

## Northern Territory Election

### NT Labor's election policies

August 2016

The Northern Territory (NT) election will be held on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

Elections in the NT are held on a fixed date every four years.

Hawker Britton has published an Occasional Paper on the on the [2016 NT election available here](#).

NT Labor, led by [Opposition Leader Michael Gunner](#), has released a suite of fully-costed policies.

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## Key policies

- Support for **local investment** including first home owners grants and rebates, keeping payroll tax cuts for locally based businesses, and an additional \$100 million in funding towards infrastructure to create and support jobs
- Reform to **government procurement** to better provide access and communication, and introduce an independent board to oversee the application of local content

- A suite of reforms to ensure **transparency and integrity** is a central part of government, including establishing an ICAC
- Return of decision making to **Indigenous communities** to see Indigenous communities take control over housing, local government, education and training, health, children and, law and justice
- A comprehensive, long term, evidence-based **early childhood plan** to put children at the centre of government's policy making
- Active evidence based **suicide prevention** and outcome tracking
- Strong new **environmental regulations** including transferring all environmental approval, assessment, oversight and enforcement powers to the Department of the Environment and the Environmental Protection Authority

## The economy

NT Labor will hold an economic summit in 2017 to frame future budgets and invite business and industry to actively contribute. As a result of the summit, Labor will deliver 10 year forward plans developed in consultation with the business and wider community.

The economic sectors that will be Labor's focus in its first term will be:

- Agribusiness
- Gas and minerals
- Tourism
- Defence related industries
- International education

Labor will also support emerging industries including:

- Health - especially tropical health initiatives, delivering health services through technology, and Indigenous pharmacopeia
- Territory art, culture, food and fashion
- Land management practices in the desert and in the tropics
- Next stage solar and alternative energy

Labor will:

- Retain the Developing the North structure
- Re-introduce Business Roundtables
- Rebuild Team NT to promote the Territory nationally and internationally
- Build an Independent Research and Economic Data Unit to share data with the business community
- Create a (restructured) agency of Business, Innovation and Trade
- Promote and support small business through a suite of locally targeted policies and programs, including reform to government tendering to allow more participation from local businesses
- Coordinate the information of government; and coordinate the Territory's labour market

NT Labor's plan for jobs is available [here](#).

## Reform government procurement to support local businesses

NT Labor will introduce the following measures to reform the procurement system and support local businesses:

- Target the Government's procurement spending to more aggressively support local business
- Increase the emphasis on supporting local business within the procurement principles and ensure lead contractors use nominated locals
- Introduce an independent board to oversee the application of local content
- Issue tenders in a way that maximises the ability of smaller local businesses to win contracts
- Pre- tender communication with local business
- Strongly support the work of ICNNT
- Joint future planning between the Government and business
- Assisting business to joint venture for larger opportunities

NT Labor's plan for A Fair Go for Territory Business is available [here](#).

## Working with the NGO and social services

NT Labor will:

- Introduce 5 year funding agreements
- Explore the use of social bonds to tackle long term social issues
- Encourage partnerships between Government, the NGO sector, and the private and research sectors in our procurement of services to improve service delivery
- Review the current funding levels of peak organisations to ensure they have adequate funding available to support their activities
- Non-government and community organisations where possible will be encouraged to partner with Aboriginal organisations when applying for Government tenders through the setting of practical quotas, particularly for services provided to children and families

NT Labor's plan to partner with the NGO and community service sector is available [here](#).

## Infrastructure

Labor has committed to allocating an additional \$100 million in funding towards infrastructure in order to create and support jobs, prioritising four key elements:

1. Creating a stronger transport and logistics grid
2. Upgrading tourism products (including creating a national arts trail)
3. Investing in innovation infrastructure and renewable energy
4. Investing in social infrastructure – including health, education and housing

Labor has also committed to prioritising investment in creating more housing in remote indigenous communities, including \$1.1 billion over 10 years (with funding support from the Federal Government), and \$20 million a year *Room to Breathe NT* policy to fund outdoor housing extensions in indigenous communities.

Labor will ensure:

- Infrastructure spending with a mix of differently sized projects



- Implement a 10 year infrastructure plan for the Territory
- Support the Territory Infrastructure Fund (\$200 million)
- Support the \$5 billion Northern Australia Investment Fund

Labor will use the funds available to it for infrastructure growth in three main areas:

1. Investment in growing and developing the transport supply chain to underpin our trade focussed economy
2. Investment in major tourism infrastructure to add to the Territory's tourism attraction
3. Investment in infrastructure that supports innovative technology and renewable energy

NT Labor's plan for infrastructure to enable growth is available [here](#).

