

Chapter 11: New ways of governing for a stronger democracy

- 1 The Labor Party is committed to strengthening our democracy and giving Australians a real say in shaping our future.
- 2 As the only Australian political party that pre-dates Federation, Labor has a long history of support and respect for Australia's democratic institutions and values and the Westminster parliamentary tradition they are derived from.
- 3 Since its earliest days, Labor has fought to strengthen our democracy. Our vision today includes our commitment to create a modern federation and to take to a national referendum a vote on Australia becoming a republic.
- 4 Labor has also been the party that has invested in our nation's public services and public institutions, to serve the common good and give individuals access to the support they need to fully participate in their community. Labor has always had a vision of government as an enabler: providing the necessary regulation and opportunities for achieving our broader social-democratic goals.
- 5 Our public services and institutions have a critical role to play in building the Australia of the 21st century. As communication technology improves, our national broadcasters will provide more content to more diverse audiences. As technology increases access to government, our public services and elected representatives should become more accountable. This will require long-term planning by government around funding for public services, workforce development and building a better coordinated public service.
- 6 Our democracy depends on robust electoral laws that prevent hidden power and influence from distorting the vote. It was Labor that legislated away the gerrymander of years past, and that created the modern system of transparent public funding for political parties. These reforms have served Australia well, but now there are new challenges in the management of election financing, funding and transparency that must be addressed.
- 7 Labor will do all it can to maintain and restore the integrity of government—much damaged in recent years—through increased transparency and accountability.
- 8 And we will ensure that the constitution, public services, parliament and new forms of democracy enhance the participation of Australians in national decision making.

The Liberal legacy: Undermining our democratic institutions

- 9 The Liberal Party in government undermined the integrity and institutions of Australian democracy. Independent institutions were attacked and undermined, ministers became less accountable and government became a vehicle for advancing partisan interests.
- 10 In office, the Liberal Party used its majority in the House of Representatives and Senate to force through successive bills with little or no scrutiny, undermining the traditional role of Parliament in scrutinising legislation and holding governments to account. Major legislative changes such as the WorkChoices legislation were rushed through Parliament, with debates shut down and the Senate treated as little more than a rubber stamp for executive government.

- 11 The Liberal Party in government attacked the integrity of the Australian Public Service, politicising appointments and weakening the impartiality of the service.
- 12 The Liberal Party used the resources of government to advance its own partisan political interests, spending more than \$1 billion on government advertising without any supervision of its legitimacy.
- 13 The Liberal Party in office waged a 12 year long culture war, politicising the boards of key public institutions such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, attacking independent institutions such as the judiciary and universities, and sabotaging progress towards an Australian republic.
- 14 The Liberals changed our electoral laws to disenfranchise thousands of voters for their partisan political interests, while widening loopholes to allow secret donations to be made to political parties without disclosure.

Labor's principles: a strong public service and transparent government

- 15 Labor in government is taking a different approach. We believe in new ways of governing for a better, stronger democracy:
 - Labor is committed to modernising our Constitution and Federation to resolve the funding and administrative problems that have prevented government effectively dealing with the challenges of today. This includes ensuring that our constitutional framework recognises our role as an independent nation but also that our federal funding and administrative structures reflect our status as a nation, not as a number of colonies.
 - We believe that Parliament should always be accountable to voters, because effective oversight and scrutiny deepens our democracy, allowing policies to be properly evaluated, and judged at subsequent elections and providing a more informed and active polity.
 - We support Australia's public services to provide essential services for the entire community, while also providing long-term policy advice for government which serves the national interest. Public services should be efficient and accountable and they should also be protected from interference from government, the private sector or political parties.
 - Government should be open to increased citizen participation in decision making, particularly in light of increased opportunities provided by technology and communications.
 - Government should be transparent and be driven by electoral mandate, not by hidden and unaccountable power. Whether through donations to political parties, lobbying activities or restrictions on freedom of information, government should be free of the vested and sectional interests that undermine the ability of government to act in the national interest.
 - Elections and voting are at the heart of a functioning democracy, and ensuring that the democratic franchise is able to be exercised by all Australians regardless of social class, race or background is an enduring Labor value.
 - A nation as large and diverse as ours needs national broadcasting institutions that are publicly owned and run in the national interest. These institutions are central to building national unity, and to recognising the diversity that makes us a strong community.

