

1. Will you develop a national legislative framework on multiculturalism?

A national legislative framework would ensure systemic change by achieving both recognition of diverse cultures coexisting in Australia, and promotion of close interaction between diverse cultures based on the principles of reciprocal respect and equality.

The fundamental principle of multiculturalism needs to be embedded not just in government policy, but also in the political system, through a whole-of-government approach to multicultural affairs, which recognises and values cultural, religious, racial and linguistic diversity.

Coalition

The Turnbull Government have ensured many safeguards to protect the rights of Australians' cultural and religious expression and diversity.

The Coalition recognises the benefits of Australia's strong history of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Our multicultural policy is currently being reviewed and updated to ensure it continues to appropriately reflect how multiculturalism works within the Australian context and encourages support for our multicultural society.

The Coalition believes that Australia's existing laws and policies across a range of areas continue to be successful and effective, and additional legislation is not required to further enhance support of our multicultural communities.

Australian Labor Party

Labor will continue to combat racism and expressions of intolerance and discrimination with strength and where necessary, the full force of the law.

The Abbott-Turnbull Government mounted a dangerously ill-conceived campaign to remove the federal protections against racist hate speech contained in section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. That campaign led to Attorney-General George Brandis declaring to the Senate that 'people have a right to be bigots, you know'.

The public consultation process on the flawed draft Bill spoke to the values of the Abbott-Turnbull Government. Senator Brandis repeatedly refused to make available the public submissions received, including under Freedom of Information.

The Australian public were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed law which would have given a green light to bigotry in Australia. Labor stood with thousands of individuals, legal experts and organisations, as well as 155 community groups, calling on the Government to dump its policy on bigots.

Since backing down on its proposal, members of the cross-bench and the Government have sought to continue the campaign against section 18C, with a Private Members' Bill proposing to weaken section 18C introduced in the Senate. Neither Senator Brandis nor the new Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull, condemned this renewed attempt to weaken section 18C.

Section 18C has served Australia well for almost 20 years and Labor will continue to stand against racism in our society and to uphold the protections against race hate speech in the Racial Discrimination Act.

A Shorten Labor Government will re-establish an Office for Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of Social Services. The Office will have a whole of government policy and research focus.

The OMA will focus on the economic empowerment of new migrants.

The mandate would include language services; access and equity; and workplace diversity strategy.

Further, the OMA will look to strengthen our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) specific responses to: domestic violence; employment (industrial relations); youth affairs; aged care; disability; and frontline health and welfare services.

The Office will also be responsible for the Multicultural Equity and Access Framework across Commonwealth portfolios.

A Shorten Labor Government will invest \$28.5 million in the Adult Migration English Program (AMEP), Community Hubs and the Racism. *It Stops With Me* Campaign.

The \$24 million investment in the AMEP will support new courses in workforce participation. Labor will also provide an additional \$3 million for the Community Hubs program and \$1.5 million towards the Australian Human Rights Commission to continue and improve the Racism. *It Stops With Me* campaign.

Australian Greens

The Greens are committed to developing a national legislative framework on multiculturalism, as set out in our comprehensive approach to multiculturalism. This can be found at <http://greens.org.au/multiculturalism>.

National legislation on multiculturalism would not only recognise the enormous contribution of migrant communities to Australian life, but also works as a base from which to enhance and protect rights and opportunities of multicultural communities. Legislation like this has been demonstrated to be a success in countries like Canada.

The Greens will commence a national stakeholder consultation to develop this national framework through establishment of a Joint Select Committee, ensuring the voices of the community and key stakeholders are heard.

A national legislative framework would be a critical step in taking a whole-of-Government approach to multiculturalism, embedding these principles across all the work of various Departments, and making it clear as a priority of Government.

The Greens are also committed to moving multicultural affairs back into the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. This is the best means of driving a whole-of-government approach to multiculturalism across various departments.

2. Will you develop an integrated national policy framework on languages?

A holistic language policy would provide a comprehensive approach to fostering Australia's communication resources, including English as a common and shared language, a second language for all, and support for endangered languages.

