, using the legal framework of the Charter and the educative role of the VEOHRC and human rights NGOs to foster and focus change
- Review the submissions from VEOHRC, human rights NGOs and other agencies to the four year review of the Charter to determine ways to ensure the Charter's effectiveness
- Place human rights education and compliance in the Key Performance Indicators of Government Departments
- Work with the VEOHRC and human rights NGOs to develop and deliver human rights education via multiple channels, including social media
- Ensure that Local Government receives and helps deliver such public education
- Ensure that rights afforded by the Charter are not lost when services are contracted out and they transfer over to non-state entities
- Review Victoria's anti-discrimination laws with the aim of shielding Victorians from any changes to Federal laws that remove rights or protections
- Reverse the Coalition Government's amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act, including the reinstatement of 'bona fide occupational requirement' limitation on the religious exemptions and powers for the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to deal with systemic discrimination on their own motion

LGBTI Rights

Building on the record of reform that Labor has proudly delivered with respect to LGBTI rights, Labor affirms the rights to equality and decency for LGBTI Victorians as a missing part of the Victorian equality framework.

Labor will:

- Create a dedicated Cabinet role for LGBTI issues with a whole-of-government focus
- Remove discrimination against children of same-sex couples – and their parents - in relation to both known-parent (where an existing relationship exists between child and adoptive parent) adoption and adoption in general
- Continuing law reform to lift the burden of convictions under unjust, prejudiced laws for homosexual acts prior to decriminalisation in 1981 and to provide a formal State repudiation of, and apology for, those laws and the harm they caused
- Amend the Relationships Act 2008 to provide that only one person in a domestic partnership need have a connection with Victoria
- Amend the Relationships Act 2008 and other relevant laws so as to treat couples recognised under equivalent laws in other states, territories and overseas (including the unions barred by s.88EA of the Marriage Act 1961 from being recognised as marriages) as if their relationship were registered in Victoria
- Remove barriers to new birth certificates for transgender and intersex Victorians and address the discriminatory automatic divorce consequence for transgender Victorians
- Acknowledge the insidious impact of homophobia and develop a comprehensive plan to eliminate it
- Improve the health and safety of same sex attracted and gender questioning (SSAGQ) students by ensuring schools and health services effectively address homophobia, including content of sexuality education
- Provide education and support for parents of SSAGQ children and gender questioning young people, particularly in rural and CALD contexts

- Ensure LGBTI Victorians experiencing housing stress have support to overcome the cumulative effects of discrimination and have access to suitable social housing and crisis accommodation options

Disability Rights

Labor acknowledges the outstanding work of previous Labor Governments in developing and introducing the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This is a once-in-a-generation change to ensure people with a disability are accorded the dignity, lifestyle choices and human rights protections that many Victorians take for granted.

Labor will:

- Properly fund the legal aid civil jurisdiction – this section provides much needed representation for those with disabilities and/or mental illness or impairment, in regards to their financial and personal independence
- Address the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission's review of guardianship to ensure laws are modern and responsive to community needs
- Manage the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in an equitable and fair manner
- Expand the jurisdiction of the Disability Services Commissioner
- Strengthen and promote the Community Visitors Program
- Work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure that Victorian safeguards such as the Community Visitors Program and the Disability Services Commissioner are incorporated into the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- Address the findings of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission report on the relinquishment of children with a disability into State care

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Labor is the party that stands for equal rights and has a long and proud history of fighting for gender equality.

Labor understands that women's lives are complex, busy and demanding.

Labor will:

- Ensure all women have the right to equal opportunities in developing and pursuing their life in a state of personal freedom and safety
- Ensure the equal status of women is in accordance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- Provide support for women who experience discrimination and marginalisation
- Work to eradicate discrimination against all women by implementing legislation and providing services which promote equal opportunity for women.
- Provide support for women to access resources that ensure more women can enter the workforce, return to work after caring for children and comfortably retire from work.

Labor also recognises that progress in narrowing the gender pay gap has stalled, and that the gap has further widened. This problem has been exacerbated by the Coalition Government's failure to support the pay equity case. Labor will work towards implementing the Victorian component of the pay equity outcome.

Reconciliation and Indigenous Rights

Labor believes that reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians is a critical and ongoing process that requires deep commitment and respect.

Labor will:

- Develop a Reconciliation Plan for Victoria, delivered by a publically funded body
- Support Victorian promotion of a National Treaty at COAG with Australia's first Nations people
- Continue to support the implementation of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement
- Introduce an annual Aboriginal Affairs report to Parliament which includes information about whether health indicators are being met and the effectiveness of strategies to address inter-generational the disadvantage
- Incorporate Aboriginal content as part of mainstream education and develop a strategy to ensure that Aboriginal Victorians meet established educational benchmarks

- Develop an active Koori business strategy to support and nurture these enterprises including business training
- Develop a major oral histories collection of Victorian Aboriginal stories
- Support and fund initiatives in the model of the 'Dreamtime Cemetery' in Ballarat

Rights of Donor Conceived People to Know their Genetic Heritage

Labor believes that all persons born as a result of donor conception have a right to know their genetic heritage. Currently, people born prior to 1998 have no right to identifying information about their donor fathers. Labor introduced a private members bill in this term of Parliament giving effect to this position which was rejected by the Coalition Government.

Labor will:

- Introduce legislation that ensures all donor conceived people have the right to identifying information about their donors, regardless of when they were born and whether or not the donors believed they would remain anonymous
- Ensure the legislation contains the safeguard of contact vetoes for those donors who do not want contact with their offspring, in recognition of the fact that donors may well have more than one donor child

Liveable, Inclusive and Sustainable Communities

Preamble

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

Labor has a strong commitment to protecting our natural environment, to sustainable and productive development and for a liveable environment.

Melbourne continues to be internationally rated as the world's most liveable city. Soon, it won't be.

People feel like they have lost control of their own community. The planning process is broken and locals don't have a say.

Services and major projects are being ignored in the development rush. Heritage and natural landscape values are being eroded.