Constitutional reform underpinning our agenda for change

- 16 Labor has a long-standing commitment to Constitutional reform to modernise our democratic structures and make our public administration more effective, efficient and prepared to deal with the challenges of the 21st century.

- 17 Labor believes that first and foremost our Constitution should reflect Australia's status as a parliamentary democracy and an independent nation.
- 18 Labor believes that the preamble to the Constitution should explicitly recognise Indigenous Australians and the core elements of Australia's history and democracy and appropriately expresses the values, aspirations and ideals of the Australian people.
- 19 Labor believes that modernising Australia's Constitution also entails a transition to an Australian Republic, with an Australian head of state, who can fully represent our traditions, values and aspirations as a nation.
- 20 Labor is committed to consulting with the Australian people, other political parties, the states and the territories as to the form that the Republic should take. Labor will promote community debate about the advantages and disadvantages of the various republican models.
- 21 Labor will conduct plebiscites to establish support for an Australian head of state and the preference for different forms of a Republic. When a preference has emerged Labor will initiate an appropriate referendum under section 128 of the Constitution.
- 22 Labor remains committed to constitutional reform that:
- Entrenches the principle of one vote, one value for all elections, to ensure equal participation for all regardless of place of residence.
 - Allows simultaneous, fixed four-year terms for the House of Representatives and the Senate.
 - Prevents the Senate rejecting, deferring or blocking appropriation bills.
 - Removes the barrier on election to parliament of a person holding an office of profit under the Crown, provided that office is relinquished on election.
 - Allows all Australian citizens to contest Commonwealth elections.
 - Removes racially discriminatory provisions from the Constitution, in particular by amending or removing section 25 and section 51(xxvi) to ensure they cannot be used to discriminate against Indigenous Australians.
 - Makes clear the capacity of the Commonwealth and the States to work together using the full range of cooperative schemes to achieve harmonised laws and national enforcement regimes.
- 23 Labor recognises that constitutional reform must be underpinned by popular ownership of the reform agenda, broad political support and effective community education.

Modernising our federation for better service delivery

- 24 Labor is committed to far-reaching reform of the federation through a new era of national cooperation.
- 25 Labor in government will continue using the COAG process to modernise our federation and improve the delivery of important services in areas like health, education, transport, water and Indigenous equality.
- 26 Labor will ensure that COAG outcomes are transparent and publicly available to the community and stakeholders.
- 27 Labor will ensure that COAG investment is used to leverage Indigenous employment and business outcomes.

Simplifying and harmonising legislation

- 28 Labor will take appropriate steps to ensure that legislation and legislative instruments are accessible to all Australians. In particular, Labor will ensure that all legislation and legislative instruments are:
- Drafted in clear, simple and non-discriminatory language.
 - Readily available to the public at the time of proclamation.
 - Consolidated in an accessible, appropriate and reasonably priced form.
 - Regularly reviewed, simplified and if necessary, repealed.
- 29 Substantive rights should be enshrined in legislation and delegated legislation will be confined exclusively to administrative matters. All legislative instruments should be subject to parliamentary scrutiny to check for consistency with Australia's human rights obligations.
- 30 Labor will establish a mechanism for ongoing legal harmonisation across Australia. Labor will further work with the states and territories on a long-term solution to ensure that the Commonwealth and state governments can put in place joint legislation to address issues of national importance for which neither government has complete responsibility.

Human rights and responsibilities

- 31 Labor has established a national consultation process to ensure all Australians can have their say on how best to recognise and protect human rights.
- 32 Through this process, Labor will engage with Australians in deciding how democratic, industrial and community rights recognised in international treaties and conventions ratified by Australia should be protected. Labor will consider and act on the views of the Australian people as expressed through this process of consultation.
- 33 Labor recognises that human rights also carry with them a responsibility to respect the individual and collective rights enjoyed by others and the need to protect and promote institutions and practices fundamental to an equal, just, democratic and tolerant society.
- 34 Any proposal for legislative change in this area must maintain the sovereignty of the Parliament and will not be based on the United States Bill of Rights.

