

The Labor logo features the word "Labor" in white, bold, sans-serif font on a red rectangular background. To the right of the red bar is a blue square containing the Australian flag's stars.

MEDIA RELEASE | WE'LL PUT
PEOPLE FIRST

**HON. JENNY MACKLIN MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR FAMILIES AND PAYMENTS
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DISABILITY REFORM
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR JAGAJAGA**

**HON. ANDREW LEIGH MP
SHADOW ASSISTANT TREASURER
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FRASER**

**SENATOR CLAIRE MOORE
SHADOW MINISTER FOR COMMUNITIES, CARERS AND WOMEN
SENATOR FOR QUEENSLAND**

A STRONG, VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY SECTOR

A Shorten Labor Government will reset the Commonwealth's relationship with the community and not-for-profit sector and usher in a new era of meaningful partnership for positive social change.

Labor understands the critical role played by Australia's community and not-for-profit sector in building the capacity of individuals and communities, strengthening community cohesion, addressing inequality and harnessing opportunity.

We know that government alone cannot solve all our social problems. Only by working in partnership with community organisations – and communities themselves – can we bring about lasting change.

But for three years, the Liberals have treated the community and not-for-profit sector with contempt.

First the Liberals ripped more than \$270 million worth of funding from frontline services.

They stripped peak advocacy organisations of their funding and slashed money from community legal centres and family violence services.

Then they completely botched their community grants process – pitching community organisations against one another and leaving many frontline services without funding certainty.

As a result, some frontline services have had to cut staff or reduce their services. Some have closed entirely.

The Liberals also tried to scrap the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission – only to be fought off by a relentless campaign by Labor and representatives of the community sector.

It's time to change the way that government works with the community sector.

That is why, a Shorten Labor Government will draw a line in the sand and embark on a new agenda of partnership with community and non-for-profit organisations.

Unlike the Liberals, Labor believes that Government and the Community Sector should work together to develop quality policy, to implement that policy and ensure it delivers real outcomes for vulnerable Australians.

Labor has already established a Federal Labor Community Sector Partnership – a regular forum for debating policy ideas and direction.

If elected, Labor will make the Community Sector Partnership a permanent interface between Government and the community sector.

Labor will also:

- reinvigorate the National Compact with the Third Sector – to outline the terms of engagement and agree a joint agenda for working together.
- scrap the Liberal's shambolic community grants program. This has been a disaster for community organisations and should not be allowed to continue. Whilst Labor will honour all existing contracts, over time we will move towards a fairer approach to funding community organisations, including longer term contracts.
- continue to work through the ACNC to streamline reporting mechanisms and cut red tape for community and not-for-profit organisations.

In addition, Labor will work with the community and not-for-profit sectors in the development of Labor's national information policy, to ensure that the power of open data is available to assist the community sector to do its job more effectively.

We will continue to support community organisations through the volunteer grants program. We know that community organisations often rely on these small grants to assist them to attract and keep volunteers. Labor will provide a further \$10 million toward this important program.

Labor also understands that – particularly as the NDIS and Living Longer Living Better Aged Care Reforms roll out around the country - casualisation insecure work are of great concerns to many employees.

Labor will work with the community and not-for-profit sector to protect the wages and conditions of employees as these reforms roll out around the country.

For more information about Labor's plan for a strong, vibrant and sustainable community sector, please visit: [Insert URL]

WEDNESDAY, 8 JUNE 2016

LABOR'S PLAN FOR A STRONG, VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY SECTOR

Labor understands the critical role played by Australia's community and not-for-profit sector in building the capacity of individuals and communities, strengthening community cohesion, addressing inequality and harnessing opportunity.

Labor is committed to a strong, vibrant and sustainable community sector. That is why Labor has a comprehensive plan for supporting the community sector and working with community organisations to tackle complex social and economic issues.

A strong community sector builds strong communities

Labor knows that governments alone cannot solve all social problems.

Poverty, entrenched locational disadvantage and unemployment, family violence, drug addiction and anti-social behaviour are all complex issues that require considered solutions.

We know that very often, community organisations – and communities themselves - are best placed to deal with these issues, particularly if we want lasting social change.

That is why a Shorten Labor Government will build on the work of previous Labor Governments and work with the community and not-for-profit sectors to create new partnerships aimed at tackling complex social problems, breaking cycles of intergenerational disadvantage and creating opportunity for individuals in the communities where they live.

A Shorten Labor Government will involve the community sector and communities themselves in designing, directing and controlling local priorities, services and solutions.

