

Victorian Labor

PLATFORM²⁰₂₂

Victorian
Labor

CONTENTS

<i>Jobs & the Economy</i>	
<i>Safe, secure jobs in a strong economy</i>	3
<i>Health</i>	
<i>Care for Victorians when & where it's needed</i>	32
<i>Education</i>	
<i>Access to lifetime learning & skills for all Victorians</i>	48
<i>Transport</i>	
<i>Transforming Victoria's transport network</i>	64
<i>Keeping Victorians Safe</i>	
<i>A more just, equal & safe community</i>	76
<i>Liveable Communities</i>	
<i>Strong, supportive communities</i>	89
<i>Sustainable Communities</i>	
<i>Protecting & caring for our environment</i>	89

1 ***Jobs & the Economy*** ***Safe, secure jobs in a strong economy***

A job is more than just a pay cheque. It means security, dignity and, just as importantly, it means stability. A decent, secure job means that you can put a roof over your head, raise a family, and put food on the table. No matter where you live, or your background, every single Victorian deserves that opportunity.

Only a Labor Government will deliver a strong economy, secure, well-paying jobs, while investing in the services Victorians need and the Victorians needed to deliver them.

The investments Labor has made in renewable energy, transport projects, and building and upgrading schools and hospitals in every corner of the state has created thousands of jobs in Victoria.

As we recover from the pandemic, Labor will ensure the changing structure of our economy continues to support workers and their families and provides them with new opportunities.

Throughout the pandemic, the Labor Government ensured that no Victorian was left behind, providing record investment to save jobs and support workers, families and businesses impacted by the pandemic.

Labor stood by Victorians, created jobs, reduced unemployment and restored economic growth. This investment is the foundation of our state's remarkable economic recovery, restoring Victoria's status as the engine room of the national economy.

Labor will rebuild Victoria with a continuing focus on equality, opportunity and fairness and deliver job creation and economic growth for all Victorians.

Only Labor will build big and deliver for all Victorians.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

1.1 JOBS

Before the pandemic, Victoria led the nation in jobs growth, with more jobs created and faster jobs growth than any other state since November 2014. At the start of the pandemic, employment in Victoria fell by almost 200,000 jobs in two months, and the unemployment rate increased from 5.2 per cent in March 2020, to a peak of 7.3 per cent in June 2020.

Labor knew that job creation had to be at the heart of the state's economic recovery with the Jobs Plan at the core of the Victorian Budget 2020-21. Labor has already delivered on the Jobs Plan's interim target to create 200,000 new jobs by 2022. Under the Labor Government, the Victorian labour market has bounced back stronger than ever, with Victoria recording the strongest jobs growth of any state since 2020, and with both the unemployment rate and the regional unemployment rate hitting record low levels in 2022.

Job creation needs to reach every part of the Victorian community. Labor understands many Victorians face barriers in gaining employment. Labor has supported the most disadvantaged job seekers to find meaningful work through the Jobs Victoria program.

Many Aboriginal Victorians continue to face significant barriers to economic participation. Labor will work to overcome this by supporting Aboriginal businesses in order to address inequality, support self-determination and achieve economic parity within a generation.

Labor will:

- continue to put job creation at the heart of our economic recovery;
- continue to support our most disadvantaged job seekers;
- work with Aboriginal people to grow Aboriginal jobs and businesses;
- focus on creating jobs and reducing unemployment right across Victoria;
- ensure job creation is meaningful, secure, sustainable, gender-equitable, free from discrimination and accessible; and
- deliver on its 2020-21 Jobs Plan commitment to create 400,000 new jobs by 2025.

1.2 CLIMATE CHANGE

Labor has already delivered nation-leading legislation that sets an emissions reduction target of 50 per cent by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050, as well as a landmark Solar Homes program, delivering solar to a million family homes over a decade and leading the nation in unlocking offshore wind.

Labor will:

- continue to develop and apply ambitious and achievable policies to enable the accelerated and orderly transition of Victoria's economy and workforce to a sustainable, high-value one that benefits from the global shift towards zero emissions, but not at the expense of jobs; and
- deploy world's best practice control and offset regulations on greenhouse gas pollution, by including Scope 2 and 3 (fugitive and combustion) emissions in offset requirements to be met by producers.

1.3 AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Only Labor Governments deliver meaningful action on climate change that creates jobs and protects the interests of all Victorians. Our goal is to deliver a greater reduction in absolute emissions than any other state. Victoria can build on this legacy to create jobs, drive down the cost of living and position Victoria as the destination of choice for climate-smart investment.

Managing the transition successfully includes a commitment to the continued availability of reliable and affordable energy and an acknowledgement that new technologies may not be 100 per cent renewable early in the transition process.

1.3.1 A JUST TRANSITION TO A NET ZERO EMISSIONS SOCIETY

Labor will continue to work with unions, communities, businesses and others to ensure Victoria's energy and industrial transition to net zero is orderly, planned and provides and protects jobs and economic growth to those impacted and the broader community.

Labor will:

- ensure that Aboriginal Victorians and Traditional Owner Groups are involved in Victoria's clean energy transition and Latrobe Valley mine rehabilitation;
- continue implementing a whole-of-government approach to decarbonisation with responsibility and accountability across all government departments and industry sectors; and
- develop public awareness and understanding of the need to decarbonise and the variety of renewable technology pathways available.

1.3.2 A JUST TRANSITION FOR WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES

Under Labor, Victoria is the home of renewable energy and climate-resilient jobs, having created more jobs in renewables than any other state in Australia. To maintain this, Victoria needs to continue to drive new project development, set strong local content requirements for renewable projects, and support the next wave of energy generation like offshore wind.

Labor knows that tackling climate change means even more incentives are needed for zero emissions vehicles, domestic solar and battery rebates, hydrogen, home heating, building retrofits and cooling technologies, and government supported large scale renewable energy programs.

Labor will:

- ensure vulnerable Victorians are not left behind;
- continue its strong focus on ensuring worker jobs and safety in the solar industry;
- continue Solar Victoria's strong PV and battery audits program and training programs;
- pursue the opportunities presented by improved energy efficiency in buildings to respond to energy demand and improve climate resilience;
- advocate to the Federal Government to consider the creation of a Just Transition Fund to be administered by a Just Transition Authority;
- consider hydrogen and other emerging clean technologies for a safe and renewable energy source; and
- continue to support the development of training for workers installing new energy technology such as batteries and electric vehicle chargers.

Labor has a strong track record of building and supporting local manufacturing and energy enterprises that create secure employment.

Labor will:

- continue to invest in local manufacturing and new energy initiatives that drive innovation and employment;
- keep investing in renewable energy, battery and digital technologies;
- explore the economic potential of converting old energy sites to being part of the new energy transition;
- explore training and job opportunities in the building retrofit space;
- consider hydrogen and other clean options for safe and reliable energy sources that are renewable or net zero emission or low emission; and
- invest in a circular economy, with a particular focus on the recycling of soft plastics.

1.3.3 BUILDING A CLIMATE-RESILIENT FUTURE

More frequent extreme weather events, bushfires and storms will impact Victorians and their livelihoods. Labor will manage the effects of climate change and continue to build the state's climate resilience.

Labor will:

- ensure that there are suitable facilities and well-supported community and local government workforces for vulnerable Victorians during natural disaster and other climate-impacted emergencies;
- continue supporting communities impacted by the pandemic and natural disasters to rebuild and recover through the Working for Victoria program;
- ensure that communities which host electricity infrastructure receive financial and economic benefits from those projects;
- pursue opportunities to improve energy efficiency retrofits across state-owned building stock;
- ensure that vulnerable Victorians have access to renewable energy technologies in their own homes, such as hydrogen, PV and batteries and that their homes are energy efficient;
- continue to develop and expand the Solar Homes program in line with Victorian Renewable Energy Targets (VRET);
- expand the successful Virtual Power Plant (VPP) and Community Microgrid and Sustainable Energy programs and encourage uptake of distributed energy capacity;
- support communities to plan and implement measures that will build their social, economic and environmental readiness and resilience to impacts from climate change and to prevent, and reduce their vulnerability to extreme weather events, natural disasters and other climate impacted emergencies; and
- investigate the availability of insurance for families and businesses in regions and communities affected by the impact of climate change.

1.3.4 VICTORIA, HOME OF THE HYDROGEN INDUSTRY

Hydrogen technology has incredible potential for Victoria – powering heavy industry, long-distance transport and an enormous export market. Labor has already laid the foundations for this emerging industry.

Labor will:

- continue to build this industry by driving demand for hydrogen;
- preserve and enhance the infrastructure needed to enable a transition to a hydrogen future;
- consider a greater focus on hydrogen for domestic, commercial, and industrial applications in future Gas Substitution Roadmaps;
- support pilot projects; and
- build the skill base for Victoria’s hydrogen industry.

1.3.5 ZERO EMISSIONS VEHICLES

The Andrews Labor Government has made a commitment that 50 per cent of new light vehicles will be zero emissions vehicles (ZEVs) sold by 2030. To ensure Victoria meets this target, Labor will expand the existing policy framework to encourage the uptake of new ZEVs.

Labor will:

- continue to ensure appropriate incentives to drive the uptake of ZEVs and support their integration into the energy grid;
- continue to support investment in electric and hydrogen vehicle infrastructure, smart home chargers, public charging stations and hydrogen refuelling and train the Victorian workforce to safely install and maintain this equipment;
- explore every opportunity to partner with business to produce ZEVs in areas impacted by the energy transition;
- encourage fleet managers bus companies to increase ZEV uptake, including targets to electrify and decarbonise the Government’s fleet;
- working with unions, TAFE and industry partners, ensure that there is accredited, standardised training for the service and repair of electric vehicles in Victoria; and
- ensure that the regulation and safety processes for charging infrastructure, service and repair of electric vehicles is fit-for-purpose and that standardised training is available.

1.3.6 ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND A FAIR GO FOR VICTORIAN HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES

Labor has assisted communities and businesses to reduce their reliance on natural gas and to become more energy efficient. Helping reduce natural gas usage can cut household bills and ensure that gas can be directed towards higher-value uses such as manufacturing.

Labor will:

- help households swap out old, inefficient heaters, hot water systems and cooktops and replace them with efficient electric and hydrogen alternatives;
- explore the economic and environmental opportunities for building retrofits;
- support businesses to use hydrogen for applications like food production;

- replace natural gas with zero-emissions alternatives such as biogas and renewable hydrogen; and
- ensure that Victoria's gas production directly serves the interests of Victorian households and businesses, including consideration of a reservation policy.

Labor has led the renewables revolution, and will do more to increase access to training for plumbers, mechanics and electricians to transform Victoria's building stock.

Labor will:

- support businesses working proactively to reduce fossil fuel usage and replace those processes with renewable energy;
- help develop and strengthen certification schemes to ensure the providence of electrical and hydrogen sources;
- support jobs in traditionally high-energy industries by working with companies to support the effective transition of energy systems, plant and equipment;
- support continuing professional development for Victorian licensed tradespeople if they are able to safely support the household transition; and
- ensure that Energy Safe Victoria has the resources required to inspect electrical installations and support electrical safety through the transition.

Labor has successfully introduced the Energy Fairness Plan and will build on its success.

Labor will:

- ensure that the transition to clean energy is tied to a fairer energy market for all Victorians;
- continue to crack down on the big energy companies;
- provide targeted support to help vulnerable Victorians access better energy offers;
- take a diversified technology approach to investing in Victoria's renewable energy future;
- support programs and promote clean, cheap renewable energy to lower prices; and
- continue to deliver the successful Solar for Business program, which is allowing businesses to access solar PV and reduce their annual energy costs.

1.3.7 VICTORIA'S LOW EMISSIONS FUTURE

Labor understands the importance of moving Victoria to a low emissions economy.

Labor will:

- set ambitious emission reduction targets for 2035 and adopt policies to meet and exceed our ambitious target to halve emissions by 2030;
- integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations into all decision making across government;
- power all government buildings such as schools, offices, hospitals, public housing with 100 per cent renewable energy by leveraging the VRET2 auction, hydrogen and improve the energy efficiency of the buildings;
- identify promising climate smart investment opportunities for Victoria;
- deliver Victoria's nation-leading Offshore Wind Target, positioning Victoria to lead the country in offshore wind manufacturing and development; and

- ensure that offshore wind is built to the highest standard of electrical safety and compliance and that Victoria's electrical safety regulation is fit-for-purpose in a low emission future.

Labor understands the need for a fit-for-purpose power network that maintains power to Victorian homes, businesses and industry, in the face of increasingly extreme fire, storm and flood events.

Labor will:

- support the deployment of energy storage across utility-scale, neighbourhood and household batteries and investigate an energy storage target;
- support moving Victoria's generation stock towards renewable energy, including household and community renewable generation;
- support Victoria's Community Power Hubs, to help spread the benefits of the transition to renewable energy to the whole community;
- support the development of low carbon housing estates powered by renewable electricity and hydrogen;
- continue to expand the successful Solar Homes Program to give Victorian households more access to solar technologies in their own homes, such as PV, batteries, ventilation and cooling, as well as solar hot water;
- protect solar owners' investment in their solar system and ensure that new national market regulation does not disadvantage solar owners;
- expand the successful Victorian Energy Upgrades program to provide comprehensive household transformation;
- support access to the Victorian Energy Upgrades program for low-income Victorians, renters and small businesses;
- ensure that Victorian distribution and transmission networks are well-regulated, safe and delivering for the Victorian community; and
- work with industry and unions to develop the future power industry workforce and drive growth in apprenticeships.

Under Labor, Victoria's Renewable Energy Target has delivered unprecedented renewable investment and job creation.

Labor will:

- expand apprenticeship and traineeship options for new and emerging industries;
- ensure that strong local content requirements are applied to renewable projects where practical;
- develop further training programs for those entering the solar or energy efficiency industry, focusing especially on encouraging the full participation of women and Aboriginal Victorians in the workforce;
- develop Victoria's capacity to train wind farm workers, to build on our extensive training facilities in regional Victoria to become the pre-eminent training provider for wind farms in the Asia Pacific;
- assist workers to transition to new energy industries, other energy employers and other industries;
- conduct an investigation into the needs of transitioning workers to maximise their employment/social outcomes;

- support redeployment across sites and energy employers, and provide training and placement in new energy generation industries;
- support an organised and direct transition for fossil fuel workers, including workers in the oil and gas and coal industries;
- provide funding for training provided through TAFEs;
- support employers across all industries to work with unions to adapt to the impact of climate change on their businesses;
- support skills development in energy efficiency and building retrofits;
- support the development of the skills required for Victoria's EV and hydrogen industry and acknowledge the support of TAFE and University courses required for the industry to identify and respond to the future workforce needs of the emerging EV and hydrogen industry;
- support the skills required for Victoria's hydrogen industry and promote TAFE and University courses required for the industry to identify and respond to the future workforce needs of the emerging hydrogen industry; and
- continue to develop apprenticeship ratios, including for Aboriginal Victorians and women workers.

Labor is committed to supporting new energy technology development and manufacturing in a low emissions future.

Labor will:

- develop a new model of engagement and partnership between Aboriginal Victorians and renewable energy projects, to ensure that the transition to clean energy supports their aspirations for self-determination and economic independence;
- review the social impact of methods for procuring and financing renewable energy projects and associated grid investments, and recommending improvements;
- support high-use energy industries such as aluminium production to take up renewable energy;
- support the development of a nation-leading hydrogen industry in Victoria through cutting edge demonstrations of hydrogen in transport, manufacturing, and chemical production;
- continue the successful implementation of the Victorian Renewable Hydrogen Industry Development Plan;
- investigate alternative sources of renewable energy, and develop these where viable, environmentally sustainable and cost-effective such as appropriate energy from waste opportunities;
- encourage job creation in new energy industries;
- support re-skilling and training for the state's gas fitters to safely enable the development of a hydrogen industry;
- continue to fund local employment programs in the Latrobe Valley;
- investigate measures to mitigate solar PV waste as systems reach end of life; and
- support and invest in new recycling technologies, including soft plastic recycling.

1.4 AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AND REGIONAL VICTORIA

Victoria is Australia's agricultural powerhouse and Victorians rely on our producers and farmers every day for their food and produce. Their work is critical to supporting our regional communities and economies.

Labor knows that our farmers and our agriculture sector are a major component of our state's economy, in addition to being the backbone to rural and regional communities.

1.4.1 AGRICULTURE

Regional Victoria is the nation's agricultural heartland. Labor believes that our farms and agribusinesses are an essential part of a thriving Victoria, particularly for rural and regional communities. Labor understands that we must continue to strengthen, grow and protect the agriculture sector.

Labor will:

- continue to promote and invest in digital accessibility, equity and inclusion for farming families and rural communities to ensure their farms and communities are able to thrive;
- support our agricultural sector as it continues to embrace new skills and technology;
- boost internet speeds for households and businesses and improve broadband and internet connections;
- support farmers and rural communities to access improved mobile and broadband connectivity through infrastructure investment;
- position Victoria as a leader in low emissions agriculture, to deliver clean, fresh food for Victorians and export markets;
- protect and maintain the world-leading reputation of Victoria's beef cattle, dairy, sheep, horticultural and cropping industries for quality and high performance; and
- support growers to diversify into alternative proteins and other emerging markets.

1.4.2 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For our state to prosper, our regional communities need to thrive. Labor believes that no matter where you live, strong and thriving communities are underpinned by jobs and opportunities, the world's best public services, access to affordable housing and world-class community facilities.

We understand that the needs of regional Victoria are as diverse as the communities and industries it supports. Labor is backing regional and rural communities to grow and succeed with place-based economic development and strategic investment.

Labor will continue to support rural and regional economic and social growth through a planning system based on economic and environmental sustainability.

Labor will:

- deliver development opportunities, economic incentives and infrastructure to support regional and rural communities;
- work to address labour shortages in regional areas and the barriers to attracting more workers, such as the higher cost of accommodation in tourist locations and longer commute times;
- support economic and social growth through a planning system that values community and environmental assets;
- support rural and regional food producers to work together to sell their produce;

- investigate creating community hubs in small townships where services can be provided; and
- promote the growth of industry in rural and regional areas.

1.4.3 FARMERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Only Labor can deliver a clear path forward for farmers and our agriculture industry to prepare for and respond to climate change.

Our agriculture sector plays an important role in Victoria's food security and is essential for the health and wellbeing of the community. Labor recognises a range of measures are required to ensure food security for Victoria in the face of climate change.

Labor will:

- continue to support Victorian farmers to adopt new technologies and techniques to build resilience and improve farming practices in response to climate change;
- partner with recognised research programs to assist food producers to transition to the most suitable commodity for their area;
- incentivise on-farm climate adaptation practices which increase canopy cover and reduce heat stress and other extreme weather effects on livestock; and
- encourage farmers to improve biodiversity, water retention, soil quality and pest management by planting native vegetation and habitat for native birds, bees and other insects.

1.5 ARTS, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

Victoria is the Creative State and Labor is focused on growing jobs, developing skills, and securing Victoria's reputation as a global cultural destination and bold creative leader.

Before the pandemic creative industries contributed almost \$23 billion to the Victorian economy each year, and was growing at 4.1 per cent per annum. The creative industries support over 220,000 full-time jobs, eight per cent of Victoria's employment sector, and attract around a billion dollars a year in cultural tourism.

At a time when the global creative community continues to face uncertainty and challenge, Labor has continued investing to provide stability, create opportunity and stimulate growth for Victoria's creative workers, businesses and industries.

1.5.1 INCREASED DIVERSITY IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Labor supports bringing greater arts, culture and creative opportunities to people and communities with limited access.

Labor will:

- encourage accessible venues;
- expand opportunities for women and girls, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), differently-abled and LGBTIQ+ Victorians;
- promote quotas for women and diverse Victorians on boards across the creative sector;
- engage with marginalised and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities to explore opportunities to attend creative and cultural events;
- encourage more regional and rural creative and cultural events;
- investigate ways to ensure government-funded events are accessible to all Victorians;

- encourage sensory-friendly events, experiences and areas at cultural events in Victoria, for both children and adults;
- review creative venues for accessibility, sensory-friendly spaces and cultural awareness; and
- focus on Victorian schools to assist marginalised students access further education in creative fields.

Labor recognises and celebrates the contribution of Aboriginal Victorians to our creative scene and supports awards and programs that recognise and celebrate emerging Aboriginal talent, particularly in rural and regional areas.

Labor will:

- strengthen Victoria’s Aboriginal arts community; and
- resource and support Victorian Aboriginal cultural heritage, particularly through public arts and culture programs in schools, regional and urban communities.

1.5.2 STRENGTHENING VICTORIA’S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Our suburbs and regions are home to theatres, galleries, and band rooms that have the power to bring Victorians together.

Creative arts and tourism industries have done it tough through the pandemic. Labor will continue backing in our creative industries by building the jobs of the future, skilling up and diversifying the workforce, and placing creativity and innovation at the heart of Victoria’s future resilience and prosperity.

Labor will:

- strengthen connections between Victorian education facilities and state-funded creative and cultural industries;
- support local talent with opportunities to work in Victoria’s creative industries;
- continue to provide incentives for Victorian artists to return or to showcase their work in Victoria;
- connect emerging local artists with leaders in their field;
- explore local creative content in government funded organisations;
- encourage Victorian schools to use works by Victorian authors, musicians and artists in their classrooms and through local works on VCE study lists;
- work with councils and public institutions to engage more communities; and
- maximise the use of existing facilities and collections.

1.5.3 CREATIVE HUBS AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY INCUBATORS

Labor will continue to support regional creative industries to recover from the deep impacts of the pandemic.

Labor will:

- support the growth and development of the regional arts, multicultural and cultural community sector and creative industry;
- explore ways to address the shortage of performance venues in regional Victoria outside major regional centres;
- reactivate the live music scene in regional Victoria and suburban Melbourne;

- investigate opportunities to open up community and government-owned assets like train stations, unused rail sheds, town halls and libraries as performance and exhibition venues with accompanying hospitality opportunities;
- build on support for creative and cultural projects with future opportunities for regional centres to exhibit and showcase creative and cultural projects; and
- encourage regional artists, marginalised groups, and emerging artists to create and exhibit.

1.5.4 FAIR PAYMENT FOR FUNDED GIGS

Many musicians are exploited and underpaid and have suffered through the pandemic. During the pandemic the vast majority of musicians, who are classified as businesses in their own right, missed out on JobKeeper and received no direct industry assistance. Labor stepped up to save the live music industry during the pandemic.

Labor will:

- work with Musicians Australia and the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) to ensure a fair recovery for musicians and other creative and cultural workers.

1.6 INFRASTRUCTURE, INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

1.6.1 INDUSTRY AND MANUFACTURING

Labor is committed to increasing Victoria's manufacturing capability and supporting businesses in key growth sectors across the state. In collaboration with unions and businesses, Labor will support the manufacturing sector so more is made in Victoria. Making things in Victoria, by Victorians, for Victorians will become our guiding directive.

Labor will work with unions to develop future industries to attract well-paid and secure jobs across the state. Working with unions, we will also ensure that as new industries emerge, workers from existing industries are given the opportunity to transition.

Workers should feel confident that as industries wind down and others emerge that Labor will not only recognise their skills and experience but will provide additional training and skills development to ensure a smooth transition.

Labor will continue investing in new and emerging cutting edge renewable technologies, including zero emission vehicles, energy efficiency programs, renewable energy storage solutions and hydrogen.

Labor has embarked on an ambitious strategy to deliver a world-class recycling system for Victoria. Labor's reforms are supported by an unprecedented investment of \$515 million to standardise Victoria's household waste collection system and deliver infrastructure and industry development that will recover more resources, create thousands of new jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Recycling and reducing waste are a priority for Labor, to be delivered through implementing a circular economy, complemented by a behaviour change campaign promoting better recycling and waste generation reduction. Labor recognises the need to improve efficiency in household waste sorting.

Labor will:

- strengthen the Local Jobs First Act 2003, including penalties for non-compliance in terms of protecting secure local jobs, legal entitlements and local content;
- establish a Manufacturing Advisory Council with an all-government jurisdiction;
- work with the Federal Government to revitalise Victoria's manufacturing industry;

- continue to fund a zero waste economy; and
- create jobs in the waste and recycling industry.

Labor recognises the importance of having qualified tradespeople working in an industry to ensure that standards apply to protect both workers and consumers.

Labor will:

- engage with Victorian Building Authority to consider options for a licensing system across metal trades; and
- consider expanding the licensing system to furnishing trades including cabinet makers, floor-layers, glaziers and the lift industry.

1.6.2 COMPETITIVE VICTORIA AND SMALL BUSINESS

Small businesses are at the heart of our communities and drive our economy. They create jobs and provide the services we rely on.

Labor will:

- help aspiring business owners by providing advice and resources so they are set up for success;
- work with recent migrant and refugee business owners, and those who live with a disability to overcome barriers and challenges to self-employment and business success;
- establish peer networks and tailored programs for aspiring and established female small business owners;
- create programs and services for home-based and family businesses, noting the unique demands placed upon them;
- offer pathways and guidance for small businesses that want to become large businesses; and
- streamline regulation and work with other levels of government to reduce the administrative burden on new and existing businesses.

1.6.3 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Labor recognises the significant contribution to the economy and employment of Victoria's 3,500 social enterprises, which contribute \$5.2 billion every year and over 60,000 jobs to the Victorian economy.

Labor will build on Victoria's award-winning approach to grow social enterprise in Victoria and continue to deliver the 2021-25 Social Enterprise Strategy. Labor will support the growth of existing social enterprises and the creation of new social enterprises, while supporting even greater opportunities for social entrepreneurs to succeed.

Social ownership provides an alternative to privatisation of government services, and Labor can claw back privatisation through creative and affirmative procurement policies. There are notable examples internationally of government contracts being awarded to cooperatives using government purchasing to deliver socially equitable outcomes under efficient, flat management structures.

Labor will:

- consider commissioning an independent and external research project on the potential role of cooperatives in developing social ownership models in Victoria;

- undertake research involving unions and employers to develop democratic ownership and management models;
- support businesses in transition, where staff and managers may be provided with advice on democratic ownership and management models, instead of the business closing due to retirement or poor succession planning; and
- promote the development of emerging cooperatives to generate sustainable economic development and fair employment outcomes.