Planning approvals start and end in the Minister's office, with an excessive number of skyscraper approvals and dubious, secretive decisions.

The Coalition's failure to invest in roads, paths and public transport has forced more people into their cars – adding to Melbourne's costly congestion crisis.

The Coalition developments are destroying Melbourne's livability, and not just in the inner city and its suburbs.

Melbourne's valuable 'green wedge' areas are being undermined by unsustainable development and massive population growth, all of it approved by the Coalition.

Labor understands that climate change is largely contributed to by human activity, and that the science of climate change is being continually updated.

Labor understands the need to address climate change and prepare effective and equitable adaption plans to meet the needs of the environment, society and the economy.

Labor acknowledges the need to increase Victoria's reliance on renewable sources of energy.

Labor will ensure that when economic systems change, vulnerable sections of the community will be protected and supported.

Essential public resources, such as water, will always be publicly owned. Our national estate and biodiversity will be protected through measures such as national and marine parks, and policies to support ecosystem services.

The Coalition Government has been responsible for some of the worst environmental decisions in Victoria's history.

They have opened up the State's precious National Parks to private developers and to cattle in the high country.

They removed the emissions target and discouraged businesses from adapting to more sustainable practices.

Under the Coalition Government, Victoria's most vulnerable are at greater risk, especially elderly people and low-income families.

No new money has been invested in the purchase or construction of new public and social housing since the Coalition came to office.

Crucial services that support the most vulnerable people to maintain their tenancies have been stripped away, putting families in real danger of homelessness.

The Coalition has not ruled out raising the rent for public housing tenants above the nationally-recognised benchmark of affordability.

Victoria deserves better than a Government that vandalises our natural environment, attacks our most vulnerable and erodes the peace and quiet of our communities.

Only Labor will stand up for stronger, prouder and safer neighbourhoods where vulnerable people are supported and all locals have a say in their future.

Our Values

Labor understands that people want to come to Victoria – and Melbourne – because of the quality of its built and natural environments. Victoria's liveability is built on our diversity; our friendly neighbourhoods nurture healthy lives, prevent isolation and protect our most vulnerable.

Victorians want to maintain their standard of living and leave behind a clean and healthy world for their children and grandchildren. This means finding ways to protect our heritage and our history when planning major projects and services to support future growth.

Labor believes locals should have a fair say in the future of their community. We have to balance the need for development with respect for our environment, heritage and neighbourhoods.

Labor understands that actions to address climate change - improving the sustainability and efficiency of our communities and economy - must make our lives healthier and safer, create new jobs across Victoria, and preserve our natural environment for future generations.

We should support and nurture the regional way of life. Rural communities and regional cities are the heart and soul of our state. Food security is one of our state's unique strengths and needs to be protected by Government. Labor understands that primary producers need support to be productive and sustainable.

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 values the contributions of Local Governments to the delivery of services, infrastructure provision and the management of our natural resources. All levels of government have an obligation to bring our communities together and protect our natural and cultural diversity.

All Victorians have the right to secure, affordable and appropriate housing and reliable and accessible services. We have to stand up for Victoria's most vulnerable people and give them the support they need to thrive.

Labor believes that a whole of government affordable housing strategy is required to expand the supply, security and quality of low-cost and private housing in Victoria.

Delivering Our Goals

Liveable and Inclusive Communities

Labor believes that a truly liveable Victoria is one where everyone has access to the services and infrastructure that is essential for a good life, no matter where they live.

Labor understands that working across all levels of Government is vital to maximise the livability of local communities in order to achieve the best possible health, educational and employment outcomes for all.

Labor supports community building projects as a way for people, groups, Government and business to achieve agreed social, economic and environmental outcomes. Community building and action plans provide a sense of ownership and contribute to the sustainability of small rural towns

Planning

Labor understands the importance of conserving Victoria's natural, cultural and heritage environments and recognises the need to maintain and develop equity, diversity and community in all planning outcomes.

The Coalition Government's open slather approach to planning has added 11 development precincts to Melbourne's Central Business District alone. There is no differentiation or guidance on how each precinct will work as a community. This developer-driven approach to urban renewal and accommodating population growth has cut community input from decision-making and runs the risk of resulting in disconnected, infrastructure-deficient residential ghettos.

Labor understands the need to develop long-term State and regional strategies that build on social, environmental and economic opportunities to provide for future statewide population distribution. New communities should be developed in stages, hand-in-hand with health, education, community, transport, and recreational services.

Labor will:

- Review Victorian Planning Provisions to promote certainty in council land use planning
- Improve the transparency and accountability of authorities regulating building services

- Strengthen Heritage Victoria's role in the protection of heritage sites and assets
- Work with all levels of Government to protect Melbourne and regional Victoria's built and natural assets
- Ensure surplus public land is considered for community use
- Use established climate change guidelines to inform sustainability policies and strategies
- Review the processes of VCAT in respect to third party appeal rights for land use decisions
- Ensure eligibility for appointment to VCAT and Planning Panels is regulated by codified selection criteria and relevant qualifications with the introduction of a Code of Practice to guide members of VCAT

Melbourne as a World Leading Capital City

Melbourne is one of the best cities to live in the world. There are endless lifestyle options across a diversity of suburbs, including coastal, inner city, urban and semi-rural suburbs.

The Coalition Government continues to favour major road developments through inner-city residential areas and parks, and inappropriate, out-of-scale high-density developments. This is destroying the livability, heritage values and character of the built environment.

Labor understands the need to improve coordination between heritage protections and development guidelines for sustainable development that protects and improves urban character and amenity.

Labor understands that public health outcomes are important in urban design. The community benefits from environments that promote physical activity, social interaction and provide access to fresh food and green spaces. Labor knows that poor urban design can impact on mental health issues and chronic diseases.

