

2021 Federal Budget Reply

May 2021

On Thursday 13 May 2021 Federal Opposition Leader the Hon Anthony Albanese MP delivered the 2021 Federal Budget in Reply.

Albanese characterised Labor's policy aims in three parts:

1. An economy that delivers for working families.
2. Investing in Australia's future.
3. No one held back and no one left behind.

The reply outlined Labor's broader economic agenda to:

- Lift wages and ensure their continued rise through both secure employment and reduction in underemployment.
- Invest in future skills training with a focus on the role of TAFE.
- Provide affordable childcare.
- Improve the aged care system particularly around dementia.
- Address housing affordability.
- Drive gender equality.
- Champion the role of renewable energy in the economy.

Policy Announcements

Housing

An elected Labor government will establish a \$10 billion 'Housing Australia Future Fund'. The fund will build social housing and will see 20,000 properties built within five years.

The breakdown is as follows:

- 4,000 properties allocated to women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.
- 10,000 properties allocated to frontline workers including nurses, police and cleaners.
- \$200 million towards repair and maintenance of housing for First Nations people.
- \$100 million towards crisis and transitional housing.
- \$30 million to build veteran housing and associated specialist services.

The initiative will create over 21,500 jobs per year and of these jobs, one in ten will be allocated for apprentices.

Energy

Albanese announced a \$100 million 'New Energy Apprenticeships' program supporting 10,000 apprenticeships. Up to \$10,000 will be allocated to each apprentice in the clean and renewable energy sector, including in emerging technologies such as green hydrogen.

Apprenticeships will be available in:

- Renewable energy generation
- Storage and distribution
- Energy efficiency upgrades
- Renewable manufacturing

This announcement is in addition to Labor's plan for electric vehicle discounts and a community battery rollout. The plan aims to lower household power bills and transport costs, reduce emissions, and stabilise the nation's energy grid. Hawker Britton's brief on this policy announcement can be found [here](#).

Industrial Relations

Labor has committed to criminalising wage theft in Australia through creating new laws in each state and territory. This policy will aim to correct current wage theft problems which cost workers approximately \$1.35 billion annually.

In addition, Labor has previously outlined policies of public reporting on the gender pay gap for large companies and ten days paid domestic and family violence leave.

Albanese reiterated Labor's other industrial relations policy commitments made in February of this year.

This included:

- Inserting 'job security' into the Fair Work Act.
- Defining casual work in law.
- Stricter regulation on labour hire firms.
- Capping of back-to-back short-term contracts.

For more on Hawker Britton's summary of this policy announcement, see [here](#).

Industry and Manufacturing

An elected Labor government will establish the 'Start Up Year' program to improve links between university and entrepreneurs. Delivered through the HELP system, loans of up to \$11,300 will be offered to 2,000 students and new graduates.

These ventures will be attached to tertiary institutions in an aim to better commercialise Australian university research.

The announcement is in conjunction with Labor's commitment to establish 'Jobs and Skills Australia' which seeks to create better partnerships across all sectors. Earlier this year, Labor also announced the establishment of a \$15 billion 'National Reconstruction Fund'. The fund will invest in Australia's manufacturing capacity across a variety of industries.

The Labor leader outlined that this fund would support making COVID-19 vaccines in Australia.

To find out more about the National Reconstruction Fund, see Hawker Britton's summary [here](#).

Women

If elected, Labor will legislate an obligation on employers to keep their employees safe from workplace discrimination and harassment.

Following the recommendations of the Respect@Work Report, which highlighted the responsibility of employers to eliminate sex discrimination and sexual harassment from the workplace, Labor will work with industry to implement these recommendations in an aim to change the culture for women at work.

In addition, Labor has previously committed to reaching towards universally affordable childcare by lifting the maximum subsidy rate to 90 per cent and abolishing the \$10,560 subsidy cap.

Earlier in the year Labor also announced a 'Fair Pay for Women Package' to improve pay equity and job security for women by closing the gender pay gap and offering more secure employment.

This package included:

- Compelling companies with over 250 employees to report on gender pay gap statistics.
- Strengthening the ability for the Fair Work Commission to order pay increases.
- Legislating ten days paid family and domestic violence leave.

Hawker Britton's summary of this announcement can be found [here](#).



Infrastructure and Planning

Labor's economic agenda is also inclusive of its previously announced 'New Cities' policy to better support urban areas.

This policy includes:

- The revitalisation of the City Deal Program.
- The re-establishment of the City and Suburbs Unit within Infrastructure Australia to oversee city deals and to increase public and private partnerships.
- The creation of a National Urban Policy framework for the design of more liveable and sustainable urban precincts.
- The inclusion of local government in National Cabinet.

For more detail on this planning announcement, see Hawker Britton's analysis [here](#).

Further information

For further information, please contact your Hawker Britton consultant [Simon Banks](#) on +61 419 638 587.