

**LABOR**

# A FAIR GO FOR LGBTIQ AUSTRALIANS



**Labor**



**A Fair Go**  
*For Australia*

# A MESSAGE FROM BILL SHORTEN



A Shorten Labor Government will deliver a fairer Australia for LGBTIQ people by tackling discrimination and giving a stronger voice to LGBTIQ Australians. These are all practical steps which take us further along the journey towards equality, providing a more inclusive and fairer Australia.

Labor has a proud record of promoting and defending the rights of LGBTIQ people. When Labor was last in Government we introduced an unprecedented number of reforms and rights protections for LGBTIQ Australians, ending legal discrimination in 85 pieces of Commonwealth legislation.

## “Labor has a proud record of promoting and defending the rights of LGBTIQ people”

In Opposition, we appointed a Shadow Assistant Minister for Equality, a first for a major party in the nation’s Parliament. We have also strongly pushed to end discrimination against LGBTIQ students and teachers in religious schools.

We were also at the forefront of the struggle for marriage equality. After the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government forced an expensive, unnecessary and harmful public vote on the country, Labor went all-out to campaign for the YES case. Labor’s support and parliamentary work was crucial to the survey outcome and the enactment of marriage equality in 2017.

While the changes to the *Marriage Act* were a giant step towards greater equality, it wasn’t the end of the road. People with diverse sexualities, gender identities and sex characteristics still face discrimination and structural impediments to full participation in society.

Given Labor’s record, the community is looking to Labor to continue to stand up for the rights of LGBTIQ people and their children. Labor is committed to working with the LGBTIQ community to continue to make Australia a fairer and more equitable society.

We have taken some major steps forward over the past years, but we still have more to do to achieve equality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Shorten". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'B' and a cursive 'Shorten'.

**Bill Shorten**

# RIGHTS

## National LGBTIQ Ministerial Advisory Council

Labor believes the best way to promote the rights of LGBTIQ Australians and develop policies that recognise their needs is by listening to and consulting with LGBTIQ Australians.

That's why Labor will establish a LGBTIQ Ministerial Advisory Council. Once a quarter, we will convene the council to have input into policy development on issues that affect the rights and lives of LGBTIQ Australians and their families.

## Protecting LGBTIQ Students and Staff

As it currently stands, LGBTIQ students and staff at religious schools risk being discriminated against, sacked or expelled. This state of affairs prompted a community outcry in late 2018, and Scott Morrison promised to tackle the protection of LGBTIQ students late last year. However, he failed to put a bill to Parliament that would deliver on this promise and he subsequently gave up.

Labor will *not* give up. A Shorten Labor Government will amend the *Sex Discrimination Act* to remove the exemptions that permit religious schools to discriminate against students and staff on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity.

We do not believe that freedom from discrimination and religious freedom are mutually exclusive. We do not believe that the removal of these exemptions will hamper a religious school's capacity to continue to teach its religion and operate according to its traditions and beliefs. If elected, a Shorten Labor Government will consult with stakeholders on the best way forward to address this issue, and then legislate to make our commitment law.

## A Nationwide Ban on so-called "LGBTIQ Conversion Therapy"

Labor is committed to ending the practice of so-called "LGBTIQ conversion therapy" (GCT). Practitioners of GCT insist, with no reliable evidence, that LGBTIQ people can be "cured" using a combination of physical and mental coercion. Medical experts and survivor organisations, including the AMA, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the College of Psychiatrists, have condemned the practice as harmful and "a serious threat to the health and human rights of those so treated." The Victorian Labor Government has already committed to banning the practice.

A Shorten Labor Government will work with survivor groups and coordinate with the states and territories to develop strategies for tackling this practice, including a nationwide ban on "Gay Conversion Therapy".

There is no place in modern Australia for this practice.

Labor knows LGBTIQ people are *not* broken and do *not* need fixing. It's high time this practice was consigned to the dustbin of history.



# RIGHTS

## LGBTIQ Human Rights Commissioner

The Australian Human Rights Commission is a key government body that educates, advises and advocates on different aspects of human rights in Australia. It has a profound impact on how rights issues are raised and progressed in Australia, providing a voice for some of the most vulnerable members of the community and its brief includes dealing with issues around age, race, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

A Shorten Labor Government will make history by appointing Australia's first full time LGBTIQ Human Rights Commissioner to advocate for and advance the rights of LGBTIQ Australians.