1.6.4 MINING AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Victoria's resources industries play a vital role in bolstering local economies through the provision of high-paying jobs and expenditure, especially in regional areas. The state's minerals sector contributes more than \$1 billion to our economy every year. More than 4,700 full-time workers are supported by the minerals sector.

Labor knows that mineral and extractive resources are critical to a growing, greener Victoria. Responsibly developing the minerals and extractives sectors will help to enable sustainable technology and ensure jobs continue to be delivered in regional towns in the future.

Labor acknowledges the importance of a new model of engagement and partnership between Aboriginal Victorians and the resources sector to support their aspirations for self-determination and economic independence.

Labor will:

- support the growth of responsible resources industries to ensure the state's prosperous mineral resources are safely developed to enable affordable and accessible technologies;
- provide access to well-paying jobs in industry for regionally based Victorians seeking employment; and
- continue to work closely with communities, including Traditional Owners, to harmonise resources development with environmental, social and safety considerations.

1.6.5 INNOVATION

Labor knows that innovation drives economic growth, creates the jobs of the future and that more needs to be done to create opportunities.

Investing in innovation through capability building, infrastructure and product development sets us up for long-term success. Labor celebrates the ten-fold increase in the value of Victoria's startup ecosystem in the last five years and is determined to ensure this strength is used as a foundation for even greater jobs and innovation success.

Labor will:

- support the ongoing development of Victoria's startup ecosystem through ongoing support for Launch Vic;
- support a strong Victorian research and development sector, including funding for initial research and commercialising relationships, knowledge gaps in the research sector and strengthening industry collaboration; and
- promote innovation that brings the private sector, universities, government and communities together, including more funding for regional universities in the areas of basic research and applied research for commercial development objectives.

1.6.6 DIGITAL ECONOMY

As the world becomes more digitised, we must make sure that no Victorian is left behind. Since March 2020, many Victorians have worked and studied from home. Businesses, service providers, community organisations and governments have moved online or expanded their digital presence. We've connected with families and friends online. It's how we work and learn. It's how we grow our businesses. It's how we access services.

Labor is committed to delivering better connectivity to all Victorians. To make this happen, we need to ensure better mobile coverage and broadband infrastructure is built in rural, regional Victoria and outer suburban Melbourne. Victoria is on track to become the most connected state in Australia.

Digital access in rural and regional Victoria

Labor knows that many rural and regional communities suffer from poor to non-existent mobile coverage. As metropolitan Melbourne moves to 5G, there is a widening gap between those with connectivity and those without. Many government services and businesses now assume that connectivity exists and base much of their provision on digital access.

Businesses and producers, including farmers, are using digital technology to improve their production and distribution systems, but too often are unable to reach their full potential due to poor digital connectivity.

Digital resiliency, being able to stay connected during and after times of emergency, is now incredibly important. Without landlines and with most information and services online, we need to make sure our telecommunication infrastructure is resilient.

Utilising existing community infrastructure, such as Local Government or CFA facilities, is a cost effective way of providing 4G coverage to all rural and small regional communities.

Labor will:

- consider exploring ways to enable communities to establish their own 4G telecommunications towers;
- finish the job started by Connecting Victoria and make Victoria the most connected state;
- support as many people as possible to have access to superfast broadband;
- implement digital inclusion measures to make sure that all Victorians can connect online, including free Wi-Fi, subsidised internet, training and support programs;
- work with communities to establish digital hubs to provide digital access and education; and
- invest in improving the resiliency of telecommunications infrastructure and investing in temporary internet access solutions following emergencies.

1.6.7 HEALTH TECHNOLOGY AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

Our state's health technology sector encompasses medtech, biotech and pharmaceuticals, and is globally competitive with a strong manufacturing presence that creates sustainable and rewarding jobs and gives Victorians access to the latest health breakthroughs.

Labor's deliberate and focused approach to health technology investment, facilitation and attraction will ensure Victoria remains at the forefront of innovation driving economic growth and jobs.

Labor will:

- support health technology companies to establish and grow their operations in Victoria to make Melbourne the leading medical technology centre in the world; and
- invest in clinical trials infrastructure and support programs to see more clinical trials held in Victoria.

1.7 PROCUREMENT

Labor acknowledges that government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the state and will use this purchasing power to generate well-paid, secure, safe and meaningful jobs and fair conditions for Victorian workers.

Labor will:

- review the effectiveness of government procurement processes and policy and tendering contracts to incorporate job security obligations;
- apply penalties in contracts for non-compliance with health and safety regulations, and employment laws, including wages and conditions, and the terms that protect secure jobs and legal entitlements; and local content requirements;
- not enter into joint major projects unless these enforceable terms and penalties are included in contracts;
- work with unions and workers' representatives to ensure government expenditure is used with employers who can demonstrate a commitment to good industrial relations practice;
- ensure social procurement objectives are achieved through independent auditing;
- support the implementation of a "Fair Jobs" Code;
- tie approvals required by state government to a requirement for locally manufactured content on all future private consortium renewable energy projects where possible;
- ensure that mandated local content on manufactured products and projects does not rely on freight and logistics for the purpose of calculating content;
- continue to strengthen oversight of procurement practices across government, including local government;
- ensure that, where possible, Victorian Parliamentary Services and other government contracts procure food, print and paper products in Victoria;
- ensure that Local Industry Development Plans (LIDPs) are included as a legally enforceable part of contracts awarded;
- investigate options to strengthen the Local Jobs First Act and the powers of the Local Jobs First Commissioner;
- continue to monitor the successful shift of any outsourced government goods and services to ethical suppliers and employers;
- support the use of Victorian-based banks;

- require, where practicable, that the work for banking and insurance contracts (e.g. workers compensation and third-party vehicle insurance) be undertaken in Victoria;
- develop procurement guidelines which encourage the purchase of Australian-made paper by government departments, agencies and government businesses like schools and hospitals; and
- consider expanding the Local Jobs First Act to require minimum local content requirements for an expanded range of distinct products.

1.7.1 TEXTILES AND ETHICAL SUPPLIERS

Labor believes that government, as a purchaser of textiles, clothing and footwear (TCF), should care about where and under what conditions products are made. 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;
- improve the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Ethical Procurement Register from which the Victorian Government will exclusively source its textile, clothing and footwear products;
- require the purchase of locally manufactured textiles clothing and footwear (where the required goods are manufactured locally, meet all requirements of bid specifications and there is a genuine market) by all Victorian Government departments and agencies and Victorian Local Government Authorities;
- require contractors on publicly-funded projects to purchase locally manufactured Textile Clothing and Footwear (where the required goods are manufactured locally, meet all requirements of bid specifications and there is a genuine market) from businesses which are accredited by Ethical Clothing Australia;
- continue the important financial support provided to Ethical Clothing Australia; and
- consider a requirement for Ministers to specify local content of TCF for Strategic Projects.

1.7.2 PRIVATISATION

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

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

Labor will:

- ensure public services and assets remain in public hands;
- work to undo the damage done by privatisation;
- seek to return public services and assets to public hands to manage and control services based on the needs of Victorian workers;
- where there is an opportunity for a government tender, consider the benefits of returning services to public ownership; and
- where services are being reviewed or renewed, consider the benefits of returning services to public ownership.

1.8 TOURISM AND MAJOR EVENTS

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

Labor will:

- work to improve Victoria's presence in domestic tourism, as well as reviving the Asian tourist market after the pandemic;
- work with Melbourne Airport and charter tourism operators to attract more flights to Melbourne and Victoria;
- ensure regional tourism boards are best placed to promote and capitalise on the unique assets of the region;
- develop destination management plans for individual locations and experiences;
- promote Victoria as a destination of choice for Aboriginal tourism visitors; and
- build on Victoria's reputation as a great sporting state and encourage active lifestyle tourism in Victoria, particularly in regional areas.

1.8.1 TOURISM

Labor recognises the importance of Victoria's natural environment and its inherent cultural and economic importance, as well as the individual health and wellbeing benefits.

In government, Labor has been motivated by the importance of protecting our natural environment while also using it to sustainably generate the jobs and revenue many Victorians rely on.

Labor will:

- support the diversity and growth of Victoria's tourism opportunities especially in regional Victoria;

- maintain and develop Victoria's UNESCO environmental sites as tourism destinations;
- invest in new bike and walking trails throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria;
- facilitate new investments in regional Victoria; and
- create opportunities to increase economic activity and local employment in regional centres by turning day trips into longer trips.

1.8.2 MAJOR EVENTS

Labor understands that major events are an important driver of Victoria's economy. We welcome tens of thousands of visitors from all over the world to attend global events such as the Australian Open and the Australian Grand Prix. The boost to tourism through staging major events has created and continues to support thousands of jobs.

Labor will:

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

1.9 RACING

Racing is an important part of Victorian life and economy, supporting more than 33,000 jobs across the state and contributing more than \$43.4 billion to the Victorian economy. Labor recognises that there are areas that could be improved, including the wellbeing and welfare of participants in the sport after retirement.

1.9.1 CONNECTING REGIONAL RACING CLUBS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Victoria has a large number of racing clubs across regional Victoria. The Victorian Racing Industry Fund (VRIF) has supported many club improvements and infrastructure upgrades to support race-day attendance, training facilities and infrastructure that can be used by the broader community.

Labor will:

- develop a strategy to optimise use of racing assets with emphasis on benefits to regional Victoria;
- consider incentives to encourage community use of racetrack facilities; and
- consider a review of the status of Sandown Racecourse and its amenities and the economic benefits.

1.9.2 CARE AND WELLBEING OF RACING PARTICIPANTS

Participants, along with horses and greyhounds, are the lifeblood of the racing industry. However, they have a limited working life in the field. Labor recognises that ensuring their wellbeing is the right thing to do as well as the key to the ongoing success and growth of the sector.

Labor will:

- develop policies to support the wellbeing of jockeys when they exit the sport;
- continue to work with Racing Victoria, Greyhound Racing Victoria and Harness Racing Victoria to support programs that enhance animal welfare outcomes including rehoming programs;
- work with state jurisdictions and the Federal Government to develop a National Horse Traceability Register that can provide transparency; and
- work with the three racing codes to ensure that there are appropriate policies and programs in place to support the welfare of participants, including utilising funding support through the Victorian Racing Industry Fund (VRIF).

1.9.3 WHIP USE

There is ongoing community concern about the use of the whip within the thoroughbred industry. Labor notes the public position of Racing Victoria, the body responsible for the regulation of thoroughbred racing in Victoria, that whip reform is essential. Reform is required at a national level to ensure that there is consistency across racing jurisdictions.

Labor will:

- support the work of Racing Victoria, in consultation with industry participants and community groups, in seeking reform regarding whip use at Racing Australia.

1.10 TAXATION

Labor is committed to a progressive tax system where the burden of taxation aligns with capacity to pay. Tax is necessary to fund the essential services and infrastructure that our community relies on. Labor is committed to a tax system in which all individuals and companies contribute in line with their obligations.

Labor will:

- continue to ensure that our tax system is as efficient, effective and fair as possible; and
- continue to invest in compliance activities, and to close loopholes that are used by some to minimise their tax.

1.11 WORKERS' RIGHTS

Labor's mission to build a more just and equitable society is drawn from the ongoing struggle for justice and fairness in the workplace. Labor recognises the importance of unions being able to organise as well as bargain collectively. Labor's Fair Jobs Code will, in practice, deliver a procurement framework that connects public funds to well-paid, safe and secure jobs, holds employers to account and rewards good industrial relations practice.

Labor will defend and advocate for the same workplace rights for all workers including labour hire, casual, agency workers. Labor believes that all workers deserve the same access to organise in their union.

1.11.1 INEQUALITY AND EXPLOITATION

Labor acknowledges that the reinstatement of unfairly or unlawfully terminated employees remains constitutionally within the powers of the Commonwealth, however Labor acknowledges the frustration experienced by many workers who are unable to obtain fair compensation because of inadequate federal laws.

Labor will:

- continue to advocate for improvements to unfair dismissal and unlawful termination laws;
- explore ways to better protect those workers whose engagements are not covered by federal laws;
- actively encourage workers to be members of their union and allow union access and representation for all workers within the Victorian public sector;
- pursue policies and initiatives to prevent worker exploitation and explore penalties for employers;
- support Wage Inspectorate Victoria staff to engage with stakeholders and the community and to take proactive measures to reduce wage theft, including in targeted sectors; and
- support the Industrial Division of the Magistrates Court to address wage theft through faster, simpler and accessible court processes.

1.11.2 EMPLOYMENT

Labor's aim is for full employment. Labor will continue to ensure the creation of meaningful, secure, sustainable, equitable, unionised and accessible jobs for Victorians.

Labor will:

- ensure job creation is meaningful, secure, sustainable, gender-equitable, and accessible;
- empower workers to re-skill and up-skill to prepare for jobs of the future;
- engage and consult with Victorians pursuing full employment, including but not limited to Aboriginal Victorians, union members, regional and rural communities, young people, people with disabilities, TAFEs and universities;
- work to address skills shortages in the Victorian community, publish information about skills shortages, and develop plans to address these, involving relevant unions;
- engage with the Federal Government on whether temporary work visas help address Victorian skills shortages;
- encourage and support publicly-funded organisations to reduce reliance on casual and short-term workers, and to provide pathways to permanent employment;
- utilise the Fair Jobs Code, together with labour hire licensing laws, to promote secure and permanent employment;
- identify and encourage organisations providing pathways to permanent employment;
- continue to monitor the use of labour hire by government agencies, including local government, and examine what options are available to government to reduce the inappropriate use of labour hire employment practices;
- continue to monitor the incidence of violence and aggression directed at essential workers; and
- continue to take steps to protect essential workers in our community from harm and aggression from clients and customers.

1.11.3 WORKER REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Labor recognises the critical importance of worker representation.

Labor will:

- seek to ensure workers in industries heavily regulated by government, including casinos and gaming, are appropriately represented on decision making bodies within regulated organisations;
- explore opportunities for workforce representatives to usefully participate in the governance of state government departments, agencies and public entities.

1.11.4 EMPOWERING WOMEN, CALD, YOUNGER AND VULNERABLE WORKERS

Labor supports the full participation of women, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD, younger and vulnerable people in the labour market.

Labor will:

- consider measures to support women in employment by incorporating menstruation, menopause, pregnancy loss, reproductive health and wellbeing leave and general reproductive health in industrial settings;
- implement job training and retraining opportunities through TAFE and high-quality contracted VET providers to users of mental health, alcohol and other drug, family and domestic violence, housing and youth services;
- work collaboratively with the public sector, private business and trade unions to facilitate housing hubs with job training, retraining and apprenticeships for women;
- expand the above services for women exiting incarceration, with child-friendly options;
- encourage apprentices and trainees to join their appropriate trade union, through union access during training and the provision of union education and information.
- provide resources, including support to obtain representation, for migrant workers who have claims for wage theft and loss of entitlements, but who risk the loss of their work visas and consequent deportation through acts of bad faith by employers or the Federal Government;
- work with the Federal Government to implement in their entirety the recommendations of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's "Respect@Work" Report;
- advocate for an extension of the Federal Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme.
- support centres that support women in business across the state; and
- ensure job creation is meaningful, secure, sustainable, accessible and gender-equitable.

1.11.5 WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Labor supports work-life balance for all workers.

RECOGNISING ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Labor recognises the tireless and invaluable contributions essential workers make to our society.

Labor will:

- consider the benefits of a reduced workweek with no loss of pay including potential social and gender equity benefits;

- explore other ways of ensuring essential workers are recognised for their contribution to our communities;
- support the objectives of the trade union movement's efforts to provide rehabilitation, outreach, outpatient and suicide prevention services to tackle addiction and mental ill-health;
- recognise employees' right to disconnect from work outside their rostered hours; and
- ensure that employees and employers both share in the established benefits of working from home.

SUPPORTING WORKERS' SAFETY

Transport and mobility are often the most difficult obstacles which determine whether an individual chooses to work at a certain place. In recent years, we have seen the introduction of paid parking at many shopping centres. These parking fees have become a significant financial burden for many retail and fast food workers, many of whom work at unsociable hours. To avoid this additional expense, many employees often choose to park in residential streets surrounding the shopping centres, which poses a safety risk particularly where lighting is poor at night.

Labor will:

- enshrine in planning legislation that in large shopping centres at least 15% of the total car parking spaces will be provided free of charge for employees of the businesses in the centre. Large shopping centres are shopping centres where the total of the lettable areas of all the retail shops (whether leased or available for lease) in the retail shopping centre is 20,000 m² or more.

PROTECTIONS FOR ONGOING REMOTE WORK

Labor recognises the need for work-life balance and protections for both those who may continue to work remotely and those who cannot, due to the nature of their work,

Labor will:

- encourage employers to create and implement a 'right to disconnect' policy for their workforce, where appropriate;
- task the Wage Inspectorate Victoria and assist unions to monitor and eliminate wage theft or other forms of exploitation for remote workers;
- work to eliminate any proximity bias disadvantaging remote workers, including enhanced gender equity reporting in both private and public sectors;
- examine issues with monitoring and surveillance of workers, particularly those working remotely and consider whether further protections of their privacy may need to be put in place; and
- confirm the occupational health and safety requirements of employers to provide a safe working environment for remote workers, ensuring that remote workers are aware of their entitlements and obligations.

1.11.6 LEAVE

Labor will always stand up for the value and dignity of work. All Victorian workers should be paid fairly and feel safe and secure at work.

Labor has reformed our long service leave laws and introduced portable long service leave, introduced a new Labour Hire Licencing scheme and established the Victorian Wage Inspectorate. These reforms will help protect all workers, particularly our most vulnerable, reduce the gender pay gap and ensure compliance and enforcement with employment conditions across Victoria.

The Long Service Leave Act 2018 (Vic) provides for an employee to be paid at 'ordinary time rate of pay'. Ordinary time rate of pay does not include any additional payments such as shift penalties or other penalties for ordinary hours. This means that Victorian workers who are employed on shift work or required to work weekends are financially disadvantaged when they take long service leave. This acts as a disincentive for those employees to take their long service leave.

Labor will:

- work with unions and employers to explore an expanded portable long service leave scheme;
- ensure that workers removed from long service leave schemes are reintegrated;
- advocate for an extension of the Federal Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme to a minimum of 26 weeks; and
- enshrine in legislation that regular penalty rates and overtime are included in the payment of long service leave.

1.11.7 SUPERANNUATION

It has long been the case that Labor governments act as model employers.

Superannuation will help many Victorians to enjoy a higher standard of living in retirement.

Consistent with the mandated Super Guarantee (SG) increase, Labor is committed to increasing Victorian public sector worker superannuation to at least 12 per cent by 2025 via enterprise agreements with unions.

On average, women retire with \$90,000 less in superannuation than men. While there are a range of factors that contribute to this statistic, most notably the gender pay gap, a further factor stems from employers not being required to pay superannuation to women while they are on paid parental leave.

Labor will:

- advocate for a federal system of superannuation for small and micro business owners;
- campaign in opposition to any delay or freeze on mandating the SG to 12 per cent;
- advocate to the Federal Government to:
 - amend applicable legislation and regulations to mandate for paid maternity leave to be considered Ordinary Time Earnings for the purposes of the Superannuation Guarantee;
 - pay superannuation on the Federal Government Paid Parental Leave Scheme;
 - increase the Superannuation Guarantee Contribution to 12 per cent;
 - consider the payment of superannuation on the day it is earned;
 - explore including superannuation payments for employees on maternity leave;
 - take action to reduce the gender superannuation gap;

- consider the possibility of legislating for regular penalty rates, regular shift penalties and regular overtime be included in the payment of long service leave; and
- explore avenues for a ‘superannuation boost’ for low-paid working women that would address lifetime super disadvantage.

1.11.8 WORKPLACE SAFETY AND WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

Labor is committed to the highest standards of health and safety and recognises the importance of supporting injured workers to recover and get back to meaningful work.

Labor acknowledges the role of WorkSafe Victoria as the regulator to enforce compliance with occupational health and safety regulation.

Labor has delivered strong reforms, including:

- strengthening legislation, raising awareness, and providing better support for workers and families affected by silica exposure;
- providing eligible workers with a mental injury claim access to provisional payments for reasonable treatment and services for up to 13 weeks, even if their claim is rejected;
- introducing a new criminal offence of workplace manslaughter into our occupational health and safety laws;
- providing new rights and protections to labour hire workers to ensure they have the same rights and protections as direct employees of a host employer; and
- prohibiting businesses from using insurance or indemnity arrangements to avoid liability to pay monetary penalties.

Labor has improved the powers of Authorised Representatives of Registered Employee Organisations (ARREOs) by amending the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act so the taking of recordings and photos in support of an ARREO holder’s entry to a workplace is allowable, and make further expansions to ARREO permit holders to hold the same powers of an elected Health and Safety representative.

Labor will:

- review the powers and support provided to ARREOs and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to ensure these powers and support provided are ensuring the best workplace safety outcomes, including consideration of whether the power to issue Provisional Improvements (PINs) and cease work powers should be extended;
- review the rights, powers and support provided to HSRs and ARREOs with a view to ensuring the legislative and regulatory regime, and other supports provided, are fit-for-purpose;
- engage with WorkSafe to consider changes to WorkSafe’s enforcement policy, to ensure duty holders, industry, workers and unions have clear guidance on fines, prohibition and improvements notices being issued under the OHS Act and Regulations;
- review the governance and compliance of self-insurers;
- engage with WorkSafe to review Compliance Codes for high-risk work, including considering whether these should be legislated (or placed in regulations) as the minimum standards for the control and management of risks in high-risk workplaces;
- advocate for Compliance Codes for high-risk work to include consideration of a wide range of control measures;

- ensure that this Compliance Code review is undertaken with input from all interested parties;
- work with the Federal Government to implement recommendations of the Boland Review; and
- work with industry and unions to ensure WorkSafe has the specialised industry skills to address necessary safety concerns.

Labor has legislated a provisional payments scheme for all Victorian workers, covering medical and like expenses for mental injuries once a worker lodges a claim.

Labor will:

- continue to provide a legislated provisional payments scheme for work-related mental injuries;
- consider extending the employer’s obligation to offer suitable and safe work to an injured worker from the current limit of 52 weeks;
- consider including female reproductive cancers in presumptive legislation for Victoria’s female firefighters;
- continue to review the governance of the workers’ compensation scheme and occupational health and safety regulator to ensure governance arrangements are appropriate and fit-for-purpose; and
- ensure WorkSafe is appropriately engaging with workers of different backgrounds, including workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, workers with disability and LGBTIQ+ workers.

1.11.9 LABOUR HIRE AND INSECURE WORK

The impact of insecure work on Victorian workers includes financial insecurity, difficulty planning and saving for the future, and stress. Victorian Labor is committed to tackling insecure work and rising inequality.

Labor knows that the pandemic highlighted some of the biggest challenges faced by those in insecure jobs and the impacts on their health.

Labor commits to not making decisions or actions in government that undermine the rights and conditions of Victorian workers through the engagement of labour hire or contractors.

Labor will:

- support workers in the most insecure industries;
- ensure that Victorians in the most vulnerable and insecure work are not required to choose between their health, the health of their loved ones, or their job;
- ensure the Victorian Government sets the standard, and expects its partners and those it does business, including local government, and all publicly-funded services with to meet it;
- work with the Federal Government to increase the Fair Work Ombudsman’s investigatory powers and to increase the penalties applicable under the Fair Work Act for award breaches and failure to maintain proper employment records;
- advocate for a national licensing scheme for labour hire operators;
- explore mechanisms to eliminate sham contracting in the state jurisdiction, such as deeming certain workers as employees;
- fund workplace rights, safety and readiness programs for recently arrived migrant workers who are particularly vulnerable to unscrupulous labour hire practices;

- consider strengthening Victoria’s occupational, health and safety laws to improve worker representation;
- increase OHS requirements and regulation of accommodation standards for labour hire workers;
- amend the Equal Opportunity Act to ensure it applies to labour hire employees to prevent discrimination;
- facilitate increased supply chain transparency including focusing on the major retailers; and
- ensure that labour hire does not undermine employment standards and rates of pay.

1.11.10 PUBLIC SECTOR

Labor understands the need to invest in permanent public sector staff.

Labor will:

- look to bring outsourced work back to the public sector and limit the use of contractors, consultants and labour hire;
- continue to invest in effective public sector staffing levels, including in agencies under stress, and realise improved service delivery through digital transformation;
- ensure the Government’s bargaining policy encourages fair wage growth;
- consider a review of the current Victorian public sector redundancy provisions to align with other jurisdictions and the private sector;
- review the use of contractors, consultants and labour hire in the provision of public services to the Victorian community.
- ensure Government Policies allow for ongoing improvements to wages and conditions for those employed by the State, State entities, State funded services and by local government; and
- empower workers to bargain in good faith to achieve wage growth, Government policy will also support workers if they wish to bargain as an enterprise, single interest or by industry.

1.11.11 SECURITY INDUSTRY

Labor recognises that, as the largest procurer of security services in the State, the Victorian Government has a responsibility to set best practice standards.

Labor will:

- take the steps necessary to ensure a robust and professional industry where its strength comes from a respected, secure, well-paid security workforce;
- ensure Victorian Government agencies are clients of best practice setting the standard and expectation that security providers deliver job security, liveable wages, respect, career and skill development, and safe workplaces; and
- work to bring an end to the use of subcontracting that allows security companies to undermine wages and conditions.

1.11.12 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

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

Christmas continues to be the most widely-observed religious and secular public holiday across Australia, a time when workers in every sector seek to take rest and spend time with their family after a busy year. Many Victorian families prepare to host friends and family on Christmas or seek to travel during this period.

Labor will:

- enshrine in legislation that Christmas Eve after 6pm be made a public holiday; and
- consider reinstating the Workers Family Picnic Day.

1.11.13 BANKING AND INSURANCE SERVICES

Labor believes that a strong financial services sector is important to the Victorian economy and is committed to restoring public confidence and trust in the financial services sector.

