

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN. LABOR'S POSITIVE POLICIES



Labor



EQUALITY FOR THE WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA IS AT THE HEART OF THE LABOR MISSION

Extending opportunity to Australian women is both a test of our national character and an essential building block for national prosperity.

Australian women continue to experience barriers to full, fair and equal access to opportunities in the workforce, leadership and education.

Labor is committed to gender equality and in government, we will pursue practical policies that promote the equal participation of women in our society and in our economy.

The latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows Australian women are currently earning 17.3 per cent less than men, earning on average \$277.70 per week less than men. Women in Australia also have an average of \$90,000 less in superannuation when they retire.

The G20 has acknowledged that one of the world's most significant barriers to global economic growth is the persistently low level of women's participation in the workforce compared with men.

The Grattan Institute estimates that if Australia had the same female workforce participation rate as Canada, Australia's GDP would be about \$25 billion higher.

Labor is committed to ensuring Australia meets the G20 gender participation target of increasing participation by 25 per cent by 2025. In order for Australia to meet the G20 gender participation target, we need to create an additional 300,000 jobs for women.

There is so much to be done to address gender inequality and Labor understands there needs to be a strong focus by the national government to deliver it.

ONLY LABOR WILL DO THIS

“I firmly believe that if this Parliament did nothing else in the next number of years but advance the march of women through the institutions of power: in workplaces, in unpaid work, in family law and economic equality, if we did nothing else in this country as a whole in the next 15 years but install women to a place of equal treatment in our society, we will be a richer, more prosperous country with a far better prospect of a brighter future.”

Bill Shorten, International Women's Day, March 2016

LABOR GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

Labor will strive for greater gender equality in Australia through strong government leadership.

A chance at an equal future for women and girls and their full participation in all aspects of Australian life will be enhanced by Labor's commitment to systemic policy reform that places gender equality at the heart of a Shorten Labor Government.

PLACING THE OFFICE FOR WOMEN AT THE CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT

Labor will place the Office for Women at the centre of a new program for gender equity in Australia. This will provide cross-portfolio analysis and oversight of all policies that impact on the social and economic wellbeing and participation of Australian women.

REPRESENTATION ON GOVERNMENT BOARDS

A Shorten Labor Government will lead by example, with a target of 50 per cent representation of women on all Australian Government boards by the end of the first term.

Labor will continue to prioritise the need for high level participation in leadership and work with the ASX 100 to raise the engagement of women on private boards.

ANNUAL FEDERAL WOMEN'S BUDGET STATEMENTS

A Shorten Labor Government will ensure each budget is accompanied by a statement of these impacts.

By re-introducing an annual Women's Budget Statement, there will be greater transparency and consideration of gender across the whole of government as well as an opportunity to understand policy impacts across budgets.



A GOVERNMENT POLICY GENDER LENS

A Shorten Labor Government will ensure all government legislation is accompanied by a statement of its impact on women, by embedding an Impact Statement for Women.

This restores past practice and maintains the commitment across policy to equity.

SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S ALLIANCES

A Shorten Labor Government will provide \$5.2 million over three years for the continuation of the work of six National Women's Alliances to stimulate advocacy and social action.

Labor will continue to support:

- Economic Security4Women (eS4W).
- Equality Rights Alliance (ERA).
- Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA).
- National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC).
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA).

Labor will also re-establish the Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AMaRWA) the peak advocacy body for immigrant and refugee women in Australia.

Under Labor, the Alliances will be required to report annually and to produce a mission statement and record of achievements.

Labor will convene an Annual Forum of the Women's Alliances, which will include a meeting between Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Women's Affairs Ministers and the Alliances. This will enable greater sharing of information and policy development on issues affecting women at all levels of government.



ANONYMOUS CV PROCESSES

A Shorten Labor Government will introduce an anonymous CV application process for new graduates and entry-level applicants for roles in the Australian Public Service. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has already had success in trialling this.