Labor will enhance the livability of the built environment while preserving urban character and amenity by:

- Accommodating population growth through well planned infill developments, ensuring community views matter when determining neighbourhood character
- Ensuring local planning schemes promote socially cohesive neighbourhoods through good urban design principles that incorporate diverse and affordable housing

- Ensuring health and well-being issues are considered throughout the planning system's legislative and policy framework so that future communities are designed with public health outcomes in mind
- Using objective criteria to identify strategic locations for development close to transport and other services
- Reviewing planning controls around major hazard facilities to protect residents' safety and the ongoing viability of associated industries

Supporting Change Across Regional and Rural Victoria

Local councils across regional and rural Victoria manage countless issues associated with population change. For some, it is keeping up with rapid growth and for others, it is managing the challenges of small and remote communities

Appropriate planning rules will protect natural resources and rural land for agriculture and be responsive to opportunities presented by new industries like renewable energy.

Labor will:

- Implement and maintain urban growth boundaries for the metropolitan area and abutting towns, regional centers and coastal towns
- Fund councils impacted by urban and rural land use interface issues
- Promote economic development across regional and rural Victoria
- Devise planning laws to protect agricultural land from inappropriate development
- Look at ways of preserving environmentally valuable land in private ownership
- Work collaboratively with communities to formulate plans aimed at attracting and retaining residents

Natural Environment and Urban Open Spaces

Labor recognises the enormous value of urban open spaces as social recreational places providing public health benefits and important habitat links across Melbourne, regional cities and towns.

Labor will ensure that existing open spaces, parklands and wildlife corridors are protected from urban encroachment, while continuing to develop these assets throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria, particularly in areas experiencing growth.

Labor will:

- Continue to work with local community and 'friends' groups in the management of urban open spaces, parklands and wildlife corridors
- Require council planning strategies to address local environments and conservation
- Analyse and approve land uses against stringent sustainability criteria, such as water availability
- Strengthen and maintain Victoria's green wedges by adopting a final urban growth boundary incorporating future green field development

Environmental Justice Plan

Labor acknowledges that the community needs to have access to all relevant information about the potential health impacts of pollution or contamination of the local environment by nearby industrial facilities. Communities also require appropriate access to the legal system to pursue environmental justice.

Labor will:

- Develop and implement Australia's first Environmental Justice Action Plan, modeled on international best practice, which requires DSE and the EPA to support environmental justice research, public education and enforcement
- Enact Australia's first 'environmental right to know' law, which would require reporting of information to local communities about issues such as significant contamination, including the mandatory disclosure of contaminated sites on property titles
- Investigate the most appropriate mechanism to resource the cleanup of contaminated sites
- Where necessary, amend relevant legislation to ensure that members of the community have legal standing to seek enforcement of the law and review of Government decisions, including reviews in the public interest

Local Government

Labor recognises the important contribution local governments make to service delivery, infrastructure provision and building stronger communities across Victoria, particularly in regional areas.

Labor will:

- Ensure local government autonomy, independence and community ownership

- Empower democratically elected Councils to manage their duties and responsibilities within each Local Government Area
- Support Councils to adopt a consistent planning model that ensures sustainability is achieved in land use, community service and financial responsibilities
- Ensure that Councils have sufficient powers and resources to effectively enforce environmental controls
- Encourage further devolution of program responsibility to the community level through appropriate representative structures
- Promote recognition of local government in the Australian Constitution
- Conduct an independent review of existing internal local government structural arrangements

Support devolution and partnerships within local government

Labor will:

- Encourage Councils to enter into partnerships with State and Federal Governments and non-government organisations to address gaps and enhance service delivery
- Encourage regional structures and groupings of councils to develop strategic partnerships that deliver more effective regional economic development, strategic planning and service delivery
- Ensure shared service models are not used as a pretext to reduce local government employment conditions, staffing levels or to threaten harmonious industrial relations
- Support Councils to undertake pilot projects for health, welfare and community services with professional advice and appropriate grants
- Work with Councils to develop risk management procedures and programs acknowledging the growing impact of climate change
- Work with small rural Councils to identify and develop new programs, practices and partnership opportunities that contribute to the sustainability and viability of these municipalities
- Support cooperative arrangements between regional and rural Councils and further enhance existing programs of cooperation, asset sharing and expertise

Ensure the provision of quality services and outcomes while remaining accountable to the community.

- Work with Councils to ensure local government services are delivered in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner
- Appoint the Essential Services Commission to set, monitor and report on service standards and delivery outcomes for local government
- Encourage Councils to bring services back in-house for the benefit of the community, noting global trends towards the in-sourcing of services previously contracted out by local government. Labor acknowledges that in-house service delivery provides quality public services and quality jobs
- Recognise there is an appropriate role for local governments in the provision and funding of home and community care (HACC), acknowledge the diversity of Councils across the State and encourage the continued involvement of local government as a HACC service provider and funder
- Recognise and support local government's significant role in the direct provision of early learning and care services in Victoria and work with Councils to maintain and strengthen their role in the delivery these services

Support Councils to independently manage their finances.

- Actively pursue a greater share of national taxation revenue for local government service provision.
- Recognise and support the autonomy of Councils in setting rates and municipal charges.
- Encourage Councils to adopt equitable and transparent principles when assessing claims of financial hardship, and to defer or write off debts in cases of extreme hardship.
- Recognise the high-risk environment many rural Councils operate within, particularly due to the impact of climate change, flood, fire, pestilence, landslides and storms.
- Ensure that financial support to local government will be on an equitable and sustainable basis as determined by the State Grants Commission.