Labor supports the implementation of each of the 76 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry. Labor believes that banking is an essential service and that all Victorians should be able to access reliable, trustworthy, face-to-face banking services.

Labor will:

- encourage any financial institution that wants to close, relocate or otherwise restrict access to face-to-face banking to consult with the local community a minimum of three months prior to any changes.

1.11.12 SAFE RATES AND THE GIG ECONOMY

Labor recognises the rapid expansion of the gig economy within the transport industry which has resulted in a largely unregulated industry that fails to provide workers with any minimum standards or safety protections.

Labor will:

- establish a Victorian state-based Tribunal by working with the Federal Government; the Tribunal will be comprised of industry experts with responsibility for ensuring safe standards of work, including fair payments and conditions, with jurisdiction over all transport supply chain, contract network and general transport workers, and with the power and obligation to:
- set enforceable minimum rates and conditions applicable to all relevant transport workers across an entire sector, industry or supply chain;
- provide accessible and enforceable dispute resolution by resolving any disputes, including unfair terminations of contract and transport supply chain/contract networks disputes, through conciliation and arbitration;
- review unfair contracts, including where the contracts become unfair in the course of operation;
- facilitate collective bargaining and action rights by approving and enforcing collective bargaining between unions, transport workers and the entities which engage them;
- address unfair termination or suspension of their contract or engagement by enabling workers to make an application to the Tribunal and the Tribunal possessing the power to remedy the termination or suspension, including through reinstatement of the contract or engagement alongside compensation; and

- report back to the Victorian Government on the exercise of its powers within its first 12 months of operation, and no later than four months following the conclusion of the Tribunal's first 12 months of operation.

1.11.14 EXPANDING PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT

Labor recognises that independent contractors have existed for decades within the economy. However, the emergence of the gig economy has seen an explosive growth in an 'independent contractors' model in which workers are hired by businesses to work in the transport, service sector and other associated industries traditionally reliant on an employee model.

While a majority of casual employees possess an entitlement under most modern awards to request casual conversion after a period of six or 12 months, independent contractors are expected to serve in this role indefinitely. Although this arrangement is beneficial to some contractors, it may not be suitable for all.

Labor has outlined a collection of policies that are designed to provide greater protections to independent contractors and gig economy workers which is a step in the right direction and recognises there is more to do.

Labor will:

- explore options such as legislating a state-based Independent Contractor Conversion Act to provide an opportunity for independent contractors to transition to full- and part-time employment where a general pattern of systematic engagement can be established.

1.11.15 PROTECTING WORKER FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Labor recognises the historic role that the trade union movement has played in the creation and development of the ALP. Labor also recognises the pivotal role that unions play today in protecting workers, improving workplace conditions, growing wages and retirement balances, and where necessary, engaging in industrial action.

Labor unequivocally supports the work that registered trade unions do in Victoria. Labor recognises that only registered trade unions can engage in protected industrial action and authentically represent members in disputes, negotiations and health and safety contraventions.

Labor will:

- prioritise engaging with the relevant Fair Work Commission registered industrial associations when seeking to engage with employees in a particular enterprise or industry;
- enhance regulatory oversight and financial compliance requirements for unregistered industrial organisations particularly focusing on financial transparency; and
- only engage registered trade unions for the purposes of negotiating wages, conditions, and rates.

2 Health ***Care for Victorians when & where it's needed***

All Victorians deserve world-class healthcare, regardless of their age, income, location, background or circumstances – this fundamental belief is at the heart of everything we do.

That means our health system must be well-funded with enough doctors, nurses, paramedics and healthcare workers to make sure Victorians get the care they deserve in world class and safe facilities.

It also means our human services system needs to be well-resourced, with enough child protection, mental health, drug, alcohol and disability workers to support vulnerable Victorians and help them lead fulfilling and productive lives.

The last two years have really knocked our health system around. Emergency departments have had to handle a sharp increase in critical COVID-19 patients, and healthcare workers have had to miss work because they or a loved one got sick.

Now, just like we have done during the pandemic, Labor will ease the pressure on our hospitals and healthcare workers by putting patients first.

Labor continues to invest more funding in Victoria's healthcare system than ever before, with the \$12 billion Pandemic Repair Plan. Labor has delivered nurse-to-patient ratios, delivered world class facilities, added more than 22,000 additional healthcare workers to our public health system and stood by our healthcare workers during the pandemic.

Labor has opened new hospitals in Footscray and Melton and Geelong, and redeveloped hospitals in Ballarat, Frankston and right across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

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

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

Labor has made progress on more than 90 per cent of the Mental Health Royal Commission's recommendations – the single largest investment in mental health in Australia's history.

Labor has hired more than 1,000 new staff, including those with lived experience of the mental health system and is creating 144 new public mental health beds to support 2,500 more Victorians to get the support they need.

We are protecting the Victorian workers who devote their lives to helping other

people and we've boosted the number of child protection workers and early intervention services for vulnerable families.

Only Labor will deliver more staff, better hospitals and first-class care for Victorians.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

2.1 JOBS IN HEALTH

Labor is committed to building a sustainable, qualified and skilled workforce that is able to meet the needs of Victorians. Labor will provide more pathways and incentives to education by providing free university and specialist training for thousands of nurses and midwives.

2.1.1 BUILDING A SKILLED AND SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Labor believes that the health and human services workforce holds the knowledge and experience to guide service design. They are the trainers of new staff and continuous builders of skills, and they are the backbone of the system who will enable a holistic care environment.

Labor will:

- provide free university and specialist training for nurses and midwives;
- provide scholarships for areas of need, including intensive care, cancer care and nurse practitioner specialists;
- increase the number of qualified theatre and sterilisation technicians to support more elective surgeries than ever before;
- up-skill and train healthcare workers to expand their scope of practice and ensure they are supported in their professional development to make their greatest contribution to their patients and our health system;
- utilise nurse practitioners across clinical specialties throughout the public health sector;
- maintain nurse-to-patient ratios across hospitals and consider expansion of ratios if relevant or necessary to enhance quality patient care and safety;
- maintain nurse to patient ratios across hospitals to , protect and enhance quality patient care and safety;
- increase nurse graduate training places in the public sector to enable more nursing graduates entry into the workforce;
- continue support for the post-graduate nursing scholarship scheme to enable nurses to enhance their scope of practice in the delivery of advanced care;
- continue the reduction of the use of temporary and agency staff across the public health sector in the pursuit of a more permanent workforce;
- support junior medical staff to advance within the medical profession through specialising to enhance the care of Victorians.
- up-skill and train healthcare workers to participate in the Care Economy and support their professional development; and
- provide scholarships for areas of need, including intensive care, cancer care, and nurse practitioner specialists.

2.1.2 KEEPING HEALTH, HUMAN AND EMERGENCY SERVICES WORKERS SAFE

Victorian Labor puts the safety and wellbeing of our dedicated healthcare workers at the centre of the healthcare system because it is fundamental to delivering the high quality care Victorians deserve.

Labor will:

- continue to ensure hospitals are safe from violence and aggression for healthcare workers and their patients;
- explore a reporting scheme to Victoria Police on code black incidents;
- continue to implement a bullying and harassment prevention strategy across all public sector health services in Victoria; and
- provide healthcare workers with the psychological support needed and resources to help healthcare workers look after themselves and their patients.

2.1.3 FAIR WORK FOR THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

A Labor Government will introduce a Code for providers of community services work to government agencies that will, through requirements placed upon providers, aim to improve job security and permanent employment in the sector.

Labor will consider incorporating the following funding conditions into the Code:

- require community sector agencies to engage ongoing staff rather than fixed term, other than for genuine fixed term staff leave replacements, and that casual employment is only to be used for genuine casual vacancies;
- mandate a paid family violence leave policy based on the public sector standard approved between the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Australian Services Union (ASU) and the community sector;
- agree to allow the ASU to access staff as part of the agencies' induction process;
- establish and resource a community sector sustainability and reform committee chaired by the lead Minister and with members including the ASU, DFFH and community sector peaks. This committee will have oversight of sector-wide workforce and training issues and requirements;
- fund agencies for at least five-year terms as part of each program (other than genuine pilot programs);
- rebalance the operation of the Reportable Conduct Scheme to provide more protections for accused workers;
- consider legislating that reporteers cannot be left immediately without income as a result of an unproven accusation;
- reform the investigation process to ensure a fair hearing for accused workers;
- remove the need for low-paid workers to have expensive legal representation, or provide funding for this representation; and
- mandate appropriate and fair time periods for the conduct of investigations.

2.2 MEETING GROWING HEALTH SERVICE DEMANDS

Victorians are receiving the care, treatment and surgery they need, sooner. Labor will make sure Victoria's health system has the funding it needs for hospitals to expand services, complete more surgeries and procedures than ever before and treat patients faster.

2.2.1 PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Labor believes that our public hospitals should provide accessible and world-class healthcare to all Victorians.

Labor will:

- deliver outstanding health facilities across the state through upgrades and new hospitals such as the new Melton Hospital;
- support access to accommodation options for regional patients who need to travel to access treatment;
- continue the Better at Home program, supporting tens of thousands of Victorians to receive home-based care and freeing up much needed capacity across our hospital network;
- evaluate and enhance Virtual Health Services including acute and chronic care services including the Better at Home program;
- ensure that the provision of non-medical services in public hospitals is accessible and equitable for all Victorians;
- ensure the Statewide Burns service is equipped to respond to bushfire emergencies, disaster or major accidents;
- strengthen public pathology services and ensure all pathology services are of the highest possible standard; and
- continue to support allergy testing for people experiencing breathing complications due to unknown allergens where such testing is deemed appropriate.

2.2.2 HEALTH SERVICES

Skills-based health service boards have been a key outcome of the government's Targeting Zero report.

Labor will:

- ensure that the composition of all public health service boards are appropriately skills-based, diverse, and representative of the local community.

2.2.3 EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY CARE

Access to timely and high quality emergency care can be the difference between life and death. Labor recognises that Victoria's growing and ageing population creates challenges for our hospitals and will make sure services are expanded, efficient and effective in order to help meet this demand.

Labor will:

- continue to provide more Victorians with access to urgent after-hours care; and
- sustain and expand the defibrillator public access program to cover more public spaces, including public train stations, in order to save more lives.

2.2.4 ELECTIVE SURGERY

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted and deferred care for many Victorians. Labor's comprehensive \$1.5 billion COVID Catch-Up Plan is boosting capacity and driving long-term improvements.

Labor is focused on system recovery and supporting more Victorians to receive access to surgery as soon as possible. When fully implemented, the COVID Catch-Up Plan will enable a record 240,000 Victorians to receive surgery every year – an increase of 40,000 procedures each year compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Labor will:

- boost elective surgery capacity to beyond pre-pandemic levels so patients can access the treatment they need faster;
- deliver dedicated Rapid Access Hubs to perform specific surgeries; and
- deliver Frankston Public Surgical Centre and Blackburn Public Surgical Centre.

2.2.5 AMBULANCE SERVICES

Labor recognises that to keep Victorians safe, Ambulance Victoria must be properly funded, and the welfare and safety of its workforce be its highest priority.

Labor will:

- ensure equitable access to ambulance cover for all Victorians;
- employ a record number of paramedics in Victoria;
- upgrade and build new ambulance stations across metropolitan and regional Victoria;
- establish a second stroke ambulance in Melbourne's south east; and
- ensure that the welfare and safety of Victoria's Paramedic workforce is supported, giving them the resources and support they need to keep Victorians safe.

2.2.6 MEDICAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

Labor is leading the nation and the world by cementing Victoria as a global centre for groundbreaking health and medical research. Research and innovation is pivotal in tackling emerging health challenges.

Labor has committed to establishing a world-class mRNA and RNA industry in Victoria, by supporting supply chain, research and development for pre- and clinical research, commercialisation and manufacturing investments.

Labor will:

- implement the Medical Research 10 Year Strategy;
- continue the development of an mRNA research and manufacturing sector;
- invest in the training and retaining of the medical research workforce, especially women and early-career researchers, to ensure Victoria has the capability and talent needed to continue developing a world class medical research and manufacturing sector;
- invest in key health technologies that address modern health challenges;
- continue to support medical research and ensure Victoria remains the medical research capital of Australia; and
- continue to support health services with the software systems and support to modernise health systems and records.

2.3 MENTAL HEALTH

Labor is delivering the biggest social reform in our state's history, investing in the mental health system Victoria deserves.

Labor established a Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System and immediately committed to implementing every single recommendation. The Royal Commission found that too many Victorians find navigating the mental health system too complex and, as a result, choose not to.

Mental health and wellbeing affects all Victorians. Labor is working to create a mental health and wellbeing system that we can all be proud of – a system that provides holistic treatment, care and support for all Victorians when they need it, closer to home. We all know someone who has struggled with their mental health. If it's not our own personal experience, it's that of someone we love. When they suffer, we suffer with them.

Labor is working to build our state's new mental health system by delivering more community-based services, more acute mental health beds, more early intervention opportunities and a new dedicated system to support young people, children and families – closer to home.

Labor will:

- implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System;
- maintain and sustain perinatal mental health funding;
- create a state action plan to combat the rise of teenage eating disorders and body dysmorphia;
- provide asylum seekers and refugees with access to mental health services;
- create comprehensive wellness care plans for all Victorians in the correctional system to ensure adequate access to mental health, wellbeing and drug rehabilitation services;
- support mental health workers and police that work in PACER (Police, Ambulance, Clinician Emergency Response) teams to receive the specialist training that allows them to deliver services to the community;
- expand the capability of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) workforce to respond to emergency mental health and intoxication instances within the community;
- provide funding for postgraduate mental health nursing and allied health professional positions;
- support a qualified, skilled wellbeing workforce, including people with lived experience, that is trained to respond to the diverse needs of people living with mental health challenges;
- increase the supply of specialist mental health housing;
- ensure that the peer workforce recommended by the Royal Commission final report is provided with appropriate supports and industrial protections;
- develop specific, culturally appropriate place-based suicide prevention initiatives for Aboriginal Victorians;
- work towards enshrining allied health pay parity to ensure that social workers and occupational therapists are retained in the public mental health sector;
- upgrade facilities to ensure that all risks are mitigated for the mental health workforce and consumers; and
- expand access to Prevention and Recovery Care services across the state.

- promote access to arts therapies; and
- continue to support specialist care that provides supportive, safe and therapeutic engagement to those experiencing mental illness.

2.4 PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTION AND PROMOTION

Labor understands that we must continue to apply the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic by prioritising public health, listening to, and acting on evidence. Working with our most vulnerable and preventative health initiatives and health promotion should be at the forefront of primary care.

Labor understands that climate change causes extreme weather events like droughts, floods and fires that can increase risks to public health, especially for vulnerable Victorians.

Labor will:

- support and fund community health services and programs;
- promote strong connections between community health centres, statewide prevention programs and healthcare systems; and
- make sure health services and workers effectively deliver services to the LGBTIQ+ community.
- support measures to improve community resilience and readiness for climate change; and
- support preventive programs that will reduce the public health risk from extreme weather events, droughts, floods, fires;

2.4.1 CHRONIC DISEASE

All Victorians should be able to live lives that are healthier and more active. Labor will help achieve this by working to prevent chronic illness and supporting preventative health initiatives that tackle diabetes, obesity, stroke, cardiovascular disease and other preventable, non-communicable diseases.

Labor will:

- continue to tackle diabetes and chronic disease with programs through Get Active Victoria; and
- build on the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023 with particular priority placed on the prevention of chronic diseases including obesity, diabetes, stroke and cardiovascular disease.

2.4.2 DENTAL SERVICES

Labor believes that good oral health is key to overall health and wellbeing. Labor is committed to improving the oral health of Victorians and reducing the gap in oral health outcomes for people at higher risk of oral disease, particularly vulnerable Victorians who may find it difficult to access expensive dental services. Labor has delivered Smile Squads to all government primary, secondary, P-12 and specialist schools across Victoria.

Labor will:

- work with the Federal Government to deliver better access to public dental care, recognising that funding the public dental system is predominantly the role of the Federal Government;

- advocate to the Federal Government to support steps towards universal dental care;
- increase the provision of dental care to the most vulnerable in our community; and
- support initiatives with a focus on prevention of oral diseases.

2.4.3 SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND BLOOD-BORNE VIRUSES

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

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

Labor will:

- continue to promote Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to populations at high risk of HIV in order to eliminate new transmissions;
- collaborate with drug support services to reduce the spread of blood-borne viruses by people who inject drugs; and
- support targeted communication strategies and community based interventions to increase testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.

2.5 FAIR AND EQUAL HEALTHCARE FOR ALL VICTORIANS

Helping Victorians live longer, healthier lives is a priority for Labor. We are building an equitable health system that effectively supports all Victorians without discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity.

Labor will focus on addressing the health challenges facing Victorian communities.

2.5.1 WOMEN'S HEALTH

Labor believes Victorian women and girls deserve access to comprehensive health services and information, where and when they need it, including women-centred, culturally safe and high quality maternity care.

Labor will:

- continue to support the right of access to pregnancy termination services and strengthen public reproductive healthcare services, particularly in regional Victoria;
- review the Victorian Health Experience Survey to ensure it identifies whether gender biases are impacting service delivery and provides data for informing a better public health system;
- investigate ways to respond to the impacts of menopause;
- continue to assist young people with awareness and identification of endometriosis and other pelvic pain disorders;
- maintain and sustain pelvic pain management for conditions such as endometriosis, funding and support research into treatment for these;
- continue to invest in rehabilitation services with the capacity to tackle addiction, and ensure women are able to access these services; and
- continue to deliver world class maternity care including pre-natal, birthing services and post-natal care in the public health system.

2.5.2 MEN'S HEALTH

Labor recognises that some men have specific health needs that require an informed and planned response that recognises high levels of avoidable illness and premature death among Victorian men.

Labor will ensure a coordinated effort across the health and community sectors to specifically address men's health needs.

Labor will:

- actively promote men's health and improve awareness of morbidity, premature death, illnesses and general health among men;
- encourage health promotion programs on nutrition and exercise, delivered through workplaces, schools and community health services, with an emphasis on groups at risk;
- continue to raise awareness of programs designed to address accidents and suicide; and
- provide support to community organisations like men's sheds which provide support for socially isolated men by connecting them with their local communities.

2.5.3 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Labor's vision is that every Victorian is supported to achieve their optimal sexual and reproductive health outcomes. This means that all Victorians have access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and information, where and when they need it, that normalises reproductive health across the life course.

Labor will:

- provide reproductive health education services for men and women;
- deliver a public Assisted Reproductive Technologies service;
- ensure assisted reproductive services are accessible to Victorians, including LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal, culturally diverse and low-income Victorians;
- consider Reproductive Leave Clauses within public sector Enterprise Agreements;
- investigate a Pregnancy Loss clause in public sector Enterprise Agreements; and
- consider Reproductive Health and Wellbeing leave as a public sector policy to allow women to grapple with chronic health conditions, menopause systems and cancer checks.

2.5.4 RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH

With more people living and working in rural and regional Victoria, Labor will ensure people living in rural and regional areas have access to the world-class care they deserve, close to home.

Labor will:

- support the provision of specialised medical and clinical services in regional areas;
- actively engage with regional and rural communities and service providers to build and expand the public health system in regional Victoria;
- continue to support healthcare workers to pursue careers as healthcare professionals in rural and regional communities; and
- develop health promotion strategies focusing on the needs of people in rural and regional communities.

2.5.5 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH

Victoria's approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples' health and wellbeing is built upon a commitment to self-determination and includes genuine and meaningful partnerships with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector, Traditional Owner groups and the wider Victorian Aboriginal community, and is guided by the Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan.

Labor will:

- ensure that Aboriginal culture, safety and health and mental healthcare is embedded into government organisations delivering health services and programs to Victorian Aboriginal people;
- consider business models for Aboriginal health organisations that promote long-term sustainability;
- increase the number of Aboriginal health professionals by providing incentives, including increasing the availability of scholarships;
- Consider implementing the Aboriginal Employment Support Officer program;
- use the existing research on the critical importance of the first 1,000 days to inform the development of programs and policies to address early childhood development issues;
- provide culturally supportive birthing suites available for Aboriginal mothers;
- support Aboriginal mothers to be able to accompany their babies when they are transferred to a major hospital;
- develop a mentoring program for new Aboriginal mothers;
- continue to support dental services for Aboriginal people by supporting public dental services to actively work with Aboriginal communities to improve access to dental care;
- recognise the particular end-of-life needs of Aboriginal people and support appropriate services to meet those needs;
- ensure medical professionals are provided with cultural awareness training;
- ensure mental health providers understand the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma;
- develop early intervention strategies with younger Aboriginal generations to build resilience;
- work with Victorian Aboriginal communities to develop and implement strategies to reduce the incidence of self-harm and suicide;
- work with the Aboriginal community to reduce drug, alcohol and other harm; and
- work with the Federal Government to ensure Victorian Aboriginal people with disabilities have access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

2.5.6 CALD COMMUNITIES' HEALTH

Victoria is Australia's most culturally diverse state and Labor believes every Victorian should be able to access culturally responsive, quality healthcare. Labor is proud of our diversity and wants to ensure that every Victorian is supported to access high-quality healthcare.

Labor will:

- ensure culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities can receive culturally sensitive health services with appropriately trained staff and translation services;
- ensure grassroots organisations are funded and empowered to promote understanding of health issues amongst CALD communities, and to ensure equal access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), aged care and health services;
- support grassroots organisations to develop and distribute educational material in community languages to enhance understanding and acceptance of health issues; and
- provide one-on-one assistance to understand systems and access including adequate translations, and assistance navigating digital and English-only application processes.

2.5.7 LGBTIQ+ HEALTH

Victoria's LGBTIQ+ community continues to face prejudice, harassment and abuse, leading to disproportionately higher levels of poor mental health, suicidal thoughts and attempts, homelessness, harassment and abuse, and an increased risk of drug and alcohol misuse.

For Labor, equality is not negotiable. Labor will continue to make mental health and wellbeing services more accessible to diverse communities.

Labor will:

- promote and encourage inclusive workplace practices and activities across public health services;
- promote best-practice inclusive healthcare including in reproductive health services; breast care and cervical care;
- implement (i) Am Equal: Future Directions for Victoria's Intersex Community;
- ensure appropriate LGBTIQ+ equality training resources are available for staff in public sector services (including aged care facilities and disability supports);
- work to build the capacity of Victoria's LGBTIQ+ community controlled health sector to deliver health services to their own communities; and
- continue to deliver public gender affirmation treatments and procedures to ensure timely access to care.

2.6 END-OF-LIFE CHOICES

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

Victoria was the first state in Australia to legislate voluntary assisted dying, providing a safe, legal framework for people suffering and dying to choose the manner and timing of their death.

2.6.1 END-OF-LIFE CARE

Labor understands the importance of high quality palliative care and supports end-of-life decisions under a well-regulated legislative framework.

Labor will:

- work with the Federal Government to support good aged care and palliative care services for vulnerable Victorians;
- provide support and training to medical professionals to deliver palliative care to their patients and facilitate their advanced care planning choices;
- support a skilled multidisciplinary team to maintain optimum health and wellbeing;
- support a model that allows for end-of-life care that is delivered in a safe place with necessary healthcare and support;
- continue to support the use of advance care directives for patients;
- encourage discussion about advance care directives at various points in the health system;
- recognise and support the specific end-of-life needs of Aboriginal Victorians; and
- continue to provide support and training to medical professionals to deal with requests for access to voluntary assisted dying.

2.6.2 ORGAN DONATION

Labor believes that more Victorians should be supported to provide organ and tissue donations and organ transplants.

Labor will:

- advocate for options to increase organ donation in collaboration with the Federal Government;
- support existing transplantation/organ donation coordinators and services; and
- support hospitals to assist potential donors and manage sensitive conversations with a patient's next of kin.

2.6.3 CEMETERY AND CREMATORIA

Labor is committed to active community involvement in the memorialisation and maintenance of Victoria's network of cemeteries and memorial parks and will retain Victoria's cemeteries as public entities.

As the state's population continues to grow, the need for far-sighted future planning and asset allocation in the cemetery sector is more pressing than ever.

Much of Victoria's current cemetery sector structure, including the consolidation of five Class A cemetery trusts, the resourcing and support of the smaller volunteer Class B trusts, as well as establishing better guidelines for the cemetery trusts administered by municipal councils, are legacy achievements of Labor Governments.

Labor's progressive endeavours in the cemetery sector will be underpinned by thorough and ongoing formal consultation with cemetery trusts and local government authorities, as well as industry participants and other stakeholders in order to ensure the broadest possible representation of views.

Labor will:

- conduct a broad community conversation on the range and diversity of memorialisation options, reflecting changing community standards and multicultural preferences;

- consider developing a comprehensive coordinated enrichment of Victoria's cemeteries as passive public recreation spaces for exercise, meditation and contemplation of our past generations, family and friends;
- consider a review of developing perpetual maintenance standards;
- roll out a statewide initiative through Class A Cemetery Trusts to ensure culturally appropriate resting places;
- encourage the development of a digital database of grave and interment data across Victorian cemeteries;
- encourage Cemetery Trusts to establish resourced and valued Friends groups that draw on the volunteer spirit of each cemetery's local community;
- consider what additional resources Class B cemeteries need so as to ensure that the graves of all Victorians are adequately maintained and cherished; and
- consider establishing a statewide forum comprising representatives of Class A, Class B and municipal cemetery management and staff to ensure that all our cemeteries are adequately resourced for the future and to assist in planning for future demand.

2.7 ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS AND ADDICTIONS

Addiction has a devastating impact on families and local communities. Labor is committed to tackling alcohol and drug abuse with a focus on early intervention and treatment measures for Victorians struggling with addiction.

2.7.1 DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES

Labor is committed to delivering improved alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and support for Victorians in need of support and experiencing addiction.