This initiative will be rolled out as a trial over a period of three years to enable Federal Government Departments to adjust.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Labor will establish Women's Advisory Committees and Diversity Units in all Federal Government Departments to set and report on gender targets for all portfolio areas. Each Department will report back to a central unit in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The Office for Women will work with Department Secretaries to ensure that all public service leaders' key performance indicators specifically include diversity and inclusion as part of their performance review and promotion processes.

A MINISTERIAL COUNCIL TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

A Shorten Labor Government will reconvene a Ministerial Council on Gender Inequality with relevant Ministers in State and Territory Governments.



ENDING THE SCOURGE OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

There is no clearer symbol of continuing gender inequality in our society than the epidemic of violence against women.

The biggest risk factor for being a victim of family violence is being a woman.

The latest research shows:

- One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15.
- At least 17 per cent of Australian women have experienced violence by a current or previous partner in their lifetime.
- Only 20 per cent of Australian women who have experienced current partner violence reported it to police.

Family violence isolates, excludes and traumatises its victims. It disconnects people from community, work, education, friends and family.

SAFE HOUSING FOR WOMEN

Domestic and family violence is a major cause of homelessness in Australia.

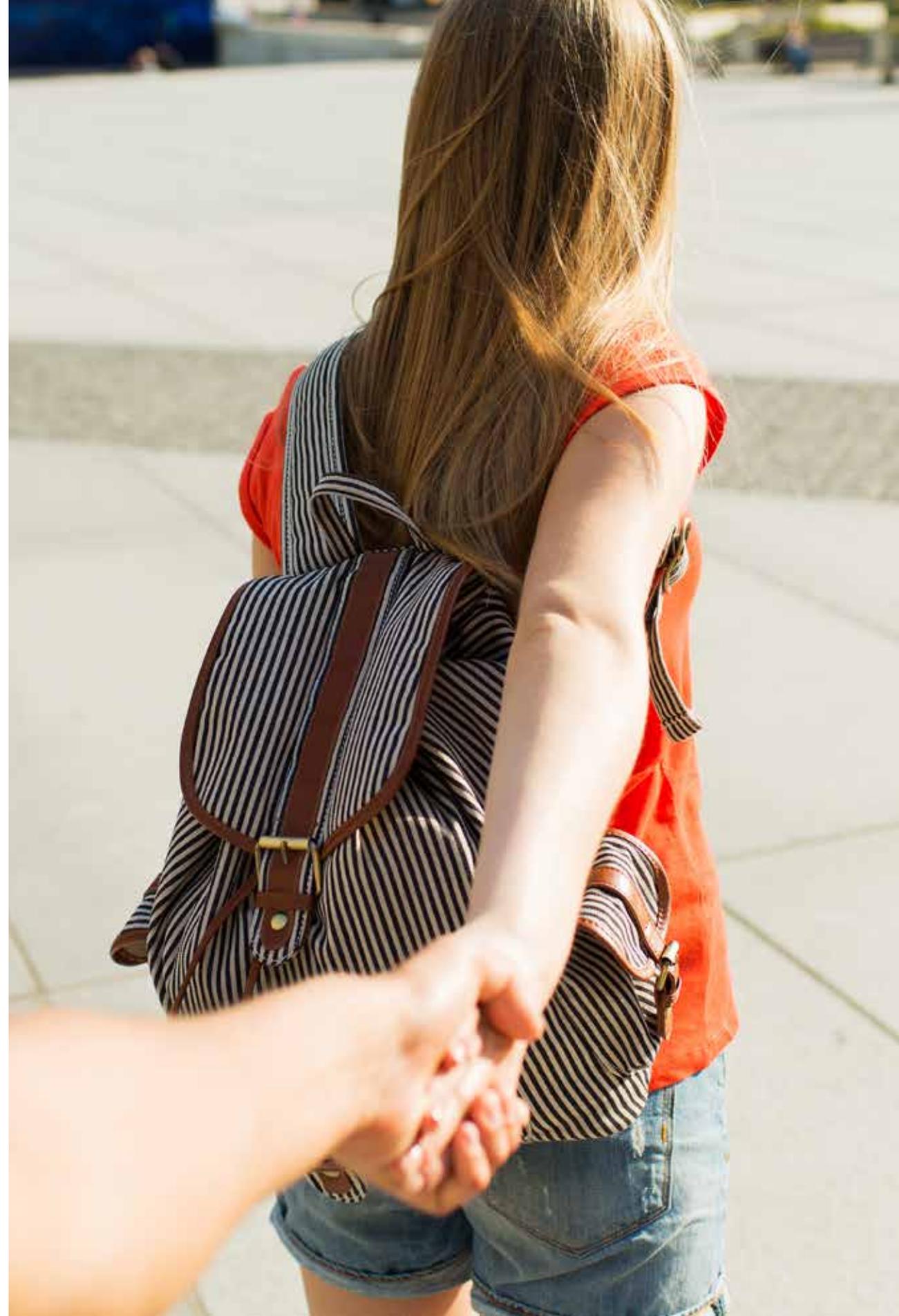
Over one third of people who accessed specialist homelessness services over the three years to 2013-14 were seeking assistance due to domestic and family violence. The majority of those seeking assistance were women: 110,000 women compared to 12,000 men over 18 years, and more than 45,000 of this group were women with children.