Ensure greater democracy, accountability, and transparency within local government

- Maintain the current system of regular Council elections held every four years, with casual vacancies that occur between elections filled by count-back where possible
- Support the use of proportional representation in elections where more than one Councillor is to be elected from within a Council ward or an un-subdivided municipality
- Ensure that Mayors shall be elected by and from elected Councillors, except at the City of Melbourne and City of Greater Geelong where direct election arrangements are already in place
- Establish an independent tribunal to recommend principles for the remuneration of Mayors and Councillors

Support and encourage local communities to have open access to Council and its decision making process

- Ensure that Council and Committee meetings are open to the public, with reasonable public notice given. Closed sessions of Council or Committee meetings should only be authorised when Councils are considering staffing matters, residents' claims of hardship, security matters, matters which are prejudicial, or matters that may cause detriment or loss to a Council
- Encourage Councils to conduct regular community meetings on important issues on a ward or municipal basis, and explore the use of social media and digital technology to encourage greater community involvement in Council decision-making

Ensure the implementation of equitable industrial relations structures within Local Government

- Encourage Councils to undertake services and functions using permanent staff, with appropriate social justice and equal opportunity employment strategies in place
- Protect and maintain the conditions and entitlements of the local government workforce, including occupational health and safety protections, equal employment opportunities, enterprise agreement terms of employment, long service leave and superannuation
- Support Councils to develop traineeship and apprenticeship schemes, including through financial incentives

The Suburbs

Labor is committed to the creation of a Ministry for the Suburbs, and is committed to establishing a dedicated fund to support the infrastructure needs of interface communities.

Labor will:

- Develop and implement a plan for the delivery of key services and infrastructure to Melbourne's suburbs
- Improve the livability of Melbourne's suburbs through support for accessible health services and transport, recreational, educational and employment opportunities

Housing

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 social housing sector is critical to ensuring that all Victorians can own or rent housing that meets their needs.

Labor will:

- Continue to expand Victoria's social housing assets through the National Affordable Housing Agreement and State initiatives
- Promote and expand not-for-profit, community-based Housing Associations
- Continue the practice of spot buying to ensure the diversity of housing throughout the community
- Review the status of State-owned properties currently managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) with a view to transferring the ownership from Government to AHV
- Investigate alternative housing finance options for social and public housing
- Encourage local government to develop initiatives that facilitate greater private and community investment in affordable housing
- Ensure that social housing is allocated using transparent guidelines based on need
- Ensure that social housing tenants are supported to maintain their tenancy by providing well-located housing close to jobs and services, with appropriate support in place for those with complex needs
- Lobby the Commonwealth to continue to play an active role in housing supply,

- Enhance the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)
- Assist public and social housing tenants to buy housing through home ownership schemes
- Ensure that Places Victoria and other statutory authorities promote a range of housing choices at suitable sites across the State
- Ensure Victoria's planning system and building regulations encourage the redevelopment of under-utilised urban sites to achieve appropriate urban densities of housing
- Work with the housing industry to stimulate investment in housing developments in regional and rural Victoria
- 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

Neighborhood Renewal

Labor recognises the enormous progress that has been made in communities that have undertaken Neighbourhood Renewal projects.

Labor will continue with a progressive program of 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 reflect surrounding communities. This will involve direct investment by Government partnering with housing associations and the private sector.

Tenancy and Private Rental

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

Labor will:

- Review and strengthen the Residential Tenancy Act and Residential Tenancies Regulations to ensure effective consumer protection and improved housing standards
- Ensure that a review of the Residential Tenancy Act and Residential Tenancies Regulations examines reforms to specifically:
 - Mandate a standard tenure of leases to be offered in the market environment under normal circumstances

- Encourage greater length and security of tenure
- 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
- Review and strengthen the regulation for tenure in relocatable housing and caravan parks
- Ensure that public housing tenants are not discouraged from social and economic participation by the prospect of immediate rent rises when their income increases

Cost of Utility Bills

Labor understands the vital importance of access to energy to all Victorians and that many Victorians are finding it harder to meet the cost of rising energy bills.

Labor is committed to strategic household energy and energy efficiency responses to help reduce utility bills for families and slash Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions.

Labor will:

- Consider a target, and support programs, for improving the energy efficiency standards of existing homes
- Actively promote information about the energy rating of homes that are sold or leased
- Support programs and incentives to improve the energy efficiency of public and social housing
- Investigate innovative funding models and incentives to assist residential tenants and landlords to improve the energy efficiency of homes and to assist with the installation of solar photovoltaic rooftop systems
- Develop strategies to support families and low incomes households save on their energy bills

- Ensure that existing No Interest Loans Schemes are expanded to cover energy efficiency products with higher upfront costs
- Assess the viability of lifting the minimum energy efficiency standard for new homes and major renovations
- Improve Victoria's proportion of insulated homes, which currently ranks fourth in Australia

Protection for Energy Consumers

Labor recognises that electricity is an essential and increasingly costly service and that governments need to do more to promote effective retail competition.

Labor will implement an Energy Consumers Charter of Rights. This charter will set out the principles for the regulation of the retail electricity sector, including that:

- Electricity contract offers will be clear and simple enough for easy comparison by the average consumer
- Vulnerable consumers will be able to access free, impartial and informed advice about which contract is best for them
- All residential electricity consumers will have the same rights and protections
- Consumers will be protected from high pressure sales tactics
- Disconnection will always be a last resort and every effort should be made to assist, not punish, consumers experiencing hardship

Homelessness

Labor believes that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should be supported to achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion.

Labor will:

- Focus on prevention and early intervention to stop people, particularly young people, becoming homeless
- Work with relevant organisations and local Councils 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 support to those in need
- Ensure that crisis and transitional housing accommodation is available in locations where it is needed

- Support tenants in crisis and transitional housing to obtain longer term housing by providing support with rental bonds, rent in advance, utility connections, basic furniture, white goods and domestic appliances
- Take action against predatory operators of sub-standard rooming houses, including full implementation of the 32 recommendations of the 2009 *Rooming House Standards Taskforce*

Neighbourhood Houses and Community Enrichment

Feeling connected to the community is critical to well-being. Labor recognises the investment required to provide opportunities for social and economic participation, education, recreation and social inclusion.

Labor recognises the important role facilities like neighbourhood houses and men's sheds play 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.