Labor will:

- continue to support AOD care that reduces the number of alcohol and drug-related hospital admissions;
- deliver on the Mental Health Royal Commission recommendations that relate to alcohol and other drug policy and resourcing settings;
- continue to invest in public rehabilitation beds to ensure that consumers, including those in mental health settings, can access rehabilitation services;
- increase the number of available detoxification beds where required;
- continue to support access to medicinal cannabis;
- finalise the decriminalisation of public drunkenness;
- take a harm reduction approach to drug policy based on expert health advice; and
- support an initiative of worker-led addiction rehabilitation and outpatient service involving a tri-partisan approach between government, industry and trade unions.

2.7.2 SMOKING

From bans on smoking in outdoor eating areas, workplaces, pubs and clubs and in cars where children are present, as well as banning cigarette displays in shops and introducing the world-first plain packaging of cigarettes, Labor is a leader when it comes to reducing smoking rates in Victoria.

Labor will:

- support initiatives to reduce the number of smokers and e-cigarette users in Victoria focusing on children and at risk communities where smoking rates are higher;
- support Quit, Cancer Council Victoria and VicHealth in their efforts to reduce smoking;
- continue to adopt measures to reduce exposure to smoking in the workplace; and
- support schools and parents to protect children from the health risks of e-cigarettes.

2.7.3 PROBLEM GAMBLING

Gambling addiction can have a terrible impact on people's mental health, as well as their family. Labor recognises that while gambling is a legitimate recreational activity, its risks must be managed and addiction must be properly treated.

Labor will:

- move toward treatment and funding of gambling addiction as a health response;
- acknowledge gambling harm as an addiction and fund it through the health system; and
- continue services to minimise and treat problem gambling.

2.8 SUPPORTING AND EMPOWERING VICTORIANS WITH A DISABILITY

Labor will keep working for Victoria to be a national leader in realising the social, economic and civic aspirations of people with a disability.

Labor will continue to drive outcomes so that people with a disability have full equality, inclusion and participation in our community. This is a crucial part of building a community that is inclusive and enabling for all Victorians.

2.8.1 SUPPORTING VICTORIANS WITH A DISABILITY

Labor is committed to embedding the social model of disability in Victoria and believes that inclusion, connection, opportunity, recognition, empowerment and purpose should shape responses to the lived experience of Victorians with disability.

Labor seeks to break down the barriers that limit people with disability from fully participating in all aspects of our community. Labor knows that when people with disabilities are included, they maximise their economic, social, cultural and community contribution.

Labor will:

- ensure people with disability are involved in co-design and delivering policy with Government that greatly impacts them, ensuring 'nothing about us, without us';
- ensure Victorian Government infrastructure follows universal design principles and explore ways to incorporate disability accessibility requirements into long-term government infrastructure planning.
- expand workplace disability programs focused on models driven by people with disabilities instead of disempowering 'place and pray' programs;

- continue support reporting schemes for all alleged abuse that occurs in the disability sector;
- expand the Enablers program to create pathway for people with disability into positions of leadership and establish targets for representation of people with disability on Government boards;
- continue mandatory reporting for all alleged abuse of people with a disability;
- support the Federal Government to address the shortcomings and lack of investment in the NDIS during the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government;
- ensure Community Visitors will continue to visit people with a disability wherever they live to support people with a disability wherever they live; and
- work collaboratively with the federal Government to build trust and transparency in the NDIS, ensure the scheme support Victorian's who need it most and co-designing the scheme with people with disability, their families and supporters.

2.9 SENIORS AND OLDER VICTORIANS

Labor recognises that our population is ageing and that those over 85 years old are the fastest growing population group in Australia. Victorians must be supported to 'age well', living healthy, active and purposeful lives as they grow older. Labor supports Victorians being able to safely age in place, maintaining independence and connection to family, friends and community.

Labor recognises that older Victorians make important contributions to our community.

Labor will:

- continue to invest in public aged care, which supports many of Victoria's most vulnerable seniors and is a major care provider and employer in much of rural and regional Victoria;
- ensure senior Victorians are not excluded from society, employment or government services due to the digital divide;
- support older Victorians with cost of living pressures through the Seniors Card and Seniors Business Discount Card programs;
- continue to invest in elder abuse services to prevent, intervene early and address family violence against seniors; and
- support seniors to remain connected to their communities through initiatives such as the Victorian Seniors Festival.

2.9.1 AGED CARE

Public sector aged care plays a critical role in delivering aged care for older Victorians who would otherwise struggle to find appropriate care. Victoria has the largest public sector residential aged care sector of any state in Australia.

Labor will:

- continue to support Victoria's Public Sector Residential Aged Care system across Melbourne and rural and regional Victoria;
- fund small capital improvement projects to enable rural and regional residential aged care services across Victoria to invest in modern infrastructure and equipment; and
- raise awareness, prevent and respond to elder abuse.

2.9.2 MULTICULTURAL AGED CARE

With a growing elderly population of Victorians who speak English as a second language, it is important that multicultural communities have access to culturally sensitive and inclusive services.

Labor will:

- support existing state government commitments to multicultural aged care to ensure culturally appropriate meals, activities and services are available; and
- advocate to the Federal Government to ensure culturally appropriate meals, activities and services are available in multicultural aged care facilities.

3 EDUCATION

Access to lifetime learning & skills for all Victorians

Education is the foundation of social justice, social cohesion and economic prosperity for all Victorians and a priority for Labor. The Labor Government's record investment and reforms are making Victoria the Education State by leading the nation and ensuring that every Victorian child gets the best start in life. Access to quality education and training is key to breaking the cycle of disadvantage and transforming the lives of Victorians.

Labor is creating a culture of lifelong learning beginning in early childhood and progressing through primary and secondary schooling and into vocational education, training and higher education, with an inclusive system providing access and excellence at every stage of this journey.

The policies and reforms introduced by the Labor Government are ensuring Victoria has a world-class education system that delivers benefits across generations. Labor is giving the youngest Victorians the best start possible by extending universal kindergarten to all three-year-olds, while also investing to transform the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) to help students graduate into great jobs and rewarding futures.

Labor also recognises the importance of public provision in vocational education and training (VET), particularly through Technical and Further Education (TAFE). The signature Free TAFE policy, introduced in 2019, has changed lives by providing access to skills and training for careers with real industry demand. More than 110,000 Victorians have already accessed Free TAFE, a number that is growing every day. This policy is now even more important and powerful as we continue our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Labor will continue to ensure that every Victorian has access to great local facilities, through delivering new and upgraded kindergarten, school and TAFE buildings across Victoria.

Alongside bricks and mortar, Labor has introduced and overseen school programs that provide young Victorians with the best start in life. These include Safe Schools, Breakfast Clubs, free dental care for public school students, camps, sports and excursions funded for kids from lower-income families, and a mental health practitioner in every government secondary school.

As our economy continues to recover, the ability to provide a great education and relevant, high-quality education workforce training will be critical for Victoria's future. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our educators have shown unparalleled dedication and professionalism to keep Victorian children safe while supporting them to continue to grow and learn.

Together, we are establishing Victoria as the Education State - delivering great services and outcomes for every child and every learner, regardless of background, place or circumstance.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

3.1 JOBS IN EDUCATION

We all know the difference a great teacher can make. This is why we're delivering a pipeline of initiatives to attract and retain staff in outer metropolitan, rural and regional areas.

Labor believes in providing our children with everything they need to thrive through access to universal, publicly-funded, high-quality education delivered by a highly-skilled and valued workforce in modern and well-resourced schools.

3.1.1 JOBS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Labor recognises the need to provide children with qualified teachers and educators who will be supported by the system to meet the learning needs of every child.

Labor will:

- ensure that pre-service teachers receive high-quality education and training, with an emphasis on music, rhyme, and play to develop learning readiness in children;
- ensure that the kindergarten workforce is supported with ongoing opportunities for professional development, networking, coaching and mentoring;
- support early childhood teachers and educators with access to professional development and resources to support their work with vulnerable children and families;
- investigate opportunities for Victoria to play a leading role in the continued improvement of the National Quality Standards, as well as avenues to ensure quality training
- advocacy for increased wages for early childhood educators;
- continue to implement the Victorian kindergarten workforce strategy that underpins the attraction and retention of qualified staff in the workforce, in consultation with stakeholders, unions and peak bodies; and
- continue working with local councils to expand access to not-for-profit occasional care services.

3.1.2 JOBS IN SCHOOLS

Labor values the dedication and commitment that teachers, principals and education support staff demonstrated during the pandemic and will continue to provide support for them through well-resourced schools, professional support and fair working conditions.

Labor acknowledges that school cleaners play an essential role in the health and wellbeing of students and the whole school community. Their work is crucial to maintaining a safe and hygienic learning environment.

Labor will:

- work to increase the number of teachers from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background;
- continue providing cross-cultural awareness training for principals, teachers, aides and other support staff;
- ensure students have access to adequate learning resources;

- maintain fair employment practices, pay and conditions for the teaching profession;
- ensure a safe and secure workplace for all government school staff;
- continue promoting, supporting and retaining leaders of high integrity, intelligence and commitment; and
- ensure that schools have expert support staff to assist in their administration and the education of students.

TEACHERS

Labor will:

- continue to explore ways to broaden the range of entrants to the profession;
- provide promotion positions, including for outstanding classroom teachers who remain in the classroom;
- provide learning specialist and leading teacher positions to schools throughout the state;
- support the mental health and well-being of government school teachers; and
- maintain professional registration standards via the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

PRINCIPALS

Labor will:

- continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of government school principals;
- continue to address workload concerns; and
- provide leadership that promotes, supports and retains leaders of the highest calibre.

EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF

Labor will:

- ensure schools have expert support staff to assist in their administration and the education of students;
- ensure Integration Aides are adequately recognised for the vital work they undertake in assisting students with disability;
- acknowledge and recognise that school cleaners play an important role in maintaining the health and wellbeing of the school community; and
- monitor the current workplace arrangements for school cleaners to ensure the best outcomes for schools and workers are being achieved.

3.1.3 JOBS IN TAFE AND SKILLS TRAINING

Labor values our TAFE and training sector educators and administrators and will provide them with modern, fit-for-purpose campuses and training equipment, professional support and fair working conditions. Labor will continue to work with industry to provide a clear career path in the training sector to encourage more people to go into the Vocational Education and Training (VET) workforce so we can train the students needed to meet the future needs of the economy.

Labor will:

- provide opportunities for workers in transitioning workforces;
- continue to bolster support provided to students so they get the most out of their training;
- deliver a Workforce Strategy that ensures Victoria will have the workforce it needs to service the local economy;
- continue to upgrade facilities, campuses and equipment to prepare students for the modern workforce; and
- continue providing opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding of Aboriginal culture in order to work effectively with students and families.

3.2 CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Victoria's education and training system is fundamental in supporting the current workforce and younger generations to build the necessary knowledge, skills and capability to adapt to climate change and build public resilience.

Labor understands that, as the heart of local communities, schools must be community leaders in addressing the challenges of climate change.

Labor is committed to halving emissions in Victoria by 2030 and to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. To achieve these targets, Labor will invest in the right training for workers to up-skill, re-skill and cross-skill to meet the massive job and career opportunities created by new energy production, circular economy practices and climate change adaptation.

Labor will:

- continue to deliver programs to support renewable energy in schools, like the Greener Government School Buildings program;
- continue to encourage participation in sustainability programs;
- achieve a greater focus on environmentally efficient building and grounds design in schools;
- deliver a 10-year Clean Economy Workforce Strategy, focusing on Victoria's long-term skills needs in renewable energy;
- continue to support training through the Clean Economy Workforce Capacity Building Fund and the Clean Economy Taskforce;
- continue programs such as the Workforce Training Innovation Fund that support the clean economy; and
- work with the Clean Economy Skills and Jobs Taskforce to address skills gaps.

3.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Every child, no matter where they live or what their circumstances may be, deserves to have the best possible start to life through quality childcare and early education.

Labor recognises that a child's early experiences have a significant impact on their learning and development, and acknowledges that play-based learning is vital for young children as it develops creativity, self-confidence and self-control.

The Labor Government has begun work to deliver the biggest transformation of early childhood education in Victoria's history. We know it is Victorian teachers and educators who will make early education a success and Labor is focused on supporting and expanding the highly-skilled, dedicated early childhood workforce.

Labor's strong investment will save families money on early childhood education, support women to return to the workforce, and ensure every Victorian child has the best start to life. This means immediate relief for family budgets, and more opportunities for kids to learn, play and make friends.

Labor is focused on building the workforce to meet the needs of Victorian children. We will lead the way nationally in early childhood education. Above all, we are committed to giving young Victorian children the best possible early childhood education.

3.3.1 SUPPORTING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH

Lifelong learning starts at birth and, while Labor recognises that parents are a child's first and most enduring educators, we understand the need to support families to ensure all children have access to the services needed to support a successful start on life's learning journey.

The Labor Government is giving every Victorian child the best start in life, with unprecedented investments in early education.

The establishment of 50 government-owned and affordable childcare and early learning centres in high-demand locations across Victoria will give families improved access to childcare and early learning, with better facilities, in every part of Victoria.

Where possible, centres will be at schools to avoid the double drop-off, and alongside hospitals, TAFES and major employers for convenient access for working parents. Where there is demand, centres will operate for extended hours and on weekends so that parents working in industries such as hospitality and healthcare have better support and more options.

Labor will:

- ensure that children, parents and early childhood services are supported by a system that promotes cooperation and professionalism, and is responsive to the needs of all;
- support the provision of early years hubs that bring together local government services, early childhood education, health and family services under one roof;
- continue delivering maternal and child healthcare services;
- continue delivering baby bundles to new families;
- support access to playgroups for vulnerable children;
- continue to deliver School Readiness funding;
- support the learning and development of children with additional needs (diagnosed or undiagnosed) through a robust system of early intervention; and
- provide comprehensive and balanced early childhood programs that motivate and engage children in play and learning;
- engage with teachers, educators and unions to ensure the wages and conditions of government owned services reflect and respect the early learning profession; and

- continue to work with the Federal Government to explore ways to expand the delivery of publicly funded and delivered early education and care.

3.3.2 KINDERGARTEN

In an Australian first, the Labor Government has committed to investing nearly \$9 billion over the next ten years to expand kindergarten programs across the state ensuring our kids get the best start in life, while also helping to reduce the cost of living for Victorian families.

These massive reforms are about setting Victorian kids up for the future and delivering early education and care that actually works for families.

Labor will:

- provide free kindergarten for all Victorian three- and four-year-old children;
- transition four-year-old kindergarten to a universal 30-hour a week Pre-Prep program of play-based learning;
- establish a Pre-Prep Taskforce to bring together staff, unions, early childhood experts, local government, kindergarten and long day care providers and other stakeholders to help inform the implementation of these significant reforms;
- maintain kindergarten services as open and transparent institutions by encouraging participation by parents, teachers and the local community;
- provide Kinder Kits to every three-year-old attending kindergarten, commencing in 2023;
- ensure access to local and responsive early childhood services for children from vulnerable or disadvantaged families;
- continue to support kindergarten programs that promote Aboriginal culture; and
- offer flexible child care suitable for families engaged in casual and part-time employment and study.

3.3.3 FACILITIES

Kindergarten is essential for a child's education and their opportunities in life. However, to get the most out of their education, they need good facilities. Creating more places for children to attend kindergarten and ensuring they can access the best facilities across Victoria is vital to ensuring a world-class education in the early years.

The Labor Government has invested \$1.68 billion in early childhood infrastructure to support the roll-out of statewide three-year-old kindergarten and to deliver on its commitment to build a kindergarten facility at each new primary school.

Labor will:

- build or expand kindergarten facilities so there are more places for three- and four-year-old children, regardless of where they live;
- help integrate community services at kindergartens so families can access early childhood education and care, health and development and family services in one place;
- build kindergartens at, or next to, schools;
- ensure that Victorian kindergartens have shaded, attractive grounds and environmentally efficient buildings to facilitate high-quality programs; and
- work towards extending the Greener Government School Buildings program to Early Childhood Centres.

3.4 SCHOOLS

In 2022 we mark 150 years of public education in Victoria. Labor will continue to promote the importance of a public education system underpinned by a shared belief that every child deserves a high-quality education, regardless of background or economic circumstance.

The Labor Government is building the Education State so that every student can access education at a great local school and has invested more than \$12.8 billion to improve classrooms, upgrade facilities and build new schools across the state.

Under Labor, Victoria's education system supports students by adopting a whole-of-child approach to student wellbeing, and by providing health and wellbeing programs delivered by qualified staff in well-resourced modern facilities.

No matter what its size, sector, location or socio-economic status, Labor will ensure Victorian schools are efficient, effective and inclusive learning communities that values the participation of parents, teachers and students.

Labor will ensure the provision of a comprehensive, accessible system of public schools throughout the state.

Labor will:

- raise the standards of learning and development achieved by Victorians engaged in education and training;
- increase the number of Victorians actively participating in education and training;
- increase the contribution that education and training make to quality of life for all Victorians, particularly children and young people;
- support students to become active learners, with the ability to think critically, solve problems and make sound educational, vocational and personal choices in life;
- support students to develop personal skills such as confidence, initiative, adaptability, self-discipline, resilience, respect, responsibility and honesty, and interpersonal skills such as kindness, tolerance and cooperation;
- ensure the curriculum includes life skills and personal development opportunities for children in primary and secondary school with curriculum activities such as excursions, camps and activities;
- support students to develop their individual talents and abilities;
- help students strive for improvement and excellence so that they become active, well-balanced, knowledgeable citizens, able to participate fully in society;
- ensure the school curriculum includes English, maths, history, science and the arts; and
- provide for an emphasis on life skills in Year 9 and in-school work experience.

3.4.1 INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

All students should be empowered to work toward achieving their own highest potential regardless of their socio-economic background or status, location, disability, culturally or linguistically diverse background in a positive and supportive learning environment.

The Labor Government is committed to ensuring that students, parents, and staff, regardless of ability, have the same access to educational opportunities and infrastructure.

Labor will:

- ensure that schools offer a broad curriculum to attract all local students and to cater for each individual student's need, regardless of their ability;
- ensure schools have facilities which meet community expectations in order to help prevent uneven enrolment patterns;
- support the learning and development of children with additional needs (diagnosed or undiagnosed) through a robust system of early intervention, including enhanced access to the Preschool Field Officer program and Kindergarten Inclusion Support packages;
- support early childhood teachers and educators with access to professional development opportunities to support their work with vulnerable children and families;
- provide appropriate levels of funding to cater for the needs of disadvantaged students;
- use evidence-based research and teacher co-designed programs to assist in addressing educational disadvantage;
- continue to support the Navigator and LOOKOUT programs;
- ensure schools provide advice on career pathways choices relevant to students;
- provide final years options that recognise the complex and different needs of students;
- continue alternative educational programs for students at risk of disengaging;
- ensure students are supported with the necessary medical and/or allied health professionals and educational resources where available;
- provide additional resources to transition students into alternative educational programs and then back to mainstream school, employment or further training where possible; and
- expand where necessary and continue programs that support at-risk students via:
 - pregnancy support programs for students to complete their schooling;
 - mentoring programs that provide positive and relevant role models to students; and
 - the use of Individual Learning Plans where necessary.

3.4.2 EQUALITY

In Victoria, equality is not negotiable. Labor takes a whole-of-school approach to supporting and promoting respectful relationships.

Labor's Respectful Relationships program helps schools promote respect, positive attitudes and behaviours in all aspects of their culture – in the classroom, the playground, the staff room and the broader school community.

By implementing this program in Victorian schools and kindergartens our students will learn from a very young age that the best relationships are respectful ones. Labor understands that attitudes on gender equality begin forming at a young age and, through these programs, Labor will ensure all Victorian children develop positive attitudes towards inclusion and diversity.

Labor will:

- continue to help students to understand the importance of respectful relationships and consent, and to conduct relationships free from violence, abuse, harassment and bullying;
- embed the values of tolerance, respect and diversity in the curriculum and school structures;
- continue the Safe Schools Program;
- enable girls and young women to explore and expand their leadership capabilities and examine opportunities to demonstrate their leadership potential; and
- work to increase the uptake of the Respectful Relationships program in independent schools; and
- continue to support the Courage to Care program.

3.4.3 ADDRESSING DISADVANTAGE

Labor understands that disadvantage can be reduced throughout the learning pathway – early childhood, school and tertiary education. We owe it to every Victorian child to give them the very best opportunities in life, and that starts with making sure every student has the facilities they need to learn and grow, no matter what school they attend.

Victoria's education reforms will help every Victorian child and family access high-quality, equitable and inclusive services, providing additional support for those who need it.

Under Labor, all children, regardless of their particular needs or backgrounds can learn in a positive and supportive environment.

3.4.4 SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Under Labor, Victorian students with a disability, their schools and their families get the support they deserve to make sure every student thrives at school and in life.

The Labor Government is making sure that students with a disability are supported in the classroom through an Australian-first \$1.6 billion Disability Inclusion package.

This reform will provide every child with tailored support they need – support that focuses on their strengths and ability, not their disability. This investment will completely transform how Victorian government schools educate and include students with a disability. These reforms will help us achieve this ambition and make all schools more welcoming and inclusive of all students with a disability.

Labor will:

- ensure the right of students with a disability to attend a mainstream school;

- ensure that students with additional needs and disabilities are supported in their learning in a fair, safe and inclusive school environment;
- continue to implement the Disability Inclusion package in every Victorian government school, ensuring students with a disability and teachers have more access to support;
- ensure timely assessment of students with disabilities and/or impairments;
- ensure students with additional needs in rural and regional Victoria have access to schools and resources;
- ensure all teachers and education support staff are well-equipped to educate and support students with disability; and
- upgrade and deliver fit-for-purpose classrooms and amenities, accessible sporting facilities, assembly spaces and music rooms at special schools.

3.4.5 RURAL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS

Labor understands that families need access to high-quality education services in rural and remote communities. The Labor Government has taken action to bridge the divide between regional and metropolitan schools.

Labor will:

- support schools that continue to service remote and rural communities;
- ensure appropriate education provision in rural and remote communities;
- provide adequate teaching and learning resources to support students in rural and regional Victoria;
- ensure opportunities for sporting or other local community groups to use the school's facilities as a shared facility where possible; and
- ensure that all schools in small townships have the relevant technology to facilitate online learning to give students access to a full range of curriculum areas.

3.4.6 ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Education is the roadmap to reducing disadvantage.

The Labor Government is working to achieve educational equity and success for students from Aboriginal backgrounds.

Labor is committed to improving educational access, experiences, and outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families.

Labor will:

- embed Victorian Aboriginal aspirations and outcomes as core business, including early childhood services, schools and training providers;
- ensure that Aboriginal students have equal access to opportunities;
- work to increase the number of teachers from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background;
- ensure that Aboriginal programs and supports are co-designed by Aboriginal communities through self-determination consultations;
- partner with Aboriginal organisations to develop ways to lift and improve school attendance and achievement; and
- support schools to promote Aboriginal culture in schools in recognition that Aboriginal participation is directly linked to culture and the notion of cultural safety.

3.4.7 EDUCATION IN YOUTH JUSTICE SETTINGS

Young people in youth justice are some of Victoria's most vulnerable, many of whom have highly complex barriers to engagement in education. Young people within the youth justice system require additional support to reach their potential.

Labor will:

- support young people within the youth justice system to engage in education settings;
- ensure learning environments are positive, culturally safe and free from stigma;
- continue meaningful engagement with young people, families/carers, community and support services; and
- ensure access to education programs in conjunction with, and/or supported by, vocational training, access to or referral pathways to psychological and/or counselling support and other medical or allied health professionals where appropriate.

3.4.8 ACHIEVING GREAT OUTCOMES

Labor acknowledges the importance of providing a safe and positive learning environment in which all students can realise their potential.

Labor will:

- ensure the Student Excellence Program continues to stretch high-ability students;
- build teacher capability to support and extend their high-ability students;
- provide opportunities for schools to nominate high-ability students for targeted academic programs supported by tertiary institutions across the state;
- fund every government school to employ a high-ability practice leader to coordinate their school's participation in enrichment programs and support their high-ability students; and
- equip schools with the resources, tools and professional learning opportunities needed to support high-ability students.

3.4.9 STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Now more than ever, Victorian kids need support both at home and at school to make sure their wellbeing is on track. Labor will support individual students, help teachers better identify and support at-risk students, and build relationships and referral pathways to local mental health services.

Labor will:

- expand the successful Mental Health in Primary Schools program to every government school;
- support schools to implement best-practice mental health and wellbeing support;
- continue to support welfare professionals to upgrade their skills;
- continue delivering secular support services;
- complete the implementation of the Child Link initiative, to make sure children are comprehensively supported by government departments and agencies; and
- address health issues impacting on the educational performance of Aboriginal students, especially in regard to closing the gap in the area of education disadvantage; and
- continue the school breakfast program.

3.4.10 LANGUAGES

Labor supports Victorian students having access to languages other than English, as well as supporting their understanding of international cultures and languages.

Labor will:

- encourage early childhood centres and schools to deliver language education in a coordinated way, to promote the ability of students to continue their language study from primary school into secondary school;
- continue to support and expand bilingual programs; and
- support Aboriginal language programs in conjunction with Aboriginal Victorian Elders and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association.

3.4.11 GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Labor maintains schools as open institutions and encourages the participation of parents, teachers, students and the local community in decision-making through effective, representative institutions and transparent processes.

Labor will:

- continue to support strong partnerships between schools, students, parents, principals, teachers and the community, so that all schools are governed effectively and are able to meet the educational needs of their students; and
- ensure school councils and boards operate as effective democratic, representative school community decision-making bodies.

3.4.12 FUNDING

Every student should have access to a great school, regardless of where they live. Labor will ensure all Victorian students have access to schools that meet their needs and provide them with a high-quality education.

The Labor Government has provided record investment to ensure our schools have the best facilities, that our classrooms have the best teachers, and that every child is given every chance to succeed.

Labor will:

- ensure students have adequate numbers of teachers, other staff and resources to support their learning;
- ensure the school funding formula supports an appropriate level of staffing, an effective, broad and accessible curriculum and modern, high-quality grounds and facilities;
- ensure free, compulsory and secular education is accessible to all Victorian students;
- ensure all students have adequate standards of education, teacher professionalism and learning opportunities;
- ensure the efficient, effective and equitable use of taxpayer funds in all schools; and
- continue to commit to achieving 75 per cent state funding towards the national Schooling Resource Standard.