Ensuring women's equal place in a stronger democracy

- 35 Labor is committed to promoting the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes.
- 36 Labor is committed to promoting and supporting women's leadership in Australia's parliaments, governments, senior levels in the private sectors and communities throughout Australia.
- 37 Labor will work to ensure women's equal place in the world by:
- Maintaining an active role in international forums to promote the rights of women including institutions formed under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
 - Ensuring the Sex Discrimination Act and the powers of the commissioner are adequately protecting women against discrimination on the basis of gender and family responsibility.
 - Supporting women's representative organisations to participate in policy development.
 - Applying sophisticated gender policy advice and analysis to policy development of the government.

- Supporting and promoting women's leaders in all facets of Australian society through a range of regulatory and educative measures.
- Supporting the greater representation of women in all of Australia's parliaments.
- Supporting diversity in corporate Australia, including in appointments to boards and at the executive level.
- Recognising the particular issues faced by Indigenous women, women of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities, rural women and young women and ensure that government policies and programs are funded, accessible and appropriate to their needs.

A dynamic, effective and modern public sector

38 Labor believes that the Australian Public Service (APS) and the wider public sector have a crucial role to play in nation building. Public services should be funded to deliver quality public policy, foster innovation, achieve best practice and create quality jobs.

39 We believe the APS should be:

- Professional and apolitical.
- Strong, independent and well-resourced.
- Committed to equality and social cohesion as well as economic efficiency.
- Accountable for meeting high standards of service delivery.
- Recruited from the brightest and best in the Australian community.
- A model employer in terms of the conditions of employment and opportunities for advancement for its staff, including through continuous education and lifelong learning.
- Subject to democratic oversight through parliament and relevant bodies including the Auditor-General, the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC).
- Subject to independent administrative review of its actions.
- A leader in environmental best practice.

40 Labor has always been a strong advocate and protector of the professionalism and integrity of the public service. We will ensure the public service is efficient, effective and responsive to the changing requirements of the Australian people.

41 Labor recognises that:

- Australian's want a career public service without partisanship;
- public service employment must be fair and equitable;
- there is necessarily a limit on, and need for public scrutiny of, top public service remuneration;
- there must be an ethos of public service; and
- outcomes are funded by public money.

42 Labor will ensure that these special elements are reflected in public service industrial relations arrangements by:

- supporting the role of unions in the workplace;
- ensuring secure, comprehensive, service-wide standards and classifications;
- ensuring secure superannuation arrangements in industrial instruments;
- emphasising training and career development;
- enabling public servants to balance work and family responsibilities;
- ensuring appeal and review rights;
- ensuring that contracting-out is not used as a vehicle to cut wages and working conditions for public sector employees; and
- establishing staffing levels commensurate with work loads.

- 43 Labor will build on the measures it has taken in office:
- Introducing merit-based selection procedures to the appointment of agency heads—other than departmental secretaries—and statutory offices working within or closely with APS agencies.
 - Establishing a career transition and support centre in the APSC to provide redeployment opportunities for public servants where required.
 - Continuing to support special programs aimed at increasing the proportion of indigenous employees in the APS.
 - Attaching renewed priority to the employment of people with disabilities in the APS.
 - Establishing an Ethics Advisory Service in the APSC.
 - Introducing a Code of Conduct for Ministerial Staff with a focus on ensuring productive and respectful working relationships between ministers, their staff and public servants.
 - Introducing a Register and Code of Conduct for Lobbyists to ensure transparency in the dealings between private and commercial interests, the government and the public service.

Making government more accountable through community cabinets

- 44 Labor supports innovative measures to make government more open and accountable, including the holding of community cabinets in locations across the nation. Labor's Community Cabinet meetings ensure close consultation with the community on national and local matters.
- 45 Labor is committed to continuing Community Cabinet meetings across Australia and will ensure that Ministers at the highest levels are made available through these public forums.

