

Labor response to the Independent Education Union of Australia questionnaire

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the IEU's priorities for this election.

Labor values the important work that your members make to Australia's education system.

Bill Shorten has made school education a priority for Labor this election, and this is reflected in our strong policies.

Labor's response to the specific issues you have raised can be found below. You can find more information about Labor's positive plan for Australia at www.alp.org.au

School funding model funded for 2018-19 and beyond

Labor believes education makes a difference to people's lives. For individuals, it opens the door to jobs and opportunity; and for our country, it builds prosperity and a secure economy.

Our teachers do a fantastic job, but they need support and resources to ensure every child gets a quality education.

Labor knows the way to improve our education system is through investment – not by Malcolm Turnbull's cuts.

Building a strong education system is critical to Labor's positive plan for government. That's why we've developed a plan for permanent improvement in school education in Australia – *Your Child. Our Future*.

Labor's *Your Child. Our Future* plan will deliver the Gonski reforms that we introduced when in government on-time and in-full. This plan will see an additional investment in our education system of \$3.8 billion in 2018 and 2019. We have made tough budget decisions so we can reverse all of Malcolm Turnbull's school cuts over the next decade.

To ensure these reforms are permanent and ongoing, Labor has provisioned \$37 billion for the package over the decade from 2015-16 to 2025-26, which will provide long-term funding certainty so schools, principals and teachers can focus on improving outcomes for their students.

Your Child. Our Future will mean more resources will flow into all classrooms, so schools can deliver improved programs that respond to individual student need. School systems will have flexibility to choose the programs that will deliver the best results for their students.

With Labor's *Your Child. Our Future* plan, every student, in every school – Government, Catholic or Independent – will get the support they need to achieve their potential. It will mean teachers will have the resources they need to provide more individual attention, with funding based on students' needs. Schools will be able to tailor programs to meet the needs of their students. *Your Child. Our Future* is sector-blind and needs-based.

Commitment to fund and index need identified by Students with Disabilities research project (learning adjustment definitions)

Your Child. Our Future will put needs-based funding permanently at the heart of our school system – so every student in every school will get the support they need to achieve their best.

The most important factor in making sure students with disability get the support they need at school is completing the Gonski reforms on-time and in-full.

It is widely acknowledged that there are many students with disability whose needs have not been adequately identified.

In 2013, Labor established the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) to determine the level of adjustment and support required for all students to fully participate in school education. Part of this process was to determine the level of unmet need.

The Turnbull Government has chosen not to release the outcomes of the NCCD which has left many students without the adequate support they need.

A Shorten Labor Government will work with the States and Territories to properly fund a disability loading in line with the outcomes of the NCCD process.

Students with disability, their parents and teachers have waited long enough.

That is why Labor will provide \$320 million from 2017– more than reversing the Turnbull Government’s cuts to the More Support for Students with Disabilities program.

Your Child. Our Future will also implement the recommendations of the 2016 Senate Inquiry into the Education and Attainment of Students with Disability, including:

- Establishing a national strategy to improve the education of students with disability.
- Making it mandatory for all initial teacher education courses to teach best-practice skills in inclusion.
- Prioritising the development of a national approach to modifying the curriculum for students with disability.

Requirement on all State Governments to meet funding co-commitment levels identified in School Review Report

Labor’s significant investment comes with obligations. State and Territory Governments will not be permitted to cut funding and they will be required to make co-contributions.

Federal investment in schools should reach our classrooms. This funding is for students, not to prop up State or Territory Budgets.

School systems will be required to show how funding is distributed in line with the needs-based reforms, while retaining system flexibility.

Federal Labor expects that State and Territory Governments will honour their funding obligations in accordance with existing agreements.

In addition, *Your Child. Our Future* will provide funding for those jurisdictions that were not signatories to the original agreements – Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory – in line with the original offers made by Federal Labor in Government.

A Shorten Labor Government will work with Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory to ensure that they can participate in these nationally significant reforms and make sure that students in these jurisdictions get the full benefits of these school funding reforms over time.

Labor will work with States, Territories and school systems to ensure that our investment is being used to improve results at a local level and this is being transparently communicated to parents.

Parents need to be sure that taxpayers' money is reaching the classroom and delivering evidence-based programs that boost student results. With *Your Child, Our Future* school systems will need to be transparent and accountable for how they distribute additional funding to improve student outcomes.

AITSL – representation of both unions on AITSL board and AITSL committees

If elected, a Shorten Labor Government will restore teacher representative positions to the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Board.