Labor will:

- Invest in local community infrastructure such as community centres, neighbourhood houses, children's hubs, men's sheds, senior citizens centres, sporting facilities and libraries to enable people to achieve their potential and to fully participate in our society
- Support the expansion of network of neighbourhood houses and men's sheds, as well as encourage innovation to fit the needs of individual communities
- Encourage local government and community organisations to co-locate multi-function infrastructure that best meets the needs of local communities

Community Sport

Labor believes that participation in sport and recreation at the local level is a crucial aspect of healthy and happy communities. Local volunteers spend countless hours at their local sporting club, which is often a major source of social connection for people of all ages and all backgrounds.

Labor recognises that not all Victorians have the same opportunity to participate in organised sporting activities. Labor believes that sport should

be inclusive and assessable, regardless of socio-economic background. This is not only important for social inclusion, but also in addressing rising obesity rates. It is vitally important that Government acknowledges the important role of community sport and acts accordingly.

Labor will:

- Invest in local sport and recreation facilities, to support healthy and active communities
- Recognise the role sport plays in social connections
- Undertake a comprehensive review of sporting clubs across the State and deliver increased services
- Promote measures to address racial and homophobic vilification, discrimination, health and safety and a general duty of care in sporting clubs
- Place special emphasis on the relationship of different sporting codes to schools and the impact on nurturing enthusiasm and interest for particular sports

Arts, Culture and Creativity

Labor believes in the cultural value and contribution all Victorians can make for their communities. The opportunity to enjoy and experience creativity in local communities right across Victoria is needed to make us a more innovative, creative and successful State.

Labor will:

- Replace Arts Victoria with a new State agency to lead whole-of-Government investment activity in the creative sectors to drive innovation and investment. The role of this agency is to facilitate artistic and cultural benefits as well as generate new jobs and industries of the creative economy
- Encourage the growth of the cultural economy in regional Victoria and the creation of jobs for regional arts professionals
- Support the development of creative hubs to stimulate local arts and creative communities
- Acknowledge the contribution made by community art organisations and support their continued growth
- Support key State cultural institutions to expand opportunities for regional and suburban activities

- Fund literary and other prizes to incorporate initiatives to raise the profile of women and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- Strengthen funding to expand the network of suburban, regional and rural exhibition spaces and build on art opportunities across the State
- Encourage the regular display of artworks held in public collections, for example those owned by local governments

Multicultural Communities

Labor strongly believes that all Victorians are beneficiaries of multiculturalism and this diversity strengthens the fabric of the Victorian community.

Labor will promote:

- A public understanding of cultural and religious diversity as a means to a socially cohesive Victoria
- A no tolerance approach to racism in Victoria together with respect for the values of the broader community
- A whole-of-Government approach to the participation and inclusion of all Australians from all cultural backgrounds in all areas of society in Victoria
- The public benefits of cultural diversity towards an economically and socially strong State for all Victorians

Labor recognises the need to support communities in rural and regional Victoria through secondary settlement assistance, to help them access employment and services.

Labor is committed to an inclusive Victoria, where all Victorians have the opportunity to engage as active citizens within their community. Labor is committed to supporting and enhancing various language programs, alongside the promotion of community cultural projects.

Labor believes that all Victorians should enjoy equality in their access to services, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious backgrounds. Labor is committed to strengthening the provision of translation and interpretation services for new and existing language groups and reinstating funding for local government translating and interpreting services.

Labor will:

- Enhance the employment opportunities for Victorians from CALD backgrounds

- Strengthen employment-related education and training schemes and work with the Federal Government to promote recognition of overseas qualifications
- Fund English as a second language (ESL) assistance to newly arrived Australians and refugees in school communities

Labor is also committed to increasing support for seniors from CALD backgrounds.

Labor will:

- Strengthen community engagement projects and promote language and digital literacy training programs
- Assist isolated CALD elderly people to connect with their communities through use of computers (through public/private partnership)
- Make it a priority to assist with the funding of multicultural senior citizens club events through the Victorian Multicultural Commission

Labor believes that Government should engage with multicultural and multi-faith communities to strengthen cultural and religious cohesion in Victoria.

Labor will:

- Support Victoria's many vibrant multicultural festivals and events
- Support Languages Other Than English programs and develop better pathways for the broader community to learn community languages
- Strengthen new and emerging CALD communities with targeted community infrastructure projects

Sustainable Communities

Climate Change

Labor believes that climate change continues to be one of the most critical issues facing our State and country and acknowledges that the State Government must play a leadership role in assisting Victoria to mitigate the risks and adapt to changing climate.

Labor will ensure that Victoria is the leading Australian State in dealing with and responding to climate change. This includes focusing on emissions reduction, utilising targets, implementing energy

efficiency measures, creating a Green Jobs Action Plan. Labor is also committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the longer term in line with the science.

Labor will:

- Revise greenhouse emission reduction targets and pursue a comprehensive strategy to achieve them, including a new Green Jobs Action Plan and a strengthened Climate Change Act
- Legislate to allow other local Councils to replicate the City of Melbourne's 1200 Buildings program to help commercial building owners finance energy efficiency retrofits
- Support mandatory minimum National standards for all major appliances
- Assess Government financial contributions to major projects against ecologically sustainable development criteria and monitor against environmental benchmarks
- Expand support for alternatives to commuting by car such as the use of free transit lanes, car pooling, more car-parking at rail stations, limits on central city parking and improved accessibility for pedestrians
- Introduce more energy efficient urban design based around mixed-use town centres
- Expand Government programs to reduce demand for energy by households, businesses and Government departments, such as the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target
- Better manage Victoria's vegetation cover, including working with landholders and Federal and local governments to reduce native vegetation clearance rates and promote revegetation and carbon farming as a means of absorbing carbon dioxide
- Continue to reduce waste production and energy use by industry by linking the reduction of greenhouse emissions to EPA approvals
- Ensure that all sections of society participate in the reduction of greenhouse emissions

Energy Efficiency

Labor recognises that many existing homes have poor energy efficiency ratings, leading to higher utility bills and causing financial disadvantage.