Labor believes that Australia needs to provide more support and assistance to women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

In March 2015, Labor announced an initial investment of \$15 million in Safe at Home grants to help people affected by family violence stay safe in their own home.

Labor will also invest \$88 million in a new Safe Housing program to increase transitional housing options for women and children escaping domestic and family violence and to support programs that enable women to stay safe in their own homes.

Safe Housing will increase the number of refuges specifically available for women and children fleeing domestic violence and will fill a gap between crisis housing and longer term arrangements.



NATIONAL CRISIS SUMMIT

Within the first 100 days of coming to government, Labor will convene a National Crisis Summit on Violence Against Women.

A National Crisis Summit will enable the Federal Government and the States and Territories to agree to urgently implement coordinated judicial and social services reform within their areas of responsibility to better deal with family violence. The National Crisis Summit is also the best way for stakeholders to openly and transparently lay down the key policy challenges for addressing family violence.

Following the National Crisis Summit, a Shorten Labor Government will seek a new deal on coordinated judicial and social services reform to better respond to and prevent family violence.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Labor will invest \$42.9 million in frontline legal services to ensure women threatened by violence do not go through the legal system alone. An amount of \$4.5 million will also be invested in Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children experiencing family violence.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Labor will invest \$8.4 million into research on mapping perpetrator interactions across family violence, law enforcement, justice, child protection and related systems. This investment will aim to:

- Identify and monitor opportunities to interrupt forthcoming violent behaviours through information sharing and specific accountability strengthening measures.
- Support research to increase our knowledge of how perpetrators track through these systems.
- Help to better understand the role and effectiveness of risk assessment systems in order to build a comprehensive understanding of perpetrator behaviours, including through a longitudinal study.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE LEAVE

A Shorten Labor Government will provide for five days paid domestic and family violence leave in the National Employment Standards.

The National Employment Standards provide statutory minimum conditions for all employees – women and men – covered by the national workplace relations system. Labor’s plan is part of the solution to reduce the costs of domestic and family violence to individuals suffering domestic violence, as well as businesses and the Australian economy.

Those who have access to the leave entitlement will retain their job and income, which gives women choice, reduces isolation, helps them to care for their children and provides them with a safe home environment.

FUNDING CERTAINTY FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE PEAK ORGANISATIONS

A Shorten Labor Government will provide funding certainty to the organisations delivering the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

Labor’s commitment will ensure 1800 RESPECT, Our WATCh and ANROWS can continue their critical work in tackling the scourge of family violence to 2021-22.