NT Labor's plan to support Indigenous rangers is available [here](#).

NT Labor's plan to empower Indigenous people is available [here](#).

## Integrity and transparency

If elected Labor has committed to introducing a suite of reforms to ensure transparency and integrity is a central part of government, including:

- Establish an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), and a Northern Territory Integrity Commissioner / Integrity Committee
- Strengthen the Freedom of Information system, including the presumption in favour of disclosure principal, remove application fees, and restrict exemption provisions
- Reform systems of appointments of key official and judicial officers to ensure they are independent
- Publish all details of international travel before the travel occurs
- Reform parliament to make it more accountable and open to the public, including a major inquiry into the conduct of Parliament and its impact on the community
- Hold comprehensive consultation processes before making important decisions
- Consult widely and listen to Territorians and business before making decisions in many important policy area
- Trial 'citizens panels' to inform policy making
- Reform the planning system to adopt six anti-corruption safeguards

NT Labor's plan to restoring integrity to government is available [here](#).

NT Labor's plan for parliamentary reform is available [here](#).

## Indigenous Affairs

NT Labor will deliver the most extensive return of local decision making to Indigenous communities since self-government. Labor will introduce a 10 year roadmap and Local Decisions Oversight Board made up of Indigenous Leaders from around the Territory that will see Indigenous communities take control over:

- Housing
- Local Government
- Education and Training
- Health
- Looking after children and
- Law and Justice

In devolving decision making Labor will be guided by the principles outlined in the Aboriginal Peak Organisation's Partnership Principles.

Labor will invest in supporting indigenous jobs including:

- \$4.1 million for one off capital grants of up to \$100,000 for Indigenous ranger groups
- Establish a land management and conservation fund of \$2 million per year to improve conservation practices on aboriginal lands and sea country, and support Indigenous ranger groups
- Amend the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act to specifically recognise the role of Indigenous ranger groups in managing for conservation across large areas of the Territory
- Provide \$500,000 per annum to establish an Indigenous Carbon Unit within Government to deliver carbon abatement and economic development on Indigenous land – this has the potential to unlock tens of millions of dollars of investment and jobs

NT Labor's plan to support Indigenous rangers is available [here](#).

NT Labor's plan to empower Indigenous people is available [here](#).

## Housing

NT Labor's plan prioritises investment in housing to overcome critical shortages in housing and support jobs in indigenous communities. Labor will:

- Provide a 10 year \$1.1 billion remote housing program to increase the amount of housing, living space and rooms available to Territorians in remote communities
- Provide an additional \$20 million per year to repairs and maintenance programs from the the 2017-18 budget and extending for 10 years
- Extend Homelands Extra funding program to \$6000 per eligible family per year and reform the eligibility criteria
- Lobby to reverse the Commonwealth Grants Commission decision to include funding for remote housing under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing in the GST provisions (which currently reduces the Territory's overall GST result)

- Work with indigenous Territorians and representative bodies to boost ways for private investment to occur in housing development to open up greater housing outcomes

NT Labor's plan for remote housing is available [here](#).

### First home owners

If elected, Labor will unlock the housing market to provide support to First Home Buyers through a package including:

- \$24,000 cut to Stamp Duty by exempting the first \$500,000 of stamp duty from any existing home purchased by a first home buyer. This will be capped at homes valued at \$650,000
- \$10,000 first home owners purchasing an existing home that can be spent on renovations and the purchase of white goods and household furniture (up to \$2,000) locally
- First home buyers purchasing a new home will retain the current \$26,000 grant plus receive \$2000 for purchase of white goods and furniture, provided those purchases are made in local stores

NT Labor's plan for a first home buyers package is available [here](#).

## Education and Children

NT Labor is seeking an historic shift in the way government has traditionally approached the design, delivery and collaboration required to meet the challenges in children's policy. If elected Labor will reform:

### Policy

- Produce a comprehensive, long term, evidence-based early childhood plan. The *Territory wide Early Childhood Development Strategic Plan* will be supported by the appointment of a minister for children, and will be co-drafted by advisory group made up of members of non-government organisations, specialists and academia
- Engage the Australian Government as a full partner in focusing on Territory children
- Introduce Community Led Schools into remote communities – to give local communities decision making in their local schools
- Introduce an Early Childhood Impact Assessment component to all Cabinet submissions