The majority of Victorians live in homes that would

only be assessed as around two stars on the energy efficiency rating scale. Simple improvements can increase a home's star rating by half or a full additional star, making a big difference to these families.

During the 2010 election, the Coalition committed to matching Labor's promise to lift the average energy efficiency of Victorian homes to five Stars by 2020. It has seemingly abandoned this promise in Government and has essentially made it impossible to meet that original goal.

Labor will:

- Aim to achieve a new 'One Million Stars' goal to improve the cumulative star rating of all Victorian homes by one million additional star rating points
- Achieve this through a range of measures including incentives for more efficient appliances and building materials, information for buyers and renters, strategic funding and regulatory support

Renewables

The Napthine Coalition has opposed renewable energy at every opportunity, including imposing internationally unprecedented restrictions on approvals for wind farms, stalling wind power investment in the State and jeopardising thousands of jobs.

The Coalition Government's hostility to renewable energy has weakened the investment climate for clean energy and undermines the ability of a future Labor Government to rapidly transform our energy system.

Unlike Premiers in other States, Denis Napthine has publically refused to oppose any changes to the federal Renewable Energy Target (RET), further undermining confidence in clean energy investment in Victoria.

Labor is committed to increasing Victoria's share of renewable energy however, the outcome of the RET review will impact on the pace at which that transformation can take place.

Victoria has world-class renewable energy resources in wind, solar and marine energy, and a diverse manufacturing base with everything from wind towers to solar hot water systems made locally.

Regional Victoria is home to the renewable energy sector.

Labor will:

- Complete a strategic assessment of the appropriate timeframe for achieving a major expansion of renewable energy in Victoria once the Federal Government's review of the RET has concluded
- Review the anti-wind farm planning laws to ensure they promote investment and jobs, are based on credible science and reflect community expectations
- Create Industry Development Plans to support the growth of bio-energy, marine energy, geothermal energy and energy storage technologies
- Compensate households and businesses that provide excess clean energy to the grid

Government Leading by Example

Labor will establish the Victorian Government as a leader in the adoption of innovative and practical emissions reduction practices for its own assets and Departments.

Labor will:

- Build on the knowledge and skills developed by EPA, which has already gone carbon neutral, and have all Government Departments and agencies go carbon neutral by 2020.
- Reinstate the role of the EPA in regulating greenhouse gases and monitoring emission reduction strategies and the implementation of renewable technologies
- Expand, where cost effective, support for retrofitting of Government buildings to improve energy efficiency, such as solar hot water systems in public housing
- Monitor and review performance requirements on greenhouse gas emissions and energy use for all State and local government operations
- Promote workplace involvement in tackling climate change by providing for employee representation on environmental issues. This will be done through the establishment of Greenhouse Committees where employers and managers work cooperatively with workers and unions to identify and then implement ways of reducing their 'carbon footprint'.

Supporting Communities

Labor acknowledges that it is the role of Government to provide community education and awareness programs to encourage a reduction in the general consumption of energy and to increase the availability of energy advisory services to Victorian householders and businesses.

Labor will:

- Restore, update and strengthen the Climate Change Act
- Maintain Sustainability Victoria to promote incentives and provide programs for energy conservation, alternative energy and reductions in greenhouse emissions
- Hold a Local Government Climate Summit to restore the relationship between State and local governments and reinvigorate the Local Sustainability Accord
- Implement strategies that support coastal communities to respond to the impact of rising sea levels

Waste Management

Labor understands the need for greater efficiency in resource usage by recycling household and commercial waste. Labor recognises that proscribed industrial wastes may contain valuable resources which can be recovered and reused. Recovering these resources instead of sending them to landfill creates economic opportunity for the State while reducing environmental impact. Labor recognises that eliminating waste and increasing recycling starts locally, within individual homes, businesses, communities and Government bodies.

Labor will:

- Replace the flawed Getting Full Value plan with a comprehensive strategy to ensure Victorian households and businesses are on track to reuse or recycle all resources, rather than send waste to landfill
- Require Government Departments and agencies to set waste reduction targets that will be audited and reported in departmental Annual Reports
- Require each industry sector to develop its own program for meeting waste reduction targets, including product design, materials used, recycling and reuse systems and infrastructure

- Support sustainable markets for recovered resources and recycled materials with strong incentives to stop particular waste streams going to landfill
- Insist on world's best practice in the storage of hazardous waste materials
- Use landfill levies to support local government initiatives and trial projects that are proven to, or are likely to, reduce waste and increase recycling within their municipalities, particularly green waste
- Prioritise purchasing of Australian made recycled or recyclable goods for all State Government bodies where such options are available at a reasonable price for the taxpayer

Labor supports the development of a State-wide infrastructure plan to provide efficiency in waste management and facilitate local solutions to local waste issues.

Labor will:

- Encourage waste reprocessing infrastructure that has limited to no environmental or public health risks
- Encouraging technologies that provide improved resource recovery rates, development of innovative products or clean ways to generate energy from waste
- Promoting product stewardship and supporting industries to recycle and reprocess reusable materials

Agricultural Practices

Labor supports farming businesses and their communities. It recognises that a skilled workforce and ready access to new technologies is crucial to ensure the agricultural sector is well placed to deal with challenges such as climate change and take advantage of advances in scientific research.

Labor will:

- Ensure that genetically modified crops are not to be released unless they are safe to health, safe to the environment and beneficial to the economy
- Ensure that systemic and technological changes to agricultural practices are compatible with a sustainable environment

- Develop a biodiversity code of practice for key industries, including a biodiversity certification and appropriate labelling
- Work in partnership with farmer-led, not-for-profit research organisations and Catchment Management Authorities to undertake agricultural research and to develop and deliver extension programs on innovative agricultural practices
- Labor will work with Victorian primary producers, food processing industry, and food retailers to develop a food labelling regime that aggressively promotes Victorian and Australian made food products

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 Commonwealth to develop seamless integration between State and Commonwealth 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
- 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
- Labor will support investment in facilities that open up access to recreational fishing opportunities

National Parks

Labor is committed to the creation and protection of a world-class system of National and marine parks for all Victorians to enjoy and will invest in these parks. Labor recognises that National and marine parks provide economic benefits for regional communities and are vital to the ecosystem, providing biodiversity,

ecosystem services and recreational opportunities.