Enhancing our democracy with real electoral law reform

- 46 Labor is committed to the fair, open and transparent operation of our electoral system and to the essential democratic principle that every person should have the right to full participation in it.
- 47 Labor will ensure that all Australians, and particularly first-time voters, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, indigenous people, people in remote locations and young people are not excluded from the electoral system.
- 48 Labor will improve the integrity of the electoral system and, most urgently, restore transparency, openness and accountability to the funding and disclosure regime.
- 49 Building on the improvements made to date, Labor will:
- Encourage public debate about reform of our electoral laws including enrolment and electoral participation.
 - Ensure that disadvantaged groups are not excluded from the democratic process.
 - Introduce a new scheme for the regulation of political financing, including donations, other revenues, expenditures, and record keeping.
 - Ensure maximum opportunities for enrolment and involvement in our electoral process.
 - As a minimum, restore the 7-day enrolment period after the issuing of election writs.
 - Should the Commonwealth establish fixed four year terms, Labor will amend subsection 394(1) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* to allow the states and territories to move their electoral systems into line with the Commonwealth,

Extending Freedom of Information (FOI)

- 50 Labor has been a strong and vocal opponent of the increased secrecy which developed under the Howard Government, and is committed to introducing major reforms to freedom of information to

strengthen citizens' rights of access to government material, bring down the costs of FOI, and removes the power of Ministers to issue conclusive certificates denying access to documents.

51 Labor will promote transparency and accountability by strengthening FOI and promoting a pro-disclosure culture across Australian Government agencies.

52 Labor has:

- Introduced legislation abolishing the power to issue conclusive certificates under the FOI Act and the Archives Act, restoring the role of the AAT and the courts in determining disputes over FOI requests.
- Moved to encourage extensive pro-active release and reporting of information by agencies on their operations and policies.

53 Labor is committed to further reforms, including:

- Strengthening the public's rights to access documents under FOI by minimising exemptions and broadening the application of public interest tests under the Act.
- Streamlining and improving review processes.
- Extending FOI to information held by other entities delivering government services.
- Establishing an FOI Commissioner.
- Implementing key recommendations of the 1996 joint Australian Law Reform Commission and Administrative Review Council 'Open government' report.
- Bringing down the costs of FOI requests.

Protecting privacy

54 Labor believes the individual's right to privacy is a fundamental political, civil and human right that must be protected.

55 We believe it is the responsibility of government to provide a strong regulatory framework to protect people's right to privacy and ensure the security of their personal information, whether held in the public sector or the private sector. To this end, Labor introduced the first Commonwealth Privacy Act in 1988.

56 Labor is committed to:

- Progressing policy changes based on the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission in its 2008 report on Privacy.
- Introducing privacy reform legislation into Parliament in two stages —the first dealing with new uniform privacy principles, credit and health information, and the second dealing with privacy laws relating to new technologies.

57 To strengthen existing privacy laws, Labor will:

- Improve privacy principles at the federal level governing both the public and private sectors.
- Work to educate Australians, particularly Australian youth, about the impact on privacy of new technologies.
- Develop appropriate frameworks for the protection of privacy in the workplace.
- Ensure that personal information of Australians transferred overseas is protected.
- Work with state and territory governments to achieve greater national uniformity in privacy laws.

Defending free speech

58 All Australians enjoy the right to exercise their freedom of speech in a manner that respects the individual and collective rights enjoyed by other Australians and allows others to live free from

violence, the fear of violence or the threat of violence. To protect freedom of speech further, Labor will:

- Legislate for proper freedom of information laws that enable Australians to access appropriate information about government activities.
- Move to implement the ALRC recommendations on sedition laws.
- Provide shield laws to protect confidential sources and recognise the public interest in giving the community appropriate access to information.
- Review secrecy laws and laws that criminalise disclosure of matters of public interest.

59 Labor supports uniform national defamation laws that provide a proper balance between freedom of expression, public debate and the protection of the reputation of others.

60 Labor believes that adults should be entitled to read, hear and see what they wish in private and in public, subject to adequate protection against persons being exposed to unsolicited material offensive to them and preventing conduct exploiting, or detrimental to the rights of others, particularly women and children.

61 Labor is concerned about the portrayal of violence and inappropriate content in all forms of media. Labor will ensure that appropriate controls which reflect community standards are in place to classify and protect all Australians, particularly children and young people.

Eliminating the political abuse of government advertising

62 Labor has a long standing commitment to remove partisan politics from government advertising, and end the waste of taxpayer money on government advertising for political purposes.