3.4.13 MODERN BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Labor understands that Victorian schools must have shaded, attractive grounds and attractive, solid, technologically advanced and environmentally efficient buildings that can be adapted for community use and changed purposes.

Labor will:

- continue to provide high-quality educational facilities for government schools;
- achieve a greater focus on environmentally efficient building and grounds design in schools;
- acquire sufficient land for future school needs; and
- ensure that there is proper provision of public education to meet future needs in both existing and new communities.

3.5 SKILLS FOR ALL VICTORIANS

Labor believes that a world-class, joined-up vocational training system is a critical economic and social enabler. It is the engine room of the economy and creates opportunities for many Victorians who might otherwise miss out.

Victoria's reforms in tertiary education have improved stability in the TAFE sector and are aimed at aligning training with the needs of industry and the economy. Through the Education State Skills First reforms, Victoria has restored trust, confidence and pride in the TAFE and training sectors by emphasising quality, revitalising industry engagement and restoring ongoing funding.

3.5.1 AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE TRAINING SYSTEM

Labor believes every Victorian deserves access to a high-quality training system that delivers the relevant training that industry needs, and is inclusive of, and accessible to, all Victorians.

Labor will:

- remove physical, social and economic barriers to ensure students with a disability can access fit-for-purpose TAFE and training;
- continue to ensure that equity and inclusion are embedded in all aspects of the TAFE and training system;
- maintain a fair concessional system for accessing training that ensures those who need reduced fees can access them;
- continue to improve access for all to Free TAFE and government-subsidised training in areas of prioritised industry need;
- expand the eligibility criteria for Free TAFE and government-subsidised training to people on all Bridging Visas;
- improve access to literacy, numeracy and digital literacy programs to enhance student educational engagement and improve educational outcomes;
- continue providing funding to deliver important support services, including Community Services Funding and Reconnect, and funding streams for Koorie Liaison Officers and Disability Liaison Officers; and
- support direct linkages to education pathways in the areas of mental health, rehabilitation, harm reduction and housing agencies to help those services to access education for their consumers.

3.5.2 CONNECTING SCHOOLING TO JOBS

Vocational training is critical to ensuring that all Victorians can get the skills they need for a good quality job and meaningful career. Labor believes that students should have access to high-quality vocational and applied learning options. By ensuring that our students get the skills they need for the jobs they want, we are also investing in our state's future prosperity.

Labor will:

- provide for an integrated senior secondary certificate, with vocational learning embedded in the VCE, replacing and building on the successes of the existing VCAL certificate;
- ensure that VET Delivered to Secondary Students (VDSS) is informed by the Skills Plan, is closely aligned to Victoria's growth sectors and local industry needs, and improves employment opportunities;
- ensure every senior secondary student has access to VET; and
- ensure career guidance in schools promotes the outstanding outcomes that post-school VET provides, with further VET study recognised as having equal value as other tertiary pathways.

3.5.3 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Labor believes that a training system can only deliver for the needs of the economy and for all Victorians if it is focused on quality, with a highly-skilled workforce, using up-to-date equipment to deliver training that is relevant to student and industry needs.

Labor will:

- continue to move away from a contestable market training system to a managed training system with TAFE at the centre, and where quality, relevance and access are the key priorities;
- continue Skills First funding for reputable, quality-focused training providers, but ensure public provision and TAFE are the anchors of the system;
- continue the critical role of the Victorian Skills Authority in embedding industry into the training system and producing cutting-edge research into the skills needs of Victoria;
- keep out providers who exploit students and drive down confidence in Victoria's VET system;
- give preference for government funding to non-TAFE training providers that are not-for-profit;
- work with the Federal Government to provide adequate funding for vocational training, while recognising the importance of state autonomy; and
- introduce reforms to deliver a more agile and responsive training system, without undermining the important role played by unions and industry.

3.5.4 APPRENTICESHIPS

Labor believes in investing in skills and secure work for Victorians. The apprenticeship 'learn and earn' model provides a pathway to secure and valued careers, and once qualified, Victorian apprentices are issued with trade papers, which are a career passport for life.

Labor will:

- maintain and expand the work of Apprenticeships Victoria to support more apprentices and trainees;
- expand the Apprenticeships Support Officers program to ensure apprentices and trainees receive the support they need;
- improve apprenticeship safety education and regulation through the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to keep apprentices safe at work;
- expand Victoria's TAFE Demonstration Projects so more apprentices and trainees can learn on Victoria's Big Build projects;
- increase the diversity of Victoria's apprentices and trainees;
- work with local government and unions to address areas of skill shortage to expand apprentice and traineeships in local government; and
- develop degree-level apprenticeships to further build the pipeline of skilled workers for Victoria.

3.5.5 ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) plays a critical role in skilling Victorians for work, further study, and to participate confidently in their local community. Labor believes that ACFE is a critical part of the post-secondary system and should be supported to give that opportunity to Victorians who would otherwise be excluded from education.

Labor will:

- implement the Ministerial Statement on the Future of Adult Community Education in Victoria 2020-25;
- support and strengthen the capacity of place-based ACFE providers to meet the educational and personal development needs of their local communities;
- support the maintenance of strong and effective community ownership/management of ACFE providers;
- increase access to Learn Locals across the state and support providers to deliver training that leads to jobs in areas of labour shortages;
- ensure that TAFEs work in partnership with Learn Locals, including by sharing facilities, developing formal partnerships and pathways, and supporting students to complete ACFE courses concurrently while studying at TAFE; and
- continue to strengthen the role of Learn Locals that are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to play an important complementary role to TAFE.

3.5.6 TAFE

TAFE is at the centre of Victoria's training system. A well-funded public TAFE system is vital to delivering Labor's ambition for Victorians to have the very best training system that leads to a diversity of great careers in fields where there is a workforce demand.

Labor will not only continue to build the best TAFE network Victoria has ever had, it will also protect TAFE to ensure no future government can try to undermine it.

Labor will:

- ensure that TAFE receives the majority share of government funding to maintain its central role as the public provider;
- expand Free TAFE to ensure that more Victorians have access to free courses;
- ensure that TAFE funding reflects the real cost of delivery, and continue to provide TAFEs with specific funding that recognises their unique role as a public provider;
- continue to build a TAFE network centred around collaboration, not competition;
- continue building world-class TAFE facilities and campuses across Victoria;
- establish a TAFE Teaching Excellence Academy to improve teaching quality and support opportunities for TAFE teachers to expand their knowledge and skills;
- expand meaningful work placements across TAFE courses to give more students work experience opportunities while studying and make them job-ready;
- develop industry endorsement of TAFE courses to ensure relevance and quality;
- support a national review of post-compulsory education and training; and
- review the efficacy of online learning.

3.5.7 UNIVERSITIES

Victoria's universities are vital to our status as the Education State and they play a critical role in our economy and community. Our universities are vital to the future economic and social prosperity of Victoria and are a source of future employment for Victorians.

Labor believes in working in partnership with universities, while supporting fit-for-purpose governance arrangements that recognise the important role that staff and students play in the operation of universities.

Labor believes that the Federal Government, which has the primary responsibility for universities in Australia, needs to significantly increase funding in order to ensure that universities can deliver what Victoria needs, while providing greater job security to staff.

Labor will:

- work closely with universities to ensure they are playing their part in delivering the pipeline of skilled workers Victoria needs, informed by the Victorian Skills Plan;
- ensure high standards of governance and accountability are maintained in higher education institutions, in a transparent and efficient manner, including university councils with elected staff and student representation;
- work with universities to build a culture for staff and students that is safe, inclusive and secure, including fair pay and conditions for the workforce and safe campus environments for students;
- advocate to the Federal Government to provide better funding to universities for teaching and research, and to work with universities to reduce their reliance on insecure work; and
- continue to support strategic partnerships between the Victorian Government and universities, to catalyse world-class research and innovation across Victoria.

4 Transport

Transforming Victoria's transport network

A huge part of our economy in Victoria is our transport plan - Victoria's Big Build - delivering the largest ever integrated transport infrastructure program in our state's history.

Labor is investing an unprecedented \$90 billion in 165 major rail and road projects right across the state. That means projects, big and small, in metropolitan Melbourne and rural and regional Victoria.

Labor is removing 85 level crossings to reduce congestion on our roads, building the Metro Tunnel to run more trains more often, and delivering a train to Melbourne Airport. We're building a new underground rail loop to meet the growing needs of our city, expanding our train network and making an unmatched investment into rolling stock. Labor is getting on with delivering the world class public transport system that our state deserves.

Labor is addressing congestion on our roads. In the west, we are delivering a vital alternative to the West Gate Bridge with the new West Gate Tunnel, which will remove thousands of trucks from local streets. We are building the missing link in Melbourne's freeway network by delivering the North East Link, joining the Ring Road in Greensborough with the Eastern Freeway in Doncaster. In addition, we are delivering massive upgrades to the Monash Freeway and the M80 Ring Road, providing more lanes and interchanges.

Labor understands the value of a strong pipeline of work and what it means, for people who can get good jobs, for industry, and for the broader economy. About 20,000 people are directly engaged in delivering Victoria's pipeline of transport projects, and many thousands more play important supporting roles in everything from planning, engineering and manufacturing to finance, human resources and administration.

Labor recognises that distance, if not met by adequate transport links, is a major barrier to economic and social opportunity, particularly because it can limit access to job opportunities, healthcare services and education in both Melbourne and across regional Victoria. The Labor Government's record investment in vital projects like the Suburban Rail Loop is making it easier, faster and more convenient for all Victorians to access our fastest-growing employment, health, education and retail centres.

Labor is committed to the Clean Energy Economy and recognizes Transport is an essential component of Victorias zero emissions future.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

4.1 JOBS

The benefits of Labor's transformative transport infrastructure program, in the form of job opportunities, economic activity and skills development, are being experienced by workers and families across the state.

Labor's Big Build is supporting thousands of jobs and helping to boost the economy: there are almost 20,000 people working directly on our projects, and for every 100 jobs supported directly, an average of 200 are supported indirectly across the community.

Labor is committed to ensuring that all Victorians continue enjoying the benefits of our Big Build – today, and tomorrow.

Labor will:

- create local jobs, training opportunities and investment in Victoria;
- continue to provide long-term and secure work opportunities for workers; and
- provide access to social and economic opportunities through Victoria's infrastructure program.

4.1.1 PEOPLE

Labor understands that staff across the network are our most valuable asset. Workers are at the heart of Victoria's transport network. Without the dedicated staff working across the network each day, Victorians would be left without a means of care, compassion and safety as they commute each day.

Labor will:

- work collaboratively to upgrade host stations to premium stations;
- together with unions, TAFE and business, employ, up-skill and train Victorian workers and apprentices in the bus, train, tram and train transport sector;
- employ new staff where required including additional train drivers, signallers, train controllers, network operators, surveillance officers, maintenance workers, station staff, traction line workers and signal technicians to support the Big Build;
- ensure conductor numbers meet operational requirements and manage fatigue
- continue the rollout of 100 additional authorised officers across the public transport network; and
- ensure minimum frontline staffing requirements for a positive customer service experience.

4.1.2 SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE

Under Labor, safety is not negotiable. Labor will work with network operators and unions to ensure that workers and commuters are kept safe when working on or using Victoria's transport network.

Labor will:

- enforce tough penalties and a public awareness campaign to address assaults on public transport workers;
- ensure safety equipment is available for customer-facing staff;
- employ additional maintenance staff and examiners where required to support maintenance of the public transport network;

- employ additional train controllers where required to operate Big Build infrastructure and associated service uplifts;
- implement an expanded infrastructure maintenance regime and strengthen maintenance delivery oversight of operators;
- work with operators to ensure appropriate staffing levels are in place that support a safe working environment;
- invest in improved CCTV across buses, trains and trams for the security of staff and commuters;
- construct and operate modern, efficient, best practice maintenance facilities;
- ensure high safety standards across the public transport network;
- install defibrillators at all premium stations (metropolitan train stations that are staffed from the first train service in the morning to the last service at night);
- increase V/Line rolling stock maintenance investment to improve standards ahead of a growing fleet and more frequent services;
- support safe deployment of station staff as required;
- boost network reliability and improve performance across V/Line services; and
- ensure there is sufficient staff to meet reactive and planned maintenance activities.

4.1.3 TRAINING

Training Victoria's transport workers is an investment in the future. Without extensive, ongoing, and high quality training, safety and reliability are compromised, impacting both workers and commuters. Labor will work with network operators and unions to ensure training is delivered in a timely and effective manner.

Labor will:

- invest in a skilled, sustainable workforce to manufacture and maintain current fleets alongside newer trains to ensure availability of rolling stock for expanded service and retain valuable industry knowledge
- work with other states to support the development of nationally accredited rail training ;
- implement industry Safe Working accreditation and support full-time work to increase flexibility and minimise costs across current and future project delivery;
- promote First Aid Training for all front line and operational staff;
- support the development of a workforce for the growing electric vehicle and heavy vehicles sector;
- work with unions and industry to recruit and train the next generation of traction overhead line workers and signal technicians; and
- work with industry and unions to encourage more culturally and linguistically diverse Victorians into apprenticeships in public transport.

4.2 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT

Since 2014 Labor has invested \$90 billion in Victoria's transport system – delivering an unprecedented program of work through level crossing removals, major road upgrades and major tunnelling projects like the Melbourne Metro Tunnel, West Gate Tunnel and North East Link.

As Victoria continues to grow, our roads, rail, trams and tunnels must keep up. Labor hasn't wasted a single second in building for the future.

Labor's Big Build program has duplicated rail tracks, built new stations, improved the local road network, built new shared user paths, grown plants to create parklands and recreation space. From the state's biggest transport projects to upgrading the roundabout at the end of the street, Labor will continue delivering the projects to get Victorians to work and home to their families, safer and sooner.

4.2.1 INFRASTRUCTURE

Labor is expanding the metropolitan rail network capacity with projects including Metro Tunnel, Melbourne Airport Rail, the Suburban Rail Loop, Geelong Fast Rail, Ballarat Line Upgrade, Sunbury Line Upgrade, Hurstbridge Line Duplication, Pakenham Line Extension, Cranbourne Line Duplication and the removal of 85 level crossings.

These projects will deliver improvements to our rail system and pave the way for future projects.

Labor will:

- continue to improve network capacity and efficiency through Victoria's infrastructure program;
- continue to upgrade overhead rail electrical lines and signals across the metropolitan network;
- continue lengthening platforms across the rail network to accommodate longer trains;
- ensure all new stations are built to accommodate longer trains, where possible;
- continue to duplicate metropolitan lines to boost capacity on the network where possible;
- explore opportunities to provide services between key suburbs until the SRL is complete;
- build gauge standardisation into upgrades and future projects where possible; and
- continue to deliver safety, accessibility and amenity upgrades at stations across the network to improve passenger experience and employee health and safety.

4.2.2 PROCUREMENT (INCLUDING ROLLING STOCK)

Since 2014, Labor has invested nearly \$8 billion for hundreds of new trains, trams and buses built in Victoria for Victorians. This investment and Labor's commitment to a minimum of 50 per cent local content is supporting close to 10,000 jobs across Victorian's advanced rolling stock manufacturing industry and supply chains.

Government purchasing power is one of the best ways of ensuring Victoria's transport system creates more jobs for Victorians. Through the Local Jobs First policy, Labor has ensured that each of Victoria's high-value transport projects put Victorian workers first.

Labor will:

- continue to maximise local content in new trains, trams and buses manufactured in Victoria;
- ensure that manufacturing and maintenance of rolling stock is performed locally where possible;
- ensure there are enough new trains, trams and buses to meet the future needs of the network;
- continue to deliver new High Capacity Metro Trains, X'Trapolis 2.0, and VLocity trains along with Next Generation Trams;
- continue to invest in new train stabling where required;
- continue Victoria's strong investment in the manufacturing and maintenance of electric vehicle buses;
- explore options to maintain and refurbish existing stock; and
- continue planning for the next generation of regional trains.

4.2.3 TRAINS

Trains are the core of Victoria's transport network, and investment in rail will ensure quality and reliability across the entire transport network. Labor has delivered 1,200 additional train services each week on the Metropolitan Train network. Labor will continue to work towards a turn up and go train service in Metropolitan Melbourne and deliver benefits through Melbourne Metro Tunnel, as well as delivering on the Suburban Rail Loop.

Labor will:

- maximise the use of new and existing rail infrastructure and add additional train services where possible;
- build the Melbourne Airport Rail Link;
- work to expand modern high capacity signalling on the metropolitan rail network where possible;
- develop a coordinated plan for network development and improvement, to be developed in consultation with operators, government and unions;
- increase capacity and services on the Melton line; and
- continue to remove level crossings across the metropolitan network.

4.2.4 SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP

Suburban Rail Loop is the biggest transport project in Australia's history and will transform the way Melbourne lives and works for decades to come. Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) will link every major railway line from Frankston to Werribee via the airport, providing important travel connections in Melbourne's middle suburbs.

Labor will deliver the Suburban Rail Loop, making it easier, faster and more convenient for all Victorians to access our fastest-growing employment, health, education, retail and job centres.

Labor will:

- start SRL Initial Works and Early Works in 2022;
- maximise jobs, training and local content on the project;
- ensure SRL stations are premium and staffed; and
- ensure SRL stations are integrated with existing connecting stations.

4.2.5 TRAMS

With 250 kilometres of double track, more than 1700 tram stops, and a fleet of approximately 500 trams, Melbourne has the world's largest urban tram network.

Labor will continue to invest in Melbourne's tram network, delivering the largest investment in locally-made trams in Australia's history – supporting thousands of jobs and improving access to Melbourne's iconic tram network. This includes delivering 100 new Next Generation Trams as part of the largest investment in Melbourne's tram network in decades.

Labor will:

- invest in Melbourne's tram network to improve service and reliability;
- implement additional tram priority signalling at suitable intersections;
- ensure there are enough new trams to meet the current and future needs of the network;
- continue improving accessibility, safety and comfort across the public transport network;
- continue planning for possible future extensions of the tram and light rail network to improve connections to the train system and services to key employment, retail and residential precincts;
- expand the separation of trams and car traffic on the road network; and
- improve the electrical supply infrastructure on Melbourne's tram network.

4.2.6 BUSES

Buses are the links in Melbourne's transport network, and necessary for Victorians to commute around the city. Labor has invested over \$500 million in new and improved bus services and delivered Victoria's Bus Plan to guide reform of the bus network. By investing in clean, comfortable and reliable buses, new routes and further increasing frequency across the network, Labor will ensure more people can get to work, home, or wherever they need to be – safely and smoothly.

Labor will:

- continue rollout of Victoria's Bus Plan and build on reforms and investments made since 2014, improving services and bus connections for passengers;
- maximise opportunities to deliver priority bus lanes and expand the use of zero emissions buses;
- explore opportunities to expand express bus lanes across metropolitan Melbourne;
- continue to expand Victoria's bus network to provide connections to key education and health services;
- work to improve co-ordination of buses and trains on routes servicing the metropolitan rail network;
- continue to improve safety measures for bus drivers including from assault; and
- explore opportunities to expand high frequency shuttle services and increase capacity on key routes, including priority bus rapid transit lanes.

4.2.7 ROADS

Melbourne has the most extensive freeway network of any city in Australia. When our roads stop due to congestion or accidents, Melbourne stops. That's why Labor is planning and delivering dozens of major road projects around metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Labor is delivering the biggest investment in roads in the state's history, supporting projects that include new roads, road widening, new bridges and major freeway upgrades. These projects will reduce congestion and travel times, improve safety, connect communities and improve the roads you rely on every day.

Labor will:

- complement investment in new road projects with additional investment in public transport;
- work with the city of Melbourne to improve options for safe loading and unloading of deliveries in the CBD;
- use existing infrastructure and new technologies to improve traffic flow and tackle congestion;
- consolidate and expand the prioritisation of road use space including bus lanes, dedicated truck routes and separate safe pedestrian/cycling areas;
- ensure road planning has an integrated whole-of-government approach that takes into consideration public transport connections, alternative means of transport and supports a diversification of modes to prioritise last mile delivery; and
- continue to build new roads and upgrade existing roads in our rapidly growing outer suburbs.

4.2.8 AIRPORTS

Victoria is rightly recognised for its prosperity and liveability. Victoria's airports are our primary gateway for air travel, tourism and freight, providing access to interstate and international markets. Our airports connect our people, businesses and institutions to the world.

Labor will continue to work with Victoria's airport operators to ensure our airports serve both the community and Victoria's economic needs.

Labor will:

- minimise urban growth encroachment into the flight paths of airports where possible;
- support the development of airports to meet the needs of industry and communities;
- ensure that airports meet environmental and safety standards;
- continue to support the development of air freight; and
- support the development and retention of training opportunities for apprentices and pilots in the aviation industry tied to permanent, full-time jobs.

4.3 REGIONAL TRANSPORT

The population of regional Victoria will double to around two million people over the next 20 years, with cities and towns within a two-hour arc of Melbourne growing the fastest. To support this growth, Labor will continue to ensure that the regional road and rail network is being enhanced, rebuilt and modernised so Victorians can get home safer and sooner.

4.3.1 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

We know that public transport plays a vital role in connecting communities, particularly in rural and regional Victoria. Labor will continue to upgrade infrastructure, buy new trains and improve facilities and accessibility for regional passengers. This will open up opportunities for work, education and leisure for communities living in regional Victoria.

Labor recognises the important role regional coach and bus services play within and between cities and towns, linking smaller communities to larger centres and connecting Victorians.

Labor will:

- make regional rail services more reliable and comfortable with extra services;
- provide better connections between buses and trains, modern signalling and infrastructure, and better phone and internet coverage;
- improve amenities for regional commuters including refreshment options;
- continue to install boom-gates and other safety upgrades at regional level crossings to make them safer;
- engage with the union and regional communities to consider the need for buffet services on long distance regional trains;
- introduce new modern trains across the regional passenger rail network;
- extend regional passenger rail services on the Mildura line;
- separate regional and metropolitan lines to provide faster and more reliable services;
- provide more frequent, reliable and connected bus services to increase regional public transport options;

- secure premises for the V/Line network control centre to future-proof network reliability and service continuity;
- invest in a dedicated rail infrastructure evaluation vehicle for the regional network to ensure regional Victorians get the maintenance priority they deserve; and
- improve targeted and on-demand regional bus services.

4.3.2 ROADS

A functioning and well-maintained network supports safer and more reliable journeys for all road users, whether you're driving a car or truck, riding a bike or crossing the street.

Just as in the city, it is vital our regional roads are built and maintained to be made stronger, safer and more durable.

Tragically, the majority of Victoria's road deaths occur on regional roads, with heavy vehicle operators the most disproportionately represented in these statistics. Labor will continue its investment to make regional roads safer.

Labor will:

- continue to prioritise investment in regular maintenance of regional and rural roads;
- upgrade truck and rest stops with suitable amenity to incentivise fatigue management;
- upgrade arterial roads to improve connectivity between the regions and meet the demands of future growth;
- protect primary regional freight corridors to enable industry to access facilities such as ports, intermodal terminals and other key infrastructure; and
- continue to improve safety on regional roads by installing safety infrastructure, upgrade level crossings and remove dangerous black spots to help reduce the unacceptable number of deaths on country roads.

4.4 ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

Access to public transport plays an important role in allowing all Victorians to reach their full potential. It enables people to travel to work or study, connects them to family, friends and their community, and provides easier access to employment and services such as healthcare and education.

4.4.1 ACCESSIBILITY

Labor will work with network operators, unions and community groups to ensure our public transport network is inclusive and accessible for all Victorians.

Labor will:

- continue to improve transport safety and deliver an integrated, sustainable and safe transport system;
- develop a Transport Accessibility Strategy to identify and prioritise improvements across all forms of transport;
- develop and introduce an action plan that establishes a clear and rapid roadmap towards a fully accessible public transport network;
- continue to be guided by expert advice to create a public transport system that is accessible to people with disabilities, older people and vulnerable Victorians;
- ensure that new and upgraded tram, train and bus infrastructure has better access for people with a disability;

- accelerate the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport program to support local and established rail workshops and deliver on community expectations;
- use new technology to make the network more accessible; and
- make sure new trains, trams and buses are accessible to all Victorians, including by installing raised platform ramps at all stations.

4.4.2 WALKING AND CYCLING

The health and environmental benefits of walking and cycling are clear. Labor will continue to provide new and upgraded walking and cycling paths, making travel easier, safer, and more enjoyable.

Labor will:

- provide better infrastructure, including footpaths, bike paths, separated bike lanes and pedestrian crossings;
- ensure that investments and modifications in shared road user spaces such as cycling lanes and bike infrastructure are developed with the needs of all road users in mind;
- improve cycling and pedestrian links to public transport, schools and public amenities;
- expand and link up our existing bike and pedestrian path networks;
- look at ways to improve pedestrian safety around congested intersections;
- make sure options for cycling and walking are factored into road upgrades;
- encourage the safe and efficient use of shared paths and roads through improved design and communication;
- promote active transport to school;
- upgrade bike infrastructure to protect and improve the safety of couriers and delivery riders;
- ensure that road design encourages pedestrian and cycling amenity; and
- upgrade additional infrastructure including protected bike lanes, rest stops and priority bus lanes.

4.5 FREIGHT

4.5.1 PORTS AND SHIPPING

Victoria's commercial ports are essential to our businesses and our communities: while goods are moving, our economy is moving, and people have jobs. Around 98 per cent of Victoria's exports (by volume) move via our commercial ports. At the same time, over \$85 billion worth of goods were imported into Victoria last year, largely via our ports.

The Port of Melbourne is central to Victoria's economic performance. Labor will work with operators and unions to ensure the Port operates at its optimal capability whilst ensuring workers are safe and protected.