Labor will:

- Review the National Parks Act to ensure its primary focus on the conservation and protection of the national parks network including:
- Ban cattle grazing in the Alpine and Red Gum National Park.
- Develop a strategic plan for the future of parks and reserves system to provide a blueprint for management of parks and reserves
- Review the status of Victorian State Parks to ascertain their suitability for inclusion as a National Park
- Exclude inappropriate commercial activities or inappropriate tourist developments and prevent any development inside National Parks that could compromise the integrity of the park
- Ensure separation of the roles of overseer of the Department and of management of parks and involve indigenous people in the management of National Parks
- Build a stronger park management agency and ensure direct reporting to the Minister for Environment. Ensure a specialist focus on environmental management of conservation areas and rare and endangered wildlife
- Investigate developing new National Parks to protect Victoria's threatened species, unique vegetation including unique grasslands
- Labor will investigate the establishment of new National Parks and reserves in current productive forests where there is agreement between key stakeholders

Coastal and Marine

Labor acknowledges the need to protect the biodiversity of Victoria's unique coastal, littoral and marine environments for the benefit of the whole community while allowing for sustainable use of resources for coastal and marine-dependent economic development.

Labor will:

- Use the Coastal Management Act and rolling five-year Victorian Coastal Strategies as appropriate accountability and reporting measures as the centrepieces of coastal policy
- Ensure the Coastal Management Act enables the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage

sites and explicitly recognises the principle of Environmentally Sustainable Development

- Review the interactions and overlap between the Coastal Management Act, the Planning and Environment Act and the Crown Land (Reserves) Act to ensure that coastal and marine zone planning and management is strengthened, integrated and simplified
- In addition to geographically-based Coastal Action Plans, draft and adopt complementary functionally-based Coastal Action Plans. For example, for recreational boating, commercial and private tenures, and the progressive removal of non-coastal-dependent uses and developments
- Prohibit draining of coastal wetlands for the purpose of development
- Maintain and strengthen Victoria's marine and coastal research program, including active scientific monitoring of Victoria's marine and coastal environment
- Prohibit new development of coastal areas that may be subject to inundation due to sea level rise and storm surges
- Investigate the rights of way along the Victorian coastline with the intention of retaining and establishing public ownership of a foreshore strip for the full length of the Victorian coastline
- Implement a strategy to improve the quality of Victoria's bay beaches

Forests

Labor recognises the intrinsic value of nature, along with the vital role forests play in protecting biodiversity and water systems and in mitigating the effects of climate change.

Labor is committed to the sustainable management of Victoria's forests through the maintenance of a comprehensive and representative system of reserves.

Labor will:

- Maintain native forests in public ownership and provide management which ensures sustainability of the environment protection of threatened species and the community as a whole
- Protect all rare, old growth forests and at least 90 per cent of high quality wilderness

- Pursue a balanced forestry policy to promote plantations and ensure sustainable and safe operations of forestry in designated timber production areas
- Ensure environmentally responsible use of forest resources
- Ensure that forest management practices reflect the values of the whole community

Labor is committed to managing native forests for the long-term based on ecologically sustainable practices. It will ensure that the primary purpose of any timber harvested from native forests is to meet the greatest social, economic, and ecological dividend this activity can result in.

Labor also recognises the vital role sustainably managed forests play in the mitigation of the effects of climate change and in supporting small regional economies.

Wetlands

Labor acknowledges that Victoria's wetlands are integral to the survival of many species particularly migratory birds. It is committed to maintaining existing public ownership of wetlands and ensuring that they are managed to promote conservation, repair and sustainable use.

Labor will:

- Maintain appropriate water regimes and where necessary restore water regimes to sustainable levels
- Phase out activities and processes that have adverse effects on wetland ecosystems or are incompatible with the protection of wetland environments and biodiversity
- Promote a range of uses that include tourism and recreation that are compatible with the environmental values of wetlands ecosystems while ensuring that matters relating to biodiversity values of wetlands are given an appropriate weighting when considering tourism and recreational activities
- Encourage wetland development and conservation on private land examining initiatives such as where environmental water is allocated to farmers to recharge ephemeral wetlands

Preserving Biodiversity

Labor acknowledges that protecting and restoring biodiversity underpins the well-being of the environment, society and the economy.

Labor will:

- Review the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and put in place a statewide biodiversity strategy which includes recognition of the role of native apex predators in maintaining biodiversity
- Give priority to restoring habitat via landscape scale projects that benefit the widest range of species and ecosystems
- Modernise threatened species protection to adopt world's best practice
- Ensure a net gain in Victoria's native vegetation cover which is measurable and reportable
- Extend resourcing opportunities for landholders for management of weeds and pests and reward responsible management of natural ecosystems on private and Crown Land.
- Strengthen links with AQIS to prevent introduction of invasive species and strengthen the role of Government agencies in managing and monitoring species introduction
- Work with local Councils and landowners to fight weeds and pests in parks to protect biodiversity and better manage public and private land
- Establish the framework for market-based instruments through which ecosystem services, which are fundamental to all communities, can be recognised, and farmers/land managers can receive financial reward for the production of these services, creating benefits for rural communities and the environment
- Strengthen efforts to manage risks from wild dogs and foxes, through bounties and other measures

Fuel Reduction

Labor is aware of the need to undertake fire mitigation measures such as fuel reduction burning to reduce the risk of fires and to protect lives, property and the environment.

Labor will:

- Develop and implement fire management plans that are appropriate to the ecosystem being

burnt, enhance regeneration and are based on current scientific research into biodiversity and sustainability requirements of indigenous flora and fauna

- Implement fire management practices based on mosaic burns principles, which allow for biodiversity preservation and ensure that managed burns replicate, as closely as possible, natural burns

Healthy Catchments and Rivers

Labor understand the importance of healthy waterways and catchments for supplying clean water for urban populations, industry, primary production and the environment and the need to balance the allocation of water for environmental, agricultural, industrial and domestic purposes.