63 Labor believes that government advertising should be governed by strict guidelines that ensure the need for government communication campaigns is assessed by public servants rather than politicians, that politicians are not involved in the development of advertising campaigns, and that the Auditor-General provides an opinion on whether each campaign meets the guidelines.

64 Labor has developed and introduced new guidelines for government advertising which take the politics out of government communications, consistent with the above principles.

Regulating political lobbying in the public interest

65 Labor has a long standing commitment to promoting trust in the integrity of government processes, particularly concerning contacts between and lobbyists.

66 Labor has established the first Federal Lobbying Code of Conduct, and a Register of Lobbyists. For the first time, over 500 lobbyists who represent third parties have publicly registered.

67 Labor is committed to:

- Ensuring the ongoing use of the Lobbying Code of Conduct and Lobbyist Register.
- Maintaining adherence to the requirements of the code by public officials.
- Reviewing the operations of the Lobbying Code of Conduct and the Lobbyist Register after an appropriate period of operation.

Protection for whistleblowers

68 Access to government information and decision-making facilitate the workings of our democratic system, allowing the public and community to obtain reasonable access to government records and documents that affect their lives.

- 69 Labor has a long standing commitment to the creation of more comprehensive and effective public interest disclosure laws, to enhance the openness and transparency of public administration.
- 70 Consistent with the commitments we gave in the 2007 election campaign, Labor will create new arrangements for the handling of public interest disclosures within the federal public sector. The legislation will include:
- Clearer procedures governing how agencies deal with public interest disclosures.
 - Protections extending beyond current public servants, and applying to the full range of government services.
 - Greater clarity and flexibility in reporting procedures and requirements.
 - Central monitoring, oversight and reporting to government on public interest disclosures.
 - Enhanced protections for whistleblowers.

Increasing trust in government

- 71 Labor believes that the public has a right to expect high standards of ethical behaviour from their elected representatives, their advisors and staff.
- 72 Ministers, staff and all members of Parliament should follow clear standards relating to their behaviour, contact with lobbyists, receipt of any gifts, and disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest which may affect them carrying out their public duty.
- 73 Labor already has:
- Introduced a revised code setting out new Standards of Ministerial Ethics, requiring ministers to act with integrity and fairness.
 - Required ministers to divest themselves of all shareholdings other than through broadly diversified investment vehicles, managed funds or trust arrangements.
 - Introduced a 'cooling-off' period of 18 months before former ministers can take up jobs with lobbying and other private sector companies in their previous areas of responsibilities; and 12 months before advisers can work as third party Lobbyists in their former areas of expertise.
 - Introduced the first Code of Conduct for Ministerial Staff.
 - Prohibited electoral fundraising at the Lodge or Kirribilli House.
 - Introduced and published the first Annual Report on Ministerial and Parliamentary Staff.
- 74 To build on these reforms, Labor will:
- Make government operations more transparent by releasing information about the costs of government advertising, the costs of ministerial and parliamentary travel and related matters.
 - Ensuring parliamentary entitlements are efficiently used and properly monitored with a high degree of transparency.

Enhancing the work of government through e-governance

- 75 Labor is committed to enhancing information and e-governance on a whole-of-government basis. Our focus will be to ensure that a whole-of-government approach is taken to information policy, including new publishing.
- 76 Labor will develop appropriate e-governance systems to increase the opportunities for public involvement in government decision-making.
- 77 Labor will review copyright issues surrounding government information, and, where feasible, publish more public information online.