These organisations provide critical frontline support services to women experiencing family violence as well as helping to drive cultural change.

Labor commits to continue the momentum of recent years around this issue, through advocates like Rosie Batty, the 2015 Australian of the Year and through the landmark Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, and the Queensland Government “Not Now, Not Ever” Taskforce. All levels of government, employers, communities, unions, legal sector, experts and services must work together to address this challenge.

INDIGENOUS JUSTICE TARGETS

Labor has developed a positive plan to address high rates of incarceration and victimisation in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to secure safer communities. This includes addressing the unacceptably high rates of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We will work closely with State and local governments to:

- Commit to a new justice target under the Closing the Gap Strategy, to be considered at the first Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting convened under a Shorten Labor Government.
- Resource a long-term study of the effectiveness of justice re-investment project currently underway in Bourke, NSW, to see what Australia can learn from this specific initiative.
- Establish three new sites in a major city, regional town and remote community that build on existing community-led initiatives to explore the role of justice reinvestment in preventing crime and reducing incarceration.
- Through COAG, establish a national coordinating body to build the evidence base, collect data and measure progress as the new targets are implemented, and to monitor the effectiveness of justice reinvestment in the Australian context.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

The health and wellbeing of Australians is a key priority for Bill Shorten and Labor.

Labor has a proud history of ensuring all Australians have access to world class, decent affordable health care. It was Labor that gave Australians universal access to public hospitals, Medicare and subsidised medicines on the PBS.

Labor stands with the community against cuts to vital health services and in government will ensure all Australians have access to quality, affordable health care.

MAKING WOMEN'S HEALTH A NATIONAL PRIORITY

A Shorten Labor Government will make women's health a national priority by committing to the *Australian Women's Health Charter* as proposed by the Australian Women's Health Network.

This will improve women's health through a whole-of-government approach to making sure Australian women have optimal health and well-being, and access to gender based services. Labor will:

1. Develop a National Women's Health Policy. This will ensure there is a whole-of-government approach to women's health and it is taken into consideration in all areas of government policy.
2. Provide funding to the National Women's Health Network to continue their important work and assist in the development of the National Women's Health Policy. This will involve funding of \$225,000 a year for four years. The National Women's Health Network will work collaboratively with service providers to identify emerging issues and research areas of concern to women's health and wellbeing.
3. Labor will contribute to developing a national conversation about women's health by providing \$100,000 to develop a national conference through the Office for Women in conjunction with women's peak health organisations to identify priorities, new policy ideas and research areas.

IMPROVING WOMEN'S HEALTH THROUGH RESEARCH

A Labor Government will invest in life-saving research into ovarian cancer, supporting Ovarian Cancer Australia's vision to reduce the incidence of ovarian cancer by 25 per cent and to improve the five-year survival rate of women affected by ovarian cancer by 25 per cent by the year 2025. Labor has committed \$8 million to this important research.

Labor will also provide \$7 million in funding for Breast Cancer Network Australia to continue and expand their vital work supporting women with breast cancer in rural Australia and women all around Australia with secondary breast cancer.



SUPPORT MANAGING WORK AND CARE

PROTECTING PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

Supporting parents to manage their work and care responsibilities is an important way of increasing female workforce participation.

That is why Labor introduced Australia's first ever Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme in 2011. Since it was introduced, Labor's scheme has helped more than 700,000 women spend more time with their newborn babies. Labor also introduced Dad and Partner Pay (DAPP). DAPP provides fathers with two weeks leave at the minimum wage following the birth of their baby.

Many of these mums and dads have also been able to extend their leave by accessing schemes their existing employers have in place. Unfortunately, in the 2015 Budget the Liberals announced their intention to limit the amount of PPL new mothers could receive if they get support from employers.