Labor will:

- Implement strategies to prevent further degradation of soil and water due to salination
- Support the National program to address over-allocation of water from Victoria's stressed rivers
- Progressively rectify existing urban and rural pollution sources
- Ensure appropriate allocations for the environmental flows in the river systems
- Promote river protection through educational programs, community-based co-operative programs, provision of targeted assistance to landholders, and vigorous prosecution of polluters
- In consultation with Catchment Management Authorities and farming communities, develop programs for riparian weed control, habitat restoration, stock management and recreational use
- Require all new dams in rural residential areas to be registered, and develop guidelines defining 'reasonable' stock and domestic use
- Sustainably allocate and manage ground water in a way that is fair and equitable for all users and potential users, taking into account social, economic and environmental dividends for the water use
- Ensure urban waterways are maintained and where possible rehabilitated as special riparian environments, including supporting community groups that monitor and support the maintenance of urban waterways

Landcare

Labor recognises that protecting the environment would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of local community groups across Victoria. Labor understands that community participation through Landcare is crucial to achieving sustainable resource management in communities across Victoria.

Labor will:

- Strengthen and support Landcare and community conservation networks to ensure knowledge and information exchange occurs between Landcare groups
- Increase support for facilitators and improve management arrangements for Landcare groups
- Work with local Councils and landowners to better manage weeds and pests on public and private land

Managing Water and Resources

Water is a public resource and is essential for the environment, community health and economic sustainability. Maintaining clean and healthy water is a key responsibility of Government. Labor will ensure that water resources and utilities remain in public ownership and that the price of water balances the need to promote conservation with the need to meet requirements in a socially just way.

Urban Water

Labor recognises the need to promote and support industry and household water conservation, including expanding education and communication to promote awareness and understanding about water resource issues.

Labor will:

- Provide education and communication strategies to ensure the community has a high level of understanding of water resource issues, such as the Target 155 Campaign
- Support business and industry initiatives to reduce water consumption
- Introduce the requirement for all new dwellings to have rainwater storage facilities appropriately connected

- Introduce the requirement for all new dwellings in appropriate developments to have a 'third pipe' system installed, where practicable and safe, to enable appropriate grey water use
- Promote water savings technology into all buildings
- Expand retro-fitting public and social housing with water saving devices
- Encourage and support the development and implementation of emerging technologies to provide recycled water for industry and commerce

Water Use in Primary Production

Labor recognises the need for diverse and secure water sources to maintain high quality food production systems.

Labor will:

- Pursue greater efficiencies in the use of water resources, including projects for irrigation systems and incentives for on-farm water efficiencies
- Support research into new and emerging technologies for waste water reuse, water treatment, transfer and delivery systems
- Provide on-farm assistance and incentives for whole farm planning, including salinity mapping, sustainable irrigation practices and water efficiency
- Provide community education to raise awareness of water issues and the interdependence of ecological, economic and social effects
- Implement strategies to mitigate the impact of irrigation on the natural environment
- Expand the Victorian Water Grid so that water can be better shared between communities in need

Ground Water

Labor recognises the importance of ground water to rural and regional communities and their associated industries and the significance of ground water to wetland environments and surface water stream flows.

Labor will:

- Place a moratorium on extraction of coal seam gas, and other forms of unconventional gas, until

the risks are properly understood and protection of the ground and surface water can be ensured

- Ensure that measures are in place to protect groundwater from contamination from mining and extractive industries
- Ensure groundwater harvesting is sustainable and does not exceed recharge rates or adversely affect stream flow of surface water or wetlands

Mining and Mineral Resources

Labor recognises that the interests of the mining industry, the agricultural sector and the environment in the regulation of mineral exploration and mining and extractive industry operations must be equitably balanced.

Labor will:

- Introduce a comprehensive strategic land use framework that protects land which sustains sensitive rural and environmental land uses
- Require production of an environmental impact statement, based on clear legislative criteria, as a prerequisite for obtaining a licence for extraction, mining or major exploration
- Maintain the ability for the Minister to exempt certain areas from exploration and/or mining licences
- Maintain a ban on hydraulic fracturing during and prior to establishing a Parliamentary Inquiry into this and other mining processes and issues relating to unconventional gas exploration and mining

Restoring and Strengthening Institutions

Labor understands the importance of clear organisational structures that ensure Victoria's environment and natural resources are properly protected and managed.

Labor will:

- Provide for separate departmental responsibility for resources management and environmental and sustainability management

VCAT – Planning and Environment

Labor will ensure good governance and greater transparency in the administration of the planning system.

Labor will review planning and environment laws and VCAT processes to:

- Ensure a better balance of social, environmental and economic outcomes
- Provide greater accountability to Victorians for planning decisions
- Promote the principles of third party rights in all processes
- Support the principle of community representatives

Catchment Management Authorities

Labor acknowledges the important role played by the Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) in managing and protecting waterways and their catchments in cooperation with local communities.

Labor will:

- Provide clear roles and funding lines for CMAs
- Ensure CMAs have a diversity of membership
- Ensure that CMAs are able to adopt best practice in planning for the future

EPA

Labor recognises the need for Victoria to have a strong environmental watchdog that has the independence to carry out its mission as protector of the environment and advocate of best practice environmental management.

Labor will:

- Support a revitalised EPA, giving it greater independence, authority and responsibility in environmental leadership
- Strengthen the EPA's monitoring and enforcement powers covering air and water quality to ensure the community is protected

Sustainability Victoria

Labor recognises the need for Government to facilitate and promote environmental responsibility in the use of resources.

Labor will:

- Ensure Sustainability Victoria has the resources and powers needed to maximise integrated waste management in Victoria
- Ensure Sustainability Victoria has the resources needed to research and promote energy efficiency in Victorian homes and businesses