Government procurement

- 78 Labor will promote a procurement strategy that safeguards skills and jobs, under existing international obligations, to ensure that Australian businesses can compete locally and internationally.
- 79 Labor will take into account a range of considerations when determining what constitutes good value for money, not just purchase price. Government agencies will not be forced to choose the cheapest supplier when that choice would cost taxpayers more in the long run because the products or services on offer are inferior in quality or have high ongoing costs. Agencies will also not be forced to choose the cheapest supplier when this would have detrimental social or environmental effects. Agencies will be required to consider all direct and indirect benefits and costs over the whole life of each product and service, along with the performance history of each prospective supplier.
- 80 Labor is committed to:
- Ensuring that government procurement delivers world-class public services, through fair and open procurement processes free of corruption and discrimination.
 - Providing leadership on sustainability and ethical procurement practices.
- 81 Labor recognises that:
- In its role as a major purchaser of goods and services, government has a crucial role to play in fostering Australia's manufacturing, service and information industries, particularly for emerging industries or companies.
 - For goods or services to be ethically sourced, suppliers must be good corporate citizens who comply with the law in all matters, most notably laws regarding taxation, trade practices, corporations, industrial relations, consumer affairs, environment and immigration.
- 82 Labor will continue to require that:
- Commonwealth procurement guidelines and codes reflect government policy on ethical procurement
 - Principal suppliers to the Commonwealth comply with procurement policies by requiring all sub-contractors involved in the principal's supply chain to the Commonwealth to comply with all materially relevant laws
 - Agencies should not to enter into contracts with suppliers who have had a judicial decision against them (not including decisions under appeal) relating to employee entitlements and have not paid the claim.
 - Agencies seek to confirm a tenderer has no such unsettled judgements by seeking a declaration on the matter from all tenderers.
- 83 To further enhance transparency, Labor in government is ensuring agencies keep records of, and make available on request, the details of any sub contractor engaged by a contractor in respect of a Commonwealth contract for procurement.
- 84 Labor is establishing coordinated procurement contracts for goods and services where appropriate. When established, government agencies must use the contracts established for those goods or services unless an exemption has been provided. Exemptions may only be provided where an agency can demonstrate a special need for alternate supply. These arrangements will reduce duplication between agencies when meeting common procurement requirements and allow the government to use its combined purchasing power to improve value for money and open up new opportunities for business.

- 85 Labor will better coordinate Commonwealth procurement and where it is sensible to do so, consider options to utilise model terms and conditions to assist business and contractors.
- 86 Labor is committed to maximising opportunities for Australian companies to compete for business by establishing a Procurement Coordinator. The Procurement Coordinator will review and advise on practices across government; handle and review complaints; aggregate procurement information and submit an annual report to the Government.
- 87 Labor is ensuring that SMEs are able to engage in fair competition for government business. Government officials undertaking procurement are required to ensure that procurement methods do not unfairly discriminate against SMEs.
- 88 The Labor Government requires written contracts for procurements by an agency from a small business to specify payment within 30 days. This applies to payments valued up to and including A\$5 million (GST inclusive). Labor has required all contracts up to a value of \$1 million (GST inclusive) with small businesses to include the right to charge interest for late payments.
- 89 Labor is increasing the transparency of government contracts by limiting the use of commercial-in-confidence exclusions in public documents. All government agencies are required to maintain a register of commercial-in-confidence exclusions, to be periodically tabled in parliament and subject to scrutiny by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit.

Communications and electronic media

- 90 The media, particularly broadcasting, are undergoing a process of major change, driven by digitisation, convergence of technology and the globalisation of broadcasting, communications and information technologies.
- 91 Labor remains strongly committed to longstanding national and public interest objectives, including:
- High-quality and informative media which contributes to the advancement of Australian society.
 - Genuine diversity of sources of information, opinion, education and entertainment.
 - Diversity of ownership, operation and control of Australia's media.
 - Greater choice and accessibility for consumers.
 - The development and reflection of a distinctly Australian national identity.
 - A vibrant competitive industry of international standard.
 - The development of, and equitable access to, new technologies.
- 92 Labor supports the National Classification Code which classifies content against the standards of morality, decency and propriety accepted by reasonable adults. The principles of classification should apply on a platform neutral basis. Labor recognises the necessity of an independent and accountable review process for the list of URLs to be blocked by mandatory filtering. Labor believes mandatory ISP level filtering should be limited to Refused Classification content according to the National Classification Code. Labor does not support the introduction of mandatory ISP filtering that would lead to significant degradation of network speeds.

Diversity and content

- 93 Labor will pursue policies that ensure that Australians have access to a diverse range of information and opinion in Australia's media.
- 94 Labor is committed to maintaining appropriate Australian content quotas in the broadcasting sector.

- 95 Labor will ensure that television and radio advertising are properly regulated and that community standards are reflected in the regulatory approach.
- 96 Labor will ensure that Australians will continue to enjoy coverage of premium sporting events on free-to-air television.
- 97 Labor is committed to ensuring that the Australian Communications and Media Authority is adequately resourced and has sufficient regulatory powers to ensure the maintenance of appropriate community standards in broadcasting material.