A Shorten Labor Government will invest more than \$1 billion to ensure that all working mothers continue to have a minimum of 18 weeks leave paid at the minimum wage. This will mean that mothers will be up to \$11,800 better off under a Shorten Labor Government, and will have more time with their newborns.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Affordable, accessible and quality early education and care is essential for closing the gender wage gap and supporting women to increase their participation in the workforce.

A Shorten Labor Government will deliver child care support that is fairer and will make early education and care more affordable for families, particularly women

Under Labor's plan:

- Low and middle income families will benefit from an increase to the Child Care Benefit of 15 per cent.
- Every one of the 813,000 families that rely on the Child Care Benefit will be better off – an increase up to \$31 per child per week, or up to \$1,627 per year, will provide much needed relief for the family budget.



- The annual cap on the Child Care Rebate will be increased from \$7,500 to \$10,000 per child, leaving families up to \$2,500 per child per year better off.
- The 107,800 families who would otherwise reach the Child Care Rebate cap this financial year won't have to choose between paying double fees, or dropping out of the workforce.
- Up to 300 centres in high demand areas will be supported to expand - tackling waiting lists and helping parents balance work and family.
- The current number of 1,200 Outside School Hours Care services will be supported to expand, or to set up in areas where they currently don't exist.



CUTTING WAITING LISTS

Long waiting lists drive up early education and care costs - locking low and middle income families out in high demand areas. They also lock vulnerable and disadvantaged children out of vital early learning, when they have the most to gain.

To help tackle waiting lists, Labor will:

- Invest \$100 million over three years from 2017-18 so services in areas of very high demand can expand - creating more places where families need them. We will target areas of high or rapidly growing demand, with waiting lists in the local area, and priority will be given to community and not-for-profit services which would otherwise not be able to expand.
- Commit \$63.2 million over three years from 2017-18 to establish or expand up to 1,200 Outside School Hours Care services. Grants of up to \$50,000 will be made available. Services must be in areas of high demand, have waiting lists or be in areas where Outside School Hours Care is currently not available.

FLEXIBLE WORK IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

As female workforce participation increases, families need flexibility to be able to manage their work and care responsibilities.

Slowly, more and more businesses are providing flexible work arrangements for parents. Telstra, for example, has made all of its roles fully flexible.

Labor believes the Australian Public Service can be a leader in providing flexible work environments for employees, without compromising job quality or conditions of employment.

Already the New South Wales Government and the Queensland Government are working towards more flexible work in their public services.

A Shorten Labor Government will immediately begin work with the Australian Public Service and the Community and Public Sector Union to investigate how we can promote more flexible working arrangements across the Australian Public Service.

These changes will be achieved through constructive consultation that gives staff a genuine say in managing their work and personal responsibilities.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

SCHOOLS

Every woman deserves to reach her full potential – and to get the best start in life through a great education.

Labor's Your Child. Our Future plan for schools will put needs-based funding permanently at the heart of our school system – so every girl in every school gets the support she needs to achieve her best.

Labor will invest an additional \$36 billion in schools over the next decade, including \$3.8 billion more than the Liberals in 2018 and 2019 alone. This will make a big difference in the classroom and improve results for Australian students.

PROMOTING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN SCHOOLS

Along with parents, schools and teachers are the frontline in shaping attitudes towards gender and violence in the next generation.

If we are to address the issue of gendered violence, every teacher in every classroom should be equipped to help students understand respectful relationships.

Already, several States have implemented respectful relationships and gendered violence programs in the classroom, and work is underway to strengthen the national curriculum.

A Shorten Labor Government will continue to work with the States and Territories to develop best-practice programs and ensure teachers have the tools they need to make sure children understand respectful relationships and know what to do if they are exposed to gendered violence.

EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS GIRLS THROUGH EDUCATION

Right now, less than six out of 10 Indigenous female students complete secondary school as opposed to eight out of 10 non-Indigenous students.

To address this issue, Labor will partner with the Stars Foundation to empower Indigenous girls through education and gender equity. The program supports Indigenous girls and young women at risk of disengaging from education, providing full-time school-based mentors and including sport, art, music, dance and community experiences to achieve targets and outcomes.