A Shorten Labor Government will change the way we work with local communities, creating new partnerships for positive social change.

This is Labor's plan for a stronger, more vibrant and sustainable community sector.

A SHORTEN LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL DIRECTLY INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY SECTOR IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE FEDERAL LABOR COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

Labor's Community Sector Partnership met for the first time in April 2015.

The Community Sector Partnership brings together leaders from the community sector to outline priorities for social policy reform and set a new agenda for working together to deliver positive social change.

Providing a mechanism for government and the community sector to work together to design, implement and deliver policy is an important first step in developing new approaches to solving complex problems.

Under a Shorten Government, the Federal Labor Community Sector Partnership will meet regularly to continue to inform and advise on the best approaches to tackling new and emerging community issues.

A SHORTEN LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL REINVIGORATE THE NATIONAL COMPACT WITH THE THIRD SECTOR

In 2010, the then Labor Government and 23 foundation signatories signed up to the National Compact with the Third Sector. This was an agreement to:

- Document and promote the value and contribution of the sector.
- Protect the sector's right to advocacy irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist.
- Recognise sector diversity in consultation processes and sector development initiatives.
- Improve information sharing including greater access to publicly funded research and data.
- Reduce red tape and streamline reporting.
- Simplify and improve consistency of financial arrangements including across state and federal jurisdictions.
- Act to improve paid and unpaid workforce issues.
- Improve funding and procurement processes.

The National Compact provided a solid foundation for engagement between government and the community and not-for-profit sectors.

Since coming to government, the Liberals have left the compact to languish.

As a consequence, there is currently no framework for engagement between government and the community sector.

Funding cuts and a botched community grants program have left the relationship between government and the community sector at an all-time low.

Labor is committed to a relationship of genuine engagement.

A Shorten Labor Government will work with foundation signatories as well as members of Labor's Community Sector Partnership to reinvigorate the National Compact with the Third Sector, providing a new platform for engagement and partnership between government and community organisations.

In consultation with the sector, Labor will examine ways of strengthening the Compact as a genuine platform for partnership into the future.

A SHORTEN LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL MOVE TOWARDS A FAIRER APPROACH TO FUNDING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The Liberals' approach to funding community organisations and frontline services has been a disaster. It has left the community sector – and the communities they serve – uncertain about their future.

Significant cuts to grant programs have left gaps in the provision of important services such as emergency relief and financial counselling.

While Labor remains committed to honouring all contracts with community organisations, Labor will take a different approach to the Liberals when it comes to funding the community sector.

To begin this process, Labor will undertake a comprehensive evaluation of all of the Department of Social Services' funding models with a view to moving towards a fairer approach to funding the community sector.

Labor will act on the recommendations of the Senate Inquiry into the Department of Social Services Community Grants program by commissioning the independent Auditor General to undertake the evaluation.

Labor will move towards a community grants process which encapsulates the following principles:

- Diversity amongst small and large not-for-profit organisations, to ensure a vibrant sector which includes local community organisations capable of marshalling the resources of local communities.
- For-profit providers do not receive funding for essential frontline services such as homelessness, domestic violence and emergency relief.
- Five year contracts to provide longer-term funding certainty for not-for-profit and community organisations.
- Proper indexation of funding for community organisations.
- Advocacy is recognised as a key component of the work of the community sector and barriers to the practice of advocacy are removed from funding agreements.
- Removal of the Liberals' gag clauses in contracts with the community sector.
- Appropriate incentives for programs with a strong evidence base.

A SHORTEN LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TO STREAMLINE REPORTING AND EVALUATION THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMISSION

Labor is committed to the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission.

A Shorten Labor Government will work with the States and Territories to harmonise parallel state and federal regulatory schemes, significantly reducing the regulatory burden on the community and not-for-profit sector.

A Shorten Labor Government aims for an environment where any not-for-profit that registers with the National Charities Commission would automatically be registered in their home state as well.

Labor wants a scheme where community organisations would also qualify for state concessions and exemptions simply by becoming a Deductible Gift Recipient at the federal level.

This is already the case in South Australia and the ACT. We want to see it around the country.

A SHORTEN LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL HARNESS THE POWER OF OPEN DATA TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND BREED A NEW GENERATION OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Governments hold an extraordinary amount of unique data that can be accessed, analysed and used by the community sector to improve service delivery, monitor performance and evaluate program outcomes while at the same time protecting the privacy of clients.

Open data has the potential to transform not just business, but also our community sector, by improving efficiency and effectiveness, and ultimately outcomes for the Australian people.