Public broadcasting

- 98 The ABC and SBS are two of Australia's most important public institutions. Labor is committed to ensuring adequate funding and support for Australia's public broadcasters, to enable them to continue to provide Australians with high quality broadcasting services, free from political and commercial interference.
- 99 Labor recognises the importance of the ABC being maintained as an independent and comprehensive national public broadcaster, catering for a diversity of interests in the Australian community.
- 100 Labor recognises that the SBS provides a unique national broadcasting service that promotes a multicultural Australia, and provides services to Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds which are not delivered by the ABC or the commercial broadcasting sector.
- 101 Labor will:
- Ensure public broadcasters cater to the needs of urban, regional and rural Australia, providing coverage of local news, current affairs and community activities.
 - Provide programs and services relevant to young Australians, including specialist children's programming available on digital channel ABC3.
 - Work with Indigenous people to provide services and programs relevant to them and their communities.
 - Provide comprehensive coverage of a broad range of sporting and artistic activities.
 - Ensure board members are appointed on the basis of merit.
 - Restore a staff-elected commissioner position on the ABC board, by introducing the necessary legislation before the end of the current term of parliament.
 - Continue to invest in youth-accessible current affairs, and look to establish new services using new media.
 - Support and promote Australia's external broadcasters in radio, television and digital platforms, which encourage awareness of Australian values around the world and build closer ties in our region.
- 102 Labor will also ensure that the ban on ABC advertising and sponsorship remains in place. Labor will also ensure that advertising is not permitted on ABC branded websites.
- 103 Labor will provide adequate funding on a triennial basis to the ABC and SBS to ensure they can deliver quality public broadcasting services. Labor will ensure that the national broadcasters are able to exploit the potential of new technology to deliver attractive and innovative content over digital television and the internet including regional broadband hubs on ABC websites.

Community broadcasting

- 104 Labor regards community and Indigenous broadcasting, including radio and television, as an essential component of Australian broadcasting, and will continue to encourage its maintenance, growth and development.
- 105 Labor supports diversity in community and Indigenous broadcasting recognising that it meets the needs of many communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, ethnic communities, and Australians with a print disability; and addresses developing Australian media needs with services for youth, mature age, religious, specialist music and other emerging communities of interest.
- 106 Labor will investigate the need for administrative arrangements to assist the training, support and regulatory compliance needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasters.
- 107 Labor believes that adequate public funding must be provided to community and Indigenous radio and television for their effective ongoing operation. Labor seeks to improve the capacity of community and Indigenous stations to serve their communities by providing support to the sector for content production, improving skills, technical infrastructure, new digital broadcasting, and sector coordination and planning. Labor accepts that appropriate funding must be provided to the community and Indigenous broadcasting sector.
- 108 Labor acknowledges the importance of community broadcasting organisations in providing opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander produced content.
- 109 Labor remains committed to supporting an Indigenous, nation-wide free to air television channel through National Indigenous Television.

Keeping Australia Post public

- 110 Labor will:
- Maintain Australia Post in full public ownership.
 - Maintain Australia Post as the sole carrier of the standard-size, letter service and the sole issuer of postage stamps. Cross-subsidy arrangements between metropolitan and regional Australia will remain to ensure an equitable, flat-rate postal charging arrangement for the standard letter.
 - Encourage the growth of Australia Post's services and ensure that Australia Post's community service obligations provide equitable access to a full range of postal services for all Australians.
 - Ensure that Australia Post continues to maintain appropriate coverage of post office and post box outlets throughout Australia. Labor will ensure that the present Australia Post corporate retail outlets remain publicly owned and operated and that the current ownership mix will be maintained.
 - Promote greater social responsibility by Australia Post towards its employees and the communities in which it operates, particularly those communities within regional Australia.
 - Encourage Australia Post to continue to use its network to provide public access to new communications options and essential community information. Labor envisages Australia Post playing a key role as a platform for the delivery of digital services, particularly to regional Australia.
 - Strongly encourage Australia Post toward direct full time employment of staff rather than on a contract basis, where possible, to limit the use of the "out-working" or "remote commencement and cessation".