Respect, Partnership, and Opportunity

A Gunner Labor Government and Indigenous Territorians
A 10 YEAR PLAN TO TRANSFER POWER BACK TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES.

In cooperation with Indigenous Territorians, Labor will embark on the most significant empowering of Indigenous people since Self Government.

Indigenous people should be making the decisions on the issues that impact on them.

A Labor Government will embrace the principle that Indigenous empowerment and decision making will better provide solutions and a way forward.

This approach will be central to all of our work and will be reflected in all of our policy statements.

This will see the Government, Indigenous representative organisations and Indigenous people working together on projects to transfer power in:

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

Labor will continue the current work being done by Indigenous health focused organisations and Indigenous communities.

The localising of decision making will be done at a pace that suits the relevant Indigenous groups and people. It is a 10 year plan.

We recognise that building, supporting and investing in strong Indigenous governance is necessary to ensure local people drive local solutions and Indigenous organisations are supported.

In devolving decision making Labor will be guided by the principles outlined in the Aboriginal Peak Organisation’s Partnership Principles1.

A COMMITMENT TO CONSULTATION.

Labor is committed to extensive consultation with Indigenous communities

We will:

- Consult and work with Traditional Owners.
- Consult and work with the organisations that represent Indigenous Territorians.
- Ensure the voice of Indigenous women is heard loud and clear.
- Continue to support First Circles as a development opportunity for youth leadership.
- Continue the Community Champions program.
- Bring back Community Cabinet meetings with an emphasis on remote Territory meetings.
FOUR STAGES OF DEVOLVING LOCAL DECISION MAKING.

Labor believes that the roadmap to local decision making will occur over stages.

**STAGE ONE**

DETERMINING WHAT DECISIONS PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE.

Labor will work with communities to determine what decision making people want in what priority. We will not assume that all Indigenous communities want to have all decision making options now.

**STAGE TWO**

DETERMINING LOCAL DECISION MAKING MODELS.

Labor will work with Indigenous communities and representative organisations to determine the most appropriate model for local decision making in each of the areas of responsibility.

**STAGE THREE**

DETERMINING OUR JOINT GOALS.

Labor will work with communities to assist in planning their goals in each of the areas being transferred. This will be matched with a clear understanding of the capacities Indigenous people bring to this task and the capacities that are needed in each area.

**STAGE FOUR**

MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

Labor will work with Indigenous communities to determine on the ground mechanisms for the evaluation of programs and outcomes and public, open and transparent reporting requirements.

We will be careful to ensure any cooperative ventures are properly supported (and monitored) in implementing work plans and not set up to fail under the weight of responsibilities and demands for services.
COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVEMENT.

Local Decisions Oversight Board.

Labor will implement a whole of government coordinated strategy for making decisions local.

To ensure that the Labor Government's plans are being implemented effectively, in a timely way, Labor will appoint an oversight body consisting of leading Indigenous Territorians and reporting directly to the Chief Minister.

In particular, this LDOB will play a significant role in supporting regions, where they wish, transfer successfully from Regional Councils to more localised regional authorities.

This group will include leading Indigenous organisations and peak bodies such as APONT, the Land Councils and remote Indigenous leaders.
LOCAL DECISION MAKING - LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Labor will strengthen local decision making in local government.

Centralising decision making is not supported by the majority of Indigenous Territorians in the bush and we will put into place reforms that will extensively localise decision making. We got it wrong with Shires and we will not repeat those mistakes.

People want a road map to new communities of interest or regional authorities that work for them and their cultural groups. We will work with them to provide this road map in a way which takes sensible steps to more local decision making.

For those areas that believe and want to support a new regional authority Labor will support the development of a road map to this model of local government. This roadmap will be required to demonstrate the steps to the regional authority, as well as showing the likely impact on other groups.

Labor’s Local Decisions Oversight Board will be engaged to work with the proponents of such regional authorities and provide key, clear criteria for their establishment.

REGIONAL COUNCILS

Labor will work with Regional Councils to act as important groups in delivering services to remote Indigenous Territorians.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

We will support the strengthening of local authorities as a key voice to inform both regional councils and our government. We will -

- support the annual $5m fund to be distributed to local authorities for local priority projects.
- grow the role of Local Authorities in the development of local government work programs
- ensure local authorities are a key point of local contact for our Cabinet Ministers and other elected members of our government.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Where there is a need, and there is broad support, we will support the development of new forums, with regional cultural authority, to take the lead on critical issues.

LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

We will also invest in a Strategic Local Government Infrastructure Fund that will provide an additional $5 million per year for remote local government projects designed to lift liveability, health and community development outcomes in remote communities.

These funds will be used to back projects such as re-sealing internal town/community roads, green streetscapes projects, storm water management, barge landings, cemeteries up-grade, accreditation of rubbish tips, communications infrastructure and other projects.
Local decisions to underpin Labor’s $1.1 billion investment in remote housing

If elected, Labor will provide a 10 year $1.1 billion remote housing program to lift the amount of housing, living space and rooms available to Territorians living in remote communities. For greater detail see Labor’s Remote Housing Strategy paper released in November 2015.

These funds will be allocated from within the Territory budget for infrastructure.

This funding will be allocated to 5 housing construction and expansion programs. These are:

- $500 million over 10 years for new houses- HomeBuild NT.
- $200 million over 10 years for additional repairs and maintenance of houses beyond the funds currently provided by the Australian Government.
- $200 million over 10 years for Room To Breathe NT.
- $200 million over 10 years for an expanded Government employee housing program that is accessible by locally recruited remote Government employees.
- An expanded Homelands Extra funding program.