### Funding

- Allocate an additional \$124 million into NT schools over four years commencing on January 1 2017, which would include:
  - \$20 million each year directly into school budgets
  - \$8 million per year into early intervention, behaviour management and disability support in school
  - \$1 million per year to support schools with Business Managers to alleviate Principals of doing unnecessary administration work
  - \$300 000 in flexible funding for schools over four years
  - upgrade, repair and maintain sporting stadiums, grounds and facilities across the NT
  - \$5 million for refurbishing and upgrading homeland schools

## Workforce support

- Improve the wages and conditions of workers in the child care field
- Develop a leading School Principals Leadership Program and more mentoring for teachers
- \$8 million to expand the Nurse Family Partnership Program, to fund additional support for up to an additional 500 children and their families each year
- Expand the Families as First Teachers program to an additional 32 communities

## Health

- Work with schools and the school community to improve facilities and support for students with hearing loss
- 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

## Curriculum

- Introduce compulsory coding training into primary and secondary schools
- Develop a high achievers program
- Provide \$2 million per year to create Healthy Life Creative Life- a program school sport, arts and health across the Territory

## Empowering young people

- Support the Chief Minister's Youth Roundtable and Youth Parliament
- Host Community Cabinet meetings in high schools
- Engage young people and entrepreneurs and listen to their ideas and innovations through the October Business Month

NT Labor's plan for Territory Children is available [here](#).

NT Labor's plan for Strong Schools, Good Outcomes is available [here](#).

NT Labor's plan to Value and Support Young Territorians is available [here](#).

## Youth justice

NT Labor has committed to:

- Fully cooperating with the Royal Commission into Child Protection and Youth Justice, and disengage from influencing the Royal Commission while continuing financial commitment
- Close Don Dale Centre as soon as possible
- Move youth justice out of the Corrections Department
- Develop a contemporary youth justice and rehabilitation system, including within the Courts system
- Establish an independent oversight mechanism for the youth justice system

Labor supports:

- A community policing approach to working with families to reduce young people offending

- Specialist courts and court diversion mechanisms that addresses the underlying cause/s of a young person’s offending behaviour - 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

## Health

In Government, NT Labor will:

- Improve antenatal services and develop outreach models for hard to reach mothers
- Resource our community health centres to expand their promotional health reach by funding more child and family nurses
- Develop a *Child and Adolescent Health Plan*, supporting youth friendly health services, capitalising on technology and making sure services are accessible to vulnerable children in contact with the justice and child protection systems
- Support complementary services such as sport and recreation, improved housing, NGO services to encourage positive healthy behaviours
- Implement key recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiries into Youth Suicide and ICE
- Prioritise health promotion, prevention and early intervention to reduce overall rates of chronic disease in the Territory
- Continue the transition of health clinics to Aboriginal Community Control for those communities willing to make the transition
- Implement initiatives in hospitals to support demand management and reduce emergency department and elective surgery wait times
- Incentivise private health practitioners to establish themselves in the Northern Territory, particularly for General Practitioners and allied health professionals in regional centres
- Undertake master planning for all hospitals and plan for a future that prioritises local treatment for the majority of health needs, not interstate
- Implement a planned approach to equipment replacement and capital works as part of Labor’s 10 year Infrastructure Plan, including planning for the replacement of Royal Darwin Hospital
- Expand the number of aged care beds to reduce bed block through partnerships with the private sector and improve the quality of care being provided in aged care by establishing registered nurse to patient ratios
- Work with the Commonwealth to expand medi-hotel facilities close to regional hospitals to support our remote patients and reduce bed block in our hospitals
- Re-commit to step down and rehabilitation services in partnership with the Commonwealth
- Support the NDIS trial sites and build services to support Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder patients
- Establish genuine partnerships and plan for the future in conjunction with partners – AMSANT, the Primary Health Network, Darwin Private
- Hospital, day surgery practices, peak bodies and other jurisdictions for remote patients



- Make telehealth a standard service in remote communities, capitalising on mobile telephony and wireless internet service capacity
- Invest in staff, including supporting more aboriginal health practitioners, more allied health workers, support specialisation in nursing and a return to nursing for people out of the sector

NT Labor's plan for healthy, strong communities is available [here](#).