Labor will:

- ensure that Ports Victoria provides technical support and guidance regarding the preparation of Port Development Strategies;
- work with Victorian ports, including the Port of Melbourne, to ensure efficient capacity to handle the freight task is being provided;
- prioritise moving freight by rail from the Port of Melbourne to reduce trucking and road congestion;

- work with the Port of Melbourne to support planning for the next tranche of container capacity;
- work with the Commonwealth to investigate opportunities to sustainably develop a coastal shipping industry as a key platform for Victorians to work and gain maritime workplace experience;
- support investment and development in Victoria's regional ports;
- establish a Victorian Maritime Jobs Taskforce to provide advice to the Victorian Minister for Ports and Freight, Department of Transport and Ports Victoria on options and opportunities to support Victorians to establish a career in the maritime industry;
- prepare a Port Landside Access Plan for each commercial trading port, supporting the development of Port Development Strategies by each port manager;
- support the establishment of a national strategic shipping fleet to help deliver fuel and energy security for Victorian industry and citizens;
- consider amendments to the Marine Safety Act 2010 (Vic) and Marine Safety Regulations 2012 (Vic) to enhance marine safety through employment of Australian seafaring and marine sector labour in Victoria;
- support the development of the Victorian offshore wind energy sector including maximisation of employment of Australian maritime workers and maximisation of local content in wind energy infrastructure;
- work with Victorian ports to prepare a 'port supply chain guide' confirming roles and responsibilities of industry participants to promote a shared understanding across the sector;
- work with industry to further develop a Voluntary Code of Practice for how industry works together to respond to a blockage in container flows when it occurs;
- Work with Victorian ports and the cruise ship industry to increase cruise ship visits, including to regional ports;
- explore opportunities to expand short sea shipping between regional ports and the Port of Melbourne, and in Bass Strait trade; and
- explore new industrial development/value-adding opportunities in sectors such as hydrogen, ammonia, green steel and green aluminium where sea freight could be the preferred transport mode.

4.5.2 RAIL FREIGHT

Across Victoria, our freight network relies on both road and rail connections. The Labor Government is investing in works to move more freight from road to rail, particularly long-haul freight, where rail is superior.

Victoria generates more economic growth and more jobs from freight than any other state. Freight is the economic engine for much of regional Victoria. That's why better freight connections are essential to the success of Victorian businesses and primary producers and, ultimately, to job creation across all parts of our economy.

Labor will:

- work with the Commonwealth to deliver the Outer Metropolitan Ring (OMR) rail line to promote more freight travelling to the ports by rail, improve the condition of Victoria's freeways and bridges, and take trucks off local roads in the western and northern suburbs;
- work with the Commonwealth to fund the Western Interstate Freight Terminal;
- collaborate with industry stakeholders including unions to develop an industry plan to ensure rail is competitive into the future;

- work with industry to facilitate the delivery of port rail shuttle services; and
- ensure that throughout the delivery of inland rail and the OMR that maintenance of infrastructure and rolling stock generates jobs in Victoria by means of local content provisions.

4.5.3 HEAVY VEHICLES AND ROAD TRANSPORT

Heavy vehicles and road transport are crucial components of Victoria's economy. The industry is in high demand as a consequence of supply chain pressures and Victoria's nation-leading Big Build. Labor recognises the essential role that drivers, whether they be employees or owner-drivers, play in ensuring Victorians benefit from the massive investment in infrastructure projects across the state.

Labor will:

- explore proposals to make registration more affordable and simpler for truck owner-drivers to ease economic pressure;
- consider proposals for free heavy vehicle licensing for new drivers under the age of 40 to address ageing workforce issues and driver shortages putting a strain on the industry; and
- work with established and recognised unions and employers to review rates and levies for owner-drivers on Government projects.

5 Keeping Victorians Safe

A more just, equal & safe community

All Victorians have the right to feel safe and be safe in their homes, communities, and workplaces. Victorians should be able to live free of violence, crime and the fear of crime. Safety is essential to our wellbeing and is critical for supporting sustainable and healthy communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly changed the way Victorians live and work. The Labor Government responded to these changed circumstances by investing in a range of social, health, education, employment, housing, mental health and early intervention and diversion services. These services are all helping to strengthen protective factors against crime and offending to help people stay on the right path and out of the justice system.

What makes a community safe is continuing to strengthen relationships with the local community and community leaders.

Labor is committed to continuing to improve community safety by:

- building on our record investment in Victoria Police to ensure they remain well resourced and equipped to enforce our laws and keep Victorians safe;
- making sure our courts and prosecution services have the resources they need to enforce the law;
- adopting a whole-of-government approach to tackle the root causes of crime, preventing it from happening in the first place;
- implementing flexible, innovative and modern programs to reduce repeat offending, improve rehabilitation and support people to exit and stay out of the justice system for good; and
- continue to provide strong support for victims of crime.

Labor recognises community safety also depends on a strong emergency services response to natural disasters and emergencies. Recent fires, major storm events and the COVID-19 pandemic, have highlighted just how critical our emergency services are in protecting and supporting communities, as well as helping them rebuild and recover.

Labor is committed to supporting our emergency services to continue protecting and empowering Victorians.

Feeling safe in our own communities also means being able to live our lives free from prejudice and discrimination, with equal rights, equitable access to services and having trust and confidence in the integrity of our democratic institutions.

Labor is the party with the proven track record on equality – for women, for our LGBTIQ+ communities, for our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, for people living with a disability, for regional and rural Victorians, and for Aboriginal Victorians.

Labor believes that in Victoria equality is not negotiable. Every Victorian, without exception, deserves to feel safe, supported and equal.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

5.1 KEEPING VICTORIANS SAFE

Labor believes that in order to keep our communities safe we must address the root causes of crime. We must tackle disadvantage and inequality, and other risk factors, including access to education, employment and sustainable housing, and connection to family, community and culture. These are critical steps in reducing crime and making our communities safer.

Labor has supported the development of a whole-of-government Crime Prevention Strategy that endorses a holistic approach to improving community safety.

By supporting people to have sustainable employment, a roof over their head and a decent education, we can reduce disadvantage, which is a key cause of crime.

Labor will build on what is already working and support local innovation to deliver results and help create safe, resilient and thriving Victorian communities.

5.1.1 PREVENTING CRIME AND RE-OFFENDING

The best way to keep Victorian communities safe is preventing crime from occurring in the first place. Labor is stopping crime before it starts, targeting the root causes of crime, and finding solutions to reduce reoffending.

Through justice reinvestment, Labor will continue to deliver a safer community by preventing people from entering the justice system in the first place and ensuring that those who do enter the system get the best chance to turn their lives around.

Labor will:

- continue to tackle inequality and disadvantage as risk factors associated with offending in close collaboration with key community organisations, businesses, local councils, the education sector, and other strategic sectors;
- empower local communities to work with Victoria Police, Neighbourhood Watch and other community organisations to address issues at a local level;
- support housing, employment and education programs which reduce the demand on the justice system and avoid the construction of more prisons;
- invest in access to justice options, including seed funding for innovative approaches;
- ensure that prisoners or people on remand are assessed for mental illness, addiction or a disability and provided appropriate support where possible;
- ensure that wherever possible, alleged offenders, victims or other people involved in police interviews with a disability, cognitive impairment or mental health or addiction issue can access support from an appropriately qualified and independent third person; and
- continue to monitor our bail laws to assess that they are working to protect the community from serious offenders who present an unacceptable risk of serious violent crime.

5.1.2 RESPONDING TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND GENDERED VIOLENCE

Feeling safe in our community begins with feeling safe in our homes. Sadly, this is not the case for many Victorians, particularly for women and children.

Family violence remains the number one law and order issue in Victoria. The Royal Commission into Family Violence, established by Labor in 2016 as the first of its kind in the nation, revealed many failures in the system.

After accepting all 227 recommendations of the Royal Commission Report, the Labor Government is leading the nation with an investment of more than \$3.7 billion to end all forms of gendered and family violence – more than every other state and territory combined.

Labor will:

- continue building on the implementation of all 227 Royal Commission recommendations by building a system where victim-survivors are supported to recover and rebuild their lives, perpetrators are kept accountable and in view and violence is prevented before it starts;
- roll out specialist family violence courts and remote hearing and witness services to ensure people experiencing family violence have support closer to home and courts have the functions of a Family Violence Court Division;
- engage with the Federal Government on progressing a national response to family violence, including the establishment of a federal Family Violence Royal Commission;
- ensure that communities impacted by family violence, including Aboriginal communities and CALD communities, contribute to the development of appropriate programs for reporting, addressing, recovering from and preventing family and gendered violence; and
- prioritise the needs of victim-survivors; and
- support perpetrators who have been excluded from the home have access to accommodation and counselling support, to reduce their likelihood of breaking the order and/or escalating their violent behaviour.

5.1.3 ELDER ABUSE

ELDER ABUSE IS A FORM OF FAMILY VIOLENCE.

Labor acknowledges the rise in cases of elder abuse, with potentially up to one in 20 older Victorians subject to physical and also often financial, psychological and emotional abuse at the hands of their children and other family members.

Labor believes that more work is needed to raise awareness and respond to elder abuse, including through culturally specific programs and campaigns, and through mental health and support services and longer-term funding for service providers.

Labor will:

- continue to support campaigns and programs to raise awareness about elder abuse;
- ensure that service providers are adequately funded to respond to and support victims of elder abuse; and
- ensure that our laws and institutions can deliver justice to victims of elder abuse and are not used as a means of elder abuse; and
- support people experiencing elder abuse with access to case managers that can help coordinate their care across services.

5.1.4 ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND ABORIGINAL JUSTICE

Aboriginal Victorians, especially young Aboriginal Victorians, are overrepresented in our criminal justice system. Labor remains committed to reducing offending by strengthening diversion and early intervention and, critically, addressing inequality and disadvantage as underlying risk factors.

Labor is committed to self-determination as the guiding principle for addressing the overrepresentation in the justice system. Labor acknowledges and understands that self-determination and Treaty will empower Aboriginal communities and support them to achieve long-term generational change and improved justice outcomes.

Under Labor, the Yoorrook Justice Commission has been established:

- for truth telling regarding both the contemporary and historical injustices committed against Aboriginal Victorians; and
- to make recommendations for institutional and legal reforms to address these injustices.

Labor has a clear and longstanding commitment to improving justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. This is expressed through Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja, the fourth phase of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement and Wirkara Kulpa, the Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy.

Labor will:

- continue to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system by working with Victorian Aboriginal communities under the principle of self-determination;
- implement Wirkara Kulpa and expand Aboriginal Youth Justice Hubs and Aboriginal-led early intervention family services, and diversion programs for young people;
- continue to prioritise programs that divert Aboriginal children and young people away from the youth justice system and work toward Aboriginal-led justice responses;
- continue to strengthen the Koori Court system;
- embed cultural safety and cultural training in all programs and include cultural awareness training for workers in the criminal justice system;
- engage with and respond to the Yoorrook Truth and Justice Commission and Aboriginal communities on outstanding issues arising from the report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody;
- improve the accessibility, use and effectiveness of justice-related programs and services such as the pilot program for more flexible forensic mental health care for Aboriginal Victorians under community corrections orders; and
- implement public intoxication reforms, and transition from a punitive to a health-based response.

5.1.5 YOUTH JUSTICE

The Labor Government has implemented sweeping reforms to divert young people out of the justice system with early intervention into support and mental health services. As a result, youth offending has declined in our state.

Labor recognises that the children and young people who do end up in the youth justice system have often gone through traumatic life experiences. Many are victims of abuse, trauma and neglect at home; many have serious mental health or drug and alcohol issues, and many are not engaged in education, training or a job. A disproportionate number of these young people are Aboriginal Victorians or members of CALD communities.

Labor believes that responses to youth offending must reflect the unique circumstances of young people including the developmental nature of adolescence and its link to offending, the criminogenic (crime-causing) effect of imprisonment, and the public interest in and the prospects for the rehabilitation of young people.

Labor will:

- build on programs that are successfully diverting children and young people from the youth justice system;
- continue programs designed to keep children out of custody, including family therapy, the Children's Court Youth Diversion Program, the specialist Children's Court and ensure that court registry staff keep providing active case management;
- build on programs to give those children and young people who do enter the youth justice system the best chance at rehabilitation;
- expand services, including online and after hours, at the Children's Court and Victoria Legal Aid to make sure that children and young people are not remanded in custody because there is no available court to hear their bail applications;
- ensure existing youth justice centres maintain family and community connections during the custodial sentence and are better suited to the mental health needs of young people in custody; and
- take part in the national process to consider a proposal to raise the age of criminal responsibility.

5.1.6 SPECIALIST COURTS

Court is a crucial part of a victim-survivor's journey when seeking protection from family violence. Through the roll-out of the Specialist Family Violence Courts, Labor is building a court system where victim survivors of family violence feel physically, emotionally and culturally safe – a system that is accessible and a place where our diverse Victorian community, including Aboriginal Victorians, have equal access to justice.

Labor will:

- ensure all headquarter Magistrates' Courts have the functions of a Specialist Family Violence Court Division, so magistrates with specialised knowledge oversee the work and have appropriate powers to facilitate therapeutic and specialist services; and
- continue the roll out of physical works and service integration to support the specialist courts, including safe and secure facilities for victim survivors and their families such as remote witness facilities, waiting rooms, and separate entries.

5.1.7 DRUG USE

Labor understands that for many people, illicit drug use is both a health issue and a justice issue and that there is more work to do to reduce drug-related harms and support Victorians affected by drug use.

Labor will:

- consider options to further support existing work to ensure that low-level drug offending is addressed as a health issue as well as a justice issue including:
- establish and operate a Melbourne CBD-based medically supervised injecting facility;
- utilise health-based, harm minimisation approaches to reduce the harm to Victorians from illicit drug use;
- continue to support access to medicinal cannabis;
- carefully consider any recommendations arising from the Drug Diversion Infringements working group; and
- continue to support alcohol and other drug rehabilitation capacity inclusive of services in justice settings, including for those who have experienced trauma and in child friendly settings.

5.1.8 ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Under Labor, more Victorians have better access to important legal services, life-changing support and faster access to fair and open justice, regardless of where they live or how much they earn.

Labor understands and acknowledges the crucial role community legal centres play in making justice accessible for Victorians, particularly vulnerable Victorians, and will continue to support Victoria Legal Aid and Community Legal Centre and Aboriginal legal services.

Under Labor, a specialist LGBTIQ+ legal service at the Pride Centre will provide legal advice and representation and outreach services across a range of areas for LGBTIQ+ people facing discrimination and disadvantage.

Labor will:

- work with the Federal Government to ensure adequate funding for Victoria Legal Aid, Community Legal Centres and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services;
- continue to make sure that Victorians living in regional and rural areas have access to affordable and timely justice;
- ensure that victims of sexual offences are supported to come forward and seek justice in a way that minimises the risk of re-traumatisation;
- ensure that specialist mental health services are available within the justice system;
- make sure people with complex mental health issues are better supported by establishing new Assessment and Referral Courts and expanding the ARC list into more Magistrates' courts; and
- continue to support specialist courts including Koori Courts, drug courts (and the Court Integrated Services Pilot Program at the County Court) and family violence specialist courts.

5.1.9 VICTIMS OF CRIME

The Labor Government introduced landmark reforms to transform victims' experiences with financial assistance to make it trauma-informed, timely and accessible, such as the new Financial Assistance Scheme, and to support victims with greater opportunities to feel heard, with the new Victim-Centred Restorative Justice Program.

Labor will:

- operationalise the new Financial Assistance Scheme to ensure that it works, as intended, to better support victims of crime; and
- continue to implement the new Victim-Centred Restorative Justice Program, to provide eligible victims with greater opportunity to feel heard and participate in restorative justice processes.

5.1.10 GENDERED VIOLENCE - VICTIM-SURVIVORS

Labor acknowledges that sexual violence is widespread, causes serious harm, is significantly under-reported, and that even when reports are made, many cases don't make it to court, and the few that do, don't result in conviction.

Labor believes that more work is needed to make sure our laws and institutions deliver justice to victim-survivors of sexual offences. This was highlighted by the report of the Victorian Law Reform Commission on Improving the Response of the Justice System to Sexual Offences, released in 2021.

Labor will:

- ensure specialist sexual assault services are adequately funded to help respond to increasing reporting and demand;
- implement affirmative consent model and laws to clearly prohibit the removal of a condom without consent; and
- introduce changes to criminal investigations and trials (including through specialist training and education of lawyers, the judiciary, court staff and jurors, and everyone working in the criminal justice system) to minimise trauma for victim-survivors of sexual offences, to ensure the system better support victim-survivors and to improve the response of the criminal justice system to victims of sexual offences.

5.2 EQUALITY FOR ALL VICTORIANS

5.2.1 WOMEN

In Victoria, equality is not negotiable.

Labor is leading the way in building a state where all Victorians feel safe, have equal human rights, and can live wholly and freely.

Labor is committed to achieving gender equality in Victoria. We are doing more than ever before to create more opportunities for women and girls. At the same time, we acknowledge that, from cost-of-living pressures like childcare and women's healthcare, to job insecurity and the risk of family violence, women continue to shoulder enormous burdens and face immense barriers to equal opportunity.

Labor continues to invest in nation-leading reform to improve gender equality and ensure every woman and girl in Victoria lives in a fairer and better state.

Through landmark legislation such as the Gender Equality Act, Labor has acted to improve gender equality in the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils. Through the Act, Labor will increase women's workforce participation meaning greater productivity, a boost in economic output and more financially secure families

Labor has much to be proud of, including Victoria's first ever Gender Equality Strategy and the introduction of gender-responsive budgeting to ensure outcomes for women are measured and considered as part of the budget process to drive more meaningful outcomes. However, it is vital that our momentum continues.

Labor will:

- continue building on implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence;
- work to expand family violence leave provisions;
- consider measures for including values for unpaid work in Victoria's Gross State Product calculations;
- support the implementation of the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy;
- embed Gender Responsive Budgeting in Victorian Government practices; and;
- work to improve women's representation, leadership opportunities, workforce and economic participation.

5.2.2 ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

Victoria leads the nation in supporting Aboriginal communities. We are the first and only jurisdiction to have actioned both the Treaty and truth elements of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Labor also established the nation's first truth-telling process into systemic injustices experienced by Aboriginal people since colonisation. The Yoorrook Justice Commission, supported by \$58 million of investment, has begun hearings into the historic and continuing injustices faced by Aboriginal Victorians. It will hand down a final report in June 2024.

Labor is also working towards self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians.

Treaty is an opportunity for Victoria to recognise and celebrate the unique status, rights, cultures and histories of Aboriginal Victorians. It is also an opportunity to heal past wounds, achieve genuine reconciliation and build a stronger state for all Victorians. Treaty will reflect a shared aspiration to tangibly improve the lives of Aboriginal Victorians for future generations.

Labor will:

- continue to resource and support the establishment of the Treaty Authority to oversee and facilitate negotiations between Government and Aboriginal Victorians;
- continue to resource and support the Yoorrook Justice Commission;
- consider the establishment of an independent parliamentary officeholder; and
- ensure that Reconciliation Victoria is adequately funded to continue its work to promote reconciliation across Victoria, with deeper understanding, respect and justice for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

5.2.3 LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

Labor has invested over \$70 million in supporting and celebrating LGBTIQ+ communities since 2014 and delivered groundbreaking legislative reform to remove discrimination and make sure every Victorian has equal rights and freedoms.

Labor has proudly made great progress towards equality for LGBTIQ+ people. These include building Australia's first Pride Centre, removing legal barriers so that trans, gender diverse and intersex Victorians can have birth certificates that reflect their true identity and banning harmful change and suppression "conversion" practices.

Victoria leads the nation in LGBTIQ+ equality, but despite the life changing – and lifesaving – progress that has been made, there is still much more to do, which is why we have developed a whole-of-government LGBTIQ+ Strategy which lays out a vision for reform over the next decade.

Labor will:

- support the implementation of the LGBTIQ+ Strategy, including specific actions, to ensure that LGBTIQ+ Victorians feel safe, are healthy, have equal human rights and can live wholly and freely;
- review relevant laws and work to remove laws that are discriminatory or have a disproportionate impact on LGBTIQ+ people;
- fight to ensure new laws include and consider LGBTIQ+ experiences and potential impacts on LGBTIQ+ communities;
- continue to improve access to services and support for LGBTIQ+ communities in rural and regional Victoria;
- require all schools to have programs which support all children to feel safe, supported and included when they go to school; and
- continue to support programs that support the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people.

5.2.4 CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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

Labor will:

- continue to prioritise the development of a human rights culture in Victoria, using the legal framework of the Charter and the educative role of Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to foster and support change;
- prioritise human rights education for and compliance with human rights by government departments and agencies; and
- ensure that human rights and anti-discrimination obligations of government are always met.

5.2.5 VICTORIANS LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

Labor believes that every Victorian deserves to have access to employment, services and infrastructure that meets their needs and improves their lives.

With more than 1.1 million Victorians living with a disability, Labor is working to systematically address inequality and discrimination while working to mitigate inequalities that affect so many Victorians daily.

Labor will:

- commence work to implement the priority areas in Labor's Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026;
- develop a new Disability Inclusion Act, in consultation with Victorians with a disability; and
- consult on establishing an Australian-first Commissioner for Disability Inclusion to drive improvements in the public sector and promote inclusion across Victoria.

5.3 EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency service workers and volunteers make selfless and brave contributions to local communities and to our state more broadly.

Right around Victoria and across the nation, demand for emergency services is at an all-time high, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. Victoria is facing an increasing number of natural disasters driven by climate change, requiring an emergency response.

Victoria's emergency services play a vital role in keeping our communities safe. Labor recognises the vital work they did to keep Victorians safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and is committed to honouring those contributions by continuing to support and keep safe those who put their lives on the line to save and protect us. Under Labor, our emergency services workers and volunteers are respected and supported with the resources, training, equipment and infrastructure they need to keep protecting Victorians.

5.3.1 EMERGENCIES AND NATURAL DISASTERS

Rebuilding following an emergency is complex and difficult work. Labor believes that communities deserve dedicated support to help them get back on their feet as quickly as possible and resources so that they can make their decisions about their recovery.

We are committed to supporting the work of Emergency Recovery Victoria, the dedicated agency responsible for rebuilding after natural disasters. The establishment of a permanent agency recognises that our state faces increasing pressure from more disasters as the result of a changing climate.

Labor will:

- continue to support work to improve the culture and safety of emergency service organisations and to encourage more women and diverse communities to join the sector; and
- support sector wide reforms to strengthen emergency management coordination and help for Victorian communities during and after emergencies.

5.3.2 POLICE

Labor has made record investments in Victoria Police to ensure they have the tools, training, technology and facilities they need to tackle crime and keep Victorians safe. Labor believes that communities are best served and feel safest when they have a highly visible, well-resourced police force.

Labor is continuing to make the biggest ever investment in Victoria Police in our state's history, recruiting and employing 502 police officers and 50 PSOs, building on the 3,135 extra police officers already recruited. Labor's record \$4.5 billion investment in police has delivered funding for 3,637 new sworn police officers, as well as investment in police facilities including new police training facility, new and upgraded police stations, high-tech automatic number plate recognition technology for all highway patrol cars, an expanded air wing, mobile technology and new police powers.

Labor has given Victoria Police new powers to work more smartly and more effectively, including developing the Firearm Prohibition Orders scheme to tackle criminals who use illegal firearms and present a clear threat to the community and expanding the role and powers of PSOs.

Policing is inherently dangerous. Officers put themselves in harm's way every day to keep our community safe. Over the past few years, we have asked more of police than ever before as they have responded to natural disasters and been on the frontline of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Victoria Police family and the Victorian community have also recently mourned the deaths of five police officers resulting from the horrific road trauma tragedies in Mildura and on the Eastern Freeway.

Labor recognises and appreciates the incredible work our police officers do each and every day. We also know that this sometimes comes at a cost with our police members and other emergency services workers experiencing burn-out, mental illness and suicide at higher rates than other professions in our community.

Labor will continue to invest in the physical and mental health and wellbeing of police employees.

Labor will:

- make sure that Victoria Police has the resources, technology, training and expertise they need to need to keep the community safe;
- keep building on Labor's investment in police; and
- continue to invest in the physical and mental health and wellbeing of Victoria Police members.

Misconduct and the investigation of complaints against police are issues that concern all Victorians and go to the heart of community trust and confidence in Victoria Police.

Labor believes that complaints against and serious incidents involving Victoria Police must be investigated thoroughly, and fairly, in order to maintain the community's trust and confidence in Victoria Police.

Labor will:

- continue to look at ways to improve Victoria's robust and transparent oversight system for serious complaints against police.

5.3.3 FIRE SERVICES AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Labor understands that with the changing nature of our state, we need a first-class fire services and emergency management sector to continue to protect Victorians.

Labor also acknowledges that the Emergency Services Telecommunication Authority (ETSA) has been under significant pressure and continues to respond to record demand from the pandemic.

Labor believes that when they call for an ambulance, police or fire service, Victorians should have the confidence that there will be help on the other end of the line and that help will be on its way.

Labor is making a record investment in our Triple Zero call takers and dispatchers, to boost our Triple Zero capacity.

Labor will:

- continue to up-skill and protect volunteer firefighters with more training, including driver training, and upgraded emergency vehicle fleets;
- help, support and encourage more diverse people to join local brigades with more female-friendly changing facilities and upgrades at CFA stations;
- support a state ban on the use of poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) across the fire services and implement PFAS assessments and the roll-out of decontamination, starting with high-risk stations and appliances;
- establish a redress scheme for Fiskville affected persons in response to recommendation 31 of the Parliamentary Inquiry into the CFA training college at Fiskville;
- continue to recognise that forest firefighters play a continually increasing year-round role in disaster and incident response;
- where possible continue to encourage forest firefighting agencies to employ on a full-time basis;
- ensure that there is adequate Triple Zero call taking and dispatch capacity to meet demand;
- ensure adequate funding for training, technology, resources and equipment to meet Triple Zero demand;
- continue to support SES volunteers to maintain their facilities, upgrade priority vehicles, and help volunteers respond to floods and other emergencies;
- continue to support water safety programs that help more people become confident in the water, particularly after the pandemic including water safety programs at public pools;
- continue to invest in equipment and infrastructure at surf life saving clubs; and
- continue to invest in services to support Victorian communities so they can recover from disasters through empowering locals to lead their own recovery.