Access to high quality, affordable continuing education

Labor built Australia's modern higher education system. The Hawke Government put it on a sustainable footing through its establishment of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), and we opened the doors to further expansion of higher education during the last Labor government.

Labor believes that every Australian has an equal right to access a quality tertiary education – no matter their income or their postcode.

Only through education can Australia fully develop our economic potential, our scientific potential, and our artistic potential – our people's potential.

Unlike the Turnbull Liberal Government, Labor will not support a system of higher fees, bigger student debt, reduced access and greater inequality.

In Opposition, Labor has defended Australian higher education from the Liberals' short-sighted and reckless cuts, including:

- Opposing the Liberals' plan to deregulate university fees which will lead to \$100,000 degrees, putting higher education out of the reach of so many Australians.
- Forcing the Government to withdraw its plan to introduce a real interest rate on HECS and lower the HELP repayment threshold. All Australians with an existing HELP debt would have been hit.

A Shorten Labor Government will properly fund universities to ensure every Australian has an opportunity to get a quality university education without \$100,000 degrees.

We have set an ambitious goal to increase the number of students completing their study by 20,000 graduates per year from 2020.

Labor will work with the university sector to ensure that incentives within the demand driven system are introduced to achieve this goal. Our Student Funding Guarantee will deliver \$2,500 more per student than the Liberals, and remove the need for higher fees and a lifetime of debt.

Labor has also announced practical policies to strengthen Australia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. Vocational education is vital to our future productivity, innovation, growth and jobs.

Only Labor has a plan to protect and strengthen TAFE and restore integrity to Australia's VET system.

Last year Bill Shorten announced that a Labor Government will guarantee TAFE funding into the future by working with Premiers and Chief Ministers on a comprehensive National Priority Plan that defines the role of TAFE and places it squarely as the public provider within the VET sector.

Labor's TAFE funding guarantee will ensure that a guaranteed proportion of government funding for vocational education stays with TAFE, so that our TAFE system can continue to provide training opportunities for those who need it most.

Labor will undertake a comprehensive National Vocational Education and Training Sector Review to ensure our vocational education system is properly equipped to train Australians for the jobs of the future, weed out dodgy providers and enforce proper standards, and the central role of our public TAFE system is recognised.

Labor will restore integrity to Australia's VET system by introducing a loan cap of \$8,000 a year in the VET FEE-HELP program as part of an integrity package to stop the current massive waste of taxpayers' money by preventing price gouging of students and improve training outcomes.

Right of union to apply for multi-enterprise bargaining, and industrial action in multi-enterprise negotiations

Labor will be making more announcements in future to deal with current problems in the Australian workforce. In particular Labor is very concerned about the erosion of pay and conditions that is occurring as a result of workers being employed indirectly through third party labour providers, outsourcing or other agencies. Labor is committed to ensuring that workers doing the same work in the same workforce should be treated the same. A worker should not be disadvantaged just because they're employed indirectly. And employers should not be using indirect employment to avoid paying workers what they're due.

Labor is also very concerned about how supply chains have been used to avoid responsibility for workers and their entitlements, and is looking very closely at the model of how occupational health and safety laws overcome these challenges.

Labor is also determined to strengthen the low paid bargaining stream to ensure that all workers have a genuine capacity to bargain with employers in good faith. The low paid bargaining stream has not succeeded in providing the opportunity for low paid workers to achieve outcomes through collective bargaining. Labor is open to considering measures to ensure equitable outcomes through bargaining for all industries, particularly low-paid sectors.

Maintenance of current Paid Parental Leave provisions

In 2011, Labor delivered Australia's first national Paid Parental Leave scheme. Since then, more than 730,000 families have been given extra support to spend more time at home in the critical early months of their child's life.

Labor's Paid Parental Leave scheme gives eligible new parents 18 weeks' pay at the National Minimum Wage. This is a modest and affordable scheme that appropriately targets assistance to women on low and middle incomes. More than 75 per cent of parents receiving Labor's Paid Parental Leave scheme are on incomes of less than \$70,000 a year.

Exactly one year ago – on Mother's Day – the Liberal Government announced huge cuts to Labor's Paid Parental Leave scheme. Senior Liberal Ministers disgracefully labelled hardworking mothers as "double-dippers", "rorters" and "fraudsters".

If Malcolm Turnbull is re-elected, new mums will be forced to choose between returning to work early and missing out on time with their newborn, or staying at home and having their living standards drastically reduced.

In the 2016 Budget, Malcolm Turnbull locked in these cuts to Paid Parental Leave, which are scheduled to begin after the election.