We will build on their existing programs in schools in the Northern Territory to provide 7,155 student places through an expanded program in the Northern Territory and new programs in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Continuing to support women to access quality higher education is critical to closing the gender wage gap.

Labor has announced a plan to properly fund universities without the Abbott-Turnbull Government's \$100,000 degrees.

A Shorten Labor Government will introduce a new Student Funding Guarantee, which will deliver \$2,500 more per student than the Liberals and remove the need for higher fees and a lifetime of debt.

Labor will:

- Increase the number of students completing their study by 20,000 graduates a year from 2020.
- Offer 2,000 students a Startup Year at university to develop and commercialise their own enterprise.

SUPPORTING INCREASED STEM SKILLS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Labor will offer 100,000 Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Award Degrees over five years – with half of these award degrees going to women.

With women representing only 20 per cent of engineering and related technologies enrolments, and 14 per cent of information technology enrolments, boosting the representation of women in STEM degrees is a serious priority.

Upon graduation, the entire HECS-HELP debt will be written off, meaning these students can graduate debt free.

We will provide a financial incentive for students to enrol in, and complete, a STEM undergraduate degree, in recognition of the significant public benefit of growing Australia's STEM capacity.

This policy will seek to encourage universities to work with schools and TAFEs to target students in the last two years of their schooling or TAFE course, with an emphasis on boosting the number of STEM students from underrepresented groups such as women, Indigenous, regional and lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

GIRLS INTO CODE

Labor will support the expansion of Girls into Code with a \$4.5 million grants program to support organisations that promote, encourage and inspire girls to learn code.

Labor's Girls into Code grants program will facilitate mentoring and access to role models, connect coding programs to schools, and create opportunities for girls to build up their confidence and showcase their talent in coding and ICT skills.

There are a range of organisations and movements that are doing great work delivering engaging and inclusive programs that inspire young women and girls to code, including Code Club Australia, Code Like a Girl, DigiGirlz and Girls Make Games.

Labor's Girls into Code will ensure these programs are offered in more places, to more girls so that in the future Australian women are equipped to benefit from the jobs of the future.



PROMOTING WOMEN'S SPORT

Women's sport makes up a small fraction of television sports coverage in Australia. In 2014, the Australian Sports Commission found that just 7 per cent of non-news programming content on television was devoted to women's sport.

The Abbott-Turnbull Government's savage cuts to the ABC over the past three years have made this problem worse.

Labor will provide funding of \$21 million to the ABC to increase coverage of women's sport in Australia on both television and digital platforms.

With this funding, approximately 500 live hours of dedicated women's sport coverage can be delivered across broadcast and digital platforms.



GENDER PAY EQUITY

Bill Shorten and Labor are committed to addressing gender pay equity in Australia.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency notes that the current gender pay gap is 17.3 per cent and that it has remained within the 15 per cent to 19 per cent band for the past two decades.

WORKING WOMEN'S CENTRES

Bill Shorten and Labor understand the need for vital services that support vulnerable women with information and advice about their status at work. Working Women's Centres (WWC) in Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory have provided such services since 1994.

A Shorten Labor Government will allocate \$3.8 million to these three centres to continue the outstanding work they do in those communities.

Not only do the WWCs provide specialist advice and advocacy, they also produce educational materials, deliver community education sessions and provide advice to government on a range of female workforce issues. If funding for these centres ceases, there would be no free, specialist employment advice service for vulnerable women in the Northern Territory, South Australia or Queensland.

This would leave more than 9,000 workers without advice every year.

PROTECTING PENALTY RATES

Labor believes that penalty rates continue to be a fundamental part of a strong safety net for Australian workers, enabling those in low income and highly casualised industries to share in the nation's economic prosperity.