It would provide a framework for implementing mandatory second language education, supporting community language schools, and facilitating quality and responsive language services encompassing community interpreting and a strong bi-lingual bi-cultural workforce.

The framework would provide for a balanced rationale for bilingualism – covering both the trade and economic dividend, as well as its importance in fostering individual, cultural, and intellectual development in our population. A comprehensive approach would include language rights, language maintenance and language study for enrichment, identity and cultural exploration.

Coalition

The Coalition recognises the important contribution that our multilingual communities make both locally and within a broader global context. If re-elected, we will continue to ensure that our diversity in language skills is maintained.

Australian Labor Party

Labor recognises the importance of linguistic diversity to the cultural and economic health of our community.

A Shorten Labor Government will award 100 scholarships a year to Australian school teachers so they can further develop their Asian language skills.

The scholarships, worth up to \$20,000 each, will allow our teachers to get advanced language experience in Asian countries.

Recipients will be able to use their scholarships for purposes such as intensive Asian language courses, or teaching opportunities in Asian schools.

A Shorten Labor Government will re-establish an Office for Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of Social Services, with a mandate which includes language services.

Australian Greens

The Greens believe that Australia's multilingualism provides an enormous benefit to our community as a whole, and have been strong supporters of programs that promote and celebrate community languages, including ATSI languages.

The Greens support development of an integrated national policy framework on languages, understanding that the learning, celebration and sharing of languages in our schools, workplaces and communities is critically important in our multicultural society.

3. Will you commit to policy action on harnessed productivity through diversity?

FECCA calls for all parties to commit to policy action on harnessing productivity through diversity by facilitating recognition and effective management of cultural diversity, enhancing self-employment support, streamlining overseas qualifications recognition, and promoting economic security and industry leadership representation for women from CALD backgrounds.

Coalition

All of the Coalition's policies inherently reflect and harness Australia's productivity through diversity. A re-elected Turnbull Government will always support policies that reflect Australia's core values and beliefs by empowering individuals to be the best they can be, whilst maintaining a safety net for vulnerable people and families.

Australians with CALD backgrounds make up 30 per cent of small business owners. The Turnbull Government has identified diversity as a key contributing factor to Australia's economy and overall productivity. Culturally diverse communities foster the entrepreneurial spirit that is an essential part of our economic plan for jobs and growth.

Australian Labor Party

For too long the economic contribution of migration and multiculturalism to Australia has been significantly undervalued.

By funding migrant support properly in the short term, Australia will be better off over the long term. By ensuring our programs and policies continue to improve, more new migrants can fully participate.

Australia is one of the most diverse societies across the globe. This was no accident and has been the result of hard work. We cannot stop now. Promoting social cohesion and economic inclusions will see the multicultural dividend grow into the future.

A Shorten Labor Government will renew investment in Australian multiculturalism, with \$28.3 million of new funding to support social cohesion and economic inclusion.

Labor will re-establish an Office for Multicultural Affairs (OMA) in the Department of Social Services. The Mandate of the office will include workplace diversity.

A Shorten Labor Government will invest \$28.5 million in the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), community hubs and the Racism. It Stops With Me Campaign.

The \$24 million investment in the AMEP will support new courses in workforce participation. Labor will also provide an additional \$3 million for the community hubs program and \$1.5 million towards the Australian Human Rights Commission to continue and improve the Racism. It Stops With Me campaign.

Labor will also invest in the people who support new and established migrant communities. A funding stream of \$7.5 million will help organisations build critical skills in their staff. From community leadership to volunteer management to bilingual engagement, these skills are vital to support new migrants settle into society and the labour market.

Australian Greens

Our workplaces benefit from cultural and linguistic diversity, and Australia should do all we can to ensure our workplaces are well placed to harness this opportunity.

The Greens will announce initiatives to support migrant employment and to promote the benefits of employing people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and support.

4. What steps will you take to ensure that Government Boards reflect our multicultural society, particularly addressing the extremely low level of representation of women from non-English speaking background on decision-making public bodies?