5.3.4 FIRST RESPONDERS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Labor understands that Victoria Police officers play a critical role in responding to reports of people experiencing mental health injuries to protect the safety of the individual, our paramedics, and the entire Victorian community.

Labor knows that transforming the emergency response to ensure it is health-led is a key part of delivering on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

Labor will:

- continue to work with Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and other key stakeholders to develop and implement a health-led response to our mental health crisis.

5.4 CONSUMER RIGHTS

5.4.1 CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Labor believes Victorian consumers need greater transparency and greater protections in order to make informed choices. Consumer rights are paramount, particularly with respect to the rights of vulnerable Victorians.

Labor will:

- consider 'lemon laws' to support consumers who purchase a defective motor vehicle in Victoria;
- improve the rights of retirement village residents under the Retirement Villages Act; and
- investigate the use of 'bait and surcharge' tactics to charge unjustified 'administrative' or 'handling' fees in the sale of digital tickets.

5.4.2 BUILDING SURVEYORS

Labor acknowledges that conflicts of interest and poor transparency in the engagement and responsibilities of some private building surveyors exists to the detriment of Victorian consumers of new domestic builds across Victoria.

Labor will:

- consider ways to mitigate these conflicts of interest and increase transparency around the engagement and responsibilities of building surveyors in domestic construction projects.

6 Liveable Communities **Strong, supportive communities**

Victorians deserve a sustainable environment, excellent services, secure jobs and a safe and accessible environment for our communities.

Over the past eight years, Labor has been getting on with delivering the projects and services our growing suburbs and communities need. From building and upgrading local schools and hospitals, to getting on with road and rail projects to get Victorians home sooner and safer. Each of these initiatives, every cubic metre of concrete, every dollar of investment has been about making life better for every single Victorian.

Labor is planning for Victoria's future, managing the growth of our state while creating jobs, supporting the delivery of services and infrastructure, driving our economic recovery and ensuring that as Victoria grows, its best features are protected and enhanced.

Labor has a track record of working in partnership with suburban and regional communities and local governments on place-based approaches to addressing disadvantage and inequality so that communities are empowered and engaged in decisions that affect them, and solutions can be tailored to meet identified needs.

Labor has a strong record of building and upgrading community centres, arts and cultural spaces, parks and reserves, and sport and recreation facilities, so families in our suburbs get the local infrastructure they deserve.

Ensuring that local governments are well-equipped to deliver local services is crucial. From rubbish collection, to local parks and community spaces, to sustainable living, Labor is committed to supporting councils to serve their local communities.

Here in Victoria, we have a proud multicultural story - one based on success, and meaningful contribution.

Labor believes that to be truly inclusive communities must treat others with respect and dignity. That's why Labor will keep investing in the opportunities that support a fairer and more equal future for every Victorian.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

6.1 CLIMATE CHANGE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Labor understands that addressing climate change must make our lives healthier and safer, create new jobs across Victoria, and preserve our natural environment and our culturally significant built heritage for future generations.

Labor will:

- protect our communities and natural environment through strategies developed to respond to climate change;
- ensure that all Victorian Government departments and agencies take a leadership role to immediately implement effective climate change strategies; and
- encourage councils to undertake major adaptation works in response to climate change, including renewable energy and investing in solar power and highly-efficient LED lighting in municipal buildings.

6.2 EMPOWERING ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

Labor has always understood the importance of supporting Aboriginal communities, their rich history and the role they play in making Victoria what it is today.

6.2.1 TREATY WITH VICTORIA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

The Victorian Labor Government was the first in the nation to take real action towards Treaty, with significant progress having been made alongside the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

This includes establishing the independent Treaty Authority to oversee future treaty negotiations between the State Government and Victoria's Aboriginal communities.

Treaty is an opportunity to come to terms with the past and work together for a shared future. It will forever alter how we view and understand our identity and our history. It will create a future where Aboriginal communities have autonomy, power, and self-determination, and provide a bridge between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal Victorians. It will create a stronger and fairer Victoria for us all.

Labor will:

- commence Treaty negotiations with Victoria's Aboriginal people;
- work with Victoria's Aboriginal people to consider the most appropriate forum for a Voice;
- ensure Victoria's Aboriginal people are sufficiently resourced to negotiate Treaty on equal footing with the State; and
- work with the Yoorrook Justice Commission, which will provide a foundation for Treaty negotiations and provide avenues for reparations.

6.2.2 CLOSING THE GAP WITH ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

Labor acknowledges that, historically, Victoria's Aboriginal people have not been consulted or included in decision-making processes, instead being subjected to government policies that directly impact them and their communities without adequate consultation. This has contributed to the discrimination experienced by Aboriginal Victorian communities and to the widening of social and economic gaps.

Long-term, sustainable solutions that close the gap are only possible when Aboriginal people lead decisions about the issues that impact their lives.

Labor will:

- work with Victoria's Aboriginal people to move beyond the deficit framing of 'Closing the Gap';
- work with Victoria's Aboriginal people to agree Treaty as the all-important mechanism which will transfer decision-making power and resources to Victoria's Aboriginal people so they can pursue their aspirations, and design and deliver their own solutions to improve outcomes and "close the gap";
- work alongside the Closing the Gap Partnership Forum to implement Victoria's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023; and
- embed cultural safety in contract management and service agreements.

6.2.3 PROTECTING AND PROMOTING ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Self-determination means supporting Victoria's Traditional Owners to manage, protect and control their cultural heritage across Country. Victoria's Traditional Owners are the knowledge keepers of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Under Labor, Aboriginal cultural heritage will be maintained and preserved by Aboriginal people, so it can continue to be enjoyed and shared now and into the future

Victoria is the only state in Australia where Traditional Owners have the final say in decision-making about the protection of heritage as part of planning processes.

Labor is strengthening the protection and preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage, providing \$13.5 million in support to Traditional Owners to ensure its preservation for generations to come.

Labor will:

- support the right of Traditional Owners to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage and environmental values;
- support Traditional Owners to proactively and strategically identify Aboriginal cultural heritage on Country so it can be protected, promoted and celebrated;
- ensure substantial penalties that provide an effective deterrent against the harming of Aboriginal cultural heritage;
- consider ways to strengthen the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, including oral traditions, performing arts, stories, rituals, festivals, social practices, craft, visual arts, environmental and ecological knowledge; and
- work with Victoria's Aboriginal communities to develop new policies and procedures that recognise and protect Aboriginal data sovereignty.

6.2.4 RECLAIM, REVIVE AND MAINTAIN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

Recognition of Aboriginal languages is a key foundation of Aboriginal Victorian cultural heritage. Labor understands that language is inseparable from culture, kinship, land and family, and is the foundation upon which the capacity to learn, interact and shape identity is built.

Labor will:

- promote and support Aboriginal culture and tradition in Victoria;
- partner with Aboriginal Victorians and their language organisations to revive and maintain traditional languages;
- support the protection of intellectual and copyright issues and protocols concerning Victorian Aboriginal languages;
- investigate and remedy the structural barriers in education, training and skills development for Victorian Aboriginal languages;
- continue to invest in Aboriginal language playgroups and language schools for children;
- establish a strategic partnerships with the relevant Aboriginal Victorian people to effectively manage language services and naming protocols;
- support initiatives to study, record and publish language materials and create research archives for endangered Aboriginal languages; and
- support scholarships for Aboriginal researchers to undertake training in the restoration and revitalisation of Aboriginal languages.

6.3 BUILDING STRONGER MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Victorian Labor is the party of equality. We are built on the values of social justice, diversity and inclusion. Each of those values is based upon the fundamental truth that whatever your background, wherever you are from, whatever your faith or religious belief, you should have the means and opportunity to fulfill your potential.

Victoria is a diverse and inclusive state. Labor believes our ethnic diversity is a source of strength which brings new insights, skills, and opportunities to our society. To fully harness these benefits, Labor will ensure a supportive environment for our multicultural communities to settle and prosper whilst being able to retain a connection to their heritage, culture, and language.

Victoria is one of the multicultural success stories of the world. We are proud that Victorians come from more than 200 countries, speak 260 languages, and follow 135 different faiths.

It is a priority for Labor that Victorians from diverse backgrounds are able to participate fully in society, remain connected to their culture, and have equal rights, protections and opportunities. Labor is committed to continue investing in the opportunities that support a fairer and more equal future for every Victorian.

6.3.1 MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Few places in the world offer themselves so readily to multiculturalism as Victoria. Since World War II, Victoria has been at the forefront of Australia's multicultural nation-building enterprise.

Labor will continue to invest in our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, to celebrate what makes our state great and promote better opportunities for every community.

Having safe and secure places to celebrate and share cultural history and traditions ensures Victoria's multicultural communities can continue to build connections, share traditions and celebrate diversity.

Labor will:

- encourage community participation;
- support multicultural communities to feel socially connected;
- develop communication strategies to further facilitate the inclusion of multicultural communities;
- provide funding to build and upgrade multicultural community facilities and places of worship;
- provide funding to support multicultural and multifaith cultural festivals and events;
- support multicultural communities with tailored and translated messaging and programs;
- continue to support the Office of the Victorian Multicultural Commission; and
- consider establishing a Centre for Intercultural Dialogue.

6.3.2 MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community organisations offer opportunities for inclusion, particularly through service delivery, building peer-to-peer support, and reducing the barriers to accessing information.

Labor believes empowering community organisations is fundamental to building an inclusive and resilient state. Labor remains committed to improving the representation of CALD communities on government boards and advisory bodies.

Labor will:

- encourage small and medium community organisations to work with multicultural communities to achieve more equitable support for all Victorians;
- provide access to eligible grants for community organisations;
- support multicultural organisations to navigate grant funding processes; and
- provide mentoring programs to get more CALD Victorians onto government boards.

6.4 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

For our state to prosper, our communities need to thrive. Labor believes every Victorian should have access to the opportunities and support they need to reach their full potential, regardless of their background.

Labor supports place-based approaches to address harm, inequality and disadvantage in suburban and regional communities in partnership with local organisations, businesses and local governments.

Labor is committed to building strong, resilient and inclusive communities to improve the lives of all Victorians. Labor's commitment is to give all Victorians the best opportunities and the best chance to succeed.

6.4.1 YOUNG PEOPLE

Labor recognises young people as leaders in their communities who bring strength, energy and optimism to our state. Labor will work to ensure that young people from all backgrounds can participate fully in our social, economic and civic life.

Labor will:

- deliver on Our Promise, Your Future – Victoria's new five-year youth strategy developed in collaboration with young people;
- improve opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to achieve their goals across education, training and employment;
- deliver services and supports for young people to be healthy, safe, and secure;
- provide more opportunities for young people to participate in their communities;
- provide opportunities for youth engagement in government decision making; and
- celebrate the achievements of young Victorians.

6.4.2 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering is part of Victoria's identity and volunteers are at the heart of our community. Labor recognises that volunteers build stronger, more resilient and inclusive communities and are vital to the delivery of everything from essential services to grassroots sport.

Large-scale changes have affected the volunteering landscape over recent years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, an ageing population, challenges attracting new volunteers, and the requirement to operate within an increasingly complex regulatory and compliance framework.

Labor will:

- strengthen volunteering, in partnership with the volunteering community;
- promote, build, support and celebrate all forms of volunteering; and
- bolster the ranks of community-based volunteer organisations across Victoria.

6.4.3 GAMBLING

Gambling harm is a complex issue, which is made even more so when it exists alongside other conditions. Labor recognises the risks associated with gaming promotion, especially the recent convergence of gambling and video games.

Labor will:

- continue its vigilant oversight of the gaming industry in Victoria;
- strengthen the already robust oversight of the casino operator;
- work with the Victorian Responsible Gaming Foundation and wagering providers to review strategies around the impact of gambling advertising on young Victorians; and
- advocate to the Federal Government to amend the ACMA Code of Practice to restrict the hours in which betting agencies can advertise.

6.5 HOUSING

A home forms the foundation of a better life, and Labor is proud to be delivering Victoria's Big Housing Build. This involves the investment of a record \$5.3 billion to deliver more than 12,000 new homes, including 9,300 new social housing properties and 2,900 affordable homes, as part of the largest single investment in social housing development ever seen in Australia.

Every single Victorian deserves housing that they can make a home, Labor will build more social and affordable homes in areas where Victorians need it most – revitalising communities to make them even better places to live, work and play.

Labor will:

- deliver a pipeline of affordable housing projects to ensure that social housing continues;
- deliver more than 12,000 new homes – 9,300 new social housing properties and 2,900 affordable homes;
- invest in existing social housing infrastructure and maintenance; and
- support Aboriginal art and culture in social housing developments where possible.

6.5.1 EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a substantial and growing problem for Victorians who are without accommodation or living in insecure and inadequate accommodation.

Labor is committed to breaking the cycle of homelessness through a whole of government approach by achieving tangible and lasting outcomes for Victorians. Labor recognises that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should be provided with safe and secure long-term housing while addressing any issues that make them vulnerable to homelessness.

Labor will:

- deliver on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System by including wrap-around health services and access to education, job training and retraining;
- enhance relationships addressing homelessness with employers, trade unions, not-for-profit organisations and government; and
- continue to fund and develop specialist services for people experiencing homelessness and the risk of homelessness that supports access and maintenance of secure and affordable housing.

6.5.2 PUBLIC HOUSING STOCK

Work is well underway on the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build to address the undersupply of social housing. The program will boost our state's social housing supply by 10 per cent so more Victorians in need have access to stable accommodation.

Labor will:

- ensure the current stock of public housing is maintained and expanded;
- support programs which allow recipients of social, public and community housing to transition into private home occupancy and ownership;
- support social housing providers to acquire land that is surplus government land, where appropriate; and
- ensure that when land with outdated public housing is redeveloped, it is retained as publicly-owned land using long-term lease arrangements for the provision of new community and affordable housing provision.

6.5.3 SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY HOUSING

Labor recognises the increasing need for social housing provision for low-income tenants, including social and community housing.

Labor is addressing this undersupply through the Big Housing Build program.

Labor's Big Housing Build is the largest investment in social housing infrastructure made by any Australian Government. This landmark \$5.3 billion investment will address the growing issue of housing shortages and housing affordability in Victoria, ensuring more Victorians have a safe place to call home.

Labor will:

- deliver more than 12,000 new homes – 9,300 new social housing properties and 2,900 affordable homes;
- advocate with the Federal Government to re-establish a national social housing agreement with targets; and
- provide social housing providers with the opportunities and capacity to acquire land that is surplus to government requirements.

6.5.4 HOUSING FOR ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

Having a home means security, stability and security. Labor is delivering more culturally safe housing options for Aboriginal people across the state. Labor will continue to support self-determination and culturally safe housing for Aboriginal Victorians.

Labor will:

- ensure housing policy and development meets the needs of Aboriginal Victorians;
- partner with Aboriginal owned and controlled community housing providers to deliver accessible, affordable, appropriate and secure housing;
- work with the for-profit sector to increase the stock of social housing specifically for Aboriginal people in large-scale developments; and
- increase the ability of housing service staff to respond to the unique and complex needs of Aboriginal Victorians.

6.5.5 HOUSING FOR WOMEN

Labor recognises that the growing need for appropriate housing options for women as the number of women experiencing or at risk of homelessness increases. A range of reasons, including the gender pay gap, family violence, time out of the workforce to care for family, and lack of superannuation is driving this increase.

Labor will ensure women at risk of homelessness have access to safe and secure housing.

Labor will:

- support programs to assist women with low incomes or experiencing hardship to purchase their own home;
- support programs which allow recipients of social and community housing to transition into private home ownership;
- support older women experiencing housing stress and homelessness with access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing;
- support women in regional areas escaping family violence, with allocations from the Big Housing Build for affordable and social housing; and
- support women-specific housing providers with experience in family violence to manage and deliver services to women.

6.5.6 HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Labor believes a secure home provides a stable foundation for children and young people to grow, play and learn.

Labor will:

- support people who face challenges accessing housing including young people; and
- deliver a diversity of homes through the Big Housing Build that meet the needs of young people with complex needs alongside the delivery of targeted support.

6.5.7 PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET TENANTS

Labor knows the proportion of households who rent privately is steadily increasing and the private rental market has become increasingly unaffordable for low- and moderate-income households.

The Labor Government has introduced and passed progressive new rental laws covering the tenancy lifecycle while also expanding the rights and responsibilities of renters and landlords.

Labor will:

- monitor and evaluate the operations of Acts relating to residential tenancies to ensure the efficacy of recent reforms and consider additional ways to improve tenant welfare.

6.5.8 ENERGY EFFICIENCY RATING

Labor knows that energy costs are affecting Victorian households. Labor will continue to deliver programs to improve energy efficiency in social housing properties that reduce costs for residents while making their homes comfortable year-round.

Labor has assisted many households with access to cheaper energy through programs that support the installation of rooftop solar energy generation and batteries.

Labor will:

- ensure all new Big Housing Build homes will meet 7-star energy efficiency standards;
- support energy efficiency upgrades to social housing; and
- encourage landlords to provide energy ratings for their rental properties.

6.6 WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local councils play a crucial role in serving their communities and they played a vital role in Victoria's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Local governments contribute a wide range of community services, infrastructure provision and community development across our state.

Governments work best when they work alongside one another in pursuit of collective goals for the best outcomes for our community. Labor will continue working with councils to deliver strong outcomes for Victorian communities.

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

- ensuring the provision of quality services and development of effective infrastructure for its community;
- competent financial management and transparency in councils' roles and responsibilities;
- excellent governance practices;
- equitable industrial relations;
- community engagement and ownership; and
- leadership in gender equity.

6.6.1 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Labor recognises the important role of local governments to build thriving communities across Victoria. Labor believes councils should comply with principles requiring transparency, accountability, strong public consultation and sound financial management.

Labor will:

- support the capacity of councils to be collaborative and innovative with State Government entities and with each other;
- Support the ministerial oversight of councils, including the ability to suspend a councillor in cases of governance failures or breach of the Local Government Act; and
- support the power of the Minister to suspend and dismiss a council where there is evidence of significant governance failures or breaches of law, subject to parliamentary approval;
- ensure councils have the general competency to undertake their responsibilities and functions;

- ensure democratically elected councillors have the powers required to manage the delivery of service and provision of infrastructure in their districts;
- review existing contractual arrangements, performance monitoring and mechanisms to recruit a CEO, including due diligence on prior performance and conduct; and
- consider a review of local government structural arrangements, including finance, structure, employment and forms of representation, to ensure councils have an integrated strategic planning and reporting framework.

6.6.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Councils make decisions about a diverse range of community needs, such as recreational facilities, statutory and strategic planning and waste disposal. To cater for these needs, transparent and well-managed public participation can help to better inform local government decision making with the development of policies and their translation into effective strategies, programs and projects.

Labor will:

- help councils to effectively meet their obligations to engage with their communities;
- encourage increased community and workforce engagement in forward planning;
- ensure participants are notified of council decision-making;
- support diverse representation in consultation processes, including ensuring a true representation of those affected by decisions;
- provide a supportive and inclusive space so participants are encouraged to contribute without bias and supported to make informed decisions; and
- ensure transparent and accountable outcomes so councils are held accountable for the outcomes of the consultation process.

6.6.3 GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Councils should continue to have clear governance rules to maximise community value, accountability and transparency. Labor supports public accessibility of council decision-making and believes that this should be transparent.

Labor believes it is important that councils reflect the communities they serve, and that an, inclusive, safe and positive culture will support good governance, increase community confidence, and encourage a broader range of underrepresented community members to nominate for council.

Labor supports performance reporting and believes that there must be a consistent policy across all councils for financial hardship considerations when it comes to rates.

Labor will:

- work with the local government sector to improve council culture so that councils are safe places, high functioning, and focussed on meeting the needs of their communities;
- ensure council meetings are open, with a full agenda available to the public and that reasons for their decision-making known to the public and recorded in council minutes;
- support councils to develop four-year plans with annual budgets and require a long term vision with a 10-year financial outlook and financial management plan;

- work with local governments to strengthen financial management, transparency and accountability in the sector, including through a review of service performance principles and the inclusion of opportunities for local employment growth and retention in these decision-making principles;
- strengthen governance arrangements of local governments;
- monitor the ongoing financial viability of councils;
- ensure existing regulators are responsive and that legislation enforces fraud prevention in council practices by either elected or employed persons;
- establish better practice guidelines for the way councils identify and engage with ratepayers experiencing financial difficulties, including assistance to those affected by family violence;
- monitor the impacts of rate capping on councils long term sustainability, including wage increases and improvements to job security and conditions; and
- advocate to the Federal Government to ensure that the State Grants Commission allocates funding on an equitable and sustainable basis to local government.

6.6.4 JOB SECURITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Governments are significant employers in their communities, particularly in rural and regional Victoria.

The local government sector is a significant part of the Victorian economy. The state's 79 local councils employ over 50,000 people. Labor recognises that secure employment in the local government sector benefits employees and the broader community.

Through the provision of community services, vital infrastructure and community development, local government and the workers within the sector enable our state to thrive. However, many of our councils struggle to offer the same amount of services in the medium term without additional revenue.

Labor will:

- promote permanent and direct employment as the standard mode of employment with limited fixed-term employment, casual employment and labour hire;
- require councils to provide publicly available annual reports on the usage of fixed-term, casual and labour hire staff, including the length of engagement and costs incurred for third-party employment models;
- ensure contractors and suppliers comply with employment, industrial and workplace health and safety obligations;
- ensure councils facilitate cooperative and constructive relationships between employees and their representatives;
- work with stakeholders, including workforce and their representatives to monitor and address the full impacts of rate capping;
- assess councils' overall financial sustainability, including rate capping, to restore and protect quality jobs and services; and
- continue measures to address skill shortages in essential council service delivery, such as the successful Women Building Surveyors Program.

6.6.5 EQUITABLE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

As a large employer, councils must be able to demonstrate compliance with industrial agreements. Councils and CEOs must be publicly accountable every time they resolve to cut secure jobs or outsource another service, and not permitted to avoid scrutiny on matters that could contribute to a decline in the quality of service provision.

Labor will:

- establish policy settings designed to address inappropriate use of labour hire and casualisation in local government;
- explore ways to minimise the use of labour hire and outsourcing in local government;
- ensure councils have a CEO Employment and Remuneration policy consistent with the principles in the Public Sector Commission's Policy on Executive Remuneration for Public Entities;
- ensure that council CEOs develop workforce plans in consultation with staff and the appropriate union representative, including setting out their future workforce needs;
- support the protection and improvement of long service leave entitlements for local government staff, including correcting anomalies;
- require councils to enable flexible working arrangements for all positions;
- support council provision of 20 days per annum of paid family violence leave and support to employees who have been impacted by family violence;
- ensure that councils develop workforce plans setting out their future workforce needs and how these needs will be met, including by offering apprenticeships and traineeships; and
- ensure councils do not use rate capping to lead to service reduction or undermining of equitable industrial relations.

6.6.6 EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Labor is committed to equality and diversity in local government and backed this commitment with the Gender Equality Act 2020 and Local Government Act 2020.

Labor will:

- encourage councils to meet a gender equity target of 50/50 for councillors and mayors by 2025;
- support councils to model gender equality in the workplace by establishing an aspirational commitment towards 50 per cent women in executive roles;
- support programs that increase the participation of women from diverse communities in local government decision making;
- aid local government to develop programs that increase consultation with women in matters of planning and service delivery;
- encourage councils to embed a gendered lens across their planning, programming, service delivery and interactions with community in early years, maternal and child health services, youth services, sports and recreation and aged and disability services;
- support measures to collect a gendered analysis of the local government workforce and encourage councils to provide publicly available annual reports on their progress towards achieving gender equality;
- consider strengthening requirements for councils to actively consult with and involve their workforce and their representatives in implementation activities to ensure the spirit and intent of progressive change; and

- encourage councils to undertake significant building projects on existing buildings to accommodate the diverse needs of people with disabilities and additional access needs.

6.6.7 HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

Labor understands the need to support local government in the provision of Home and Commonwealth Home Support Programs (CHSP – formerly Home and Community Care, HACC) delivered by councils.

Labor will:

- work with local government to protect the Victorian CHSP system is kept council run;
- advocate to the Federal Government that block-funding arrangements for CHSP/HACC continue;
- work with the local government sector and unions to deliver greater funding stability to those councils contracted by the State Government to provide these services to the community; and
- investigate amendments to government policies which are required to encourage councils to remain CHSP/HACC providers.

6.6.8 SERVICE DELIVERY

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

Labor acknowledges that council facilities such as public libraries are a safe and welcoming space for people to come to for social interaction, lifelong learning and free access to digital technology. Councils are increasingly providing programs to address issues like problem gambling, social isolation, digital literacy, domestic violence and mental health and wellbeing.

Labor recognises also that local government and state government agencies and authorities have a significant role in natural disaster mitigation and management.

Labor will:

- work with councils to deliver emergency management and disaster resilience programs, ensuring councils are supported to respond effectively to natural emergencies and implement disaster recovery programs, and that councils work in partnership with the community, locally based organisations and other stakeholders to effectively manage climate change risk;
- continue to support and invest in public libraries to ensure equitable access for all Victorians;
- consult with relevant unions and other stakeholders to develop regulations on the use of shared services/beneficial enterprises in the procurement of goods and/or services;
- ensure councils are not able to exploit shared services/beneficial enterprises as a means of undermining worker pay and conditions or as a way of outsourcing, eliminating or reducing services;
- support councils to continue to provide services via an in-house service delivery model; and
- encourage councils to bring services back in-house and to place the in-house service delivery model as the default service delivery model for local government.

6.7 PLANNING

Labor takes a responsible approach to planning for Victoria's future, managing the growth of our state appropriately while creating jobs, supporting the delivery of services and infrastructure, driving our economic recovery and ensuring that as Victoria grows, its best features are protected and enhanced.

Labor will continue to support the development of thriving communities with better access to open spaces, employment opportunities, housing and other critical services while maintaining rigor in the planning and environmental assessment and approval processes.

6.7.1 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Labor understands that the planning system must address the specific needs of rural, regional and metropolitan Victoria to develop the economic potential of the state, build on the social and environmental needs and enhance existing planning strategies for transport, health, education and community services.