The Commissioner will be located within Australian Human Rights Commission to work across government for the removal of discrimination and structural impediments to full participation in society for LGBTIQ Australians.



# RIGHTS

## Ending all remaining discrimination at the federal level

When Labor was last in government we made large strides towards ending discrimination against LGBTIQ people at a Federal level. We amended 85 federal laws to ensure all couples regardless of gender, and their children, were treated equally when it came to taxation, superannuation, health, social security, child support, aged care, immigration, citizenship and veterans' affairs. We also made sure all couples, including de facto couples could access the Family Court to resolve disputes.

But there are still areas of the law that discriminate against LGBTIQ people. For instance, there are still statutes containing outdated and discriminatory language. The *Fair Work Act* contains no protections against adverse action for trans or intersex employees, leaving them vulnerable.

Labor will continue to work to remove all discriminatory measures against LGBTIQ people from Commonwealth law.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## LGBTIQ Community Grants

Labor believes LGBTIQ organisations have a key role to play in supporting and ending discrimination against LGBTIQ people and their families. That's why a Shorten Labor Government will commit \$3 million in grants of up to \$300,000 each over three years for capacity building, community cohesion and/or advocacy to LGBTIQ organisations.

In January, it was revealed the Liberals had cut \$310,000 in funding from Switchboard, a service which provides support to LGBTIQ older Australians in aged care. Labor will restore that funding.

We will also support Joy FM, Australia's first and only LGBTIQ radio station, through a \$600,000 grant for its ongoing operations.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## The Pride Centre

The Victorian Pride Centre will be the first of its kind in Australia. The building will be home to ten proposed major residents: the Victorian AIDS Council, JOY 94.9 FM radio station, the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Switchboard, Midsumma Festival, Melbourne Queer Film Festival, Minus 18, the Australian GLBTI Multi Cultural, Multi Faith Advocacy Group, and Team Melbourne, a peak organisation representing over 20 LGBTIQ sporting groups.

There will also be up to 40 other LGBTIQ local and national organisations that will regularly use or meet at the VPC including bisexual and transgender groups.

The Centre represents a promising blueprint for the future of LGBTIQ community organisations in Australia. Labor is proud to provide \$10 million in funding for this ground-breaking project.

## JoyFM

A Shorten Labor Government will also provide \$600,000 in funding for Joy FM to move into the new Pride Centre and update its equipment.

# HEALTH AND AGED CARE

## Making HIV History

Australia's policies, combined with recent developments in treatment, testing and prevention over the last 35 years have put us in a good position to be the first country to eradicate HIV.

A Labor Government intends to seize the initiative and make HIV history.

Labor's commitment will see:

\$10 million a year to renew Australia's HIV response by restoring the funding and capacity that the Liberals have cut from HIV peak organisations. Labor's investment in these groups and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

will allow them to undertake critical engagement and communications activity with at-risk populations.

\$3 million a year to target hidden populations – including people who aren't diagnosed with or treated for HIV, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We can do this by improving prevention, testing and treatment for these groups through:

- ✓ New health promotion campaigns
- ✓ Expanding access to testing
- ✓ Partnering with primary health care providers to ensure that people who are diagnosed with HIV are treated.

# HEALTH AND AGED CARE

## LGBTIQ Health and Inclusion Strategy

Services aimed at the general public often fail to understand or address the specific needs of LGBTIQ people. They can fail to reflect the needs of people with diverse bodies or know specific health risk factors present in the community. The consequences of that are worse health outcomes for a disproportionate number of people in LGBTIQ communities.

In collaboration with LGBTI community-controlled organisations, Labor will develop a National LGBTIQ Health and Inclusion Strategy, aimed at addressing a range of health issues including:

- ✓ Smoking, alcohol and other drugs
- ✓ Mental health
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Trans and gender diverse people's health
- ✓ Rights and health needs of people with intersex variations
- ✓ The needs of people born overseas, including international students.

## LGBTIQ Aged Care

In 2012, Labor introduced the National LGBTIQ Ageing and Aged Care Strategy and removed the right of religious affiliated aged care organisations to discriminate against LGBTIQ people in service delivery.

The Liberals have since replaced the Strategy with the broader Aged Care Diversity Framework. The Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group is developing three action plans, one of which will be for LGBTIQ people.

Labor will ensure this action plan, and any future plans, prioritise the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ people in services.