Gender equality policies ignore the specific challenges or opportunities for CALD women and do not consider them as a group that faces intersectional barriers or as having diverse needs. Challenges impacting CALD women in fulfilling their leadership potential include experiences of discrimination, lack of access to leadership pathways and to relevant professional networks, and limited understanding in the public and private sector of the need to identify CALD women as a distinct group.

Coalition

The Coalition strongly supports gender equality and diversity of Australian boards in both the public and private sectors. The Turnbull Government has recently been reviewing options to expand the Australian Multicultural Council in order to enhance its expertise and cultural diversity. The Coalition is committed to diversity and gender equality on government boards, and recently announced a new gender target of 50 per cent female representation on government boards.

Australian Labor Party

Labor is committed to promoting diversity, including through the participation of women on company boards. A Shorten Labor Government will set a target of 50 per cent representation of women on all Australian Government boards by the end of the first term.

A Shorten Labor Government will work to make sure the membership of Australian Government boards represents, and benefits from the ability of, all our community.

Australian Greens

The Greens believe our boards work best when they reflect the diversity of our community, and would strive to make appointments that reflect Australia's multicultural community. Additionally, we need to ensure that board members have greater freedom to advocate on issues of cultural diversity, and that they have the power to use their experiences to advocate for better outcomes for multicultural communities, in and outside of Government.

5. Will you review the approach to setting targets for eligible partners in the family migration stream with a view to implementing an entirely demand-driven system?

The Migration Programme must achieve an appropriate balance between skilled and family migration. Partner migrants make a significant contribution to Australia's economy through participation in the labour force. The current system whereby the number of partner visas in the Family stream is restricted by a target set annually is inequitable. Under this system, skilled migrants are able to bring their partners to Australia with relative ease while Australian citizens are subject to a considerable wait time due to the quota system.

The social and particularly economic contribution of Family stream migration should not be underestimated. The approach to setting targets for eligible partners in the Family migration stream should be reviewed with a view to implementing an entirely demand-driven system.

Coalition

The Turnbull Government does not currently have a cap or target for partner places in the Migration Programme. Instead, indicative planning levels for partner places in the Migration Programme are set and adjusted annually to account for changes in demand for places in the Programme. In 2015-16, there are 47,825 partner places available in the Migration Programme. The Turnbull Coalition team is committed to ensuring that the number of places planned for in future years remains consistent with demand.

Australian Labor Party

Labor understands the particular importance to Australia's migrant communities of a fair and transparent process around visas for family members. We will have more to say on this topic before the election.

Australian Greens

Yes – the Greens have called for a review of the entire family reunion visa program.

6. Will you guarantee 24 hours of subsidised child care per week as a minimum standard for every child, regardless of parents' ability to meet an activity test, in views of the benefits of early childhood education for children from CALD backgrounds?

Child care reform has the potential to achieve the two key objectives of the child care system – increasing labour force participation and improving individual child development. The quality of life of migrant and refugee children is directly affected by their access to appropriate early childhood education and care services through the development of their language skills and exposure to Australian social culture, assisting with their later transition to formal schooling.

FECCA calls for investment of adequate resources into early childhood development and education to ensure that children from migrant and refugee backgrounds develop a sense of belonging, have access to adequate support and are empowered to preserve and develop their cultural identity while gaining knowledge and understanding of Australian culture.

Coalition

The Coalition remains committed to providing all parents, including citizens from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with more choice and opportunity to work through the *Jobs for Families* Child Care Package announced at the 2015-16 Budget. This package will create a simpler, more affordable, accessible and flexible child care system and will see the Coalition invest more than \$40 billion in child care support over the next four years.

The Government's child care assistance package strikes the right balance toward targeted child care support for hard working families who depend upon it, a generous safety net to protect those most vulnerable in our community and ongoing support for high quality early learning.

As part of the Child Care Safety Net, from 1 July 2016, eligible early childhood and child care (ECCC) services will be able to apply for bicultural support funding through the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) Innovative Solutions Support stream under the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP).