It also has the potential to breed a new generation of social enterprises and start-ups.

Apps such as 'Safe Around Me', which aggregates information and services on domestic violence, InfoXchange's new app to support access to services for people experiencing homelessness are two examples of ways in which data can be used to deliver service to vulnerable Australians.

Asthma Foundation NSW has also developed an app providing real-time access to data on air quality for sufferers of asthma.

The applications of open data for the community and not-for-profit sectors are endless.

Labor wants to ensure we have a proper framework for data collection, standardisation and release which balances the need for greater transparency with privacy concerns.

That is why a Shorten Labor government will develop a National Information Policy, with a view to ensuring the data governments collect can be used by new and established organisations to improve outcomes for the community sector and the people that it serves.

The applications to which data can be used to improve service design, delivery and evaluation within the community sector will form a key component of the National Information Policy.

Further information on this policy can be found at

<http://www.alp.org.au/nationalinformationpolicy>

A SHORTEN LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE VOLUNTEER GRANTS

Volunteer Grants are small grants of up to \$5,000 aimed at assisting community organisations to build their capacity to find and retain volunteers.

Grants can be used to purchase small equipment that will assist their volunteers, assist with the reimbursement of fuel costs incurred by volunteers, assist with transport costs for volunteers with disability who are unable to drive, or contribute to the cost of training courses and background screening checks for volunteers.

Volunteer grants help community organisations to harness the power of volunteering.

Currently, funding for volunteer grants runs out in the middle of 2016.

If elected, a Shorten Labor Government will commit \$10 million to continue volunteer grants for another year.

A SHORTEN LABOR GOVERNMENT WILL PROTECT WAGES AND CONDITIONS FOR PEOPLE WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTORS

As the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Living Longer, Living Better Reforms roll out around the country, significant new workforces will be required to meet the growing demand for disability support, aged care and related health services.

These new reforms place consumers at the centre of choice and control about the services they want. For people with disability and older Australians, these reforms will be truly transformational.

Labor wants to ensure that as these reforms roll out, and new workforces are developed, proper wages and conditions are protected for workers in these industries.

At the same time, new technologies are breeding a new generation of start-ups and social enterprises. Labor wants to see all Australians share in the benefits of this transformation. Labor will work to put in place appropriate standards to protect workers, consumers and the public good as the sharing economy and social enterprise markets emerge.

LABOR'S RECORD

Following a decade of neglect under the Howard Liberal Government, from 2007-2013, Labor implemented a range of significant reforms aimed at building the capacity of Australia's community sector and improving the relationship between government and communities.

As a part of its Social Inclusion agenda, Labor appointed the country's first Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector.

Labor removed the 'gag' clauses in government contracts with the sector.

Labor developed a National Compact with the not-for-profit sector, which defined 'the rules of engagement' and provided a basis for improving the policy, programs and services available to Australia's communities and individuals.

Labor established the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, a new national peak regulator for the not-for-profit sector, and began work on a more streamlined approach to reporting for the community and not-for-profit sectors.

Labor legislated a new, uniform definition of charity.

In recognition of the limited nature of evaluations of the sector, Labor commissioned the Productivity Commission to develop a tool to measure the direct and indirect contributions of the community and not-for-profit sector to the economy.

Labor also introduced a number of significant reforms to the way parts of the sector are funded - most notably in the aged care and disability care - to deliver the services that people with disability and older Australians need to live decent lives.

The shift to individualised funding under the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Living Longer, Living Better Aged Care reforms provide vast new opportunities for these sectors, and the people that they serve.

THE LIBERAL PARTY'S RECORD

On 18 September 2013, immediately following his election, Prime Minister Tony Abbott disbanded both the Office for the Not-for-Profit Sector and the Social Inclusion Unit.

The Office for the Not-for-Profit Sector was responsible for the National Compact along with the National Volunteering Strategy and social investment initiatives. These strategies have all been left to languish under the Liberals.

During the 2013 election, the Liberals vowed to abolish the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission, despite widespread support from across the community sector.

Labor has fought the abolition of the ACNC successfully.

In their first budget, the Liberals slashed around \$240 million from the Department of Social Services' community grants program, followed by a further \$30 million cut in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook in 2014.

The Liberals' new DSS grants program has been a disaster for the community sector.

A large number of organisations have had their funding cut, resulting in widespread gaps in essential frontline services across the country.

As a consequence, the relationship between government and the community sector is at an all-time low.

Financial Implications

\$10 million.