A Shorten Labor Government will put people first by reversing Malcolm Turnbull's unfair cuts to Paid Parental Leave.

If Labor is elected, we will immediately end the Liberals' war on working mums. We will protect their paid parental leave entitlements and their living standards.

Under Labor's policy, each year 80,000 families with new babies will be as much as \$11,800 better off than they would be under the Liberals.

The choice for families is clear this election: Malcolm Turnbull and the Liberals will cut Paid Parental Leave, cut family payments and cut penalty rates, while giving tax cuts to millionaires and multinationals.

Labor will put people first. We will protect Paid Parental Leave for new parents. Only Labor can be trusted to deliver a fair Paid Parental Leave scheme.

Right to return to work after parental leave

Labor believes people should be able to manage their work and caring responsibilities through paid parental leave, rights to unpaid parental leave of up to two years, the right to request part-time work, or other flexible work arrangements, including an effective right of review for unreasonable refusals of their requests, and the right to work reasonable but not excessive hours.

Paid Domestic/family violence leave

Labor is committed to addressing the national disgrace that is family and domestic violence.

Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health in Australian women aged 15-44. Over 12 months, on average, one woman is killed every week as a result of intimate partner violence.

The number of women affected by domestic and family violence negatively impacts business productivity across Australia.

The Department of Social Services reports that violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy an estimated \$13.6 billion in 2009. Without appropriate action to address violence against women and their children, an estimated three-quarters of a million Australian women will experience and report violence in the period of 2021-22, costing the Australian economy an estimated \$15.6 billion.

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 a part of the solution to reduce the costs of domestic and family violence to individuals suffering domestic violence, as well as to 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 and helps them to care for their children and provides them with a safe home environment.

Providing those impacted by domestic violence with time to attend court appearances and related appointments, to seek legal advice and make relocation arrangements will contribute to employees returning to work and contributing to business productivity.

Labor will provide the necessary educational support to employers, particularly small businesses, to implement the mandatory arrangements.

Labor believes businesses, which already offer a variety of forms of leave, including sick leave, annual leave and long service leave, will see a reduction in lost revenue associated with absenteeism and decreased productivity.

It is vital for people who have experienced family and domestic violence that their workplace understands the impact violence has on their lives, and for leave arrangements to be handled sensitively and confidentially, which will happen as part of Labor's plan.

Prioritise Indigenous health, education and wellbeing

Labor believes strong, practical action is needed to address the racism, injustice, poverty and disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; to improve life expectancy, healthcare and education outcomes; and to reduce alarming rates of family violence and incarceration.

Labor will work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their representatives and organisations to improve the social, economic, health and wellbeing of their communities.

A Shorten Labor Government will take strong, practical action by:

- Setting justice targets to help close the gap on incarceration rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and improve community safety.
- Implementing Labor's *Your Child. Our Future* policy which will provide an additional \$100 million in needs-based funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and deliver the Gonski school funding reforms on-time and in-full. These additional resources will support more than 195,000 Indigenous school students achieve their potential and help close the education gap.
- Providing \$4.8 million to fund 100 scholarships per year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers.
- Partnering with the Stars Foundation to empower Indigenous girls across Australia to improve education and employment outcomes.
- Invest \$9.5 million to address the scourge of trachoma and close the gap in vision loss that robs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults of their sight at more than six times the rate for other Australians.
- Will work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their representatives to develop a model and build a national consensus for a successful referendum on constitutional recognition held within its first year in office.

Appropriate and adequate funding to ECEC

Labor believes every child deserves the very best start – and that means access to affordable, quality early education and care.

Early education is one of the smartest investments we can make as a nation. It helps parents return to work and sets children up for success at school and later in life.

After promising the world before the election, the Abbott-Turnbull Government will go an entire term without doing a single thing to assist with access to affordable child care.

In addition, there are serious concerns about the impact of the changes the Government is proposing. Independent modelling has revealed one in three families will be worse off, despite the Government spending an extra \$3 billion in taxpayer funds.

Malcolm Turnbull's recent decision to delay additional investment in child care until 2018 will hurt families already dealing with increasing out-of-pocket child care costs as a result of this Government's inaction.

At the same time, the Liberals have confirmed the only way they will invest any money in vital early education is if they can strip it from family pockets, through massive cuts to Family Tax Benefits.

Families deserve better – early education and care is too important for parents and too important for children to be given this chaotic and embarrassing treatment.