The ISP funding model for bicultural support moves away from current 'block' funding by jurisdiction to a competitive demand driven model which aims to be more responsive and tailor-made to meet the bicultural support needs of ECCC services. Importantly, the new ISP will allocate at least as much funding for bicultural support as that provided under the existing Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP).

Australian Labor Party

Yes. Labor's recently-announced early education and care policy will boost financial assistance for families and keep the existing arrangements with respect to access to two days of subsidised care, unlike the Turnbull Government's unfair activity test that will see some of the most vulnerable families have their access reduced to just one day a week.

A Shorten Labor Government will not proceed with the Liberals' child care changes in their current form, because they will leave as many as one in three families worse off, especially vulnerable children who have the most to gain from early education.

Before the last election, the Liberals promised to make child care more affordable for Australian families, but they have gone a whole term in government without delivering any relief. Families who rely on early education and care need a better deal now – and that’s what Labor will deliver.

Labor’s plan will take pressure off the family budget, help grow the economy by keeping more parents in work and ensure that all children continue to have access to two days of vital early education.

Our package will give parents the early education and care fee relief they need now – from 1 January 2017.

Under Labor’s plan:

- Low and middle income families will benefit from an increase to the Child Care Benefit of 15 per cent.
- Every one of the 813,000 families that rely on the Child Care Benefit will be better off – an increase up to \$31 per child per week, or up to \$1,627 per year, will provide much needed relief for the family budget.
- The annual cap on the Child Care Rebate will be increased from \$7,500 to \$10,000 per child, leaving families up to \$2,500 per child per year better off.
- 107,800 families who would otherwise reach the Child Care Rebate cap this financial year won’t have to choose between paying double fees, or dropping out of the workforce.

Australian Greens

Yes. The Greens believe all Australian families should have access to affordable, quality childcare. By streamlining funding to reduce out of pocket expenses, the Australian Greens will give all families a guaranteed 24 hours of subsidised care per week and provide \$200m to help early learning centres cut waiting lists. Our comprehensive child care policy is available at <http://greens.org.au/childcare>.

7. Will you ensure that people seeking to escape family violence are entitled to crisis payments regardless of their visa status?

Domestic violence service providers report that the biggest issues that they are observing in relation to temporary migrant women who experience violence is that these women have no source of income due to Centrelink eligibility requirements. Without income, women cannot meet their basic needs and the needs of their dependents. Many women on temporary visas return to their abusive partners because of lack of financial resources. The immigration status of women who experience family violence has a significant impact on their experience of that violence and their ability to leave a violent relationship. FECCA calls on all parties to commit to ensuring that people seeking to escape family violence are entitled to crisis payments regardless of their visa status, as recommended in the report of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Coalition

The Government provides a one-off crisis payment to people who are in severe financial hardship. The Crisis Payment is paid through Centrelink and includes the following four categories of payment: extreme circumstance forcing departure from home; remaining in home after removal of family member due to domestic or family violence; release from gaol or psychiatric confinement; and humanitarian Entrants who arrive in Australia for the first time on a qualifying humanitarian visa on or after 1 January 2008.

In order to qualify for a Crisis Payment a social security pension or benefit must be payable to the person and on the day of claim the person must be in severe financial hardship.

Australian Labor Party

No-one should feel that they are unable to seek help or escape from family violence, regardless of their visa status or any other factor. Labor is aware of this issue and will have more to say before the election.

Labor is committed to embedding within support services the diverse needs of victims from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, migrants, refugees and people from a non-English speaking background, people with disability, older women and other vulnerable groups. Labor will commission a National Crisis Summit within 100 days of coming to government.

A national crisis summit on violence against women is required for the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to agree to urgently implement coordinated judicial and social services reform within their areas of responsibility to better deal with family violence.

A national crisis summit on violence against women is the best way for stakeholders to openly and transparently lay down the key policy challenges for addressing family violence.

Australian Greens

Yes. The Greens will work to ensure that those affected by family violence have full access to the support Australia can offer.

8. Will you adopt a comprehensive national communications policy that supports public broadcasting in languages other than English and ethnic and multicultural community broadcasters?