Local Groups will manage this investment.

The decisions over housing – what to build, where, when to build, what repairs and maintenance and who will be allocated housing- will all be made by locals where they choose to do so. Regional Councils, local authorities or housing groups will be the decision makers and this will be determined by local people.

Local Groups will manage tenancies.

Labor will re-invigorate the Housing Reference Groups and will ensure that communities have local housing officers to support local initiatives and improve government responses. Initially Labor will ensure that housing officers exist across 25 major areas. Labor will devolve the tenancy management for remote communities away from Territory Housing.
LOCAL DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Community Led School= Real Decision Making by Communities.

Labor believes that the outcomes of Indigenous education will improve when Indigenous people have more control over the decisions made about education and training for their children, in their community.

We also believe that by empowering communities to take charge of education and training we will reduce truancy and increase the relevance of education and training to Indigenous people.

To achieve this transfer of decision making Labor will:

- introduce Community Led Schools in remote communities.
- support the introduction of these schools with an agreed 10 year community education capacity building plan.
- establish the outcomes to be achieved and support School Boards and school communities in establishing the best and most effective means of getting to these outcomes.

The most recent Indigenous Education Review, A Share in the Future, identified serious and significant issues in the education and training of Indigenous Territorians. All Territorians are concerned by the data provided in this report.

However the solutions proposed in the report and its recommendations as interpreted by the CLP Government have taken more decision-making away from parents and the school community.

This Review, and its implementation, does not make schools more open and relevant to the concerns and wishes of Indigenous parents. Labor will take a different approach.
LABOR’S APPROACH - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY LED SCHOOLS.

If elected Labor will undertake community consultation on the introduction of Community Led schools.

We will work with communities to determine the schools that school communities will manage.

Community Led schools can be in individual communities or in clusters of communities and feeder outstation/homelands.

SCHOOL BOARDS TO MANAGE SCHOOLS

Within agreed areas we will establish a School Board for the management of education and training. This Board can include the school community, community groups and the Department of Education. Boards can be made up of parents, carers, elder representatives, health clinics, local industry, police – whoever is determined by the community as having a role to play in the education of children.

AGREEMENT ON OUTCOMES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY

Labor will bring Government and the community/region together to reach agreement about the outcomes to be achieved in the schools.

Agreements will be clearly understood by all participants in education and training, widely publicised in the local area and will form the basis of agreed reporting and monitoring mechanisms.

There will be a particular focus on literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Once the outcomes are established the way they are achieved is determined locally with advice and support provided from the Government.

In each school community, the School Board will be asked to consider appropriate cultural elements that could enhance education delivery.

CAPACITY BUILDING

To support the best possible achievement of outcomes Labor will understand the capacity that Indigenous people bring to the education system and use that in the schools, We will also provide strong capacity building programs to communities to train locals to engage with and be part of schools in various capacities.

Further, Labor will provide innovative training and support for teaching staff, for principals and school administrators to prepare them for life in bush communities.
LOCAL DECISION MAKING ABOUT HEALTH AND INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

A health partnership with Indigenous organisations and communities.

If elected, Labor supports local communities developing local strategies to promote good health and tackle community health issues. See our Healthy Strong Communities Position Paper.

We will work with the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT) to continue the good work they and member organisations are undertaking.

Labor will continue the transition of remote health clinics to Aboriginal Community Control for those communities that are supportive of the transition and where there is an Aboriginal service provider who can provide the services required.

Labor will commit to transitioning 1 remote health clinic per year over the next 10 years to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Labor fully supports the Nurse Family Partnership program in Central Australia delivered by the Central Australia Aboriginal Congress. This nurse led 2 year home visiting program is delivering improved early childhood and parental health and wellbeing. Territory Labor will extend this in another 5 remote communities, preferably delivered through Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Labor will work in partnership with local communities to identify, develop and deliver local health promotion activities to prevent diabetes, mental illness and chronic illness. We will also work hand in hand with communities to overcome issues such as drug and alcohol or volatile substance misuse, by developing strong community led strategies.
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ENGAGED IN LABOR’S EARLY CHILDHOOD FOCUS.

Labor has announced that a focus on the early years, children aged 0-4 is a critical element of Labor’s agenda in government. For greater detail see Labor’s Changing Our Future paper

Indigenous Territorians will be an important part of that effort.

In devising strategies for improving outcomes for children Labor will engage Indigenous expertise and assistance.

In Government Labor will:

- Appoint the Deputy Chief Minister as the Minister for Children.
- Develop a Territory wide Early Childhood plan.
- Restructure agencies to have a whole of government focus on children supporting the plan.
- Ensure that non-government organisations are fully engaged in the planning of policy and its delivery in the early years.
- With an overarching plan established the Government will then work with communities to ensure that there are clear, local, community driven community plans interlocked with the overarching Strategic Plan.

Labor will ensure that the Territory wide Early Childhood Plan is devised with the input of Indigenous people living in remote and regional communities.

Where Indigenous children require care we will aim to have as many as possible supported by extended Aboriginal families.

Labor will grow and develop Indigenous non-government organisations focused on out of home care and child protection.
LOCAL CONTROL OF LAW AND JUSTICE.

Labor will work with Indigenous Territorians and the Territory justice and legal system to increase the involvement and leadership of Indigenous people in the legal and justice system.

We believe that by re-empowering traditional structures Indigenous elders can re-invigorate the leadership and direction it can provide to communities.

We believe in the increased use of the Local Court system that includes increases the use of traditional knowledge and approaches.

Labor will also examine family responsibility models as have occurred in other places and will establish a Territory approach to re-asserting local power and recognised cultural authority in legal matters.