Hospitality workers are in the bottom 30 per cent of Australian income earners. Along with hospitality and food services, retail has the largest proportion of low paid workers in Australia.

Women make up a disproportionate share of workers in both the retail and hospitality sectors accounting for 55 per cent of all those employed.

Labor has already taken the unprecedented step for an Opposition of making a submission to the Fair Work Commission arguing that penalty rates must not be cut. Labor is the only party in this election to have made a submission.

A Shorten Labor Government will intervene in proceedings before the Fair Work Commission in favour of retaining penalty rates.





MAKING RETIREMENT INCOMES FAIRER

A FAIR PENSION SYSTEM

More than half of Age Pension recipients are women and nearly 70 per cent of recipients of the Carer Payment are women.

In 2009, Labor increased the pension by the largest amount in its 100-year history. Because of Labor, age pensioners, disability support pensioners and recipients of the Carer Payment received a \$30 per week increase to the base rate of the pension. Labor also legislated new indexation arrangements which mean that the pension keeps pace with the standard of living of other Australians.

In 2014, the Liberals tried to cut pension indexation. Had they been successful, this would have meant a cut to the pension of \$80 per week within a decade.

Labor fought this cut, and we won. Labor has also fought the Liberals' plans to increase the pension age to 70 and limit the amount of time pensioners born overseas can visit family whilst still receiving their full pension.

FAIRER SUPERANNUATION FOR WOMEN

According to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency:

"The average superannuation balance at retirement in 2011-12 was \$105,000 for women and \$197,000 for men, resulting in a gender retirement superannuation gap of 46.6 per cent."

"Men's superannuation balances at retirement are on average twice as large as women's. In practice this means that women, particularly single women, are at greater risk of experiencing poverty, housing stress and homelessness in retirement."

A small number of Australian employers have initiated top up superannuation payments for their female employees, to address the gap between men and women's superannuation balances.

Labor will amend the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 to ensure companies are able to make higher superannuation payments for their female employees when they wish to do so. As part of this process, we will ask the Australian Human Rights Commission to advise on the most appropriate legislative approach.

Labor will also ask the Australian Human Rights Commission to develop guidelines and advice for any organisation contemplating providing additional superannuation payments for women. This proposal is consistent with the unanimous recommendation of the Senate Economics References Committee report into the economic security of women in retirement.



ADVANCING WOMEN'S WELLBEING AT HOME AND ABROAD

Historically, women bear the brunt of poverty, are the worst affected by humanitarian disasters, are much more vulnerable than men in times of crisis, and are often marginalised when it comes to economic decision making.

In government, Labor put gender equality at the centre of our aid program. Sadly, Labor's approach to aid has been damaged by the Liberals' cuts to foreign aid.

Violence against women undermines a country's social fabric and prevents women from achieving social and economic equality.