FECCA calls for all parties to adopt a comprehensive national communications policy that supports public broadcasting in languages other than English and ethnic and multicultural community broadcasters, including through adequate resourcing for ongoing development and innovation, and provides an inclusive and empowering digital transformation agenda.

FECCA calls for all parties to preserve the uniqueness of SBS and to commit to a non-amalgamation policy between SBS and ABC. SBS is a key component to Australia's success as a migrant country by facilitating social cohesion between groups of differing cultural backgrounds.

Coalition

The Turnbull Government is committed to supporting our national multicultural broadcaster and ethnic and multicultural community broadcasters to provide programming in languages other than English.

The Government's 2016-17 Budget provided substantial funding for the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) of \$829.4 million over three years. This will support the SBS to provide television programming in more than 100 languages and radio services in 68 languages.

In addition, the Turnbull Coalition will continue funding community broadcasters to provide ethnic and multicultural programming on community radio stations across Australia. The Coalition will provide more than \$46 million over three years to the Community Broadcasting Foundation to support community broadcasters, including multicultural and ethnic broadcasters.

Australian Labor Party

Labor believes that SBS has a very special mandate to tell the stories of multicultural Australia and explain the diversity of cultures in Australia to all of us.

The SBS provides a unique national broadcasting service promoting multicultural Australia, and provides services to Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds which are not delivered by the ABC or the commercial broadcasting sector.

Labor will ensure SBS remains a properly publicly funded broadcaster. Labor will provide adequate triennial funding to the ABC and SBS so they can deliver quality public broadcasting services. Labor will ensure the national broadcasters are able to exploit the potential of new technology to deliver attractive and innovative content.

Labor regards community broadcasting, which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island services, radio for the print handicapped, LGBTI-focuses, faith-based, and ethnic and multicultural broadcasting, as an essential component of Australian broadcasting meeting the needs of many diverse communities, and Labor will continue to encourage its growth and development.

Labor believes community broadcasting's access to multiple distribution platforms must be provided on a basis of parity with the national and commercial broadcasting sectors wherever it is practical to achieve; available on a free-to-receive basis; and affordable to community broadcasters.

Labor is committed to adequate funding being provided to ensure the effective ongoing operation and development of community broadcasting.

As Minister for Communications, Malcolm Turnbull said he supported community digital radio. In his first Budget as Prime Minister, he cut \$5.6 million from it.

According to the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, 37 community digital radio services are facing closure altogether from 1 July 2016.

Labor knows these services are a valued part of Australian culture, and a Shorten Labor Government will restore funding to ensure continued delivery of community digital radio services in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Adelaide.

This \$5.6 million commitment over four years - \$1.4 million per annum – will assist with digital platform and infrastructure costs including data connectivity, linking, multiplexing and transmission.

Australian Greens

The Greens have been strong supporters of the role public and community broadcasters play in broadcasting in languages other than English, and believe that this important voice must be heard through a national broadcasting policy.

The Greens have consistently opposed cuts to services such as the SBS and community radio and television, which provide a vital service in broadcasting in languages other than English, as well as catering for a level of cultural sensitivity that other networks cannot. Ensuring that funding is restored is paramount, to allow services to continue to provide this important cultural service.

9. Will you take targeted and comprehensive measures to empower CALD consumers in consumer-directed care reforms, including aged care, the NDIS and mental health, to ensure equitable access and experience?

There is sufficient evidence and research to indicate that Australia's migrants and refugees continue to face multiple disadvantages across a number of indicators. The subsequent risk adversely affects not only migrants themselves, but also the levels of social cohesion within communities, and halts the potential for increases and inclusive economic growth, and prosperity for Australian society at large. It is imperative that the levels of multiple disadvantage of CALD Australians are addressed through all government policy and program design and delivery to eliminate any disparities in terms of equity in access, participation, and outcomes.

Coalition

The Turnbull Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Australian Labor Party

Labor recognises that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds face particular challenges in accessing care in the aged care, disability and health systems – including mental health.