## Mental health

NT Labor will:

- Work with local communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to improve culturally appropriate Government responses to suicide and suicide prevention
- Review the effectiveness of the current *NT Mental Health Strategy* and *Suicide Prevention Action Plans* and provide for evidence based solutions
- Establish a set of indicators to monitor and measure improvements in service delivery and wellness, consistent with national reporting requirements to drive down suicide
- Provide \$3 million over 4 years to trial the implementation of the *Housing Accommodation Support* to provide support and stability of tenancy for up to 200 people with a mental illness each year
- Support the use of telehealth in the provision of specialist mental health services in remote communities
- Provide 10 postgraduate scholarships per year for registered nurses who would like to specialise in mental health nursing
- Provide 10 scholarships per year for enrolled mental health nursing
- Support the opportunity for mental health specialisation for Aboriginal Health Practitioners and Aboriginal Community Workers to improve cultural competency mental health first aid training to frontline workers, including for Police, Teachers, Child Protection, Correctional Services and Housing

## Mental health (youth)

NT Labor will:

- Provide \$750 000 per annum to improve after hours youth activities in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek
- Fully implement Mindmatters in a consistent way across NT middle and senior schools, and develop specific cyberbullying strategies
- Work with the Federal Government to secure a headspace service in Katherine for young people with early onset psychosis (\$150 000 committed by a Labor Government)
- Develop a policy for school counsellors to meet the needs of students as identified in the *Gone Too Soon Parliamentary Inquiry*
- Additional \$750 000 per year funding for youth specific drug and alcohol services for young people as identified in the Select Committee report on Ice use in the NT
- 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

NT Labor's plan to improve mental health services is available [here](#).

## Disability

- Recognise Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder as a disability. NT Labor will develop a whole of Government framework that supports the prevention FASD and include universal and targeted strategies to do so. A Territory Framework will start the work of developing specialist services across Government services to support individuals and families
- Work with private sector and the not-for-profit sector to seek opportunities and incentives to improve the overall employment of people with a disability
- Review Government funded disability rehabilitation services, to optimise the return to work for people with a disability

NT Labor's plan to improve disability services is available [here](#).

## Family violence

NT Labor supports the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women* and is committed to implementing the plan.

Labor committed to new initiatives to prevent family violence and raise community awareness, it will:

- Provide \$6 million towards building a new Alice Springs Women's Shelter, and establish a further remote women's safe house in Galiwinku
- Conduct an infrastructure needs analysis of all existing emergency women's shelters to develop a 5 year master plan
- Re-introducing the Banned Drinkers Register
- Support the establishment of alcohol management plans and community led approaches
- Develop a Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework providing a roadmap
- Provide for 50:50 female representation on Government Boards and Committees by 2020
- Establish a Ministerial Advisory Committee of Indigenous Women
- Implement best practice and evidence based prevention initiatives such as NAPCAN's school-based 'Lovebites' program to improve community education about respectful relationships

NT Labor's plan for reducing family violence and sexual violence is available [here](#).

## Environment

NT Labor will:

- Transfer all environmental approval, assessment, oversight and enforcement powers to the Department of the Environment and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), and properly fund these enforcement bodies to do their jobs
- Strengthen the powers of the EPA to enforce regulation and punish noncompliance
- Close the loophole which allows major projects to escape an Environmental Impact Assessment

- Increase the transparency of mine management plans and environmental management plans
- Ensure penalties for non-compliance and environmental bonds are appropriate
- Ensure carbon pollution is considered when assessing environmental impacts of large developments
- Transform the Waste Management and Pollution Control (WMPC) Act into a fully functioning Environment Protection Act consistent with national and international experience and tailored to local needs

## Water

A Territory Labor Government will:

- Be guided by science when approving water allocations, including a return to the 80/20 rule for environmental/extractive allocations
- Invest in more research, information, and water modelling
- Return to the consultative approach to water planning including water advisory committees, open water planning process
- Ensure water requirements for mining are formally incorporated in the consumptive pool for water allocation plans rather than the current approach which sees these uses sit outside of the system with risks of over allocation
- Ensure that mining and petroleum operations will be subject to the Water Act, so that they are dealt with like all other uses and must apply for a water licence
- Install a “water for purpose” principle within the allocation and licensing provisions to stop over claiming of water for profit only
- Reinstate Strategic Indigenous Reserves and ensure specific consultative structures are in place to guarantee Indigenous Territorians a real say in water allocation that affects their interests
- Establish an Indigenous Water Unit within Government to oversee these processes and to also capitalise on the economic opportunities sustainable water use presents for Indigenous Territorians
- Make all water decisions accessible under a new public portal
- Conduct an independent review, at arm’s length from government, of all water licenses granted since August 2012 to see that proper process was followed and also conduct an independent scientific review of all water modelling for allocation plans

NT Labor’s plan for a healthy environment, strong economy is available [here](#).