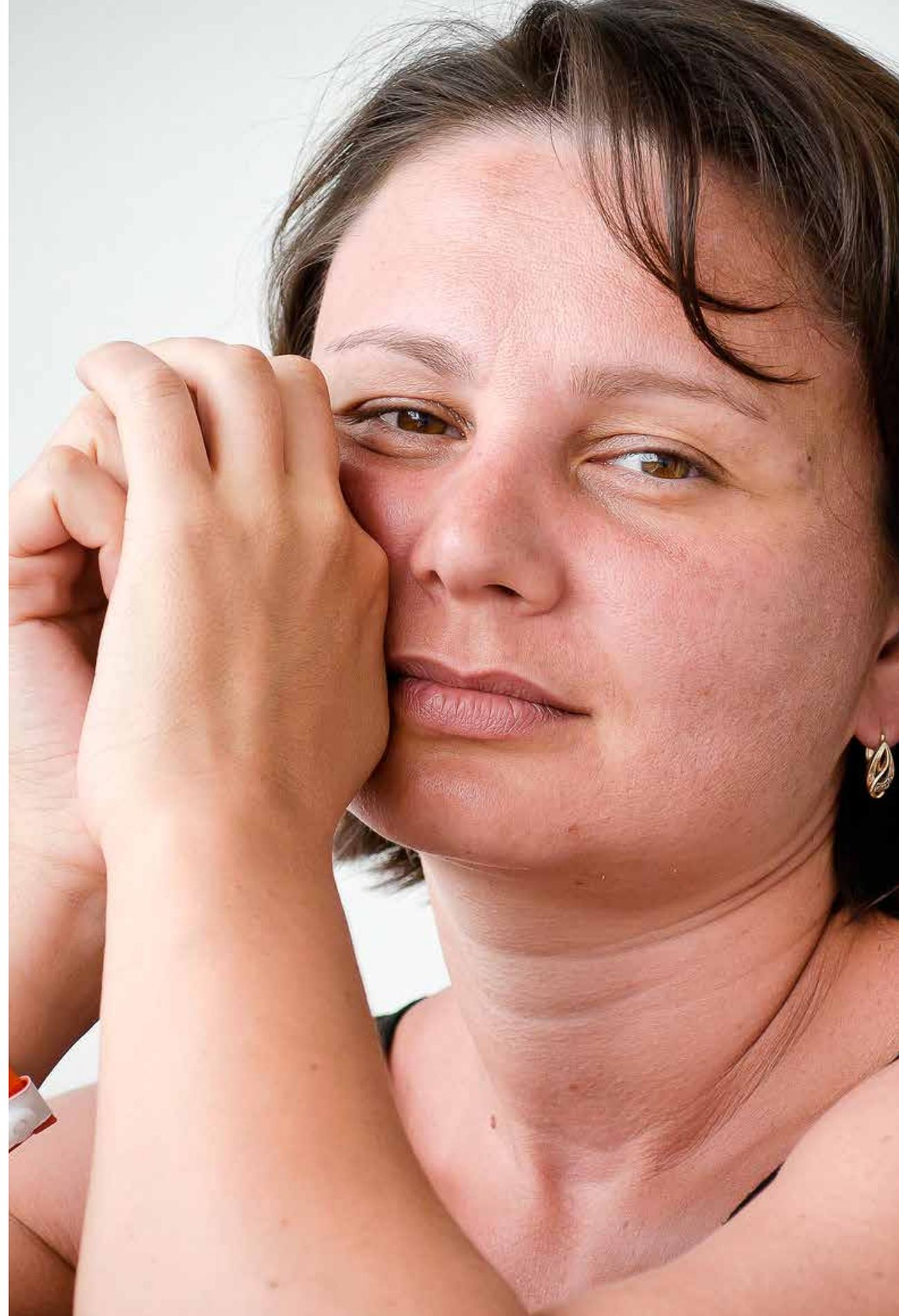
Under Labor, the aid program recognised and responded to gender equity as a precondition for both human rights and economic development.

In government:

- We helped women leave behind extreme poverty with microfinance.
- We increased the number of women who were able to give birth safely.
- We supported efforts to reduce domestic violence and sexual assault.
- We supported increased political representation of women, and the inclusion of women in decision making and peace building exercises.
- We doubled aid funding for family planning services.
- We abolished the Harradine amendment which prohibited Australian aid money going to organisations which delivered family planning services.

Over the next four years, Labor will provide around \$800 million more for overseas aid than the Liberals.

We believe in a strong aid program because gender equality and empowering women has been shown to contribute to growth, development and stability.



A UNITED LABOR TEAM WILL PUT PEOPLE FIRST

From the day Bill Shorten became Leader, Labor's team has remained united, with a single-minded commitment to deliver those policies that put people first. A healthcare system underpinned by Medicare. An education system that gives every child in every school more individual attention – Public, Catholic or Independent. University and TAFE that is accessible for all.

**WE HAVE PUT FORWARD OUR POSITIVE PLANS.
WE ARE UNITED. WE ARE READY.**



WE'LL PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Labor



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