Labor is committed to addressing these challenges through a model of care that focuses on the needs of the individual – person-centred care and integrated support services, focused on the needs of the whole person.

Australian Greens

The Greens believe it is critical that services and care, including aged care, the NDIS and mental health ensure equitable access and experience for CALD communities.

We know that the mental health sector is under-equipped to be able to assist culturally diverse communities. The Greens have set out a number of steps in relation to data collection and a national strategy for mental health needs in CALD communities, which would further inform the Greens' \$1.4bn investment in our mental health system.

The Greens have worked with CALD community stakeholders and peak bodies to identify how aged care reforms will impact on CALD communities, and the need for particular strategies that respond to the specific needs of CALD communities as aged care reforms and the NDIS are rolled out. The Greens look forward to working closely with CALD community members and organisations in the coming Parliament to ensure there are targeted and comprehensive measures to empower CALD consumers.

10. Will you develop a National Community Relations Strategy with funding earmarked for national and community-based projects?

FECCA calls for all parties to commit to a National Community Relations Strategy with funding earmarked for national and community-based projects which further promote social cohesion in Australia through innovation, education and intercultural cooperation.

Australian population data demonstrates the multicultural reality of Australia today, which is an asset of which all Australians should be proud. There is a need for a coordinated national strategy that will ensure equitable outcomes for all Australians, regardless of their cultural, ethnic or religious background, so that they can contribute to Australian society and, in turn, benefit from being part of a fair, diverse and harmonious community.

Coalition

The Coalition Government currently funds a range of national and community-based projects and grants that benefit CALD communities. These include the Building Safe Communities for Women and their Children grants which are designed to support communities develop and implement practical solutions to reduce violence against women and their children in their own community.

They also help prevent violence into the future and make a positive difference for women and their children who are victims of domestic violence. Building Safe Communities for Women and their Children grants can be used to better understand the prevalence and impact of domestic violence in the community.

Australian Labor Party

A Shorten Labor Government will renew investment in Australian multiculturalism, with \$28.5 million of new funding to support social cohesion and economic inclusion.

An Office for Multicultural Affairs (OMA) will be re-established in the Department of Social Services to improve coordination, policy development, research and evaluation, and program management.

The first task of the OMA will be to implement a Community Cohesion Program, to support the skills and development of new migrants to successfully settle in Australia.

Labor's \$28.5 million investment will fund improvements in the Adult Migrant English Program, Community Hubs and the 'Racism. It Stops With Me Campaign'.

Labor will invest \$11.3 million to fund capital works for settlement and community sector organisations. For too long, support for new and established migrant communities has occurred without the necessary infrastructure.

The Abbott-Turnbull Government, in one of their first decisions in 2013, slashed the Building Multicultural Communities program. Even after letters of successful grants had been received by many organisations, overdue projects were snatched away at the last minute.

Labor will also invest in the people who support new and established migrant communities. A funding stream of \$7.5 million will help organisations build critical skills in their staff. From community leadership to volunteer management to bilingual engagement, these skills are vital to support new migrants settle into society and the labour market.

These policies have been informed from the grassroots. After listening to settlement and multicultural organisations who live and breathe support for new migrants, Labor has the right plan to ensure future citizens are given the support they need.

This investment represents a stark contrast to the Abbott-Turnbull Government. Instead of asking settlement and multicultural organisations to do more with less, as we saw in the Budget, a Shorten Labor Government will invest in organisations to help new humanitarian migrants succeed.

Australian Greens

Yes – the Greens support development of a National Community Relations Strategy, and believe this is critical to ensuring social cohesion in Australia is strengthened.

We need an integrated approach to combat stereotypes, prejudice and racism in Australia. We need to build a sense of community, and ensure all Australians feel that they are part of and contributing to our country. The Greens believe we need a national approach to develop and implement key preventative programs that help to build social cohesion.

Since 2015, the Greens have had legislation before the Parliament for an Australian Centre for Social Cohesion, an independent centre that would bring together the community, Government, experts, academics and researchers to combat racism and prevent violent extremism. This also includes re-committing the \$11 million cut from the Building Multicultural Communities Program.