Many women stand to have their access to child care cut, or be pushed out of the system entirely because of harsher work rules around access to child care. Under the Turnbull Government's plans, low-income families will have their access to subsidised child care cut in half, from two days a week to one.

Early education should be good for parents and good for children – it shouldn't be an either/or proposition.

Labor believes changes to the child care system should make it easier for women to increase their participation in the workforce, and make sure as many children as possible are accessing vital early education.

Labor is proud of our record in early education and care and we are driven to build on this.

In Government, we increased the Child Care Rebate from 30 per cent to 50 per cent of out-of-pocket costs, and increased the cap on the rebate from \$4354 to \$7500 per child per year, to reduce the cost of child care to families.

Labor introduced the National Quality Framework to lift the quality of early childhood education and care, with improved staff to child ratios and qualification standards. With the early years playing such a significant role in a child's development, we want to make sure children are getting the best start to life possible.

In 2009 Labor introduced universal access to preschool in the year before school, making sure every child could benefit from the transformative impact of early education. It's making a difference - Australian studies show children who attend preschool or kindergarten go on to score significantly better in Year 3 NAPLAN tests.

Labor believes that children who are enrolled in early education are better prepared for their future studies and for life outside the classroom and wants Australian children to access 15 hours of early education per week in the year before school.

In contrast, The Turnbull Government has failed to provide any funding for preschool after next year – leaving vital early education in limbo yet again.

Labor will continue to fight for affordable and accessible child care and quality early education. We will have more to say on our exciting plans during the election.

Asylum seeker fair go

A Shorten Labor Government's humane and compassionate policies will provide greater protection for vulnerable people; maintain appropriate deterrents to prevent people smugglers preying on these people; and restore Australia's place in the world as a respected and responsible global citizen.

Labor's policy is clear: we will not put the people smugglers back in business.

Labor recognises that this is a difficult issue that people feel strongly about, and that many Australians are disappointed in the Turnbull Government's handling of it – leaving people in limbo for so long is unacceptable.

Labor will restore the faith of Australians in our processing network by providing independent oversight of facilities; and creating an independent statutory advocate to protect the interests in children seeking asylum, including the power to bring court proceedings on a child's behalf.

Provided it can be done safely, Labor will retain the option of turning people smuggling vessels around at sea. This is a difficult decision, but one which will save hundreds, ultimately thousands, of lives.

The Turnbull Government has failed to secure a regional agreement with credible resettlement arrangements.

Australia owes these people safe, dignified and humane refuge and we must urgently resolve their fate by finding a durable resettlement solution. Labor will make this a priority in government.

A Shorten Labor Government will provide significantly increased annual funding to the UNHCR for its global work program and its work in South East Asia and the Pacific. At a time when the global humanitarian need is greater than ever, Labor will provide \$450 million over three years. This funding commitment would place Australia in the top five global contributors to the UNHCR and is something of which all Australians can rightly be proud.

Labor also plans to take a leadership role within South East Asia and the Pacific to build a regional humanitarian framework to improve the situation of asylum seekers.

Labor will increase Australia's annual humanitarian intake to 27,000 by 2025. This is almost double the current intake, which the Abbott-Turnbull Government reduced to 13,750.

In 2013, the former Labor Government implemented the Regional Resettlement Arrangement which severely restricted the ability of people smugglers in Indonesia to 'sell' the journey to Australia. A Shorten Labor Government will stand firm on maintaining a policy of offshore processing to keep this perilous boat journey shut.

Labor does not believe these facilities should be run as punitive holding cells. The processing facilities on Manus Island and Nauru must be humane and offer people seeking safety exactly that.

Labor will also empower the Commonwealth Ombudsman to provide independent oversight of Australia's onshore detention network and will continue to ensure that those working in the Immigration system enjoy the benefit of whistleblower protections to speak out about any maladministration and corruption.

We will also legislate mandatory reporting of any instances of abuse of children in immigration detention.

Labor will restore fast and fair processing of asylum claims for those people already living in Australia. We will reinstate access to the Refugee Review Tribunal and abolish the Independent Assessment Authority established by the Liberals.

A Shorten Labor Government would be focussed on removing people from detention as soon as possible, in particular children and their families.

Labor in government will reintroduce the '90-day rule' into the Migration Act.

We will abolish Temporary Protection Visas, which keep people in a permanent state of limbo, and provide refugees with permanent protection visas.

This package will allow Australia to play the largest role it ever has in tackling the refugee crisis facing the world and also prevent people dying at sea.

In sum, Labor's immigration policy is about opening Australia's door wider, bringing more refugees here, but doing so safely.