

Valuing Young People

LABOR'S PLAN FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



Foreword



Children and young people should be given every opportunity to achieve their potential. Labor has a long term vision to support children and young people from the very start.

Labor has outlined that we will invest in well planned, evidence based programs for all Government funded services in the Northern Territory.

We will invest in early childhood development, in the health and education of our children and young people in a universal way and targeted for at risk families.

Labor will invest in sport, recreation, health and the arts that keep young people safe, healthy, and broaden their horizons.

Labor will implement strategies that better support children in the child protection system and prevent the incarceration of young people in the youth justice system. We broadly support the objectives of the Making Justice Work campaign to reduce incarceration and recidivism of our young people in the Northern Territory.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Gunner
Leader of the Opposition

The best start in life.

Labor will provide \$8 million to expand the Nurse Family Partnership Program, a targeted nurse home visit for vulnerable families for the first two years of a child's life, improving parenting, child health and development, and their home environment.

Labor's investment will support up to an additional 500 children and their families each year when fully operational. These will be placed in East Arnhem Land, Katherine region, the Barkly and expanded in Central Australia. These locations should complement the proposed expansion of the program by the Australian Government in Darwin, Tiwi, Wadeye, West Arnhem and Maningrida.

We will enhance the Department of Health Yellow Book with e-health and recall capacity to make sure children are immunised on time, and have their health and wellbeing check every year from birth to school.

Labor introduced the Families as First Teachers program and we will expand it. If elected, Labor will expand it into urban areas and 32 additional remote communities. This assisted playgroup supports early learning and provides parenting support and guidance.

Education cuts reversed.

As part of the additional \$124 million provided by Labor to increase resources to education, we have allocated \$32 million over 4 years to provide specialist support for students with a disability, and tackle challenging behaviours. This includes:

- Increased assessment of students to understand underlying issues;
- Provide alternative pathways that engage students, not necessarily in the classroom;
- Provide additional support through teachers' assistants, and other support staff such as allied health staff.

We will invest in programs like Clontarf and Stars that support school participation.

\$2 million for a Healthy Life Creative Life program.

Labor will introduce a comprehensive *Healthy Life Creative Life* program that will bring together sports, the arts and health education for remote and regional schools across the Territory.

We will bring together the sports and arts community with the Department of Education, School Sport NT, the Department of Health and the Department of Sport

and Recreation to develop a comprehensive program to be run in schools engaging the sporting and artistic talents of young remote and regional Territorians.

This program will be focused on promoting interschool competition and participation in Territory wide sports. It will also seek to hone the artistic talents of students providing them with opportunities for the future.

Not only will this program provide a healthier lifestyle, research now shows that the arts and music can be used to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes of students.

This program will be developed in consultation with the NGO sector and community led schools Labor intends to introduce to remote regions. Labor will also seek to identify gaps in youth programs which Labor will support with targeted funding.

In Central Australia, Labor will provide an additional \$750 000 per annum to improve after hours youth activities in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek. We will work with current providers, government agencies and the NGO sector to develop a program that supports at risk children.

Labor will also invest in emergency accommodation for young people as part of our remote housing program.

Investing in the health of young people.

Labor will develop a child and adolescent health plan which will detail a holistic approach to improving the health and wellbeing of young people in the Territory.

We will work with Principals Australia to fully implement *Mindmatters* in a consistent way across NT middle and senior schools and develop specific strategies to curb cyberbullying.

Labor will work with the Federal Government to secure a *headspace* service in Katherine for young people with early onset psychosis. \$150 000 will be committed by a Labor Government.

We will work with the Department of Education and appropriate non-government organisations to determine the right number of school counsellors and the right placement required to meet the needs of students as identified in the *Gone Too Soon* Parliamentary Inquiry.

Once this is established Labor will work within existing budget parameters to roll out a school counsellor program.

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder will be recognised as a disability by Labor. We will charge the Department of Health, through the Office of Disability, with taking the lead policy, planning and service development role for FASD.

A whole of Government framework will be developed that supports the prevention of FASD and will include universal and targeted strategies to do so. A Territory Framework will start the work of developing specialist services across Government programs to support individuals and families.

Labor will provide additional funding for youth specific drug and alcohol services for young people as identified in the Select Committee report on Ice use in our community. We will work with health and the non-government sector to improve these services. Labor will commit \$750 000 to these services each year.

Labor will restore flexible youth drug and alcohol grants such as the Remote Aboriginal Area Alcohol and Other Substances grants that support remote communities tackling substance misuse.

Fostering youth leadership.

Territory Labor supports initiatives that encourage youth leadership, like the Chief Minister's Youth Roundtable and the Youth Parliament.

Labor will host Community Cabinet meetings in high schools to hear the voice of young Territorians, and how we can better engage young Territorians on improving their home and communities, and improve our policy and program development

Labor will seize the opportunity of October Business Month to reach out and engage young people and entrepreneurs and listen to their ideas and innovations from right around the Territory, including remote communities. We will also enforce a young professionals component to our Business Roundtables program.

Youth participation has immense potential in the Northern Territory. Labor will work with young people and the sector to increase participation and tackle key issues identified by young people in an evidence based and data driven way. This includes developing a youth employment plan and improving access to services.

Young people in care and youth justice.

Labor will fully cooperate with the Royal Commission into Child Protection and Youth Justice.

As we have already announced Labor will ensure that, as the Territory is being investigated by the Royal Commission, we will disengage from influencing the Royal Commission while continuing our financial commitment.

Labor will also:

1. Close Don Dale Centre as soon as possible
2. Move youth justice out of the Corrections Department
3. Work with justice experts and the NGO sector to develop a contemporary youth justice and rehabilitation system, including within the Courts system
4. Establish an independent oversight mechanism for the youth justice system

A more comprehensive statement on children in care will be made as part of Labor's Child Protection policy to be announced.

Labor broadly supports the *Making Justice Work* campaign and our approach to investing in the health and welfare from early childhood is an example of this approach. We support a range of prevention and diversion initiatives that the evidence shows reduces the number of children and young people coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

This includes:

- A community policing approach to working with families to reduce young people offending
- Specialist courts and court diversion mechanisms that addresses a young person's underlying cause of their offending behavior such as mental illness or disability
- Working with police and government agencies, justice experts and NGOs to develop bail support solutions for young people to reduce the number of children on remand
- Supporting youth justice conferencing that brings offenders, their families and victims together to discuss their crime, its impact and how to make reparations
- Improving the use of approved interpreters in youth justice situations, especially in remote areas

COSTINGS

Policy Initiative	\$m 16/17	\$m 17/18	\$m 18/19	\$m 19/20
Nurse Family Partnership Program (already announced)		1	2	5
Families as First Teachers expansion (matching Government commitment)		1	1	1
Education – Engaging Challenging Children and Young People (already announced)	8	8	8	8
Healthy Life Creative Life (already announced)	2	2	2	2
<i>Headspace</i> (already announced)	0.15			
Central Australia After Hours Activities	0.375	0.75	0.75	0.75
Youth drug and alcohol rehabilitation services		0.75	0.75	0.75

** All other initiatives to be funded from within existing resources