NT Labor’s plan for sustainable water use is available [here](#)

## Energy

A Territory Labor Government will:

- Adopt a target of 50% renewable energy by 2030
- Commission a new Road Map to Renewables report which will set out the options to achieve the target of 50% by 2030 (to be delivered in 2017)

- Establish a Renewable Energy Unit with the Department of the Chief Minister to provide expert advice on the technological, regulatory, financial and legal requirements to achieve the target
- Provide ongoing research and development funds for CDU and the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT)
- Invest \$5m to fund the installation of roof top solar to a wide range of school buildings across the Territory
- Ensure PowerWater, Territory Generation and Jacana remain 100% publicly owned
- Guarantee that any power price rises are capped at CPI for the first term of a Labor Government.
- Ensure gas continues to provide stable base and peak load power during the transition to renewables
- Guarantee the 1 for 1 (Net Metering) feed in tariff for solar remains while the Road map to Renewables plan is developed
- Invest \$5 million to further the development of Alice Springs as the Centre for Excellence for Solar Energy. This investment will be used to leverage a further \$15M of private sector and commonwealth funding with a focus on project activities including:
  1. Grid Integration: advanced control strategies for a new generation grid with large amounts of renewables
  2. New Business Models: Assessment and implementation of innovative private sector business models for renewables
  3. Regulatory Frameworks: evaluation of alternative regulatory frameworks to support next generation grids/power systems
  4. Showcasing: bringing together the world class knowledge frameworks for solar technology implementation and showcasing them to the world

NT Labor's plan to transition to renewable energy in the Northern Territory is available [here](#).

### Hydraulic fracturing (fracking)

The Labor Party has committed to holding an expert scientific review into fracking if elected. Following the outcome of the review, public consultation, and the development of a regulatory framework ensuring appropriate environmental protections and safeguards Labor will either:

- A) Ban fracking
- B) Allow fracking in highly regulated and tightly prescribed areas

NT Labor's plan for fracking in the NT is available [here](#).

### Innovation

NT Labor will:

- Increase the funds to the Business Innovation Support Initiatives by an additional \$1 million
- Expand the reach of the BISI grants program to remote and regional Northern Territory
- Encourage the development of local "Angel Investor" groups to provide seeding funding to assist ideas to progress to commercialization

- Innovation Hubs: Fund a scoping study to identify opportunities for innovation hubs
- Host innovation/entrepreneurial focused events with attached seed funding i.e. startup, pitch up, and hackathon events
- Explore an Innovator in Residence program to creating stronger links with local, national and international innovators through the exchange of ideas and sharing of resources
- Prepare young Territorians by supporting the expansion of enterprise education in schools and invest in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) education from the early years of schooling. Partnership with the private sector and support programs such as the \$20 Boss program in collaboration with the Foundation for Young Australians
- Train students in coding
- Invest in upskilling the digital literacy of Territory teachers and trainers
- Introduce a formal mentor/network component to new and existing grants programs

NT Labor's plan for innovation is available [here](#).

In Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Labor will:

- Adopt a whole of Government ICT Strategy
- Create Open Government by adopting the Commonwealth Government's Public Data Policy
- Implement a Digital by Default policy and adopt the Commonwealth Digital Service Standards
- Appoint a whole of Government Chief Information Officer (CIO)
- Create a Data Analytics Centre

NT Labor's plan for ICT is available [here](#).

## Tourism

NT Labor will boost tourist numbers from India and China, and renew, refresh and create interesting tourist attractions.

If elected NT Labor will bring back the Arafura Games, and engage with Asia to expand the event.

Labor will also boost tourism attractions by investing \$100 million in a nationally Iconic Indigenous Arts Trail across the Territory, including:

- \$50 million for the Iconic National Indigenous Art Gallery in Alice Springs.
- \$20 million an Iconic National Indigenous Cultural Centre in Alice Springs
- \$30 million for Gallery Wings in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Arnhemland
- Linking Community Galleries
- Capital Grants for Community Galleries

NT Labor's plan for tourism is available [here](#).

## Fishing

If elected, NT Labor will:

- Invest \$50 million in the first term in infrastructure supporting recreational fishing
- Stock residential lakes with barramundi fingerlings
- Provide grant funding for fishing clubs to run children's fishing clinics
- Provide funding to install a marine radio repeater system for recreational boating safety and communication

NT Labor's plan for recreational fishing is available [here](#).

## More info

For more background on the Northern Territory political environment click [here](#).

For a list of NT candidates and likely outcome of the election click [here](#).

For more information on the Northern Territory contact Hawker Britton's adviser on the Northern Territory [Claire March](#) on 0403 937 849.