Labor will:

- support a system that builds and strengthens governance and delivers outcomes for the state;
- ensures a statewide strategic focus framework is brought to planning and environmental assessments and decisions;
- protect the existing character and amenity of existing metropolitan and regional cities;
- apply consistent standards to protect Victoria's heritage and built environment;
- ensure Plan Melbourne continues to be part of the long-term strategy to develop both regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne;
- ensure strategies are developed to respond to the impacts of climate change; and
- conserve our vital coastal zones to achieve a balanced approach between residential and commercial activities and the environment; and
- support timely approvals for urban planning applications for regional communities.

6.7.2 RURAL AND REGIONAL VICTORIA

Labor acknowledges the need to have a statewide planning approach that provides economic, environmental and social opportunities for all Victorians, regardless of where they live.

Labor will:

- develop and implement Plan Regional and Rural Victoria;
- ensure that the planning framework generates economic opportunities for both urban and farming communities and protects food production across rural Victoria;
- encourage the Victorian Planning Authority to adopt a consistent and equitable framework for urban and commercial development between regional cities and small rural towns;
- consider an urban growth boundary for the regional cities and townships, particularly where development could spill over into productive rural land or environmentally important areas;
- ensure the planning framework considers protecting productive agricultural land in close proximity to the metropolitan and regional centres from inappropriate uses;

- support planning to achieve integrated development between metropolitan Melbourne and the transport links to the regional cities;
- support land use in the transport corridors that accommodates discretionary uses, which are compatible with the existing agricultural uses; and
- protect water storages from inappropriate development by enforcing the “precautionary principle” in catchments.

6.7.3 METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

Labor knows the importance of appropriate planning for the improvement and further development of urban amenity and character for both metropolitan Melbourne and outer suburban areas.

Labor will:

- manage Melbourne’s growth to continue supporting jobs and growth while building on Melbourne’s distinctive and enviable quality of life;
- support Plan Melbourne’s policy that decisions must be based on an appreciation of Melbourne’s past as well as an understanding of its future needs;
- encourage diverse medium-density housing in developments on brownfield and greenfield sites;
- continue to protect Green Wedge zones in Plan Melbourne;
- encourage the development of diverse and affordable housing in residential zoning of local planning schemes; and
- incorporate the provision of healthy, liveable, active, local and safe amenities on all new urban developments.

6.7.4 GREEN OPEN SPACES FOR MELBOURNE

Labor recognises the importance of green open spaces in urban areas to reduce emissions, support biodiversity and ensure that families have more safe, comfortable places to spend time together. Additionally, Labor knows that trees offer incredible benefits for communities and families, by providing shady places to share on hot days and reduce the urban heat island effect.

Together with our investment in parks, we’re boosting liveability, improving air quality and tackling climate change through Labor’s \$315 million Suburban Parks Program, which is providing more than 6,500 hectares of parkland, walking trails, bike trails, pocket parks and dog parks.

Labor will:

- create new parks and recreation spaces in Melbourne by 2030;
- work with local councils to expand new green spaces;
- continue the Trees for the West program;
- train a new generation of workers to help maintain our new urban forests and involve the community in maintenance;
- implement further apartment design standards, including requirements for more open green space within an apartment development;
- protect Melbourne’s green wedges from overdevelopment; and
- increase community food production through garden sharing schemes, school gardens, vertical and rooftop farming, in partnership with local governments.

6.7.5 HERITAGE

Labor understands the importance of protecting our heritage and built environment. The changing face of industrial and urban Victoria has seen the closure of older industrial workplaces in metropolitan and regional areas. Labor understands the need for a comprehensive conservation management and retention plan to secure the material and cultural heritage to ensure the history of working people is properly acknowledged and preserved.

Labor will:

- provide strong protections for heritage sites and assets through Heritage Victoria and supporting legislation;
- ensure Plan Melbourne's Policy 'Recognise the value of heritage when managing growth and change' consistently guides proposed development;
- develop a working definition of heritage that recognises and protects the heritage of working people in Victoria;
- encourage preservation of significant Victorian volcanic quarry faces for scientific, educational and tourism purposes;
- protect the history of Victoria's historic communities and industries recorded in our architecture;
- support the retention of cultural and archival heritage that records the history of working people, their communities, their cultures, and workplaces;
- support the archiving of company and union records by universities; and
- encourage the Public Record Office of Victoria to develop their collections of industrial and labour history;

6.8 SPORT AND RECREATION

Labor invests in community sports because they are good for families and local workers. They create jobs, boost local economies, level the playing field and help community sport organisations grow their participation. Most importantly, they encourage Victorians to get active and stay healthy.

6.8.1 COMMUNITY SPORT, PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

Participation in community sport is central to building healthy and engaged communities. Labor acknowledges the importance of local clubs and organisations having strong governance in place to ensure access for all community members.

Labor will:

- work with the community sport and active recreation sector to ensure that Victorian community sports clubs have good governance structures and processes;
- encourage good governance in community sporting clubs through the provision of practical tools and resources;
- support the provision of online materials to support community sporting clubs to grow their memberships, deliver events and administer their operations more effectively;
- support disadvantaged and underrepresented cohorts to participate in community sport; and
- provide support for physical activity through the Active Victoria Strategy 2022-26.

6.8.2 COMMUNITY SPORT, FACILITIES AND INCLUSION

Labor acknowledges the fundraising efforts undertaken by sporting clubs to enhance their activities.

Labor will continue working in partnership with local councils and sporting organisations to deliver new and improved community sports infrastructure and programs to boost participation in local clubs and organisations.

Labor will:

- continue to provide grants to deliver new and improved community sports infrastructure, with a focus on female-friendly change rooms and facilities to encourage more women and girls to get involved in local sport;
- continue to provide grants to support the development of community sports infrastructure across Victoria, through investment in indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities and indoor stadiums, lighting projects and pavilion upgrades; and
- continue to provide grants to support Local Government Authorities to create safe spaces for physical activity and recreation.

6.9 VETERANS

Although the primary responsibility for veterans and their families sits with the Federal Government, Labor will always support ex-service personnel and their families living in Victoria.

Labor continues to support Victorian veterans and their families' wellbeing by supporting targeted grant programs, increasing employment opportunities, and working with specialist veteran housing organisations to ensure homelessness within the veteran community is addressed.

Labor will:

- engage with the veteran community, including through the Victorian Veterans Council, on their needs and ensure that their voices are heard in the development of veterans policy and programs;
- ensure that Victoria's programs and our advocacy to the Federal Government meet the needs of our veterans community;
- continue to monitor the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide; and
- identify opportunities to work in partnership with the Federal Government to improve the health and wellbeing of Victoria's veterans.

7 Sustainable Communities

Protecting & caring for our environment

Labor recognises the vital importance of biodiversity and is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment. Victoria's natural environment supports jobs, communities, tourism, wildlife and our liveability. Our parks contribute significant environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits to Victoria, including ecosystem services and recreational opportunities.

Labor has invested over \$560 million to protect and improve our precious biodiversity and natural environment – the largest ever investment of its kind by a Victorian Government. This includes dedicated support to improve our sensitive marine and coastal environments, habitat restoration and breeding programs for some of our state's most iconic species, and funding to ensure a sustainable future for our recycling industry.

Labor will continue to delicately balance sharing and protecting our natural environment in the interests of all Victorians, ensuring our natural assets and biodiversity are protected through national and marine parks, and implementing policies and record investment to support diverse and thriving ecosystem services.

Labor is also securing Victoria's water supplies and protecting the jobs, farmers, families and communities that rely on them, ensuring that water assets and their management remain in public hands.

Victoria is Australia's agricultural powerhouse, and Victorians rely on our producers and farmers every day for their food and produce. Their work is a critical part of a sector which itself is critical in supporting regional communities and economies. Labor will continue working in partnership with industry to build an agricultural sector that is innovative and resilient in the face of the challenges of today and the future.

It is essential to promote healthy ecosystems 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 has created a new Climate Change Act. This world-leading legislation sets an emissions reduction target of net zero emissions by 2050. In 2017, Victoria also became the first state in Australia to enshrine its renewable energy targets into law. Our Victorian Renewable Energy Targets of 25 per cent by 2020, 40 per cent by 2025 and 50 per cent by 2030 show that Labor is committed to leading the nation when it comes to renewable energy generation.

Labor has returned Victoria to the forefront of environmental protection with the complete overhaul of the Environment Protection Act 1970, which enshrines a new general environmental duty at the heart of the new scheme. The new Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018 passed the parliament in August and is backed in by an unprecedented investment by Labor of over \$180 million.

Labor knows that there is a critical inter-relationship between the environment, society and the economy, and that sustainability is at the heart of a society that promotes the wellbeing of all Victorians.

DELIVERING OUR GOALS

7.1 BIODIVERSITY

Our natural environment is not only beautiful, it is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of every Victorian. It provides us with clean air and water, productive soils, natural pest control, pollination, flood mitigation and carbon sequestration – and supports productive activities that underpin our state’s liveability and economic advantage.

Labor has an ambitious environmental agenda which prioritises the care and protection of our natural environment, which in turn will lead to greater economic stability and healthier communities. Labor’s ambitious Protecting Victoria’s Environment – Biodiversity 2037, supported through a record \$560 million investment, will help stop the decline of native plants and animals and improve the state’s natural environment.

Labor will:

- encourage efforts to protect, restore and build Victoria’s natural and productive environmental assets;
- work to prevent biodiversity decline; and
- continue implementing policies to support diverse, thriving ecosystem services to ensure our natural assets and biodiversity are protected.

7.1.1 PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

Labor recognises that the health of our society fundamentally depends on the health of our environment.

A whole-of-government commitment to effective laws, accounting, regulation, standards, investments and compliance measures is required to prevent species and habitat loss. Collaboration between government, community, industry and other stakeholders is vital to restoring and protecting ecosystems quality of life and shared prosperity.

WILDLIFE IN CAPTIVITY

Labor will:

- ensure that there are strong controls to regulate the breeding of native wildlife held in captivity, including licensing requirements for breeding native wildlife in captivity;
- monitor the effects of release into the wild of captive-bred wildlife;
- fund zoos so they can continue their primary objective of species conservation and education; and
- continue to develop and promote efforts to minimise harmful impacts on wildlife.

PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE

Labor will:

- minimise the use of ‘authorities to control wildlife’ and ‘unprotection orders’ for threatened species;
- ensure effective oversight and regulation of wildlife management and control authorisations; and
- encourage and promote activities which involve passive interaction with wildlife.

WILDLIFE CONTROLS

Labor will:

- partner with Traditional Owners to ensure Aboriginal Victorians are able to hunt native species in accordance with their cultural practices;
- establish protocols for landowners or their nominee to control, where native wildlife populations are causing significant damage to agricultural enterprise; and
- establish controls for culling of specific species in circumstances where it is causing detriment to rare or endangered species.

7.2 INVASIVE SPECIES AND WILD DEER MANAGEMENT

Labor understands the negative impact which invasive species can have on the environment, communities and industry. Furthermore, it recognises the need to establish controls to prevent damage caused by invasive species, while ensuring that invasive species governance is consistent with biodiversity conservation outcomes.

Wild deer in Victoria are the subject of increasing community interest. Growing awareness of increasing deer populations and their negative impacts on environmental, cultural and agricultural assets has led to the development of the Victorian Deer Control Strategy.

Labor recognises that an enhanced role for recreational shooting organisations is necessary for the control of invasive species, including (but not limited to) deer and pigs where appropriate.

IMPACT FROM DOMESTIC PETS

Labor will:

- ensure that the Domestic Animals Act is enforced;
- provide educational programs relating to care and management of domestic pets and plants; and
- consider whether urban development biosecurity processes require updating in relation to invasive species.

CONTROL MEASURES FOR INVASIVE SPECIES

Labor will:

- where possible, ensure that conflict between biodiversity conservation and invasive species policy and management practices is minimised;
- ensure that invasive species control measures are humane and meet community expectations;
- ensure an appropriate balance between control measures for indigenous species that pose a threat to agriculture while protecting Victoria's biodiversity conservation assets;
- ensure that invasive pest animal control measures are evidence-based, scientifically justified and effective;
- ensure that pest/invasive animal research initiatives are conducted by qualified scientists; and
- consider the potential combined effects of the use of poisons on Victorian public and private lands, including the long-term use of poisons for invasive pests and animal control.

WILD DEER

Labor will:

- consider further measures to control the overabundant wild deer population in consultation and partnership with Traditional Owners, conservation groups, licensed hunters, and other important stakeholder groups;
- continue to manage the spread and population growth of wild deer species through integrated pest management programs delivered in collaboration by relevant agencies;
- continue implementing the Victorian Deer Control Strategy;
- reduce wild deer impacts using research and experience to inform regional control plans;
- look at options to develop the commercial wild deer harvesting industry to assist with the impacts of overabundant wild deer on agriculture; and
- consider ways to support Traditional Owners in managing wild deer on country through the Victorian Traditional Owner Game Management Strategy.

GAME MANAGEMENT

Labor will:

- continue to ensure game hunting is conducted in a sustainable and responsible way and that illegal hunting is prevented and enforced; and
- ensure Traditional Owners are able to continue cultural practices of game hunting and wildlife management consistent with tradition.

7.2.1 APEX PREDATORS

The survival and protection of native terrestrial apex predator populations, including their ecological function, is important to the health of Victorian ecosystems.

Labor will:

- work to identify and protect native apex land predator populations (Canis Dingo) in Victorian ecosystems including including through recognition of dingo dominant hybrids as wildlife;
- minimise the lethal control of dingoes/dingo-dominant hybrid populations while taking environmentally responsible measures to minimise the impact of predation on livestock producers;
- maximise reliance upon non-lethal farm livestock stock protection measures as an alternative to lethal control;
- continue collaborating with Traditional Owners in apex predator management and conservation in Victoria; and
- consider how native apex predator control can be further improved in areas where public land intersects with private farms.

7.3 COASTAL AND MARINE

Under Labor, Victoria's precious marine and coastal environments will be protected and enhanced to benefit the Victorian community now and in the future. Labor is protecting our marine and coastal environments for the communities that rely on them every day and the millions of people who visit them every year.

Labor will continue to protect and enhance Victoria's precious marine and coastal environments to benefit the Victorian community, now and in the future.

7.3.1 COASTAL ZONES AND FORESHORES

Labor will conserve Victoria's coastal zones from the impacts of climate change for future generations. We will work with local communities and Traditional Owners to ensure policies provide protection for existing natural environmental values and that the urban growth boundaries of coastal towns support protected coastal landscapes.

Labor will:

- ensure coastal public land use for tourism and recreation also protects existing environmental values;
- work with private owners to protect environmentally sensitive coastal land;
- consider a strategy for the protection of coastal management areas and marine park environments; and
- retain public access to foreshore coastal areas for the community.

7.3.2 MARINE LIFE

Labor is committed to conserving biodiversity, and ensuring the survival of marine apex predator populations.

Labor will:

- demonstrate Victorian Government's commitment to ending trade in shark fin products;
- investigate the scale and species composition of shark bycatch in Victorian waters from both commercial and recreational fishing activities; and
- work to align Victorian commercial and recreational fishing activities with marine apex predator threatened species protection.

7.4 CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

Every Victorian has a right to a healthy and safe environment. Nature has an intrinsic value, our catchments, landscapes and forests play a vital role in protecting biodiversity and water systems and in mitigating the effects of climate change. Labor is committed to maintaining its strong record of protection and safeguarding of our environmental assets.

7.4.1 ABORIGINAL AND COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Labor respects the unique relationship that Traditional Owners have with their lands and waters and acknowledges Traditional Owners as inherent rights holders rather than ‘stakeholders’ in the management of public lands and natural resources.

Labor will:

- engage with Traditional Owners as inherent rights holders in land use planning and management to ensure that caring for Country is embedded as the best practice approach to land and sea management in Victoria;
- provide for Traditional Owner sole management of selected national parks and other Public lands;
- support the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy;
- deliver a grants program to support Traditional Owners where cultural fire techniques or intellectual property is used; and
- develop and implement fire management plans and practices that:
 - are appropriate to the ecosystem that is being burnt;
 - enhance regeneration;
 - are based on current scientific research into biodiversity and sustainability requirements of indigenous flora and fauna;
 - are produced in partnership with Traditional Owners;
 - retain unburnt patches of vegetation within the set fire perimeter;
 - burn areas on a cycle which provides sufficient time between burns to allow the full recovery of the ecosystem.

7.4.2 MANAGING LAND AND FORESTS FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

Labor understands the need for long-term protection for land with conservation or heritage values of national, state or regional significance.

Victoria is fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers and not-for-profit groups that are passionate about looking after the environment and biodiversity. Hard-working volunteers, community groups and Traditional Owners play a critical role in education, restoration and caring for Victoria’s natural environment.

Labor will:

- retain, sustainably manage and protect land which has conservation or heritage values;
- develop strategies to sustainably manage and protect freehold land;
- continue investment to protect high-value conservation assets;
- continue to pursue programs to preserve biodiversity values, and
- provide resources to biodiversity research, monitoring, reporting and management to improve conservation outcomes.

7.4.3 PUBLIC LAND

Public land is an important asset for all Victorians. It supports the delivery of essential government services, protects sites of environmental and cultural value and provides opportunities for community and recreational uses.

Labor will:

- rename Crown Land to Public Land to remove the references to colonisation and to reiterate that the land belongs to all Victorians;
- develop programs to protect and actively manage remnant vegetation along stream-sides, roadways and wetlands;
- continue working with local government to protect and manage remnant vegetation in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP);
- continue scientific assessments of environmental impacts resulting from public use of ecosystems including wetlands, waterways and forests;
- maintain existing public ownership of wetlands and ensure they are conserved, restored and managed in the public interest;
- continue to balance the need to protect our biodiversity with tourism and recreational activities; and
- ensure effective management of pest species through monitoring and adaptive management practices that apply best practice and humane approaches.

7.4.4 FREEHOLD LAND

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

Labor acknowledges that changing agricultural practices need to be compatible with responsible ecosystem management to underpin key rural industries, such as agriculture, forestry, horticulture and tourism.

Labor will:

- work with landholders to revegetate land to reduce carbon emissions and create habitat for some of Victoria's most iconic species;
- continue programs like BushBank, Bush TenderBush Broker and Eco Tender;
- work with the Federal Government to encourage carbon farming on private land;
- continue support for conservation covenants to protect and sustainably manage native vegetation; and
- undertake an audit of private forestry holdings.

7.4.5 MANAGING WETLANDS

Labor understands the importance of wetlands to our environment and our communities.

Labor supports the conservation and repair of native wetlands and conservation-based recreational use of wetlands.

Labor will maintain existing public ownership of wetlands and ensure that they are managed in the public interest.

Labor will:

- support the maintenance and protection of Ramsar wetland sites, based on scientific research;
- raise community awareness for environmental values, wetlands, endangered species, national estate values and world heritage values.
- promote a range of conservation sensitive uses of wetlands ecosystems, including tourism and recreation;
- provide support and assistance to wildlife rescuers and carers;
- ensure Traditional Owners are appropriately engaged regarding the management of wetlands; and
- ensure that Victoria fulfils Australia's obligations under the relevant international agreements including Ramsar sites.

7.4.6 CONSERVATION

Labor is continuing to invest in protecting Victoria's diverse and wonderful native wildlife, supporting critical research, habitat protection and the amazing efforts of wildlife carers.

The successful delivery of the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (MSA) will save the natural and cultural heritage of Victoria's grasslands from extinction and enable immediate management actions necessary to halt further degradation of natural and cultural values.

Labor will:

- support acquisition of Grasslands and Grassy Eucalypt Woodlands;
- overcome uncertainties about the timing and rate of development and therefore the cost of delivering the conservation outcomes of the program;
- work with councils, water authorities and other statutory authorities to proactively manage ecological outcomes;
- improve the annual reporting of the program, as well as the periodic Ecological Outcomes Report;
- identify suitable properties with high conservation values;
- protect and manage habitat corridors for endangered species;
- provide opportunity for reconciliation and restoring Aboriginal cultural practice; and
- engage with the relevant Traditional Owners to discuss management of the protected areas.

7.4.7 GOVERNANCE

Victoria is a leader in effective, inclusive and responsive environmental decision-making based on rigor, fairness and good governance.

Labor will:

- ensure that appointees to Boards of Management have relevant environmental and governance competencies and work for the advancement of the State of Victoria;
- ensure decision-making takes into consideration the protection of the environment;
- establish the Victorian Government as a leader in the adoption of innovative and practical emissions reduction practices for its own assets and departments;
- promote the involvement of the workplace (employees, unions and management) in tackling climate change; and
- ensure that the Victorian Government coordinates its own state of the environment reporting with the Federal state of the environment reporting.

7.4.8 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Labor believes that all Victorians should have access to, and enjoyment of, our public lands, including coastal and alpine regions. Labor acknowledges the contribution of our experienced citizen scientists to understanding and protecting our unique ecosystems and wildlife.

Labor will:

- ensure best practice environmental risk analysis and protections are in place to preserve soil, water and biodiversity in resource exploration and production;
- improve community consultation on proposed resource exploration and production projects;
- improve access to our natural environment for all communities; and
- continue working with and supporting credible citizen science programs, including data collection and analysis.

7.5 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Labor knows that a cleaner, greener waste management system with less waste and pollution will create more jobs and a sustainable thriving circular economy.

The Labor Government has embarked on an ambitious strategy to deliver a world-class recycling system for Victoria. Labor's reforms are supported by an unprecedented investment of \$515 million, which will standardise Victoria's household waste collection system and deliver infrastructure and industry development that will recover more resources, create thousands of new jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

7.5.1 DEVELOPING A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Labor will work with industry, local councils and the community to make the necessary systemic changes to build a sustainable and thriving circular economy for Victoria.

Labor will:

- implement behaviour change strategies to reduce waste;
- continue supporting local councils to implement Recycling Victoria reforms;
- introduce a four-bin household waste and recycling system;
- introduce a container deposit scheme;
- introduce a ban on specific problematic single-use plastics by 2023;
- work with food retailers to help inform consumers about the impact of food organics;
- support to councils to expand education programs on food and organic waste; and
- improve waste sorting in multi-unit living environments to reduce waste.

7.5.2 RECYCLING AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

Labor is transforming Victoria's waste and recycling system, with strong regulations and record investment in new recycling infrastructure, creating new uses for waste, innovation for businesses to increase recycling capacity and community education.

Labor is strengthening Victoria's recycling industry so valuable resources are reused over and over again, delivering a recycling system Victorians can rely on.

Labor will:

- invest in infrastructure to increase local resource recovery processing for cardboard, plastic, paper, glass and mixed recyclables;
- support local councils to improve recycling sorting infrastructure;
- ban e-waste from landfill and continue e-waste education campaigns to improve compliance with the law; and
- provide access to recycling collection points in government schools.

7.6 WATER

Safe, reliable and affordable water is key for the health, wellbeing and social fabric of our communities, the liveability of our cities and towns, the environment and the economy.

Victoria faces two major challenges in managing our water resources: climate change and population growth. As the climate continues to change, we need to understand and plan for diminishing inflows into our catchments. Labor is securing the future of our long-term water supplies and protecting the jobs, farmers, families and communities that rely on them.

Labor is planning and investing in regional water infrastructure and continuing to build the water grid to ensure that our cities, towns, regional communities and agricultural sector are productive and resilient in the face of climate change and increasing demands for water.

7.6.1 TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

The water sector makes a significant contribution to greenhouse gases through energy use and sewerage treatment. An ambitious sector target to achieve net zero by 2035 is in place and Labor will continue to make sure Victoria is on track to achieve that commitment.

Labor will:

- require water authorities to continue to develop and implement plans for reducing emissions to meet the 2035 target; and
- require water authorities to source energy from renewable sources by 2025.

7.6.2 SECURING OUR WATER SUPPLIES

Labor will continue to invest in our water security as well as the jobs, communities and industries that rely on it. We will continue to develop the water grid for the benefit of cities, towns, and rural communities across Victoria.

Labor will ensure adequate and healthy water supplies while also protecting surface and groundwater ecosystems.

Labor will:

- ensure that long-term planning is undertaken for water security based on science and population predictions;
- support a transition to using more manufactured sources of water such as recycled water, desalination and stormwater;
- continue to support farmers, rural communities and regional centres by expanding the water grid, investing in irrigation and recycled water infrastructure, modernising systems and keeping water services affordable; and,
- ensure adequate and healthy water supplies while also protecting surface and groundwater ecosystems.

7.6.3 RECOGNISING ABORIGINAL VALUES OF WATER

Water for Victoria has given a clear roadmap to deliver water for Victorian Aboriginal cultural, spiritual and economic values.

Labor will:

- assist Traditional Owners to access to water entitlements for cultural and economic purposes;
- ensure Traditional Owners are given the option to take up any unallocated water where available; and
- continue to work with Traditional Owners and the water sector to strengthen the role of Traditional Owners in water planning and management.

7.6.4 INVESTMENT IN HEALTHY AND LIVEABLE WATERWAYS

Victorians deserve to be able to enjoy healthy parks, gardens, sporting fields and recreational activities and to engage in fishing, camping, bushwalking and water sports in areas with healthy waterways.

Victorian Labor recognises that we also must boost environmental flows where we can, but not at the expense of farmers and other water users.

Labor will:

- improve waterway and catchment health;
- explore opportunities to return more flows to the environment; and,
- support water efficiency and integrated water management.

7.6.5 IMPROVING OUR WATER GRID AND MARKETS

Victorian Labor will continue its work in developing the water grid across the cities and regions, and ensuring that the markets work for every Victorian.

Labor will:

- invest in irrigation infrastructure to support farmers, rural communities and regional centres;
- modernise the water grid and systems where needed; and
- keep water services affordable.

7.6.6 WATER AUTHORITIES

Water corporations provide a range of important services to customers including water supply, sewage and trade waste disposal and treatment, water delivery for irrigation and domestic and stock purposes, drainage, and salinity mitigation services.

Labor will:

- not privatise or in any other way sell off or lease water assets; and
- work with unions to agree on a process to review the use of outsourcing in the water sector and bring back outsourced services.

